

WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

BENNINGTON MUSEUM



VOLUME 1 - OCTOBER 2008

WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

BENNINGTON MUSEUM

Volume 1
October 2008

Editorial Information

Stephen Perkins, Executive Director

William Budde, Editor

Bennington Museum Publication Committee
Ruth Ekstrom, Jamie Franklin, Linda French, Tyler Resch

Author Guidelines available upon request.

ISSN

© 2008 The Bennington Museum, All Rights Reserved

Subscription Information: The Walloomsack Review is published annually in October. Subscriptions are \$5 per year and should be sent to:

Walloomsack Review
Bennington Museum
75 Main Street
Bennington, VT 05250

Please include your name, mail address, and email address (optional).

The Walloomsack Review
Volume 1 - October 2008

An Invitation. <i>William Budde</i>	page 4
Welcome. <i>Stephen Perkins</i>	page 5
Why Walloomsack? <i>William Budde</i>	page 6
Park-McCullough's Carriage Barn: A green architectural appraisal. <i>Jane Griswold Radocchia</i>	page 10
The Two Worlds of Mary Sanford. <i>Anthony Marro</i>	page 16
Solving the Mystery of C. E. Sackett's "Bennington Furnace" Drawing at the Bennington Museum. <i>Victor R. Rolando</i>	Page 30
<i>Book Reviews</i>	
Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865-1910. <i>Reviewed by Tyler Resch</i>	page 35
Glastenbury <i>Reviewed by John Howard</i>	page 38
Vermont's Fern Industry <i>Historical Article by George Aiken</i>	page 40
Ode to Battle of Bennington	page 44

An Invitation

I imagine that most of us enjoy a celebration once in a while; the more personal the celebration feels the greater the sense of belonging for everyone involved.

The first issue of the *Walloomsack Review* has the feeling of a celebration for me and fortunately not the “Thank God that’s finally done!” type of celebration. We should celebrate because:

- *Someone said how a bout a journal published by the museum, and we didn't let go of the idea, we did it.*
- *We have been cataloging the museum collections and discovered that we have a very exciting collection for southern Vermont and neighboring New York and Massachusetts.*
- *The museum collections have a spirit that extends into the community. This is a spirit that relates to the families, architecture, history and politics of Vermont and New England in a very deep way.*
- *The museum staff works very hard to make this a community museum, a museum that involves local artists, collectors and experts on a personal level.*
- *There is a willingness to take risks on new ideas while responsibly watching the bottom line.*

So, what about the promised invitation? There are actually three invitations.

First, if you like the above, consider subscribing to support the *Walloomsack Review*. We made a decision to keep the Review modest so that it would be affordable and more widely available.

Second, tell your friends. Ask them if they knew there was an iron works in south Shaftsbury, or if they know how many places named Bennington there are in the United States. Find out if they knew Bennington was home to several of the active and leading Socialists in the United States. Look at an old stable, barn or carriage house and try to forget that it was naturally warmed and cooled long before it was politically correct.

Third, we invite you to send us suggestions, ideas, observations, feedback and draft articles. We have picked the theme for the next issue due out in September/October of 2009 – Architecture.

One more thing. Feel free to invite us to your next celebration- its great to share the excitement.

Bill Budde, editor

Director's Message

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *The Walloomsack Review*, an annual journal published by the Bennington Museum. For the past seven years an intense inventory and cataloging project at the Bennington Museum has uncovered lost gems, provided back-ground on well-know objects, and has generally made more accessible the rich collections of this great institution. Each mystery solved and intriguing document uncovered leads to the same statement, “boy, someone should write an article about this.” Now, someone can write an article.

In this first issue, you will find two articles derived directly from objects or information uncovered through this cataloging project. Solving the mystery of C.E. Sackett’s “Bennington Furnace” Drawing in the Collection of the Bennington Museum by Victor Rolando explores how a name can be misleading and proper study of a work of art can lead to many interesting discoveries. Anthony Marro’s article on Mary Sanford is a direct outgrowth of his volunteer work with the collections department to better document and make available the vast glass plate negative collection.

With a mission to celebrate the heritage of the southern Vermont region you will find articles on topics outside the museum’s collection such as Jane Ridoccio’s look at the Park-McCullough carriage barn and book reviews of recent Vermont-based publications as well. As a reader of this periodical I encourage you to explore your interests and perhaps become a writer for future issues.

Please enjoy this first issue and we look forward to your comments, contributions, and support.

Steve Perkins

Why Walloomsack?

William Budde

New England has a rich history of using Native American place names alongside imported European names. Walloomsack is an odd-sounding name and most would believe it to be Native American. I know I did when I first read it. Pritchard identifies Walloomsack as a Munsee word that can interpreted as meaning “red rock,” or a rock that has been dyed red.” He points to a section of the Town of Hoosic, New York, not far from Bennington as the location of the red rock.¹

It seems more likely that the name may be Dutch with several possible origins and many different spellings. (Some of the spelling variations are given in the sidebar.) A few of the spelling variations include Walloomsac/Walloomsack, Wallumschaik/Wallumscoick, and Walloms Kork.² The variations may arise from two sources. The first stems from differences in pronunciation. Until spelling became standardized, words were often spelled as they were heard – phonetically. Depending on the accent of the speaker there was room for a great deal of creativity in the final spelling. The commanding officer of the Hessen-Hanau Artillery unit, Lieutenant Johann Michael Bach,

offers a good example of the changes due to accent. Bach drew a map of the Bennington Battle and identified the river as ‘Williams-cook.’ This type of error is compounded by simply misspelling the original word. When the copyist was rushed, interrupted, tired, or just didn’t care, errors were made that were not corrected. Over time the errors were copied correctly and the resulting error was passed on through the generations.

The second type of error is related to handwriting. While jokes are made about the poor handwriting of doctors, the historic changes and cultural differences in writing styles is more of a problem in historical studies. The common example of writing style differences has often been the double “ss.” Three hundred years ago the double “s” or “ss” we use today was written in what looks like a lower case “f.” Without knowledge of the context and the differ-

Spelling variations

Walloomsac/Walloomsack
Wallomschaick/Wallumschaik
Walloomscoick/Walloonschoik
Wallumscoick/Wallumscoick
Wallumscaik
Wallon/Walloon-creek
Walumscaak
Wallamscook/Wallamscoock
Walloms Kork/Wallorm-kork
Walamscock/Walmscott
Walloomback
Lormscork/Loomschork
Maloonsack

ence between a true “f” and a double “s,” the original word or meaning can become distorted or misread (The primary difference in the direction of the lower loop).³

On December 12, 1769, Cadwallader Colden, Lieutenant Governor of New York, signed a proclamation to seize James Breckenridge and others “for riotously obstructing the partition of Wallumschaik Patent,” an area just north of the Hoosick Patent that was granted in 1688.⁴ The Wallumschaik Patent covered an area of 12,000 acres that extended from New York into the area some considered Vermont. Geographically the grant ran about three miles through the southwest corner of Shaftsbury, Vermont, into the town of Bennington and Breckenridge’s farm on today’s Murphy Road.⁵ The grant followed the flow of the Walloomsack River in what has been described as an awkward form.

To refer to the Wallumschaik Patent may be repetitious. The Merrills in *Sketches of Historic Bennington* state that the word Wallumschaik is a combination of two Dutch words – Wallum being a proper name of a Dutch settler and schaik a word referring to “a scrip or patent.” This patent was granted by the New York authorities June 15, 1739, a little more than ten years before New Hampshire Governor Benning Wentworth granted Bennington its charter on January 3, 1749, O.S.⁶ Swift traces the story of Wallum’s Patent back to Zadock Thompson’s gazetteer and points out that the attribution to a person named Wallum may be apocryphal. No one named Wallum is mentioned in the original 1739 patent.⁷ (The 1860 Gazetteer of the State of New York identifies the patentees as Collins, de Lancy, Styvestant, van Rensselear, Williams and Morris.)⁸

The *Gale Encyclopedia of Multicultural America* offers the opinion that the name came from the Walloons. This may be one of the least likely origins of the river’s name. The Merriam-Webster online Dictionary defines a Walloon as “a member of a people of southern and southeastern Belgium and adjacent parts of France.”⁹ While this sounds logical and promising, there seems to be no historical support for this explanation.

Perhaps the most colorful and fanciful explanation of Walloomsack was given by Alexander B. R. Drysdale in *Bennington’s Book*. He attributes the name to an “eccentric Dutchman” named Van Vetchen Van Der Spiegel that lived on the banks of the river.

‘This Van Der Spiegel raised a great number ... of rabbits known as Belgian hares, which in those days were known as Walloon hares, from the old name of Belgium. These hares he used to carry thru the streets of early Bennington in a large sack, selling them to the house wives for a shilling apiece. Because of this custom he came to be

commonly known as Walloon-Sack Van Der Spiegel, and the stream which he lived nearest to was often referred to as “Walloonsack’s River” and hence Walloonsac. Later our village came to be a manufacturing town of some importance and many looms were set up on the banks of the Walloonsac. The younger generation, entirely forgetful of Van Vetchen Van Der Spiegel and his bag of Belgium hares, thought the river was named in honor of the looms it turned... and corrupted the word to Walloomsac, which name the river bears to this day.”¹⁰

Given all of this variation, speculation and folklore there may be a pattern in the spelling. Shortly after the Battle of Bennington a Lt. Durnford drew a map of the battlefield and the placement of the American and British forces. The legend at the top of the map states: “Position of the Detachment under LieutT. Coll. Baum at Walmscock near Bennington ...on the 16th August 1777 drawn by Lieut. Durnford Engineer Engraved by Wm Faden 1780.” On the map he has labeled the river the Walloomsac River, a spelling we are more accustomed to seeing.¹¹ Later Crockett makes a similar distinction – Walloomsack Patent and Walloomsac River. Perhaps the spelling of the place name and the river name were meant to clearly separate the place from the river.¹²

Today most spelling has been standardized to remove ambiguity and ensure that you and I are speaking about the same thing. Walloomsac the place and river are both spelled Walloomsac. This has a certain advantage for map makers and school children but occasionally it has the effect of hiding the history and the struggle for defining a place.

When we choose to call this the Walloomsack Review we intentionally choose an older spelling. The purpose of the Review is to present a wide range of historical or cultural articles on the southern Vermont and neighboring New York and Massachusetts areas. Today we define these areas as discrete states with clear boundaries, but the reality is that the history, social and industrial relationships are much more interesting and fluid. Before the boundaries were defined there was more variation in the view from the perspective of Vermonters, Yorkers, and New Englanders. The spelling of the older form of Walloomsack was chosen as an acknowledgement of the past and the often ambiguous influences that have shaped our present.

Endnotes

¹ Evan T. Pritchard. *Native New Yorkers: The Legacy of the Algonquin People of New York*. Tulsa, OK: Council Oaks Books, 2002, p. 291. Reviewed at GoogleBooks.com August 26, 2008. Debbie Winchell in “A Critical Review of Evan Pritchard’s Native New Yorkers” questions Pritchard’s scholarship and accuracy. Reviewed at http://members.tripod.com/debbie_winchell/pritchard.html on August 26, 2008

² Philip Lord, Jr. *War Over Walloomscoick: Land Use and Settlement Pattern on the Bennington Battlefield – 1777*. Albany, NY: The University of the State of New York, State Education Department, 1989; p. 37. The spelling variations in the side bar are also from Lord.

³ Kip Sperry. *Reading Early American Handwriting*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1998. See also Harriet Stryker-Rodda. *Understanding Colonial Handwriting*. Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1986. Ann Rycraft. *Sixteenth and seventeenth century handwriting*, Series 2. York, England: University of York, 1969.

⁴ E. B. O’Callaghan. *The Documentary history of the State of New York*. Albany, NY: Charles van Benthuyssen, 1851, p. 615. Highland Hall. *The History of Vermont from its discovery to its admission into the Union in 1791*. Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1868, p. 116.

⁵ Hall, p. 116-17. J. H. French. *Gazetteer of the State of New York Embracing a Comprehensive View of the Geography, Geology, and General History of the State, and a Complete History and Description of Every County, City, Town, Village, and Locality*. Syracuse, NY: R. Pearsall Smith, 1860.

⁶ Esther Munroe Swift. *Vermont Place Names – Footprints of history*. Brattleboro, VT: The Stephen Green Press, 1977, p. 80. John V. D. S Merrill and Caroline R. Merrill. *Sketches of Historic Bennington*. Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1907 (© 1908), p. 41.

⁷ Swift, p. 77; A review of Thompson’s Gazetteer did not locate the passage on the Wallum Patent.

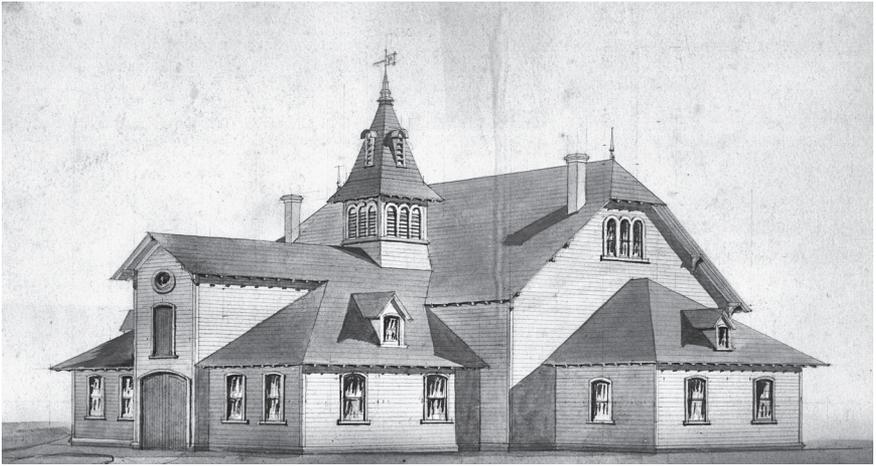
⁸ J. H. French, pp. 555-56.

⁹ “Walloon.” Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2008. Merriam-Webster Online, 10 May 2008. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/Walloon>

¹⁰ Alexander B. R. Drysdale. *Bennington’s Book Being the Complete Chronicle of a New England Village with Various Digressions and Dissertations on Life Which Should Prove of Great Benefit to All Men*. n.p., n.p., 1927, p. 11. Equally entertaining is Drysdale’s “A True Account of the Events of August 16, 1777. n.p., n.d.

¹¹ Lieut. Durnford. *Position of the Detachment under Lieutt. Coll. Baum at Walmscock near Bennington Showing the Attacks of the Enemy o the 16th August 1777*. Drawn by Lieutt. Durnford Engineer. Engraved by Wm Faden 1780. Reviewed at www.nps.gov/nr/twhp/wwwlps/lessons/107bennington/107images/107ill1bh.jpg August 26, 2008.

¹² Walter Hill Crockett. *Vermont: The Green Mountain State*, vol. I. New York: The Century History Company, Inc., 1921.



Park-McCullough's carriage barn a green architectural appraisal

Jane Griswold Radocchia

The Park-McCullough House's carriage barn in North Bennington, Vermont is pleasing to look at. Its roof angles, trim details, cupola, and crowning weather vane have an inherent sense of proportion and stability that is elegant. This building can also be seen today as "original green" or "built to the weather," designed to maximize the comfort of its inhabitants all year round without technology.

"Green building" refers to ways to minimize the impact of new construction on global warming. In the United States today, buildings create about thirty percent of our carbon emissions, a significant contribution to global warming. One of the more cost-effective ways to reduce this impact is to build with the climate.

Vermonters have been building to our specific climate conditions for generations, a practice architectural historians call "original green." Our ancestors had neither electricity, central heat, nor air conditioning, so they learned to fashion their buildings to make daily living more comfortable. They understood the basic environmental forces of sun, wind, rain, and temperature. Intimate with their surroundings, they also understood how the topography and geography of their own land created specific micro-climates.

Their solutions were simple, inventive, brilliant and in today's buildings

Figure 1 above: The original drawing submitted by Henry Dudley showing the building in afternoon sun.

too often largely ignored.

The carriage barn at the Park-McCullough mansion was built in 1864 as part of Trenor and Laura Hall Park's summer house to provide space for their horses, carriages, equipment ('tack'), hay, feed, and housing for the staff. Both the house and barn were designed by the prolific architect Henry Dudley of the New York firm of Diaper and Dudley. Dudley had migrated from England in 1851 and settled in Troy, New York, where he designed several buildings before relocating to New York City. He was an accomplished designer, and he understood weather.

Trenor W. Park, as Dudley's client, expected the newest technology in his grand new home: gas lights, central heat, indoor toilets, hot and cold running water. Closely involved in the design and construction of his house, Park changed several aspects of the design, but none of his changes affected how the buildings would work with the climate. Both men understood how to build to the weather in North Bennington. The carriage house remained as it was originally designed until 1902, when Park's daughter, Lizzie, and her husband, John G. McCullough, renovated it to add a new stable on the rear.¹ They, too, built to the weather.²

So, what design elements of 1864 do we mostly fail to notice today?

The aesthetic siting of the carriage barn had few constraints. It could be placed wherever on the site it fit best. Architecturally, the final site serves as a backdrop to the house without diminishing or stealing the focus of the big main building nearby. The main facade looked back to the house, gardens, and pond.

The practical setting of the barn, though, was constrained by several considerations: the sun, the wind, the tilt of the earth on its axis, and the seasons, all simply givens that influenced the final design, and so the carriage barn was skillfully designed to work with these elements.

To take advantage of the sun's warmth, the building was oriented to its seasonal changes. The east end, or front, would get the morning sun; the long south side, sun all day; the west side, afternoon sun; and the north side, a brief bit of sun in mid-summer. In this part of Vermont the wind blows mainly from the west, sometimes the north. Wind is good for cooling in summer but in winter "wind chill" makes us colder. To work with the North Bennington micro-climate, the carriage barn faces east. Its doors all face the mild east or the sunny south. West walls have only small windows.

The building's main entrance - wide double doors tall enough for carriages and horses - is set back (Figure 2). Aesthetically, the setback makes the door more visible and important. It also makes the hay door above it easily accessible for wagons, which can park underneath and unload. While not immediately obvious, the recessed space protects against wind and gathers



Figure 2: The front of the building faces east to take advantage of the morning sun. Note the recessed main doors and the hayloft access above.

sun, making a sun pocket. Gardeners know that sheltered sunny nook in their garden where daffodils will bloom; this recessed entry creates a sheltered sunny place for horses and people.

Many buildings have a double entry that functions like an air lock: you enter through a door into a little vestibule, close the door behind you, then open another door to go into the main space. Cold air is kept out of a warm space and vice versa. It's not practical to have a double entry on a barn. Imagine how big the air lock would need to be for a carriage! So this recessed entry is a pretty good substitute because the doors can be opened without the wind rushing in, and on a sunny day in winter, heat may even come in.

The cupola, with all its roof angles and arched vents, plus its weather vane with Trenor Park's monogram, is a great architectural flourish at the top of the Park-McCullough carriage barn. The cupola is also an important part of the cooling system. A vent above a hay loft is essential because stored hay, especially if damp, can get hot enough to burst into flame. So the vents let that heat escape. They also help to keep the barn cool because heat rises. As that air goes out, replacement air has to come in from somewhere else. An opening - a door or window - lower down in the building, lets fresh cooler air in. If the vent at the top is smaller than the opening below, the quantity of air coming in is greater than the quantity that can easily go out. More air wants to go out, and as it does so it makes a breeze. In summer, when windows and doors to the hay loft are open, a breeze will keep the carriage house, the workers, and the horses cool.

Eaves do important work, too. From a practical perspective, they help to keep the rainwater that drips off of a building's roof away from its walls. This is vital because rainwater on the walls will become trapped inside those walls, which leads to mildew, mold, and rot. Similarly, eaves keep icicles from forming directly on a building's outer walls, which is bad because an icicle on the wall will become an icicle dripping down the wall, leading again to water

inside the wall.

Eaves that stick out six inches are barely deep enough to keep rain off; a nine to twelve inch overhang is better. The carriage barn's eaves are eighteen inches deep. Originally copper gutters, now worn out and removed, sat in curved brackets running along the roof edge, adding four inches more depth to the overhang of the eave as well as redirecting the water.

Eaves are also for play, of course, because they make the carriage barn fun to look at. Without eaves, this building would be an awkward box with bumps. The length of the eaves, their edge moldings, and the rows of brackets underneath, all come together to create a roof that visually shelters what's inside and delights the eye. The decorative corbels, or brackets, facing both ways at the ends of the dormer windows and at the barn's corners are frosting on the cake.

The eaves here have one other job, quite visible in the accompanying picture (Figure 3). This is the south view of the west end of the barn. The eaves keep the summer sun from shining in the windows. This photograph was taken in early May, when the shadow line of the eaves is below the small windows in the stable. The sun will not shine in these windows again until late August. With the extra four inches of gutter, the windows would be shaded earlier and later in the year. Because the sun's path across the sky changes with the seasons, due to the earth's tilt and rotation around



Figure 3: This view from the south side of the stable area shows the cupola vents used for cooling, the dormer placement and the role of the eaves to passively control solar heating in summer.

the sun, in winter the sun will be low enough in the sky to shine below the eaves, and into those windows, bringing light and heat to the space inside.

The layout of the interior space is a further refinement of how the barn works with the weather. In the drawing (Figure 4), north is to the top, south to the bottom, the horse stalls to the west (left) and main door to the east (right).

The carriage barn was designed to create a logical, efficient progression of spaces from the horse stalls to the carriages to the front door, with stops along the way for harnessing and tack. The space overhead is used for hay and grain storage while additions on the sides of the building provide staff quarters and an equipment repair area.

The carriage barn was also laid out to maximize the comfort of occupants

all year round. The long working side faces south, where general purpose rooms are designed to prepare carriages for use, with a tack room to hold bridles, saddles, and horse paraphernalia. Next comes the store room for harnesses, the grooming room with double doors facing south, and then the stable on the west end. Horse stalls need only small windows set high in the wall. Thus, with only a few small openings the stable also becomes a barrier to cold winter wind, helped in part because the horses' own heat will keep the stable warm, making it a buffer for the main barn.



Figure 3: Main floor plan of the interior space.

The north side of the main carriage space, holding carriages not in use, can be closed off in winter by twelve-foot-long sliding doors. A people door, only three feet wide, between the hall and the north bay, bearing the McCullough monogram, speaks to this north side's regular separation from the main bay.

Two chimneys in the carriage barn serve stoves in rooms designed for people: the groom's quarters on the north side and the tack room on the south. The tack room, a working space, is in the middle of the building. Almost entirely surrounded by the carriage and store rooms, it is buffered from the elements. It has a large window to let in natural light, and warmth from the winter sun. In addition, this room is set in a sun pocket that's protected from the weather by south- and east-facing walls. With a coal stove, this room would have been a cozy place to mend tack and talk about horses.

The room for washing carriages is also protected by its location: in the center, beside the tack room, under the hay loft. The water used to wash the carriages drained down the sloped tin floor into the cellar. That water would not have been quite so cold here in winter, in a room buffered on all sides. Above it all is the hay loft, filled with fabulously good insulation (hay), which disappears in summer when it is not needed, and reappears each fall.

Last of all, there are those large windows, which let in the welcome winter sunshine and light, and can be opened across from each other in good weather to encourage summer breezes. And so we return to the cupola, the "original green" air conditioning.

These designs were common knowledge before the widespread use of central heat and air conditioning allowed us to forget. They can also be seen in the design of the Park-McCullough house itself. They are still in use in older buildings all around us.

Bibliography

Maxwell Fry and Jane Drew. *Tropical Architecture in the Dry and Humid Zones*. Huntington, NY: Robert E. Kreiger Publishing Co., 1964.

Ian L. McHarg. *Design with Nature*. Garden City, NY: The Natural History Press, 1969.

Victor Olgyay. *Design With Climate: Bioclimatic approach to architectural regionalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973.

Bernard Rudofsky. *Architecture Without Architects, a Short Introduction to Non-Pedigreed Architecture*. Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1964, 1987.

James Marston Fitch and William Bobenhausen. *American Building*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1999.

Low-Energy Building Design Guidelines – Energy Efficient Design for New Federal Facilities: A guidebook of practical information on designing energy-efficient Federal Buildings. Washington, DC: Federal Energy Management Program, U.S. Department of Energy, DOE/EE-0249, 2001. Website: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp/pdfs/25807.pdf>

Joseph Lstiburek. *Buider's Guide to Cold Climates: Details for design and construction*. Building Science Corporation, Westford, MA, 2006

M. Joe Numbers. "Finding the Sweet Spot." *The Best of Fine Homebuilding*, (Winter 2008), p. 50-55.

Endnotes

¹The original plans identified the building as the "Stabling." The Stabling was built in 1865-1866, designed by the same firm as designed the House and is reported to have used many of the same builders and supplies that worked on the House. When renovations were made in 1901-1902 the Stabling became the Carriage House. *The Park McCullough House, Historic House and Museum*. North Bennington, VT: Park-McCullough House Association, n.d.

²Lizzie and John McCullough later added a garage to house the family's new automobile. The new garage was not designed to be energy efficient.



The Two Worlds of Mary Sanford

Anthony Marro

The pictures were taken more than a century ago, and they document a life of wealth and privilege in the late Victorian era. They show tea parties on verandas, tennis on wide lawns, strolls through woodland settings, and summers at the shore. The women who appear in them (there are few men, and in some cases they're just holding the horses that are the real subjects of those pictures) are mostly young and fashionably dressed. They're usually smiling happily into the camera. The notable exceptions are the self-portraits of the woman who took them. In the pictures of herself, Mary Robinson Sanford often appears both formal and stiff, with barely a hint of a smile. In one of them she's sitting side-saddle on a horse, dressed in a top hat and riding habit and looking as resolute as if preparing for a cavalry charge (Figure 1). Since so many of her pictures show her this way, it's likely the way she wanted others to see her.

She was a slight woman, five feet three and a half inches tall (she counted the half inch), with bluish-grey eyes, brown hair, and a fair complexion.¹ Classmates remembered her as gliding across the Vassar campus in a toga-like scarlet robe, and the program for Class Day exercises in 1882 – intended to poke gentle fun at the graduates – said she was “such a quiet, unassuming

Figure 1: Mary Robinson Sanford in Troy, New York, on “Tom” (Bennington Museum).

little thing that she never became very well known to her admiring classmates.”² She left little in the way of a written record, and a short article in the Fall 1991 issue of the *Vassar Quarterly* is the only known published account of her life and work. But the “unassuming little thing” proved to be equally at home on a horse, on a picket line, and behind a camera. She was a serious amateur photographer at a time in the 1890s when very few women were, capturing the world of gracious living enjoyed by wealthy people in Troy and in Old Bennington, which back then was known as Bennington Centre. And, unlike most of her Vassar classmates, she would go on to live – but not photograph – a life of Socialist Party activism in turn of the century Greenwich Village, which already had become known for its Bohemian lifestyles and radical politics.

The pictures, taken on 5 X 7 glass plate negatives, are now in the Bennington Museum, where they’re part of a much larger collection that’s being digitalized and catalogued. For years it was thought that her work stretched across twenty years. Only a few of her plates are dated, but an early one showed the aftermath of a heavy snow storm in Troy in 1891, and a much later one showed the Bennington High School football team in 1910. That last seemed odd to Callie Stewart, the Collections Manager at the museum who is overseeing the digitalizing and cataloging project. For one thing, the great bulk of the Sanford photographs seemed to have been taken in the early 1890s. For another, she seemed to have taken no other pictures in the village of Bennington itself.

The Sanfords were a part of the summer colony of Bennington Centre, and it was the place where – except when she was traveling in Europe – Mary Sanford would spend every summer of her life. Her home on Monument Avenue was just a mile away but a world apart from the grit and bustle of the mills down in the valley, and there are no Sanford pictures of mill workers, merchants, French-Canadian and Irish immigrants, or street scenes. For that matter, there are almost no pictures of strangers. So the picture of the football players seemed jarringly out of place, and on close inspection Stewart discovered that the index number showed it had been taken by Fred Burt, a professional photographer in Bennington, and somehow had been mistakenly mixed in with the Sanford collection.

It’s now thought that Sanford probably started taking pictures sometime just before 1890 (one picture that shows the Bennington Battle Monument under construction had to have been taken in 1888 or 1889) and stopped taking them, at least in a serious way, well before 1900. Stewart thinks that most if not all of the plates in the museum’s collection were taken between 1889 and 1894. The numbering system on the plate envelopes suggests there were more than 300 plates at some point, but some are missing and some

are broken; only about 250 remain intact. This means that the Sanford pictures are just a tiny fraction of the museum's collection; were taken during a relatively short period of time; and are focused mainly on a small circle of relatives and friends. But they're an important time capsule, nonetheless, particularly for Bennington Centre, showing what people looked like, what sort of houses they lived in, what sort of clothing they wore, how they furnished their homes, and how they whiled away summer days.

There are approximately 10,000 plates in the museum's collection (because they've not yet been fully catalogued, no one knows the exact number) and Stewart believes that when the project is completed they will document life in the region in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a very full way.

Mary Sanford never set out to document life in Bennington Centre or anywhere else. Only a small percentage of her pictures – probably between twenty and twenty-five percent – seem to have been taken there. She mostly photographed her family, her neighbors and friends, probably never intending them to appear anywhere except on parlor tables or in photo albums. For the most part, they show a woman's world and a world of leisure, with the women dressed for outings, not household chores. They're tightly corseted, fashionably attired, and often wearing elaborate hats. They're shown relaxing in porch rockers, playing pianos, holding small puppies, posing in their gardens, and pouring tea. But some of them are historically relevant, including a picture of three generations of women from Bennington's Swift family; a front porch portrait of Hiram ("Uncle Hi") Waters, who is mentioned often in early accounts of village life; and a picture of Betsy Robinson (Mrs. Uel Robinson), who had been born in 1798 (Figure 2).

Sanford never mentioned her pictures in the short biographical reports she did for class reunions. But she likely wanted them preserved because late in her life she gave the plates to her long-time chauffeur, John Baker, who was known to have an interest in local history. She didn't give them to the museum itself – Baker later did – and that might have been because she didn't consider them historically important. But it also might have been because John Spargo was the museum's director at the time. Spargo had been an inspiration to Sanford in the early 1900s, when he was a teacher at the Socialist Party's Rand School in Manhattan and she was a student there. She later became his benefactor, helping move him to Bennington in 1909 and installing him in a cottage she owned. This was at a time when he was seriously ill and expected to die. Spargo recovered, and returned to his writing, speaking and organizing for Socialist causes. But along with many others he broke with the party in 1917 over the issue of American involvement in World War I (he was in favor of it while many in the party opposed it), angering and distressing Sanford



Figure 2: Mrs. Uel Robinson, born in 1798, sitting on her Bennington Center porch. She died in 1893 not long after this photograph. Note the figure just inside the door on the left, possibly Mrs. Robinson's care giver (Bennington Museum).

in the process.³ Thomas Brockway, who became friendly with Sanford in the 1930s when he was teaching history at Bennington College, said that she was still “incensed” about it many years later.⁴

The anger was rooted in the fact that Sanford had lived her life in two very different worlds. The first was a cocoon of wealth and leisure in Bennington and Troy. The second was the maelstrom of progressive causes and Socialist politics in lower Manhattan, where the circle of activists she belonged to included Jack London, Upton Sinclair, Norman Thomas, W.E.B. DuBois, John Reed (the author of *Ten Days That Shook the World*) and Frances Perkins (later Franklin Roosevelt's Secretary of Labor). Spargo, who had started out as a Socialist and would end up as a conservative Republican, had been an important bridge from the first to the second. And it was that second world – the one that Spargo had denounced and abandoned – that Sanford had become passionately committed to.

Mary Robinson Sanford was born on April 20, 1859, in Troy, New York. She was the only child of Samuel and Sophia Sanford, both of whom were born in Bennington and both of whom – along with Mary and many other relatives – are buried in a family plot in the Old First Church cemetery. Her mother was descended from William Brewster, who, at age fifty-five, had been the oldest passenger on the *Mayflower*. Her father was descended from Andrew Sanford, who arrived from England in 1634. Her maternal grand-

father, William Bigelow, had been a local doctor who also had represented Bennington in the state legislature, and her family tree included some of Bennington's most distinguished names, including Robinson, Jennings and Bigelow, as well as Sanford itself.⁵

She attended the Emma Willard Academy in Troy from 1869 until 1876, and then entered Vassar Preparatory School and eventually Vassar College. Her college transcript shows that she took English Composition, Latin, Music (one of her pictures is of her piano, and presumably she knew how to play it), French and Philosophy, while avoiding the "Domestic Science" courses intended to prepare women to raise families and manage a household.⁶ But six months after she graduated, her mother died, and she was pressed into service as her father's housekeeper. This was a job for which, she later noted, she was "poorly prepared," and for which, it appears, she didn't have full enthusiasm. She did it for the next fourteen years.⁷

The homes she helped manage were at 100 First Street in Troy and at 22 Monument Avenue in Old Bennington. The former no longer exists (the site is now a parking lot for Russell Sage College) but the latter is the large brick house at the corner of Bank Street that was built by Samuel Raymond in 1821. By the time she started taking pictures, her father's shirt manufacturing company had been merged with four others into the huge United Shirt and Collar Company, with sales rooms in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago and San Francisco, and with Sanford as president. This was at a time when about 90% of all the collars sold in this country were being manufactured in Troy.⁸

Workers struck United in January, 1891, after the company had arbitrarily cut wages to an average of fifty cents a day. The company first refused to negotiate with the strikers, most of them women, thinking they'd quickly return to work. But only two of the more than 500 strikers crossed the picket lines, and the company capitulated after the American Federation of Labor launched a national boycott. Newspaper accounts and labor leaders proclaimed it a great victory for the "collar girls."⁹

While it's not known what Mary Sanford thought about the strike at the time, it may have made a lasting impression. She would spend the second half of her life trying to improve the conditions of women working in factories very much like the ones that produced the wealth she inherited. But in 1891 she was taking pictures of different kinds of women in very different circumstances – fashionable young ladies picking flowers in gardens, playing pianos in parlors, and sipping tea on verandas, not wage slaves making shirts, cuffs and collars for pennies a day.

Just when and why she started taking pictures isn't certain. One of the earliest numbered pictures in the collection shows First Street in Troy, in-

cluding the Sanford family home. There are two men standing on a street corner, and a notation on the envelope says “Mr. Lloyd.” There were only a few families named Lloyd in the 1891 Troy City Directory, but one of them – James H. Lloyd – was a photographer who lived just a few blocks away. So it’s possible, but not certain, that this was one of her very first pictures, with Lloyd instructing her on how to use her new camera. It’s also known that she met with Alice Austen, already a skilled photographer, when Austen visited Bennington in August, 1890. Most of the Austen pictures from that trip were standard travel shots, featuring the Battle Monument and other postcard-type scenes. But Austen often pushed the parameters of what was considered acceptable for women photographers at the time, shooting pictures of child workers, tenement dwellers, Manhattan street scenes, automobile races and, more daringly, women smoking, drinking, dancing together, and dressed up as men. One of her pictures of Sanford taken during this visit is unique because it’s the only one known in which Sanford is smiling broadly and mischievously. She’s also – probably urged on by Austen – dancing a sort of jig with a Bennington neighbor, Eliza Snively, both of them lifting their dresses high enough to show a shocking (for 1890) amount of ankle and calf.¹⁰

Sanford’s pictures are much more subdued. Her own portrait of Mrs. Snively, for example, shows her posed demurely on her porch with her Episcopal clergyman husband and their two children. But while they never matched the technical excellence or boldness of Austen’s far greater body of work (for Austen, photography was a life’s passion, while for Sanford it was a brief hobby), the Sanford pictures are interesting, engaging, and historically valuable.

Many of her subjects are unknown, but they likely included visiting friends from Vassar as well as relatives and neighbors. While she noted the lens aperture and shutter speed on many of the envelopes, the subjects usually were identified only by initials or first names, or not at all. The pictures were taken not only in Bennington Centre and Troy but also at Magnolia Beach, north of Boston; at Duxbury, Massachusetts; at Plymouth Rock and elsewhere. We don’t know what sort of equipment she owned, but her camera used 5 X 7 plates; she clearly had a large wooden tripod to hold it (cameras couldn’t be held by hand because any picture taken in the shade required at least three seconds of exposure); and some sort of flash attachment (magnesium flash powder was commonly used at the time). Photography in 1890 was more demanding than it is with today’s push button technology, requiring both patience and skill. The glass plates had to be carefully inserted, and the lens focused, the aperture set and the shutter speed adjusted for each individual shot. In several of the pictures of Sanford, she’s holding an arm behind her back, suggesting that she might have had a long shutter cable hidden

behind her. But because she likely composed them and made all the focus, aperture and speed settings needed, most of the pictures of her probably can be classified as self-portraits, even if someone else pushed the shutter.

Marcia Carlisle, who studied the pictures while she was teaching at Bennington College and who later wrote about Sanford for the *Vassar Quarterly* magazine, was particularly impressed by the landscapes Sanford shot, not just because they're "striking in composition and clarity," but because "she was pushing the boundaries of what common wisdom said women could and could not do." Carlisle said that women in the late 19th century were thought incapable of producing landscapes because of the physical effort in moving around all the heavy equipment required, not just cameras but also tripods and boxes of glass plates.¹¹

Sanford photographed vistas that showed cornfields, woodlands, cows in country streams, waterfalls and rocky shorelines. Some of her most artistic landscapes have herself in them, a small figure posed like a woodland nymph in a setting of tall trees. She hauled her camera to picnics, tennis matches, dinner parties and weddings. But many of her pictures also were taken in back yards or on porches, where she could shoot portraits in controlled settings, using natural light. One of these shows her father and his sister, Mrs. Alfred Robinson, on the porch of his Monument Avenue home on a summer afternoon. Samuel Sanford is portly, with a white Van Dyke beard, fashionably dressed and smoking a cigar.

It likely was one of the last pictures ever taken of him. He died suddenly on August 3, 1896, after hemorrhaging on that same porch. A handwritten notation in the museum files says that the cause was cirrhosis and Bright's Disease; the official record just says "kidney disease."¹² When he died, Mary Sanford's life changed in a sudden and very dramatic way. She was thirty-seven, single, suddenly wealthy in her own right, and anxious to flee Troy. She later said that she left her birthplace "without one regret" and moved to Manhattan where "everything, no matter what one is interested in, is at its best."¹³

Just how wealthy she was isn't clear, and probate records aren't particularly helpful. But she was wealthy enough to afford servants, long trips to Europe (one of them lasted fourteen months and three others averaged seven months each), and impressive homes. Within two months of her father's death she began buying the land needed to build the large shingled house at 7 Monument Circle that she called "The Priory." This was completed around 1898 and would be her "summer cottage" for the next forty-nine years. At the same time, she also built the large carriage barn at 1 Monument Circle, and the small caretaker's cottage just south of it. Sometime around 1908 she either built or acquired the house at 9 Monument Circle as a smaller "winter cot-

tage” that she called “Tucked Away.” Even though a companion later noted that the huge “summer cottage” was impossible to heat between mid-November and mid-May, it’s not clear why she acquired a “winter cottage” when she was spending her winters in New York. But for many years she owned all four of the properties, as well as the house immediately south of the Old Academy that later became John Spargo’s home.¹⁴

Mary Sanford seems to have abandoned photography – at least as a serious hobby – even before she moved to Manhattan. There are no pictures in the collection known to have been taken in New York. It may have been because photography had been replaced by social activism. She moved in with her close friend Mary Safford, who appears in many of Mary Sanford’s earlier



Figure 3: Mary Sanford (left) and Mary Safford (right). Eventually they went their separate ways and Sanford moved in with Helen Stokes and they became life long companions (Bennington Museum).

pictures, and Safford’s 76-year-old mother, Henrietta, who had been widowed for at least thirty years (Figure 3). The 1900 census shows the three of them at 25 East 30th Street, just north of Madison Square Park, and also at “The Priory,” along with three servants – a waiter, a cook and a chambermaid. She became active in The Consumer’s League, whose main goal was to improve conditions for women working in clothing factory sweat shops. The report she

wrote for her Vassar class reunion in 1902 said that “Miss Safford and I have all our tastes in common, and divide our time between our work and music...” the work with the Consumer’s League putting her in contact with “some of the most interesting women in New York.” While it’s not known if Mary Sanford knew her, the young Eleanor Roosevelt was very active in the Consumer’s League in Manhattan at the same time. Eventually, Sanford and Safford went their separate ways, Safford moving in with a cousin and Sanford moving to 90 Grove Street, in Greenwich Village, just a short walk from Washington Square Park. This was in a townhouse and artist’s studio

owned by Helen Phelps Stokes, who was a portrait painter and a Socialist Party activist.

Helen Stokes was a tall woman, five-foot-ten, with brown eyes, dark hair and a long, oval face.¹⁵ She came from a family that was far richer than Sanford's. Her father, Anson Phelps Stokes, was a multimillionaire banker and merchant, and one of the founders of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The family home in Manhattan was the large brownstone at 37th Street & Madison Avenue that now houses the Pierpont Morgan Library. Their "summer cottage" in Lenox, Massachusetts was called "Shadow Brook" and its one hundred rooms made it the largest private home in America at the time. Helen grew up in a social whirl that was straight from an Edith Wharton novel, with balls in Manhattan, lawn parties in the Berkshires, sailing on huge yachts and camping on a private island in the Adirondacks. One of her sisters, Sarah, married a baron and became Baroness Halkett. One of her brothers, Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes, was an architect who designed the University Settlement House in lower Manhattan, the chapel at Columbia University in upper Manhattan, and the famous "Turk's Head" building in downtown Providence. Isaac's wife Edith was a niece of Robert Gould Shaw, who had commanded the 54th Massachusetts Regiment in the Civil War and died leading his black regiment in the assault on Fort Wagner (which was the subject of the movie *Glory*), and she had posed for the huge statue called "The Republic" that sculptor Daniel Chester French created as a centerpiece for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. Most of the nine Stokes children were progressive people despite their great wealth, and another of her brothers was a founder of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, which held its annual New York conventions at Helen's Grove Street studio. The Dec. 30, 1910, report about that year's convention in *The New York Times* noted that among those attending were "Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair and Miss Mary R. Sanford."

Helen Stokes and Mary Sanford probably met sometime around 1905 and became lifetime companions, sharing homes, travel, and a strong commitment to socialist politics and improved pay and working conditions for women. They organized support for women on picket lines, and Stokes became known for going to court with women strikers who were arrested and paying their fines for them. She also was a founding director of the American Civil Liberties Union. A Stokes relative described Sanford as being jealous of anyone else being friends with Stokes, saying that the two women "went everywhere together," and that Sanford showed up at all the Stokes family gatherings "whether she was invited or not."¹⁶

The Village gave birth to so many different political, social and artistic movements in the early years of the last century that one resident later said it sometimes seemed as though everything had started there except Prohibi-

tion.¹⁷ At the time Sanford moved there, it was a center of socialism, feminism, and sexual liberation, as well as avant-garde literature and art. It had become a magnet for both the creative and the eccentric. Ross Wetzsteon, writing about this period in *The Republic of Dreams – Greenwich Village: The American Bohemia, 1910-1960*, said that the Village ethos was dedicated to overthrowing the capitalist, philistine, and puritanical leadership of the American middle class. “Whatever their individual obsessions – socialism, anarchism, feminism, pacifism, free verse, cubism, Freudianism, free love, birth control – the Villagers were allied in an assault on social oppression, cultural gentility, and moral repression,” he wrote.¹⁸ In short, it was a very different world from Bennington Centre, which Sanford nonetheless returned to each summer.

There were many factions in the Socialist Party at the time, and the one that Sanford and Stokes belonged to was considered the conservative faction, more intent on reform than revolution and more progressive than radical. They were often referred to by critics as “Parlor Socialists” or “Parlor Pinks.” John Spargo’s biographer, Markku Ruotsila, said that Sanford was a Bolshevik, but she considered herself primarily a Christian, saying that it was the Christian Socialist Fellowship that persuaded her that the socialism was consistent with Christian values while the existing economic system was not.¹⁹

To learn more about socialism, Sanford became a student at the Rand School in 1907 when the British-born Spargo was a teacher there. Among the other teachers were Bertrand Russell, Scott Nearing, Steven Vincent Benet and John Dewey. Spargo already was well-known as the author of *The Bitter Cry of the Children*, which described the grim lives of children working in mines. He was a prolific writer, a forceful speaker, and somewhat self-centered, once insisting that “The only intellectual produced by American socialism was myself.”²⁰ Frances Perkins had a different view. In talking about the Stokes family’s activism for an oral history project at Columbia University, she said that “John Spargo, who belonged to that wing of the Socialist Party, was crazy.”²¹

Whatever the case, the relationship would prove to be important for Bennington. When he became seriously ill with emphysema, Sanford and Stokes helped arrange for Spargo to be moved to Old Bennington, where, Ruotsila says, “it was expected he would spend the last days or weeks of his life.” Instead, he survived and eventually made Bennington his permanent home. He helped organize the Socialist party in Vermont, as did Sanford, who in addition to being the treasurer of the Interscholastic Socialist Society in Manhattan became the secretary of the Vermont Socialist Party and the editor of its newspaper, which she helped launch “to keep the Vermont comrades in touch with one another.” When she staged a Socialist rally that

drew a crowd of 500 to the baseball field in Bennington in 1909, Spargo was a principal speaker.

His break with the party in 1917 ruptured the friendship. Thomas Brockway said that Sanford was so angry that she wanted Spargo to move out of the house at 34 Monument Avenue that she had been letting him live in, apparently rent free. He refused to move, Brockway said. But in 1919 he used \$4,000 of his royalty money to buy the house, which he called “Nestledown.”²² From that point on, Spargo became not only increasingly conservative but increasingly focused on things other than politics, including Vermont history and Bennington pottery. In 1926 he published *The Potters and Potteries of Bennington*. In that same year, he helped found and organize the Bennington Museum. He merged his new enthusiasms by donating his large pottery and glassware collection to the museum when it opened in 1928, and then went on to serve as the museum’s Director-Curator for twenty-eight years. He also served as the president of the Vermont Historical Society for a decade. In these different pursuits he remained as opinionated as he had been in his politics, often described as difficult as well as brilliant, and said to be a man of many feuds. A short profile of Spargo in the *Bennington Banner* after his death said that his final interests included his extensive gardens, “a subject blessedly beyond politics...”²³

Sanford and Stokes remained committed to socialism, but were becoming older and less active. They moved to Bennington permanently on May 8, 1931, alternating between “The Priory,” which they had renamed “Gray Gables,” in the summer and the smaller “winter cottage” next door from mid-November until mid-May. Sanford was seventy-two by this time, and Stokes – a decade younger – was becoming increasingly crippled by a serious form of arthritis, requiring the help a nurse. They had a Pierce Arrow automobile equipped with a special hoist that allowed Stokes to be lifted into the back while still in her wheelchair, which then was clamped to the floor of the car. According to their chauffeur, John Baker, the wheelchair “weighed more than she did.”²⁴

Somewhere along the way, much of Sanford’s wealth disappeared, although just how and why – whether in the market crash of 1929 or elsewhere – isn’t clear. Probate records show that when Sanford’s estate was finally settled, many years after her death in 1947, only \$25,380.29 remained. All of the Old Bennington properties except for the caretaker’s cottage ended up being bought by Stokes – the Stokes will gave the carriage barn to the Old First Church and provided that Sanford could remain in the “winter cottage” and would be cared for as long as she lived – and it was Stokes money that paid for the cook, waitress, nurse, gardener and chauffeur that they employed.

Monthly reports that Helen Stokes wrote for a family newsletter starting

in 1931 describe a routine of endless visitors and lunches with friends (Norman Thomas²⁵ and Dorothy Canfield Fisher were among the many visitors), motor trips to Woodford Mountain to view an eclipse and to North Adams to view the foliage, and complaints that she couldn't vote at all in the 1944 elections because there were too few socialists in Vermont to allow the party to get a place on the ballot. They describe yearly visits to Manhattan, usually for the month of March, where they rented living quarters at 52 Gramercy Park South, visited their doctor and dentist, and entertained family and friends, sometimes seeing more than eighty of them in the course of four weeks.

They also describe their enthusiasm for a final cause, the planning and building of Bennington College, which they became active and generous supporters of. John Baker drove them there often to watch the construction. "The campus is alive again," she wrote in September, 1933 "with girls in gay summer dresses (and sometimes shorts!)." Polly Wilson, who was Polly Ridlon and a freshman in 1941, said that each fall they invited all the new "townie" students from the Bennington area to a tea party at "Gray Gables." Sanford donated \$1,500 for a 350-pound bell from the Meneely Bell Co. in Troy for the cupola of the Commons Building and Stokes donated the money for one of the white clapboard dormitories on the campus, which was named the Stokes-Sanford House. While the name hasn't changed officially, today it's generally known just as "Stokes House."

Helen Stokes died in 1945 and Mary Sanford two years later, on Dec. 19, 1947, when she was eighty-eight. Although Sanford had been a part of the Old Bennington community for close to nine decades, had owned some of its most impressive homes, had captured in photographs its Victorian splendor, had contributed much money to the Old First Church, had helped transform the Old Academy building into a local library and a social center for the church, and had been involved with some of the most important people and issues of the Progressive Era, her obituary in the Bennington Banner consisted of just four short paragraphs. It made no mention of either her photography or her politics.

Endnotes

¹ Mary R. Sanford card, September 30, 1901, Emergency Passport Application, U.S. Embassy London. *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925*. "Emergency Passport Applications (Passports Issued Abroad), 1877-1907"; National Archives Microfilm Publication M1834, 56 rolls; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Ancestry.com [Database on-line]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007; viewed September 6, 2008.

² Class Day Program. Vassar College, June 13, 1882.

³ Markku Ruotsila, *John Spargo and American Socialism*, New York, NY, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp. 54 and 76.

⁴ Interview with Thomas Brockway conducted by an unidentified Bennington Museum staffer, May 25, 1984. Now in the Bennington Museum archive, 2008.

⁵ 50th Anniversary History of the Vassar College Class of 1882, published June 1932.

⁶ Marcia Carlisle, "The Worlds of Mary Sanford," *Vassar Quarterly*. Fall, 1991.

⁷ Records of the Class of '82. Vassar College, June 1902.

⁸ Don Ritter, "The Collar City," first written for *The Troy Record* and now appearing in the USGenWeb Project hosted by RootsWeb (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nyrensse/article11.htm>), accessed August 31, 2008.

⁹ *New York Times*, January 30, 1891.

¹⁰ Ann Novotny, *Alice's World: The Life and Photography of an American Original, Alice Austen, 1866-1952*. Old Greenwich, CT; The Chatham Press, 1976, p. 150.

¹¹ Marcia Carlisle, from a draft proposal for an article on Sanford that is now in the Bennington Museum archive, 2008.

¹² Bennington, Vermont Town Clerk's Office. Death Records.

¹³ Records of the Class of '82. Vassar College, June 1902.

¹⁴ The information about Mary Sanford's Bennington Centre properties can be found in real estate records in the Bennington Town Clerk's Office and in *Historical Sketch of Buildings, Bennington on the Hill*, by Richard S. Bayhan, Cleveland, OH: Central Publishing House, 1930.

¹⁵ Mary R. Sanford card, February 12, 1895, passport application no. 20260. *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925*. National Archives Microfilm Publication M1372, 694 rolls; General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Ancestry.com [Database on-line]. Provo, UT: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007; viewed September 6, 2008.

¹⁶ G.E. Hatch, in an undated interview with an unidentified Bennington Museum staffer; unpublished, in the Bennington Museum archive, 2008.

¹⁷ Ross Wetzsteon, *The Republic of Dreams – Greenwich Village: The American Bohemia, 1910-1960*, Simon & Schuster, New York: 2002, page xi.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Page 12.

¹⁹ Markku Ruotsila, 2006, page 132; Marcia Carlisle draft proposal.

²⁰ John Spargo in an interview with Gerald Friedberg, April 23, 1961, in the John Spargo Papers, Special Collections, University of Vermont Library.

²¹ Frances Perkins, Columbia University Libraries Oral History project on “Notable New Yorkers, Part 1, Session 1, page 67.

²² Markku Ruotsila, 2006, page 132.

²³ Tom Fels, *Poets & Pioneers -- 50 Lives in the History of Bennington*, first published in the *Bennington Banner* and then as a booklet, page 34.

²⁴ Lisa Freed. Interview with John Baker, corrected by John Baker. Unpublished manuscript photocopy, spring 1974.

²⁵ Norman Thomas (1884-1968) was a prominent socialist leader and presidential candidate for the Socialist Party of America in every presidential election from 1928 to 1948.

Solving the Mystery of C. E. Sackett's "Bennington Furnace" Drawing in the Collection of the Bennington Museum

Victor R. Rolando

Not all archeology is digging holes in the ground and screening for tiny pieces of a puzzle; some digging is done in the most unusual places.

It was thought that a great "find" had been made back in 1991 when I found a painting titled "North Bennington Iron Works" that was "done in 1865 by I. Sackett" (see Figure 1)¹ Because of the North Bennington title, it had been assumed that Sackett depicted a blast furnace at Burden's mining area off Orebed Road in western Bennington along the Vermont-New York State line and not far from North Bennington village. But when an all day field check was done on May 21, 1992, for evidence of the furnace, nothing was found to indicate any blast furnace ever operated here- no slag, no charcoal, bricks, or masonry. No large foundation walls or remains of a railroad right-of-way uphill behind the furnace site as shown in the Sackett painting. Nothing. So what was this a painting of – what were we looking at here?

As a result of the 1992 field work, which rejected the Orebed Road area as the subject of the painting, and studying the painting closer, similarities between locations of various features in the painting appeared to agree with locations of the same features in the 1869 map of South Shaftsbury depicting the furnace complex.² Regardless that the painting showed the railroad and houses uphill and in the background, I assumed that it was an "artists convention" to compress the background, and therefore determined it to be a painting of the Burden Furnace at South Shaftsbury. I was so sure of that, it was published as the Burden Furnace in the original edition of *200 Years of Soot and Sweat*.³

Fast-forward to the fall of 2005. While organizing a paper on the Burden iron works to be presented to the Bennington Historical Society in January 2006, the Sackett painting came back like a bad dream. As old ground was revisited, the great 1992 "discovery" started to unravel. Specific details in the painting didn't match the site, such as the placement of the engine house. The steam-emitting chimneys on the engine house in the Sackett painting meant that the engine house was obviously steam-driven, so why does the Beers map indicate a "Bellows House" – a give away for a water-powered device, alongside a canal that ran parallel to Paran Creek. Upon closer inspection, the number of houses in the background didn't match those that had ever existed along that background road (Eagle Street) at South Shaftsbury. And



Figure 1: Bennington Furnace by C. E. Sackett in the collection of the Bennington Museum.

then more technical discrepancies appeared, such as when Tyler Resch and I spent a few hours trying to find just who “I. Sackett” was. There wasn’t any shortage of people named Sackett in Vermont in the 1860s, but the only “I. Sackett” was in Colchester, and what little we could learn of him didn’t fit the description of an artist.

Museum improvements in 2004-2005 made it impossible to locate and visually inspect the actual Sackett painting until late December 2005, when museum collections manager Callie Stewart provided a scanned image of the painting, except that it wasn’t a painting at all, but a large-format, 23-inch-wide by 17-inch-high framed black-and-white drawing.⁴ And it wasn’t titled “North Bennington Iron Works.” Inscribed on a rock in the extreme lower-left corner of the drawing (invisible in The Shires photo) was “Bennington Furnace, C. W. Sackett, del., Sept 1868” (see figure 2). It had nothing at all to do with a North Bennington Iron Works nor I. Sackett nor 1865 and surely, the drawing looked nothing like the ca 1822-1853 Bennington Iron Works complex



Figure 2: Detail of Bennington Furnace by C. E. Sackett.

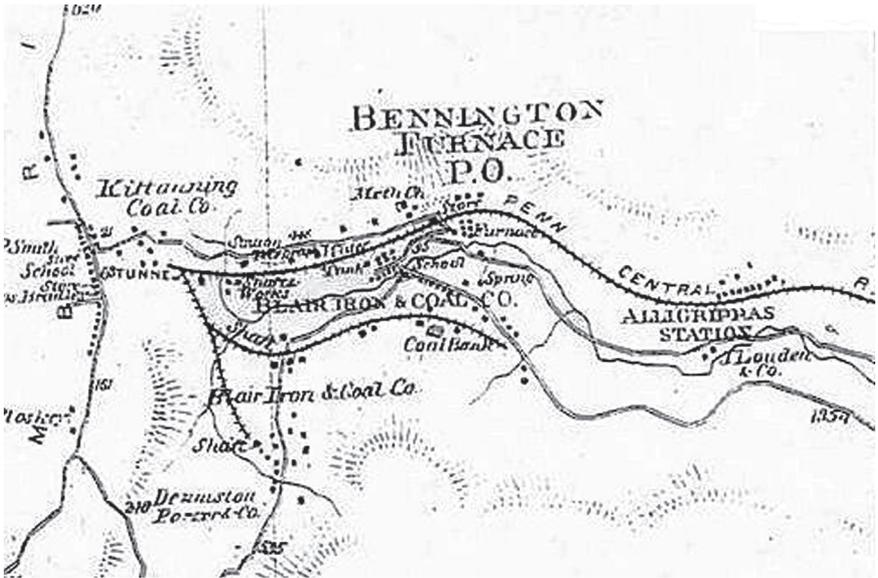


Figure 3: Detail of map of Allegheny Township, Pennsylvania, featuring the village of Bennington Furnace.

along the Woodford Road at today's Furnace Grove. And now it was starting to look like it wasn't the Burden Furnace at South Shaftsbury either, so what exactly was this drawing of?

How many places are named "Bennington" in the United States? In addition to the obvious one in Vermont, there are places named Bennington in neighboring New York and New Hampshire. Are there others? With nothing more high tech than a Rand McNally Road Atlas, communities named Bennington were found in fifteen states other than Vermont (in Idaho, Bennington is five miles north of Montpelier). What is the possibility that one of them had a blast furnace at one time? Which one? The most obvious to start with was Bennington, Pennsylvania, the state that is home to so many blast furnaces, past and recent.

Googling "Bennington Furnace Pennsylvania" produced the village of Bennington Furnace on an 1873 map of the Allegheny Township in Blair County, in western Pennsylvania, about seven miles west of Altoona (see Figure 3).⁵ A comparison of a United States Geological Survey map with the Sackett drawing found a match in the topography, adding further proof that the correct location had been identified.⁶ An email to the Blair County Historical Society with a copy of the Sackett drawing attached drew an almost immediate response. They knew of a 1860s blast furnace in nearby Allegheny Township but had never seen the Sackett drawing. They included a photograph

of the Bennington Furnace in their response (Figure 4). The photograph was contemporary with the drawing but from a different perspective. Despite the different view it showed enough to identify it as the same site as that drawn by Sackett. The email also reported that Charles Sackett was a school director in Allegany in 1864.⁷



Figure 4: Photograph of Bennington Furnace, Pennsylvania, taken in circa 1873.

Research at the Bennington Museum discovered that the Sackett drawing was purchased “with museum funds... probably circa 1946.”⁸ Speculation is that somebody saw it for sale someplace in the northeast, contacted the Bennington Museum due to the drawing’s title, and the museum purchased it since Bennington had a long history of ironworks.

The mystery of the illusive Sackett “painting” is solved, but the fact still remains that we don’t have any known photographs or on-site drawings of the iron mines along Orebed Road, Burden’s ore washing mill at North Bennington, or the blast furnace complex at South Shaftsbury. Recent deed research in Bennington and Shaftsbury has uncovered much valuable information as to who purchased what, when, and where. And we have the Beers 1869 maps of these Vermont sites, capturing what was probably there in 1869, but neither before nor after.

The Beers map of South Shaftsbury shows the furnace building, bellows house, power canal, charcoal kilns, and various roads and other associated buildings. It also indicates a telegraph office and even a house on the north side of Eagle Street where works agent John Burden lived with his young wife Jenny and four small children (three were born in Shaftsbury; two died there). Important questions still remain. How accurate was Beers with building placement and identification? What blast furnace remains lay quietly hidden only a few inches below the surface adjacent the former dam at the old Furnace Grounds waiting for a different variety of digging?

Endnotes

¹Tyler Resch. *The Shires of Bennington: A Sampler of Green Mountain Heritage*. Bennington, VT: the Bennington Museum, 1975, p. 91.

²F.W. Beers. *Atlas of Bennington County, Vermont; from actual surveys by and under the direction of F. W. Beers, assisted by George P. Sanford & others*. New York, NY: F.W. Beers, A.D. Ellis & G.G. Soule, 1869, p. 21.

³Victor R. Rolando. *200 Years of Soot and Sweat: The History and Archeology of Vermont's Iron, Charcoal, and Lime Industries*. Burlington, VT: Vermont Archeological Society, 1992, p. 145, figure 4-67.

⁴Callie Raspuzzi Stewart email to Victor R. Rolando, December 23, 2005, email attachment.

⁵Beach Nichols. *Atlas of Blair and Huntingdon Counties Pennsylvania*. Philadelphia, PA: A. Pomeroy & Co., 1873, p. 11. See also Myren B. Sharp and William H. Thomas. *A Guide to the Old Blast Furnaces in Western Pennsylvania*. Pittsburg, PA: The Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1966, pp. 17-18. For information on the current state of the former furnace see 'Welcome to Blair County Old Stone Furnaces,' *Western Pennsylvania Old Stone Furnaces* at the following website address (August 2008): <http://home.earthlink.net/~r2parks/blair.html>. As of september 14, 2008 this link returned an error message. If you do a Google search for 'Welcome to Blair County Old Stone Furnaces' you may find the active link to this site.

⁶Bennington Furnace, Pennsylvania is now known as Tunnelhill, Pennsylvania. The name derives from the large number of railroad tunnels in the area. A United States Geological Survey quadrangle map is available, USGS Cresson, PA, 1977.

⁷Van Scoyoc email to Victor R. Rolando, 2006.

⁸Callie Raspuzzi Stewart email to Victor R. Rolando, January 11, 2006.

Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865-1910

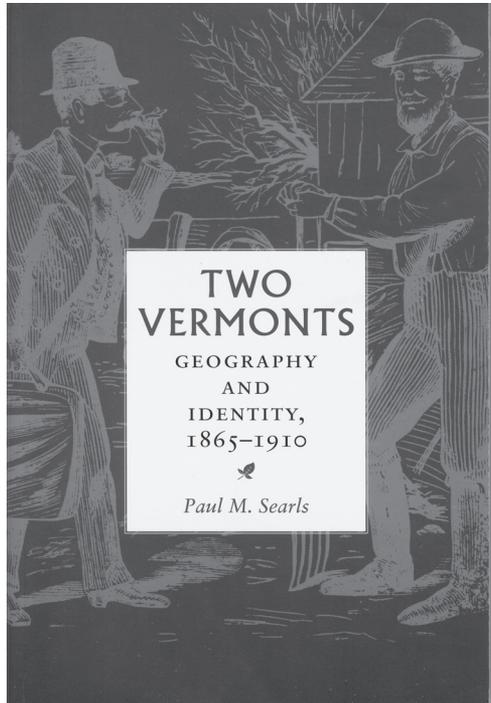
Reviewed by Tyler Resch

Vermonters are accustomed to living in a dichotomy, though they may refer to it by different names: native versus newcomer, Vermonter versus flatlander, traditionalist versus progressive. A young scholar who teaches at UVM and Lyndon State College has produced an insightful analysis of this duality but prefers his own labels: uphiller versus downhiller.

Throughout the scholarly paperback *Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865-1910*, Paul Searls distinguishes between the uphillers, those more rural, tradition-bound, and resistant to change, versus the folks who generally settled in the valleys, the downhillers, who tend to be more urban, more likely to press for change. Searls would surely acknowledge that his categories can be taken figuratively as well as literally. In fact, it's been reported that he discovered that in the town of Chelsea, for example, some tradition-bound uphillers can now be found down in the valley in a trailer park while some classic downhillers have moved uphill with their progressive ideas into a new timber frame house.

Regardless of exceptions to his rule, Searls offers an important analysis of the social, economic, and political workings of Vermont during a specific time period: after the Civil War and into the very early years of the 20th century. The text of this book is only 162 pages long but it is accompanied by an extensive section of expanded footnotes and bibliography that goes on for another 86 pages. While the thesis Searls develops is inventive and persistent, he also provides a bountiful bibliography of Vermont sources, which he utilizes and cites with consummate skill.

If you focus on the history of Vermont's population, it's as-



tonishing to realize that the numbers of residents of this small state held so steady for something like 150 years. In 1830, Vermont's population was 280,000, and it grew to 300,000 by 1850. Throughout the following decades it remained steady and as recently as 1960 had inched up only to 389,000. Not until the 1970 census, after the construction of Interstates 89 and 91, the blossoming of ski resorts, and the incipient phenomenon of second homes, did Vermont break into the 400,000 population bracket. So Searls is examining the very central core of this time of stagnation.

One fascinating chapter relates the experience of statewide temperance, the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of alcoholic beverages. To break the back of temperance, which had been brewing during the 1830s and 1840s and was locked into Vermont law in 1852, it took the ambitious publisher of the Rutland Herald, Percival W. Clement, to force the issue. In 1902 Clement made "local option" the keystone of his run for governor in a famous three-way race. This was at a time, of course, when Vermont elected only Republican governors. After he lost the Republican primary, a bitter Clement smashed tradition by going independent and forming his own Local Option Party. He didn't win that election. Bennington's John G. McCullough did. But Clement had broken a barrier and had persuaded politicians to agree at least to a statewide referendum on the matter, a procedure that would bypass the uphill-dominated legislature. When results were counted early in 1903, Vermonters adopted local option, meaning that at Town Meeting each year, every town would vote "wet" or "dry" in two categories: whether to allow the sale of beer and wine on the one hand, or "spirituous beverages" on the other. The uphillers of the smaller towns naturally resisted, while downhillers in larger towns, by and large, voted "wet." This situation lasted well into the 1960s, and those of us of a certain age remember headlines that reported results of town meetings voting wet or dry. Those short words fit easily into tight headlines.

(After several more attempts, Clement, the owner-publisher of the Rutland Herald, was finally elected governor in 1918 following a primary victory over Frank E. "Ginger" Howe, the owner-publisher of the Bennington Banner, who had been lieutenant governor.)

Searls concludes with a revealing chapter on the extent to which downhillers sought to modernize Vermont during the years just before and after 1900. A magazine titled "Expansion" and a lively new organization called the Greater Vermont Association worked vigorously to counterbalance Vermont's backward agricultural economy with some new industries that would usher in a "New Vermont." They tried to lure immigrants; Swedes were especially desired because, except for language, they were thought most to resemble hardy Vermonters. Efforts were made to persuade out-of-staters to purchase

abandoned hill farms at bargain prices. Tourism was encouraged and summer resorts were publicized. Progressive governors were repeatedly elected, but they could not overbalance the powerful uphill legislative influence of the small towns in a House of Representatives where each of the 246 members represented one town regardless of population. In 1910, to pick local examples, Glastenbury with a population of 29, and Searsburg, with 142, had the same vote in the Vermont House as Burlington, with 20,468, or Bennington, with 8,700 residents.

In the end, the effort to create a “new” modernized Vermont failed, as Searls explains. State population didn’t budge; in fact it declined between 1910 and 1920. “Expansion” magazine folded. Few Swedes took up farming in the Green Mountains. Industrialization would have to await the perfection of the horseless carriage. Republican governors kept being elected but turnover was constant because they held fast to a single two-year term tradition and also bizarrely heeded “the mountain rule” whereby governors alternated between west and east of the mountains.

(Not until John Weeks, who served two consecutive terms from 1927 to 1931, did a governor break the single-term tradition, and that was mostly because of consequences of the disastrous flood of 1927. Not until 1962 did Vermont elect its first Democratic governor since 1954. And not until 1965 was the House reapportioned down to 150 members from districts based strictly on population.)

While Searls’s exploration of “Two Vermonts” ends about 1910, the lessons learned contribute to an understanding of other issues and different times. Today’s Vermonters might even see some parallels in their state today.

Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865-1910

by Paul M. Searls; Durham, N.H., University of New Hampshire Press, 2006; paperback, 256 pp.

Glastenbury: the History of a Vermont Ghost Town

Reviewed by John R. Howard

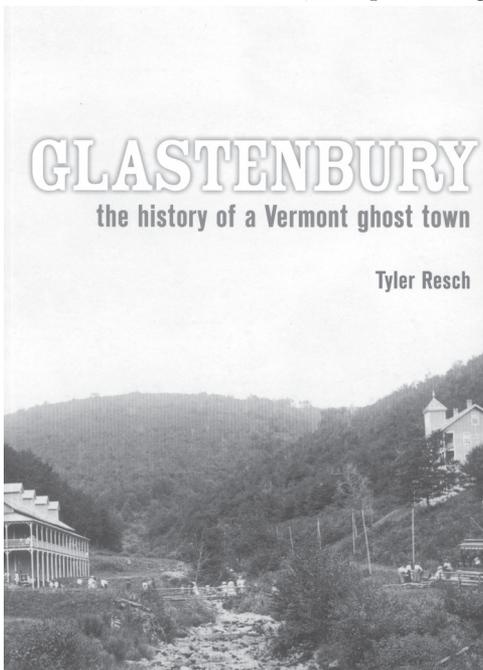
In his recent *Glastenbury the History of a Vermont Ghost Town*, Tyler Resch has given us a vivid and fast-moving account of an area that has always seemed vast, remote and somewhat mysterious to most of us. Artfully supported by an impressive variety of pictures and maps, the text itself incorporates 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.

Vermont's Fern Industry

George D. Aiken

In the sparsely populated back towns of Windham and Bennington counties in Vermont a unique and profitable industry is carried on during the months of September and October. Each year from a section scarcely 10 miles square is shipped most of this country's supply of fancy and dagger or Christmas ferns.

The towns of Somerset, Searsburg, Woodford and Glastenbury have a combined population of about five hundred, but during the fern-picking season this number is greatly augmented by newcomers who live in abandoned lumbermen's shanties and tents.

While the season is on nearly everyone in the towns mentioned works from sunrise till dark picking the ferns that find their way to nearly every city in the United States. Some idea of the importance of this industry may be gained from the fact that from Bennington, Wilmington and a few minor points are shipped annually two hundred million fancy ferns, which represent a retail value of over five hundred thousand dollars.

No monopoly is more complete than the fern-picking industry. Three men control 90 per cent of the output. They supply the pickers with baskets and crates, buy the ferns, store them, and sell them through the whole year. The country where the fancy ferns are picked is one of the most beautiful sections of New England. From the highways in Woodford, three thousand feet above sea level, looking as far as the eye can reach, one sees only forest-clad hills and valleys, typical spruce and hardwood of Vermont, and underneath this forest mantle are billions upon billions of fancy ferns which are never picked. Some idea of the countless numbers growing in this section may be had from the fact that Earl and Harry Bishop, picking twenty thousand daily, work practically the whole season within one-half mile of their home.

The fancy fern is the one picked most, and must be in good condition, and 15 inches long to be accepted by the buyer. Dagger ferns must be from 10 to 12 inches long. They are picked and tied in bunches of 25, for which the picker receives one cent. This seemed to me to be incredibly small pay, but I found that the average picker earns about four dollars a day. One picker I met said that his best day's work had been 630 bunches. His average, however, was 400. A little rapid mental calculation showed me that picking 680 bunches meant 17,000 ferns picked and tied 25 in a bunch, all between sunrise and sunset.

It is interesting to watch the experienced picker tie the bunches. A bail of twine is carried in a cloth sack at the side and as the 25 ferns are gathered the

picker catches the end of the twine and rapidly winds it three or four times around the stems, then bringing it up between them a couple of times and breaking it. No knot is tied, and the whole operation takes only a few seconds. Each picker carries a basket, similar to a common clothes basket, but a little deeper, and with straighter sides. As they are tied, the bunches are placed in this and covered with spruce or hemlock branches to keep them moist and cool. When it is full a stout cord is passed through the handles of the basket and over the top to hold them securely. One basket holds about 400 bunches, or a day's picking.

Driving along the state's highway between Wilmington and Bennington, one sees the ever-present pile of fern boxes in front of each house, tent and shanty. These are storage boxes and hold 240 bunches, or 6,000 ferns. Each day's picking is packed in these boxes at night, sphagnum moss being used in packing. That night or the next morning the boxes are collected by team or motor truck and taken to the nearest shipping station. Fifty boxes, containing 300,000 ferns, is considered a load for a double team.

In order to avoid unnecessary loss the ferns are rushed to cold storage as soon as possible after picking. From Bennington a carload is shipped by express each day. During the busiest part of the season E. S. Shaw, one of the three "fern barons," sends a motor truck load each night to Wilmington to the storage plant at Springfield, Mass., a distance of 90 miles. He also makes large express shipments. Most of the ferns are sold from storage, but some are sent directly from the picking regions. The day I visited Mr. Shaw he made shipments to such widely [diverse] points as New Orleans, Denver, Detroit, and Pittsburgh. Before the war shipments were made to European countries, but these are now cut off.

Practically all cities demand the fancy ferns. Only a few, the most notable of which is Boston, ask for the daggers. The ferns are not shipped from storage in the wooden boxes, but are repacked in pasteboard boxes holding 5,000 each. These are purchased by wholesale florists and distributed by them to the retail florists, who use them for decorations. When asked if there is any loss in cold storage, Mr. Shaw said they are kept at a temperature of 28 degrees, and that allowance is made for a loss of 20 per cent. More ferns are sold for Easter than any other day, with Memorial Day second. I was surprised to learn that very few ferns are sold at Christmas. They come into competition with other decorations at that time, and many retail florists have a freshly gathered local supply sufficient for the Christmas trade. In the early part of the summer the storage supply usually gives out, and the trade has to depend on freshly gathered ferns for a few weeks.

Note

George D. Aiken was 25 years old when he wrote this article about the now-lost business of ferning in 1917 for a publication called *Rural New Yorker*. He was engaged in fruit farming and the nursery business, and had yet to run for public office. After serving as a school director in Putney, he was first elected to the Vermont House of Representatives in 1930, served as speaker from 1933 to 1935, was elected lieutenant governor from 1935 to 1937, and governor 1937 to 1941. In January 1941 he was appointed to fill a vacancy in the U.S. Senate, was re-elected five times, and retired in 1975. He was succeeded by Patrick J. Leahy. Senator Aiken died in Putney in 1984. The George D. Aiken Wilderness area of the Green Mountain National Forest covers some of the area he was writing about in this article.

Author Biographies

Jane Griswold Radocchia is an architect practicing in the Bennington, Vermont area who volunteers as a docent at the Park-McCullough House in North Bennington, VT. She received her BA from Oberlin College and her Masters in Architecture with Honors from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Jane specializes in old houses – restoration, renovation, expansion, repair, always including passive solar elements. She has also designed active solar houses. Her articles on historic homes have appeared in the Lawrence, MA, Eagle-Tribune and the Bennington (VT) Banner. The oldest house she has worked on is the 1680 Benjamin Abbot House in Andover, MA. She has been awarded eight Historic Preservation Awards for her work in Andover, Massachusetts. Her interests in historic vernacular architecture and solar energy contributed to her appreciation of the subtle design features of the Stabling at the Park-McCullough House.

Tony Marro is a child of Route 7, having been born in Middlebury, grown up in Rutland, educated at UVM (and later at Columbia) and now living in Old Bennington (well, actually now on Route 9). He was a reporter for The Rutland Herald, Newsday, Newsweek, and The New York Times, and worked on reporting teams at Newsday that won two Pulitzer Prizes. He was Managing Editor (six years) or Editor (sixteen years) of Newsday, during which it won 12 more Pulitzer Prizes. He and his wife, Jacqueline Cleary Marro, live in Old Bennington and North Scituate, R.I., where they raise bees and tend large gardens.

Bennington resident **Victor R. Rolando** has been an Industrial Archeology Consultant since retiring from GE Aerospace, Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1992. He is the editor of The Journal of Vermont Archaeology, an annual publication of The Vermont Archaeological Society, and gives frequent programs and tours on industrial archeology subjects throughout the Northeast. His current projects include the preservation and stabilization of the 1838 Mt. Riga blast furnace ruin in Salisbury, Connecticut, and the study of the Henry Burden & Sons ca 1860s-70s presence in southwestern Vermont.

Ode of William Cullen Bryant
on the occasion of
the Centennial Anniversary of the Independence
of the State of Vermont
and the Battle of Bennington

William Cullen Bryant composed the following poem to be read at the centennial celebration of the Battle of Bennington. The original handwritten cover letter and poem, with minor corrections by the author, are in the archives of the Bennington Museum. The original poem has been reproduced on the back cover, and the transcription is given here for both the letter and poem. The poem and letter were donated by Bela Landover.

*Roslyn, Long Island, N.Y.
July 25th 1877*

Dear Sir.

I send you in compliance with your request, a copy of my verses on the Battle of Bennington, with the condition that it is not to appear in print until after the celebration of the anniversary and that it shall be carefully printed. You need not take the trouble to send me any copies.

*Yours respectfully
W. C. Bryant*

H. L. Stillson Esq.

For the Hundredth Anniversary of
the Battle of Bennington August
16th 1877

On this fair valley's grassy breast
The calm, sweet rays of summer rest,
And dove-like peace benignly broods
On its smooth lawns and solemn woods.

A century since, in flame and smoke,
The storm of battle o'er it broke,
And, ere, the invader turned and fled,
These pleasant fields were strewn with dead.

Stark, quick to act and bold to dare,
And Warner's mountain band were there,
And Allen, who had flung the pen
Aside to lead the Berkshire men.

With fiery onset- blow on blow-
They rushed upon the embattled foe
And swept his squadrons from the vale,
Like leaves before the autumn gale.

Oh never may the purple stain
Of combat blot these fields again,
Nor this fair valley ever cease
To wear the placid smile of peace.

Yet here, beside that battle field,
We plight the vow that, ere we yield
The rights for which our fathers bled,
Our blood shall steep the ground we tread.

And men will hold there memory dear
Of those who fought for freedom here,
And guard the heritage they won
While their green hill-side feel the sun.

For the Hundredth Anniversary of
the Battle of Bennington August
16th 1877.—

On this fair valley's verdant breast
The calm sweet rays of summer rest,
And dews like peace benignly brood
On its smooth lawns and solemn woods.

A century since, in flame and smoke,
The storm of battle o'er it broke,
And ere the invader turned and fled,
These pleasant fields were strown with dead.

Stark, quick to act and bold to dare,
And Warner's Mountain band were there,
And Allen who had flung the pen
A side to lead the Berkshire men.

With fiery onset, blow on blow,
They rushed upon the embattled foe,
And swept his squadrons from the vale,
Like leaves before the autumn gale.

Oh never may the people slain
Of ~~Bennington~~ ^{Cornwall} blot these fields again,
Nor this fair valley ever cease
To wear the placid smile of peace.

Yet here, beside that battle field,
We plight the vow that, ere we yield
The lights for which our fathers bled,
Our blood shall deep the ground we tread.

