

# WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

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BENNINGTON MUSEUM



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The *Walloomsack Review* is a publication of the Bennington Museum. Its purpose is to present a wide range of articles about the history and culture of Vermont and neighboring New York and Massachusetts. We invite submission of scholarly articles and of books to be reviewed. For author guidelines and submission deadlines please contact co-editor Tyler Resch at [tresch@benningtonmuseum.org](mailto:tresch@benningtonmuseum.org).

The Walloomsack Review is generously underwritten  
by Robert and Cora May Howe

***On the cover:***

“Rutland Falls, Vermont” by Frederic Edwin Church, 1848.  
*White House Historical Association*

# WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

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Volume 19, Spring 2017

- Editors' notes** *Tyler Resch and Anthony Marro* page 4
- Contributors** page 5
- A History of Vermont Environmentalism: Part 1*** page 6  
**Dear Little State Among  
the Dark Green Hills**  
*Bruce S. Post*
- The Role of State Newspapers  
in the Downfall of Joe McCarthy*** page 22  
*Rick Winston*
- Working For Aiken: 1967*** page 31  
*Anthony Marro*
- Vermont's Slate Valley*** page 38  
**Ancient Origins and Multi-Cultural Workers**  
*C. A. King*
- Book Reviews**
- Volume II of Robert Frost's Letters*** page 49  
*Reviewed by Lea Newman*
- A New Biography of Shirley Jackson*** page 53  
*Reviewed by Tom Fels*
- No Turning Point in the Revolution?*** page 56  
*Reviewed by Phil Holland*

## Editors' Notes

The reproduction of “Rutland Falls, Vermont” by the Hudson River artist Frederic Edwin Church on our cover helps to illustrate Bruce Post’s perceptive story in this issue about Vermont’s historic treatment of its landscape. Attention was called to this painting in March by Vermont’s Congressman Peter Welch who, when he went to an Oval Office meeting with President Trump to discuss drug prices, saw that Church’s Vermont scene was still hanging on the wall of a anteroom. Peter included a link to the painting in his e-mail report; we noticed that it would be perfect to go with Post’s article, and author Post agreed with enthusiasm. Because the painting is owned by the government, i.e. the White House Historical Association, it is in the public domain.

The article itself, titled “Dear Little State Among the Dark Green Hills,” is the first of a two-part series. The second installment will appear in the fall 2017 issue, which will lead up to the scenario in which Republican Governor Deane C. Davis in the early 1970s sponsored the environmental controls known as Act 250.

Rick Winston’s article is a follow-up to his description in our previous issue of the many Vermont connections with the national phenomenon known as McCarthyism. This time the focus is on the diverse approach taken by Vermont’s newspapers. Whereas the two papers owned by William Loeb fell into the trap of equating liberal politics with treason, publisher Robert W. Mitchell of the *Rutland Herald* bravely denounced Senator Joseph McCarthy and strongly supported Senator Ralph Flanders, whose efforts helped bring McCarthy down. Few living can now recall when Loeb owned the *Burlington Daily News* and *St. Albans Messenger*; he later made his curmudgeonly reputation as publisher of the *Manchester Union-Leader* in New Hampshire.

In the realm of Vermont’s earthly assets, marble and granite usually get most of the attention, but we focus here on slate, which has a grand heritage in this state. And whereas marble and granite are found and quarried in several regions, productive slate quarries are located almost exclusively in the “slate valley,” where New York joins Vermont south of Lake Champlain. Author C.A. King, who usually goes by the nickname CeCe, has explored the Slate Museum in Granville, N.Y., and other sources, and writes about the mosaic of ethnic families who have worked the quarries in that valley.

Reviews in this issue describe the new anthology of the letters of Robert Frost while he lived in South Shaftsbury and new biography of Shirley Jackson, plus a new thesis that raises questions about the Burgoyne campaign of 1777.

## Contributors

**Bruce S. Post** pursues his appreciation for Vermont's mountains in an article in this issue, which offers a new approach to the state's history; it is also a literary aspect of his opposition to wind turbines on those high ridge lines. He wrote about the 1936 proposal for a Green Mountain Parkway in a previous *Walloomsack Review* (Vol. 9, autumn 2012).

**C.A. King** volunteers in the gift shop of the Bennington Museum, as she has done for other libraries, museums, and churches. Since returning to Vermont for the third time, she has worked for the Dorset Theater Festival and performed in some of its productions.

**Rick Winston** is a film history instructor and former co-owner of Montpelier's Savoy Theater who has had a long-standing interest in the history of the Cold War era. He was one of the organizers of the 1988 Vermont Historical Society conference "Vermont in the McCarthy Era." He is preparing a book-length manuscript about this and other aspects of the Red Scare in Vermont.

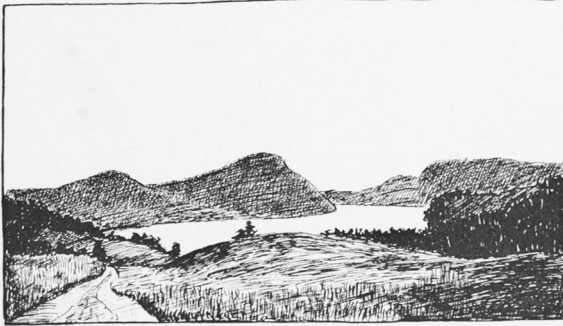
**Tom Fels** is a curator and writer living a block away from Shirley Jackson's former Vermont homes in North Bennington. A veteran of the Jackson-Hyman era, he has for more than a decade organized an annual Shirley Jackson Day in her hometown. His most recent article for the *Walloomsack Review* (Vol. 18, autumn 2016) was an interview with the late Lionel Nowak.

**Lea Newman** is professor emerita at the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts and vice president of the Robert Frost Stone House Museum in Shaftsbury. She is the author of *Robert Frost: The People, Places, and Stories Behind His New England Poetry*, and is a former president of the Hawthorne and Melville societies.

**Phil Holland** of Shaftsbury is a writer and teacher of English. He is the author of *A Guide to the Battle of Bennington and the Bennington Monument* (2016) and *Robert Frost in Bennington County* (2015).

**Anthony Marro** reaches back half a century to re-live memories of Vermont's iconic Senator Aiken.

# Vermont



## *The Unspoiled Land*

MORTIMER R. PROCTOR  
RODERIC M. OLZENDAM

*The cover of Mortimer Proctor's 1915 automobile tour of "the unspoiled land."*

## **A Cautionary Tale, Part 1** ***The Dear Little State Among the Dark Green Hills: Settlement, Spoil and Twilight***

*Bruce S. Post*

Vermont is an evocative, evanescent landscape, like a shining silver fog draped low over the shoulders of riverbank on clear and chill fall mornings. Generations have striven to distill its essence in words and colors, never quite capturing its elusive fullness.

Wendell Phillips Stafford knew this instinctively when he stood on a June day in 1910 to address Middlebury College's commencement class. A St. Johnsbury native, Stafford had traveled far and accomplished much: "justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, seer of a poet's visions in woodland valley and teeming town, companion of mystics and the lovers of beauty of all ages. Vermont's first orator..."<sup>1</sup> He had brought his new poem, *Vermont: An Ode*, as a gift dedicated to the graduating class. He began,

"Dear little State among the dark green hills,  
Who for thy never-changing bounds didst take  
The long bright river and the azure lake..."

In those three lines, Stafford encapsulated the Vermont Dilemma: How to reconcile our romantic sentiments with the cold, hard facts on that ground between "the long bright river," the Connecticut, and "the azure



lake,” Champlain.

The Vermont of 1910 was locked in a century-long limbo of spoliation and exodus. Its colonial pioneers had made short order of our hills, felling the forests, burning the trees and tiring the land. Fifty-three years later, JFK’s Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, would write of the spoil, “Not even in the cotton and tobacco belt were soils exhausted faster and forests mangled more thoroughly than on the hillsides of Vermont.”<sup>2</sup> On that June day, 1910, Stafford spoke of the exodus, “Swarm after swarm thy children have gone forth, . . . and still they fly, far west, south and north.” Vermont was “a good place to be from.”<sup>3</sup>

Today, we look back on those bad, old days almost as apparitions in black and white, photographs leaching their tones just as the fertility once seeped from mountain soils, not imagining it could happen again. We embrace, instead, our creation myth, how Vermont in the 1960s and 70’s “turned back a wave of unwelcome, unplanned subdivision development just in time.”<sup>4</sup> Like the 2013 Boston Red Sox, Vermont had gone from worst to first, from the days of spoil to the passage of Act 250, Vermont’s acclaimed land use law, in 1970.

Remember, though, that this is a cautionary tale. How long can Vermont justify its environmental exceptionalism fueled by the diminishing fumes of past accomplishments? Vermonters should ask as Samuel Ogden did: “How long can we proceed along these easy ways before we do become ruined?”<sup>5</sup> We should admit as Charlie Morrissey did: “Vermont is different? The question is asked sardonically. The trouble with Vermont is that Vermont is not different enough.”<sup>6</sup>

To begin, walking from the Connecticut to Champlain, from the past to the present with our eyes fixed on the land, we will learn “...the land does not lie; it bears a record of what men write on it . . . , a record that is easy to read by those who understand the simple language of the land.”<sup>7</sup>

## **From Settlement to Spoil**

The late Noel Perrin of Thetford could read that language, informed by his love of the land, his gaze into the past and his knowledge of literature. Using *The Great Gatsby* as a metaphor, he cites a passage on the book’s last page when author F. Scott Fitzgerald has Gatsby gazing out at the green light at the end of a dock. Perrin notes, “Fitzgerald says in this passage that it was just for a moment that men and women beheld the new world as a fresh, untouched place, a virgin world, a place where the future is open and green.”<sup>8</sup>

“Forever Virgin,” Perrin called it, “The American View of America,”

*A map of the aborted 1937 Green Mountain National Park, once favored by President Franklin Roosevelt.*

National Park Service



where, from its earliest days, America imagined its soils and forests, waters and resources as endless and inexhaustible.<sup>9</sup> The horizon was ever-receding, and beyond the next hill was always more, more, more. That was how Vermont's early European settlers must have viewed the Green Mountains: forever virgin. Having trekked north with land hunger in their bellies and dollar signs in their eyes:

*“They came inevitably to the region where land values were rising, and where the soil gave promise that they might exchange ‘the brown bread of Old Connecticut’ for ‘the wheaten loaf of New Connecticut. With almost all of them religious and political considerations were distinctly secondary.”<sup>10</sup>*

Lewis Stilwell tells their story in *Migration from Vermont*, one of the foundational scholarly works on Vermont from early European settlement into the mid-nineteenth century. The phenomenon — migration — that gave the book its title and theme aptly depicts why so many Vermonters picked up and left the Green Mountains and what personal El Dorados they sought beyond its borders.

*Migration*, though, is more than a socio-cultural study; it tallies the

grim toll of the environmental ruination inflicted on this New Connecticut by explosive population growth and heedless, though understandable, pioneer practices.

The advance phalanxes of colonial settlers found what Stilwell called a “whole aristocracy of hardwoods” – oak and maple, beech, birch and ash – soon to be vanquished by fire and by axe. Word spread down country: A hard man could hack a living out of the forests of Vermont. Like Caesar, they came, they saw, they conquered – *veni, vidi, vici*. In 1764, an estimated 1,000 European settlers lived in what would become Vermont. That population continued to climb: by 1791, 85,000; in 1800, 154,000; and by 1810, it reached 218,000. Between 1791, when Vermont became a state, and 1810, the estimated population grew 155 percent. Stilwell called this period “the Good Years,” when the land seemed lush and limitless, bountiful and boundless. Land values rose. Money was made. And, beyond the next hill, there was always more.

It was, though, a landscape of illusion. When James Fenimore Cooper asked, “What will the axemen do, when they have cut their way from sea to sea,”<sup>11</sup> he could have looked to Vermont for his answer. Its forests were, in large part, leveled; its hillsides stripped bare and made barren. The Green Mountains had been vanquished, but it was a pyrrhic victory. “It would have been better,” wrote E.M. Pember in the *Seventh Vermont Agricultural Report*, “if many of the towns had never been cleared for settlement.”<sup>12</sup>

Today, the thick woods west of Irish Settlement Road in Underhill



*A pre-photographic illustration shows the height of forest clearance, when perhaps 70 percent of Vermont was bare.*  
Harvard University, Harvard Forest, John Green photograph

Center and the high country along Fisher Hill Road in Grafton, like so many other places in Vermont, display the archaeological remnants of those early days: the ample stone walls of long-deserted fields. Those stones were used as fencing, not solely because they were so numerous in Vermont's rocky soil. Wood was precious, stone was not:

*"In nineteenth century New England there was a great need for wood for buildings, fuel, house furnishings, and farm implements, not to mention industry. Consequently, the comparatively small remaining areas of woodland were subjected to frequent cuttings to remove the most desirable trees for lumber and the least desirable ones for fuel. . . . Wood was now too valuable for fencing so the abundant stones were used instead."<sup>13</sup>*

In the decade of the 1820s, the mournful bell of destruction tolled with accelerating frequency. Stilwell wrote what could have been an autopsy for much of the state: "The forests were dwindling. The great days of potash production ended as the clearings were completed. At the same time the lumber trade was shrinking."<sup>14</sup>

Nature, we are told, abhors a vacuum; so, too, in these circumstances, did landholders in the Green Mountains. Vermonters, having cut and burned their way from New Hampshire to New York, Massachusetts to Canada, crowned a new aristocracy — sheep — to replace Vermont's toppled aristocracy of hardwoods.

By 1840, 1,681,000 sheep destructively munched on our hills, outnumbering people six to one. They so thoroughly dominated Vermont agriculture that the Deep South's reliance on King Cotton took second place to the sovereignty of sheep in Vermont.<sup>15</sup> "Laissez les bon temps rouler," say the French, "Let the good times roll." Again, it was an illusion, and the good times rolled to a stop. Like lumber, potash and wheat before them, sheep were dethroned. Boom turned to bust, leaving behind another environmental wasteland.

That was not all that was left behind. As croplands wore out, grazing lands expanded. Yet, pasturing and grazing is less labor intensive than croppage. Thousands of Vermonters voted with their feet, heading north, south and west, leaving their native state for wherever "More, More, More" beckoned. According to Stilwell, "by 1860, more than half of the towns in the state were losing population, and forty-two percent of the natives of Vermont were living in other states."<sup>16</sup>

In 1847, Woodstock's George Perkins Marsh rhetorically rang down the curtain on the period of settlement and spoil. Taking time off from judging oxen, swine, and maple sugar at the Rutland County Agricultural Fair in



*Techniques of copper mining at Ely Village, above, and Vershire, below, circa 1900, resulted in exhausted soil and mangled trees.*  
Collamer Abbott Collection, Special Collections, University of Vermont



September<sup>17</sup>, Marsh uttered a prophetic warning:

*“... the vernal and autumnal rains, and the melting snows of winter, no longer intercepted and absorbed by the leaves or the open soil of the woods, but falling everywhere upon a comparatively hard and even surface, flow swiftly over the smooth ground, washing away the vegetable mould as they seek their natural outlets, fill every ravine with a torrent, and convert every river into an ocean.”<sup>18</sup>*

Marsh's speech earned fictional President Jed Bartlett's praise in season 3, episode 9 of the popular television series *The West Wing* when he recommended it to his staff. The ersatz president may have gotten the date wrong, but he got Marsh's lesson right. Unfortunately, many Vermonters did not.

## **The Great Twilight, 1850 to 1950**

From the 1850s forward a few decades, Vermont was unsettled and uncertain. Many of its young and members of what today we call “the creative class” had fled. Its flora and fauna were in decline. As a state, a culture and an economy, it lay “twixt and between.” Like Silas, the old man in Robert Frost's poem *Death of the Hired Man*, Vermont seemed to have “nothing to look backward to with pride, and nothing to look forward to with hope.” Vermont needed a new story, a new myth.

“Myth,” according to former Vermont deputy secretary of state Paul Gillies, “is a strong elixir, especially in Vermont,” and it was during the early days of this long period that this elixir was brewed, bottled and imbibed. Long before New York City was the Big Apple, before Virginia was for lovers, there was Vermont: designed by the creator for the playground of the Continent, the Unspoiled Land, the Beckoning Country, a State of Nature and a State of Mind.

The railroads that arrived in the 1850s carried many Vermonters away, but ironically, they delivered a new bumper crop: tourists drawn by the promise of respite. For folks who could afford it, a stay at one of Vermont's spas and resort hotels was the antidote to increasing alienation from rapidly modernizing metropolitan life. Vermont became a balm to heal the urban soul. The Vermont Idea was born, marketed by promoters as a magic potion the way some charlatans sold snake oil.

Still, this era was more nuanced and complex, less easy to categorize than the earlier period of settlement and spoil, boom and bust. Depictions such as slumbering, sleepy, lethargic, and adrift are appropriate, but only as narrow simplifications. The earlier Vermont had been a youthful Promised



*Photographs demonstrate the huge transformation that came to Vermont in mid-nineteenth century: Hauling a fifty-four ton wedge of Barre granite by teams of horses, making four miles a day, versus the use of a railroad flatcar, which revolutionized quarrying.*

Vermont Historical Society



Land of opportunity for many; the century beginning just prior to the Civil War was metaphorically adolescent, replete with the accompanying trials, tribulations and tensions of pubescence.

If fifty-two words could characterize this one-hundred-year period, it would be these:

*“In short, Vermont in 1850 existed in a twilight state, neither sheep nor cow country, neither cow nor manufacturing country, neither frontier*

*nor wholly domesticated. In the gray light of uncertainty of these years, many Vermonters departed for places, both urban and westward, where the future was brighter and more clearly visible.*"<sup>19</sup>

If one book could conflate the inchoate split personalities of the New Vermont, it would be Paul Searls' *Two Vermonts: Geography and Identity, 1865-1910*. Searls uses "downhill" and "uphill" as rhetorical shorthand to characterize these personalities, and as much as the terms suggest exclusively geographical divisions, that would be an incomplete distinction. Searls writes:

*"The historical struggle over who was a Vermonter was at its heart about neither nativity nor location. It was about values .... Those with 'uphill' values were characterized by their affinity for the localized, informal, cooperative communities typical of the pre-capitalist rural America. To be 'downhill' was to have contrary inclinations toward competitiveness, formality, contractual relationships, and comfort with the concentration of power in increasingly large institutions."*<sup>20</sup>

If two photographs could register the seismic shift from a time of simple, rudimentary tools to a world of complex technologies, they would be: first, horsedrawn sledges hauling a fifty-four ton wedge of granite in downtown Barre; and second, a railroad-drawn flatbed bearing a large, stone obelisk. The former recalls when it took teams of oxen a week to move granite four miles from Millstone Hill in Barre on its way to the new State House in Montpelier. The latter dramatizes how the railroad and new tools revolutionized quarrying and made both Barre granite and Proctor marble building blocks for the nation and the world.<sup>21</sup>

The heartbeat of the period was the new Vermont Story. Caught between the fading old and the formative new, the boosters and promoters bridged the gap. They invented a Vermont that could have its cake and eat it too. Searls underlines how "they embraced the promise of the future without sacrificing the ancient virtues that were their inheritance...[A]n independent citizenry in an 'unspoiled landscape,'" a narrative he calls "comprehensively false."<sup>22</sup>

Yet, Vermont became an asymmetrical, imaginative landscape where illusion clashed with reality, and the gap between the two was perfectly manifest in Vermont's environment. Where once the Green Mountain State had been nearly entirely wooded — some 9,000 square miles out of 9,114 were forested — by 1900 roughly 3,900 square miles were. Five years later, in 1905, even amid reforestation on abandoned lands, the forest census was further reduced to 3,500 square miles.<sup>23</sup>



Another half-decade would pass before the Legislature, sensing that Vermonters could not recline like lotos-eaters, inhabiting the fantastical landscape of the boosters while their forests continued to dwindle, created the Commission on the Preservation of the Natural Resources of Vermont. Two years later, the Commission, embodying the Progressive Era's faith in government's role in promoting wiser use of natural resources, reported alarmingly:

*“The general impression is doubtless correct that the natural forests of Vermont are still being depleted at a rapid rate. In his article prepared for this Commission by the present Governor, it was said ‘our forests by reason of mismanagement are so rapidly disappearing that any estimate of the wealth we possess in them today will be valuable tomorrow only as the record of conditions already changed. However a comparison of the condition of our forests today with those of fifty years ago shows conclusively that if we continue our present method or lack of method in dealing with them we shall in another fifty years have few forests on which to place a value.’”<sup>24</sup>*

Three years later, in Mortimer Proctor's imagination, the Vermont landscape was much like he perceived his New England Brahmin caste: virtuous, chaste and undefiled. In 1915, Proctor — scion of Vermont Marble's mighty Proctor clan and destined to be a future governor, as his grandfather, father and uncle had been — circumnavigated the state in his Stutz Bearcat along with University of Vermont chum Roderic Olzendam. Together, they published an automobile tour, *Vermont: The Unspoiled Land*. Proctor took the photos; Olzendam wrote the text.<sup>25</sup> Both beheld a forever-virgin Vermont, where “one finds Nature unspoiled. Nature revealing wondrous beauty, and offering a charming, friendly pleasure ground.”<sup>26</sup> A circa-1900 photograph of the old Copperfield mining operation in Vershire provides the counterpoint to their airy delusion.

Proctor and his friend were not unique. In 1928, the Vermont Commission on Country Life was formed. One critic, years later, likened it to “an anthropologist describing a lost race of people out of step with the rest of the world, ...[turning] Vermonters into a museum display of living artifacts from the past.”<sup>27</sup>

An outgrowth of the Vermont Eugenics movement overseen by UVM professor Henry Perkins, the Commission was a who's who of prominent Vermonters, including Mortimer Proctor. Its 1931 publication *Rural Vermont: A Program for the Future by Two Hundred Vermonters* included, unsurprisingly for a progeny of eugenics, a lament, an existential wail: “What is happening to the old Vermont stock?”<sup>28</sup>

*Rural Vermont*, however, was not one-dimensional; it looked forward not just backward. Its Committee on Summer Residents correctly identified the beneficial prospects of what it called the Vacation Idea. And, a kernel of nascent environmental awareness was embedded in its recommendations. In the introduction to its report, the Committee foresaw a growing tourist industry that would be dependent on the wisdom to develop “wise and consistent policies of protection for our scenic resources.”<sup>29</sup> Just as the 1910 Commission on Natural Resources acknowledged government as a decisive agent in conservation, the Committee on Summer Residents recommended “that the state *take over* (italics added), as rapidly as possible, the summits of the principal mountains for park and forestry purposes.”<sup>30</sup>

It was bold proposal. A state “take-over” of mountain lands ran counter to the traditional Vermont veneration of personal land ownership. It also foreshadowed a similar movement to protect the high peaks of the Green Mountains in the 1960s. Another of the committee’s ideas — “a scenic highway, well up on the slopes of the slopes of the Green Mountains”<sup>31</sup> — provided the tinder for what might have been the most consequential environmental decision Vermonters would make in the twentieth century. All it needed was a spark.

## **The National Park debates**

In 1933, Col. William Wilgus, the engineer who conceived the modernization of New York’s Grand Central Station, provided that spark. Having retired to Ascutney, Wilgus coupled the idea of a scenic highway to the availability of depression-era federal funding for large-scale public works projects. He formulated a grand design: “a strip, where necessary, say 800 to 1,000 feet wide, to which later acquisitions by gifts and purchase gradually may be added, until the Green Mountain Park, five to fifteen miles wide, will constitute a continuous area of a million acres of lofty wild forest lands, from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian border....”<sup>32</sup>

Wilgus’s plan, which echoed *Rural Vermont’s* call for a highway “well-up on the slopes of the Green Mountains,” drew quick opposition from the leadership of the Green Mountain Club. Several alternative proposals were plotted, including one by Wallace Fay, a Club leader and Proctor man who reflected the uneasiness with the Wilgus plan’s interference with the Long Trail.

The Wilgus high-altitude plot was short-lived. In early 1934, National Park Service landscape architects met with Wilgus and Vermont officials in Bennington to begin surveying what would be called the Green Mountain Parkway. Laurie Davidson Cox, the chief landscape architect in charge of



*The barren hills of Northfield are evident in this photograph taken about 1860.* Northfield Historical Society

the project, was a Bellows Falls High School graduate in 1900. He was sensitive to the Club's concerns for the Long Trail and invited Wallace Fay to accompany him as he moved northward from the Vermont-Massachusetts state line.

Cox very likely would have known that Proctor himself, as Club president in 1933, told the *Rutland Daily Herald*:

*"It is the belief of the trustees of the club, he said, that there is plenty of room within the confines of the Green Mountain range for both a highway and the Long Trail, without the highway interfering with the natural charm of the trail. If such preservation were assured, he said, the club would welcome the parkway."<sup>33</sup>*

And, that is exactly what Cox did. In October 1934, he stood on snow-fringed Jay Peak. Cox could look south along the Greens (hiker parlance for Green Mountain range), his survey effectively done, and consider what he had crafted: 78 percent of the proposed Parkway lay below the environmentally sensitive 2,500-foot mark, following mostly hillside, high plateau and valley locations; and 80 percent would lie a mile to seven or eight miles from the Long Trail, keeping automobile and Long Trail hiker considerably apart.<sup>34</sup>

Perhaps Laurie Cox did too good a job. For numerous reasons, despite the Club's involvement in planning the National Parkway route and Proctor's 1933 statement, the Parkway and National Park were rejected

42,318 to 30,897 in a March 1936, referendum.

End of story? No. Five months later, on August 1, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt visited Vermont to review CCC-built dams and attend a special Saturday conference on flood control at the Vermont State House. At the conference, Roosevelt asked about “my hobby of reforestation.”<sup>35</sup> State Forester Perry Merrill then outlined the state’s forest conservation policies, but apparently, FDR was not impressed with Merrill’s answer. On board the presidential train while leaving Vermont, the President expressed his concern to reporters about Vermont’s lackluster efforts:

*“I was, frankly, a little disappointed because apparently neither state (New Hampshire and Vermont) is spending very much or doing very much towards reforestation. Vermont is spending some money, but is spending it mostly for recreational parks and not for stopping the runoff on the steep slopes. I think there is a real chance for both Vermont and New Hampshire to do a great deal more to retard runoff.”<sup>36</sup>*

Dr. Guy Bailey, president of the University of Vermont, apparently heard something he liked. While riding with Roosevelt in the President’s car, Bailey was inspired by FDR’s commitment to conservation. On September 11, he posted a letter to Roosevelt urging him to “re-examine the Winooski-Lamoille section of the flagged Green Mountain Parkway route as a National Monument.”<sup>37</sup>

The suggestion for a national monument designation was significant. Under the 1906 federal Antiquities Act, the President, by his authorization, could designate certain lands as national monuments if those lands met criteria set out in the Act. President Theodore Roosevelt first used the Act to designate Devils Tower, Wyoming, a National Monument; two years later, with the Grand Canyon threatened by development and exploitation, he used the Antiquities Act to protect it as a National Monument. National monuments could later be converted into national parks, and in 1919, Woodrow Wilson signed the legislation establishing the Grand Canyon National Park.

FDR responded positively to Bailey and requested the National Park Service to determine if the route proposed by the Vermont advocates fit the criteria under the Antiquities Act. The Park Service conducted a field study and used information from its prior survey work for the Green Mountain Parkway. It seemed to close the door, concluding “the scientific and scenic worth of the locally proposed area is not of sufficient national importance to justify a recommendation for acquisition.”<sup>38</sup>

Again: End of story? No. The Park Service added a significant *however*. “However, a careful survey of the surrounding mountain region was made

and a more inclusive area is recommended as worthy of national park status under the name of the Green Mountain National Park.”<sup>39</sup>

In April 1938, then-Governor George Aiken appointed five Vermonters to the Commission to Study the Advisability of the Establishment of a National Park; later that same month, H.R. 10239 was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives “to provide for the establishment of the Green Mountain National Park in the State of Vermont.”<sup>40</sup>

Despite this progress, no Green Mountain National Park would be created. There might be many reasons why, but to date, they are elusive. In 1939, however, Gov. Aiken’s decision to authorize ski lift towers on state land on Mount Mansfield — at the urging of Perry Merrill — may have been the death knell of the park idea.<sup>41</sup> Aiken later wrote, “... indignation meetings were held and the charge was made that the Green Mountains were being desecrated.”<sup>42</sup>

Merrill, who had voted against the Green Mountain Parkway as a member of the trustees of the Green Mountain Club, was the most prominent promoter of skiing in Vermont. He was not by profession and inclination a preservationist. It is likely he did not want a national park from preventing any further ski development on Mount Mansfield, one of the foundation blocks of the National Park Service’s proposal. (In the 1960s, he would deride the State’s establishment of Camels Hump State Park, saying, “What? Fifty dollars an acre for that pile of rocks?”)<sup>43</sup>

What had been Vermont’s golden opportunity to host what might have been one of the largest national parks in the lower 48 states ended. With war clouds gathering, the state and the nation moved on to other preoccupations.

The late Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano was fond of saying, “History never really says goodbye. History says, ‘See you later.’” The late 1840s, when an exhausted Vermont neared the end of the period of settlement and spoil, was a “see-you-later” that echoed down to the mid-to-late 1930s. George Perkins Marsh, in his prophetic 1847 speech before the Rutland County Agricultural Society, delivered the valedictory to one era’s legacy of destruction and environmental exploitation. Almost a century afterwards, Laurie Davidson Cox, the Bellows Falls boy who designed the Green Mountain Parkway, was a latterday prophet who signaled the end of his era and warned about the next:

*“Further, the Green Mountains present a wilderness area of largely unspoiled beauty not surpassed elsewhere in the east. To permit this area to follow the history of most of our other eastern wildernesses is little short of criminal. Without the parkway this despoiling of the Vermont wilderness is inevitable and only a matter of time and probably a*

*rather short time at that. The area is very largely privately owned and is subject to taxation and development; it only awaits a market and the market is already in sight. The tremendous urban civilization at the very doors of Vermont makes the exploitation of the Green Mountains an assured fact if the area remains under private ownership.*"<sup>44</sup>

Soon, the dear little state among the dark green hills would be shaken from its long slumber. During the 1940s, a great war would be fought and the Great Twilight would end. The 1950s and beyond would present profound challenges unforeseen by most, and Vermont would write anew its record on the land between "the long, bright river and the azure lake." □

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# The Role of Vermont Newspapers in Senator Joe McCarthy's Downfall

Rick Winston

When Robert W. Mitchell, the longtime publisher and editor of the *Rutland Herald*, spoke at the 1988 conference “Vermont in the McCarthy Era,” he remembered the time in the early 1950s when Senator Joseph McCarthy commanded the news. “At that time it was automatic that anyone who opposed Senator McCarthy or others who exploited fears of subversion was likely to be charged with succumbing to the communist taint itself,” Mitchell recalled. “During that period, the *Herald* published more editorials intending to debunk McCarthyism and the internal communist threat than were printed on any other subject.”<sup>1</sup>

Mitchell did not stop at anti-McCarthy editorials. The *Herald* also played a pivotal role in supporting the efforts of Senator Ralph Flanders in his battle with Senator Joseph McCarthy, a struggle that dominated *Herald* front pages from March through December of 1954. In the fall 2016 issue of the *Walloomsack Review*, Anthony Marro gave an account of Flanders’s leadership role in the censure movement that brought McCarthy’s influence to an end; this article will explore how the *Herald* bolstered Flanders’s mission.

Flanders, a machinist turned wealthy industrialist, was the epitome of the conservative, business-friendly Republican. So he might have seemed an unlikely figure to lead the opposition to his fellow Republican senator from Wisconsin. Flanders had served on many boards and blue-ribbon commissions, including a two-year stint as president of the Federal Reserve Bank in Boston. When Vermont



Vermont's Sen. Ralph E. Flanders tries unsuccessfully to reach Sen. Joseph McCarthy by telephone after delivering scathing attack on Wisconsin Republican on Senate floor yesterday. Flanders said he wanted McCarthy, who is in New York, to know what he had said about him. (Herald-AP Wirephoto).

<p><b>Clinker!</b></p> <p>KNOXVILLE, Tenn., March 9 (AP)—A woman called Internal Revenue officials to ask if she could deduct the cost of stoker coal from her income tax. The man said he was sorry, but she can't.</p> <p>"Well," she replied indignantly, "if that's not a loss by fire, I'd like to know what is."</p>	<p><b>2 Networks Face Fight on M'Carthy Ban</b></p> <p>Senator, Refused Free Time to Answer Stevenson, May Take Issue to Court.</p>
<p><b>Bill Extends</b></p>	

gerous Problems, Vermonter Tells Senate.

**Strong Words**

Prober Says He Has 'No Time to Reply to GOP Heroes,' Plans to Fight FCC 'Square Deal' Ruling.

WASHINGTON, March 9 (AP)—Sen. Flanders (R-Vt.) charged in the Senate today that Sen. McCarthy (R-Wis.) "is doing his best to shatter" the Republican party, and by his actions is diverting the nation from "far more dangerous problems" than internal communism.

The dangerous attack is from without, not from within," Flanders said after reviewing problems of dealing with Communists in Korea, Indochina, Italy, France and Latin America.

With the world split into Communist and non-Communist camps, Flanders said, McCarthy's protests that he had refused to answer questions on possible Communist links.

McCarthy who was in New York today, at first declined to comment on Flanders' speech, then said "I haven't got time to answer Republican heroes."

Flanders, who calls himself a member of the "liberal wing" of the Republican party, swung out to a free-ranging speech which Sen. Prober (R-Vt.) praised as a "very fine statement" and which a Republican colleague, Sen. Cooper (R-Vt.), said showed "moderation and

*Strong words from Vermont's Senator Flanders make headlines in the Rutland Herald in March 1954.*

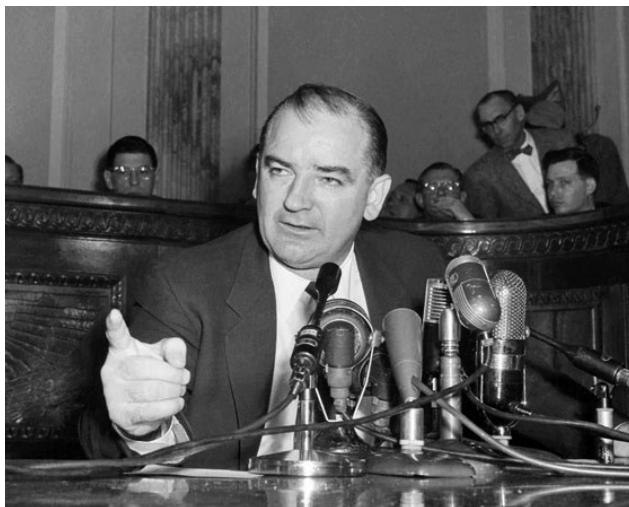


Senator Warren Austin was selected by President Harry Truman to become the first U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Governor Mortimer Proctor appointed Flanders to fill out Austin's term. Flanders, then age 68, won his first full term in 1948, serving on the Finance and Armed Services Committees. He was generally considered to be far less liberal than Vermont's senior senator, George D. Aiken.

McCarthy had been elected to the Senate in 1946 but only came into prominence in February of 1950 with his claim of Communist infiltration in the State Department. The term "McCarthyism" followed not long after, coined by the political cartoonist "Herblock" (Herbert Block) to denote exaggerated charges of subversion coupled with guilt-by-association attacks. By June 1950, Aiken had been so disturbed by McCarthy's tactics that he signed on to Maine Senator Margaret Chase Smith's "Declaration of Conscience," the first official repudiation of McCarthy's anti-Communist campaign. Smith's letter read in part, "I don't want to see the Republican Party ride to political victory on the Four Horsemen of Calumny -- Fear, Ignorance, Bigotry and Smear." Smith noted later that the junior senator from Wisconsin had the Senate paralyzed with fear that he would act to defeat any senator who disagreed with him.

This apprehension was justified. In 1950, Democratic Senator Millard Tydings's committee found McCarthy's charges of subversion in the State Department baseless, which made Tydings a particular target of a McCarthy vendetta. That fall, McCarthy urged Tydings's Republican opponent, John Marshall Butler, to publicize a doctored photo, allegedly showing Tydings with former Communist Party leader Earl Browder. Tydings's defeat effectively ended his political career. Margaret Chase Smith herself in 1954 was the intended victim when McCarthy persuaded Richard Jones to run against her (unsuccessfully) in a Republican primary.

Four years after the "Declaration of Conscience," it was Flanders who ultimately took a more influential role than either Aiken or Smith in opposing McCarthy. What may have been a crucial factor for Flanders was his own view of the conservative-liberal dichotomy. Flanders took an unusual approach for a self-described conservative businessman, acknowledging the need in society for a strong liberal voice. Liberalism, he said, represented the welfare of individual people, as opposed to organizations preserving freedom of thought and action. For him, conservatism was concerned with preserving institutions that serve the interests of people, collectively.<sup>2</sup> He began to fear that McCarthy's tactics, ruthlessly accusing liberals of being Communist dupes, were ultimately weakening what Flanders felt was a necessary fight against Communist influence worldwide. Flanders's experience on the Armed Services



*Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, Republican, of Wisconsin.*

Committee also brought him into close contact with McCarthy, and he gradually wearied of McCarthy's self-promotion and disregard for facts.

McCarthy's much-ballyhooed 1953 investigation into Communist subversion in the United States Army wound up focusing on one left-leaning dentist, Irving Peress, at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. The Army countercharged that McCarthy and his staff (notably his assistant counsel, Roy Cohn) had arranged for preferential Army treatment for Private David Schine, a chief consultant to McCarthy's committee. Like some other Republicans, Flanders was concerned about the damage that McCarthy was doing to the Republican party, and sensed that President Eisenhower shared his concern.

Although the Army controversy tarnished McCarthy, many in public life still quaked at the thought of being one of his targets. He remained both a feared and admired figure in the press. Newspaper chains such as Hearst Publications were die-hard supporters; influential columnists such as Westbrook Pegler and George Sokolsky were scathing in their contempt for any anti-McCarthy sentiment. In Vermont this banner was carried by William Loeb, then publisher of the *Burlington Daily News* and also the *St. Albans Messenger*. Loeb often wrote front-page diatribes against liberals and leftists and featured columns by strident conservatives Fulton Lewis Jr. and Victor Reisel.

Small-town editors and publishers like Robert Mitchell of the *Rutland Herald* who opposed McCarthy were rare nationwide, though Mitchell had company in Vermont: Gerald McLaughlin of the *Springfield Reporter* and John Drysdale of the *White River Valley Herald*, among others. Mitchell had passionately defended some of McCarthy's intended victims; just four years

## Rutland Daily Herald

WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1954.

FROM ARTICLE VIII OF THE VERMONT BILL OF RIGHTS (ADOPTED 1777):  
 "That frequent recurrence to fundamental principles and a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, industry and frugality are absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty and keep government free."

### Flanders' Stand

The article about Sen. Ralph E. Flanders in the current issue of the Saturday Evening Post will doubtless serve to stir up anew the controversy over his most widely publicized action, the offering of a resolution censuring Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy. The same resolution got mention earlier in the week on a TV program when Sen. Homer Capehart of Indiana announced his intention of opposing the resolution, when it comes up for action.

Though set for July 30, consideration of the proposal may be delayed because of the setting back of the Senate's entire schedule as a result of the filibuster on the atomic energy measure. When that's over, some other measure of prime importance is due for debate, including the new farm bill; and Sen. Flanders is understood to have assured his colleague, Sen. George D. Aiken, that he will delay calling up his own resolution until the farm measure is disposed of—a promise welcomed by the state's senior Senator because of the hard fight he faces in trying to get the Senate to reverse its committee stand on flexible price supports.

But whenever the resolution comes up for consideration, we think it should be understood by the public—as it too obviously is not by Sen. Capehart—just where Sen. Flanders stands and just what action of Sen. McCarthy's it is that he proposes to censure. Ours of Sen. Flanders' critics besides Sen. Capehart, including a number of very vocal McCarthy supporters in this state, appear to be considerably mistaken about the Vermonters' proposal.

Perhaps Sen. Capehart's statement on TV last illustrates this misapprehension—not to say deliberate distortion. As quoted by the Associated Press, the Indiana not only accused Flanders of trying "just a publicity stunt" (which those who know the junior Senator know it is not) but also said that Flanders is "making charges against the Wisconsin Senator which he can't prove."

Nothing could be further from the truth. The only "charges" Flanders has

made is one which is provable by anyone reading the record of that Senate committee which looked into some aspects of McCarthy's history; that the Wisconsin man refused to testify. In so doing, he did just what he himself has accused many a hapless individual called before his sub-committee with doing.

Flanders has "charged" McCarthy with none of the deeds or misdeeds about which the earlier Senate committee became curious. He has not "charged" him with these things but he has asked, logically enough, why a man who has publicly denied any misdeed should fear or refuse to repeat his denial under oath, before a duly constituted investigating body of the Senate.

The presently proposed resolution does charge that McCarthy has conducted his probe in a manner contrary to Senate traditions and tending to bring the Senate into disrepute. This, of course, is for the Senate to decide officially; but this is not the "charge" Capehart and other Flanders critics have in mind.

It is the flouting of the Senate itself which Flanders asks the Senate to recognize. He feels that any man who has so freely used the Senate's powers to question should, at the very least, be willing to answer Senate questions himself... and the Vermonters has specifically invited McCarthy to clear himself by answering those questions.

This invitation, with the request for a resolution of censure if not accepted, is no "mere publicity stunt"; nor is it "charging" the Wisconsinist with any misdeed except that of disregard, or contempt, of the Senate. And as Flanders has told his constituents in a radio speech this week, a vote against his resolution (or a vote FOR tabling it) is a vote "in support of the activities and influences of the Junior Senator from Wisconsin in the affairs of the party, the nation and the world"—as a person who considers himself above the common herd and beyond the disciplines which he himself has imposed upon those who don't happen to be US Senators.

earlier the *Herald* had taken the lead in investigating false charges that the Far East scholar Owen Lattimore had sold his Bethel property to benefit Communists.

But in early 1954, Mitchell was frustrated as he watched the weekly *Springfield Reporter* get exclusive

## Rutland Daily Herald

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1954.

FROM ARTICLE VIII OF THE VERMONT BILL OF RIGHTS (ADOPTED 1777):  
 "That frequent recurrence to fundamental principles and a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, industry and frugality are absolutely necessary to preserve the blessings of liberty and keep government free."

### Censure Recommended

First public reaction to the carefully studied, judicially worded but nonetheless vigorous report of the Watkins committee recommending censure of Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy closely follows the divisions evident since the Junior Senator from Wisconsin first began capitalizing on communism. Rep. Martin Dies of Texas, interviewed after the report was made public, put it this way: "Censure is justified but it won't hurt Sen. McCarthy because the sentiment (about him) is set—those that are for him are for him 100 per cent and those that are against him are against him 100 per cent."

How nearly true that may continue to be as Senators and the public study the report is a matter for conjecture. There seems to be small doubt that Senate consideration of the recommendations, upon the reconvening of that body Nov. 8, will be turned into a Donnybrook if Sen. McCarthy and his friends have their way. "Filibuster" appears to be a mild word for what, from their early comments, is in the making. With the freedom of the Senate floor, the dust of irrelevances raised to obscure the cold facts is almost certain to be voluminous.

But the cold facts will remain. After due consideration of the charges and of the defense, including matters brought out in what the report notes was often "vigorous" cross examination, a bi-partisan committee has unanimously found the Wisconsin Republican deserving of censure for conduct "contemptuous, contumacious and denunciatory, without reason or justification, and . . . obstructive to legislative process."

It is characteristic of the McCarthy attitude, and that of some of his friends, that the issue of "obstructing legislative process" is important only as it applies to the possible effects of censure on McCarthy's own investigations. What he has done in private or public life is made to seem secondary to the prosecution of his hunt for communists. And through McCarthy's attorney we are already promised a continuation on the Senate floor next month of the tactics which have raised so much uproar, gained the Wisconsin so much publicity—and accomplished so little in the way of uncovering possible Reds or Red activities.

But for those—and they are many—who cherish the Constitution and believe that America can be protected from its enemies, internal as well as external, without doing violence to the rights of individuals, the Watkins report will mean something.

The hearings, it will be remembered, were conducted in a judicial atmosphere, as nearly as possible consistent with the procedures we have come to rely on for dispensing justice through our courts. Both sides to the controversy had full and fair oppor-

tunity to present facts and arguments; and the fact that the report is unanimous—both as to those actions for which McCarthy deserves censure and those where censure is not recommended—should carry great weight in the public judgment of the committee's work.

The findings are based upon fundamental principles. The real issues to be involved are whether McCarthy or anyone else was actively opposed to it; they involved the integrity and repute of the Senate, the rights and privileges of Senate committees and also the seemingly lesser point of whether or not the Senate is a continuing body.

This last point bore on the present Senate's right to question a Senator's actions during a previous Congress; and the committee has ruled—in accordance with what few legal decisions there are on the matter, as well as with precedent—that the Senate is, in fact, a continuing body whose life, like the terms of its members, extends through more than two years of any one Congress. The Senate, therefore, has the right to question the actions of its members during earlier sessions; and if those actions have been, as the committee has now ruled, "contumacious, contumacious and denunciatory, without reason or justification" it is not hard to see why censure is recommended. Not alone the honor of the Senate, but the rights and powers of its committees, are at stake.

Similarly in regard to the McCarthy treatment of Gen. Zwicker, the committee avoided the pitfalls of personalities or pre- or anti-communism. Ruling that the Senator's conduct was "no proper" in the case of any witness, whether general or private citizen, the committee puts its finger on the heart of the matter in pointing out that "it is the duty of the general orders appointing what he could tell, knew his opposition to communism, his resentment of regulations requiring promotion of a Red and knew that he was a loyal officer—red despite this knowledge, held Zwicker up to public ridicule, imputing motives he knew did not exist."

The report criticizes, though without recommending formal censure, the Wisconsin man's incitement of government workers to supply him with secret information, his alleged denials of Senatorial colleagues and his threat to make public secret material.

In sum, the Watkins report fully justifies Sen. Flanders and the rest of his colleagues who dared to brave the McCarthy wrath by seeking to curb his intemperate, demagogic methods. The vigor of its language conveys the McCarthy technique is justified by the evidence placed in the record where the rest of the Senate and the American public may now study and weigh it.

interviews with Senator Flanders, a Springfield native who often returned home from the Capitol on weekends. The "Army-McCarthy Hearings," in which the Army's charges against Cohn and Schine were to be investigated, were scheduled to begin in April. There were rumblings that Flanders was preparing to criticize Senator McCarthy publicly.

An interview with the *Herald* was now of primary importance. Mitchell's displeasure at getting "scooped" was conveyed to a young reporter, Kendall Wild, who covered

Springfield for the *Herald*. Although Wild was later to become one of Vermont's outstanding journalists – as editor of the *Herald* – at the time he was only 25 and eager to be in his boss's good graces. He used his Springfield contacts to find out when Flanders would be returning next. An interview was set for Sunday, March 8.

Wild recounted his experience at the 1988 conference, “Vermont in the McCarthy Era.” The hot topic of the moment was the Puerto Rican nationalists' assassination attempt in Congress, where five representatives were wounded. Flanders, as a member of the Armed Services Committee, had much to say about it. But eventually the conversation turned to McCarthy. “‘Oh,’ he said, ‘thanks for asking. I’m working on a speech that I’m going to give tomorrow when I go back to Washington.’” In 1988, Wild still regretted not asking Flanders for a peek at that speech, which seemed to be among the papers that Flanders was shuffling at his desk. “I think probably on the papers were the phrases that he used on the Senate floor the next day about McCarthy giving his war whoop and going out on the warpath and coming back with the scalp of a pink Army dentist.” Instead, Flanders gave Wild the general drift, which left the young reporter “flabbergasted by his forthright criticism of this formidable national character.”<sup>3</sup>

As reported by Wild the next day, Flanders said that McCarthy had “gone past his usefulness” and that there may be something done soon to “close this split in the Republicans’ ranks.” The story went on to quote Flanders saying that McCarthy “is using his methods to attract attraction to himself . . . unfortunately, because of the kind of person he is, he can’t seem to attract attention without embarrassing other people.”

But there was more to that conversation, as Wild recalled years later. “One of my concerns was to protect this nice old guy from his carelessness and complete disregard to what would happen to him if he criticized McCarthy. . . I thought then that going up against McCarthy was a not only very courageous but a foolish thing to do.” The result was an article where Wild “put in phrases that would show Flanders’s reasonableness and not his foolishness.”

Flanders’s decision to take on McCarthy found enthusiastic support from one newspaper in particular, Wild’s own *Rutland Herald*. With Wild’s interview with Flanders on the front page, Mitchell wrote an editorial that read, “Senator Flanders made what may well be the ‘understatement of the week’ when he told a Herald representative that Senator McCarthy had ‘outlived his usefulness.’ . . . lots of Americans, sincerely anti-Communist, have long been worried about his un-American methods and the divisive tactics of McCarthy.”<sup>4</sup>



**Robert M. Mitchell  
(1910-1993), longtime  
publisher of the  
Rutland Herald.**

*Herald* photo by  
Vyto Starinskas

Two days later, the Flanders speech on the Senate floor was front-page news across the country. The *Herald's* own headline read, "McCarthy Doing His Best to Destroy Republican Party, Flanders Charges." Although Flanders's audience included only a handful of senators, and there were no television cameras or tape recorders, the coverage of the speech signaled a turning point in the McCarthy era.

Flanders's speech also emboldened other Republicans, nationally and in Vermont. The day that the *Rutland Herald* put the headline "Ike Terms Sen. Flanders Speech Against McCarthy a Real Service" on the front page, an additional story below it was headlined "Disown McCarthy, Janeway Demands," quoting Republican National Committeeman Edward Janeway as urging Republican leaders to rid themselves of an "embarrassing, self-made dilemma."<sup>5</sup>

The *Herald* gave its support, both in an editorial, "Sen. Flanders Speaks Out" and in a report on Flanders's speech from Washington correspondent Vonda Bergman that referred to McCarthyism as "the subject that so many seem to be running from these days." A few days later, Mitchell's periodic "Odds and Ends" column reported on the favorable press reaction in Vermont to the Flanders speech, quoting the *Barre Times* and the *Burlington Free Press*. The exception, wrote Mitchell, "was an anguished howl from the Loeb papers in Burlington and St. Albans whose owner, Bill Loeb, almost daily bows down and worships McCarthy."<sup>6</sup>

Letters were largely in favor of Flanders, with "E.B." of Bethel writing in verse,

"Oh, why do we bother with Joe?  
Why don't we just let him go?  
Let him rant, let him rave  
Let him misbehave  
While we keep our minds on the show."<sup>7</sup>

Flanders responded that week to one congratulatory note, “The trouble is that there are so many of you that (thanking everyone) has turned out to be practically impossible.”<sup>8</sup>

As the Army-McCarthy hearings progressed throughout the spring of 1954, Flanders kept up his efforts to hold McCarthy to account. The immediate issue was McCarthy’s refusal to appear before a 1952 Senate investigation that explored his finances, but there was a growing sense of alarm among Republicans as McCarthy dominated the Army-McCarthy hearings with increasingly erratic behavior.

A turning point was reached on June 10, when McCarthy attacked Fred Fisher, a young lawyer in Army counsel Joseph Welch’s firm, for an alleged leftist past. This elicited Welch’s famous rejoinder, “At long last, have you no decency?”

“It was an outstanding example of McCarthy’s unremitting willingness to destroy the reputation of an innocent bystander,” Mitchell wrote on June 11. “When the hearings are ended, the principal damage to Sen. McCarthy’s reputation will have been caused by the senator himself, if the trend of performance continues... McCarthy has plenty of enemies, but he himself is far out in front of the list.”<sup>9</sup>

That same day, the *Herald* also ran the weekly “One Woman’s Washington” report of Doris Fleeson of United Press International (the first woman to have a syndicated political column): “That flower of evil which is McCarthyism bloomed in the Senate caucus room late Wednesday – rank and noxious, a fitting funeral blossom for the death of a republic...An angry man (referring to Welch) cut it down and plunged it deep into the clear, cool waters of the New England conscience.”<sup>10</sup>

When Flanders again attacked McCarthy the following day (“Flanders Rips M’C Anew,” read the headline), McCarthy’s response was, “I think they should get a man with a net and take him to a good quiet place.” On June 19, Flanders presented a motion to the Senate Rules Committee that McCarthy be stripped of his chairmanship of the Government Operation Committee. Republican Senate Majority Leader William Knowland denounced the motion, and referred it to the Rules Committee, led by McCarthy supporter William Jenner of Indiana.

When that resolution was tabled, as Flanders had predicted, he then introduced a motion on July 30 to the full Senate that McCarthy be censured. Flanders was attacked by both McCarthy and columnist George Sokolsky as being “senile;” publisher William Loeb ran a front page editorial urging readers to “wire the old gent...tell him to stop making himself, his state, and his country look ridiculous.” To these attacks, Mitchell wrote a strong defense: “Vermonters generally know Senator Flanders and are not

misled by such efforts to belittle the man who had the courage to oppose McCarthy.”<sup>11</sup>

Flanders was not hopeful that a select committee would bring back results, but his persistent efforts paid off on September 27. The bipartisan committee led by Senator Arthur V. Watkins recommended censure, characterizing McCarthy’s conduct as “contemptuous, contumacious, and denunciatory, without reason or justification and...obstructive to the legislature processes.” The *Herald* editorial the following day concluded, “The report fully justifies Sen. Flanders and those of his colleagues who dared the McCarthy wrath by seeking to curb his intemperate, demagogic methods.”<sup>12</sup> Republicans succeeded in postponing the censure vote until after the election, when it was finally adopted by the full congress on December 2 by a vote of 67-22.

Of the 67 “yeas,” the vote among Republican senators was evenly split. One of those Republicans who voted for the censure was George Aiken. Even though he earlier had supported the “Declaration of Conscience” in 1950, Aiken had taken a back seat to Flanders in the anti-McCarthy movement, choosing instead to devote his time to putting through as much as possible of President Eisenhower’s program. Despite his own personal distaste for McCarthy, Aiken was troubled by such an extreme move as censure. He didn’t discourage Flanders from going ahead with the resolution, but voted for it reluctantly. “I finally had to vote to censure Joe. I didn’t want to, but I had to,” he was quoted as saying.<sup>13</sup> Aiken did stake out one significant anti-McCarthy position in 1954, when he gave up 13 years of seniority on the Senate Labor and Welfare Committee to take over a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, a position that McCarthy would have claimed.

The reaction among those anti-censure Republicans started the very next day. An unnamed Senate Republican was quoted as saying, “We will never forgive Sen. Flanders,” adding that the Senate might lead some sort of action against Flanders in the future. What form of revenge this might take was revealed elsewhere in the *Herald* that day, as Senator Jenner accused Flanders of having contacts with two controversial figures, Harry Dexter White (a former Treasury Department official accused of being a Russian spy) and Owen Lattimore (a Far East specialist initially identified falsely by McCarthy as being the head spy in the State Department).<sup>14</sup>

These efforts to tar Flanders went nowhere and McCarthy’s influence was dramatically diminished after the censure vote. Just a week after the vote, a *Herald* headline termed him “a man without friends.” McCarthy’s health suffered a steep decline (it is commonly accepted that alcoholism was a factor) and he died in 1957 toward the end of his second term age 48.

Flanders, at age 78 in 1958, decided not to run for a third term.

In his memoir *Senator from Vermont*, Flanders concluded his chapter on McCarthy, “In pursuit of headlines he had a masterly success, and the bullying and slurring provided acceptable journalistic material. . . . The press of our country must share in the blame for this unfortunate period in our history.”<sup>16</sup> Yet the press in Vermont played its own crucial part in turning the tide. □

1. Mitchell at 1988 Conference, “Vermont in the McCarthy Era,” quoted in “The Bob Mitchell Years,” Tyler Resch, ed., *The Rutland Herald*, 1994, 184
2. *Ralph Flanders*, “Senator From Vermont,” Little, Brown, Boston, 1961, 265
3. Kendall Wild at 1988 Conference “Vermont in the McCarthy Era”
4. *Rutland Herald*, March 10, 1954
5. *Rutland Herald*, March 12, 1954
6. *Rutland Herald*, March 13, 1954
7. *Rutland Herald*, March 15, 1954
8. Letter to Nicholas Jacobson, March 16, 1954
9. *Rutland Herald*, June 11, 1954
10. *Rutland Herald*, June 11, 1954
11. *Rutland Herald*, July 28, 1954
12. *Rutland Herald*, September 29, 1954
13. Charles Morrissey and Gregory Sanford, Aiken Oral History, quoted in “The Political Legacy of George D. Aiken,” Michael Sherman, ed., Countryman Press, 1995, 39.
14. *Rutland Herald*, December 4, 1954
15. *Rutland Herald*, December 9, 1954
16. Flanders, 268



## Working For Aiken: 1967

*Anthony Marro*

**O**n the morning of June 22, 1967, the alarm clock in our small apartment in the Richmond Hill section of Queens went off at 3:30 a.m. and less than an hour later I was off in the dark, headed to Washington in our tiny tan Volkswagen bug. I crossed the Verrazano Narrows Bridge and then watched the sun — a huge and fiery orange ball — rise up through the smog of northern New Jersey.

Just eighteen hours before I had been mustered out of Army training at Fort Dix. I was given \$122 in crisp new bills, handed a dozen mimeographed copies of orders assuring me that except for Vermont National Guard drills I was free of the military, and boarded a bus to Manhattan. I already had been accepted at the Columbia Graduate School of Journalism for the fall semester, and my wife, Jackie, already had moved us from Burlington and had found herself a job in the city.

That was a half century ago but I still remember the feeling of freedom in being cut loose from the Army and the sense of excitement that I had in setting off on an adventure. The army — eight weeks of basic infantry training at Fort Knox and four months of clerical training at Fort Dix — had been minimally onerous, although I was happy to be done with it. The coming adventure was a summer internship in the office of U.S. Sen. George Aiken, Republican of Vermont.

I had never been to Washington, although I later would spend ten years there as reporter for *Newsday*, *Newsweek* and the *New York Times*. But

I still remember the sense of excitement that I had while driving down the Jersey Turnpike at 65 m.p.h., constantly switching the radio channels looking for rock music at dawn. It wasn't likely that my National Guard company would be called up for duty in Vietnam since it was so insufficiently trained that one of our officers insisted that, "The Russians would have to be coming out of the subway tubes before they'd activate this unit." And I was going to be working in Washington at a uniquely



***Lola Pierotti and Tony Marro in 1967.***

Courtesy of the author

interesting time.

Lola Pierotti, Aiken's long-time chief of staff and soon to be his wife, greeted me when I showed up at 9:30 by saying that the Army must have been good for me because I had "never looked better." I suspected that wasn't so much because I had lost twenty-five pounds as because she was happy to see that I'd also lost six inches of hair. Aiken said that the first thing I needed to do was go to the Disbursing Office and get my name on the payroll. I was going to be paid \$1,000 a month, which was twice as much as I'd ever made as a reporter covering state government for the *Rutland Herald*. "You'll learn what makes government run, and you'll also learn what makes it stop," he said, according to notes that I typed out later that night and kept making all through the weeks that followed. "Most people don't know much about their government. Maybe it's a good thing. It might scare a lot of them if they did."

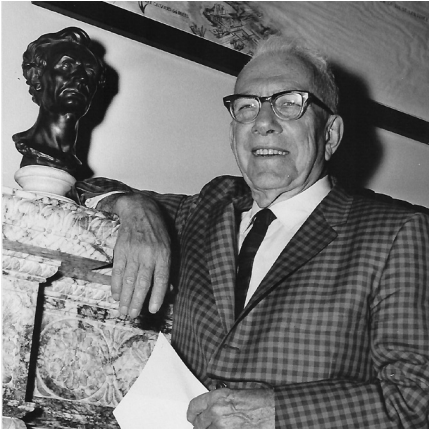
Aiken was seventy-five at the time, and was considered less a Republican than an independent. He was regarded as honest, thrifty, hard-working, and plain-talking — as embodying many traditional Yankee virtues without having the wariness of foreigners and people from "away" that many Yankees also had — "away" being twenty miles from wherever they lived. He had become an expert in foreign affairs while remaining an unfailing supporter of programs to aid farmers, dairies, and other rural interests. He had, of course, been a farmer himself, and by 1967 was the only person still in the Senate who knew how to milk a cow. That was something he liked to remind people about, even while admitting privately that he had never liked milking cows and that it was his first wife, Beatrice Howard, who had died in 1966, who had done most of the milking.

One of the curious facts about his first campaign for the Senate, in which he defeated Ralph Flanders in the 1940 Republican primary, was that many farmers had decided that Flanders — who was known as a Springfield industrialist although he himself had grown up on a small farm — was something of a fool when a campaign photograph showed him dressed in a suit and tie and holding a baby pig in his arms. The *Rutland Herald* noted that while pigs were common in Vermont so was common sense, and not many Vermonters would have handled pigs while wearing good clothes.

Flanders wasn't a fool but he later admitted that the pig picture had been foolish. He was appointed to the Senate by Gov. Mortimer Proctor in 1946 and then won a full term on his own. He was more conservative than Aiken, but both of them opposed Joe McCarthy, Flanders by introducing a resolution to censor him for his wildly irresponsible attacks on supposed communists in the government, and Aiken by giving up thirteen years of seniority on the Labor and Public Welfare Committee to take an opening

on the Foreign Affairs Committee in order to prevent McCarthy from getting it.

Aiken had been the subject of a *New York Times* Sunday magazine cover story early in 1967 in which he was described as neither a hawk nor a dove on Vietnam but as a “wise old owl.” The war had become increasingly unpopular as the casualties had mounted, and Aiken had become known nationally for having told President Lyndon Johnson to just declare the war won and bring home the troops. That, in fact, was something he never actually said. What he had said was more nuanced than that, suggesting that we could claim victory because the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong no longer could take control of the cities so long as we stayed in them, and that would allow us to withdraw from fighting in the mountains and the countryside and begin a de-escalation of the war. But once he was praised for that more simplistic position, he never denied that he’d said it.



**Senator George D. Aiken in his Washington office** Courtesy of the author

Aiken had served two terms as governor from 1937 through 1941 and preferred to be called “Governor,” which is what his staff called him. He had a craggy face and a full head of white hair that reminded some people of Robert Frost. His baggy dark suits never seemed to fit entirely right, and he often fed peanuts to the pigeons and squirrels while walking to work. He had turned a small hill farm in Putney into a 500-acre nursery that specialized in fruits, berries, and wildflowers, and in 1933 had written

a book called “Pioneering with Wildflowers.”

As governor, Aiken had been leader of the progressive wing of Vermont’s Republican party, which drew much support from farmers and blue-collar workers. The more conservative wing, the Proctor wing, was named for Redfield Proctor, a Civil War veteran and Governor, U.S. Senator and a Secretary of War. Proctor was known as the “Tombstone Senator” because of the government contracts he arranged to have his marble company provide tombstones for military cemeteries. That wing of the party was dominated by bankers, industrialists, marble company executives, and railroad barons. The farmers distrusted the bankers as a matter of course and fumed that the railroads charged them too much for hauling their

milk to the markets. Aiken also championed the creation of rural electrical cooperatives that would bring power to farms in thinly populated areas that the private utilities didn't serve. The private utilities didn't want that low-profit business, but neither did they want the low-cost competition that Aiken backed.

"When I first went to Montpelier, they put me on the House Conservation Committee," he said. "They did that because they knew I liked wildflowers. But that committee also handled the power bills," he continued. "And that's where they made their mistake." He also said that if the utility executives had their way, "I'd have stayed at home in Putney and been stung to death by the bees."

This recounting of the summer of '67 isn't intended to describe Aiken's involvement in the political issues of the day so much as to try to capture the personality of the man and to show how he ran his office. Aiken in fact had a very small staff for a Senator, and it was made up mainly of women, three of whom — Elizabeth Quinn, Ellen Jones, and Lola Pierotti — were particularly efficient. As soon as he and Lola were married in the summer of 1967, he took her off the payroll even though she continued to work full time. Charlie Weaver, a former Vermont newspaper editor, did research on nuclear energy and agricultural issues. Bill Wilbur did the same on foreign affairs.

Aiken generally was at his desk by 6:30 a.m. He grew tired as the day went along, and tried to get most of his "think work," as he put it, done before noon. If he knew something important was coming up late in the day, he'd take a nap on his office sofa right after lunch, or try to catch a bit of sleep with his head down on his desk. He began the day by reading his mail and the financial section of the *New York Times*. He started with the financial section, he said, because, "In case nobody ever told you, the Chase Manhattan Bank dictates the foreign policy of this country." He then moved on to the obituaries, he said, "to see what my friends are up to." At 8 a.m. he usually had breakfast with Mike Mansfield, the Democrat from Montana who was the Senate Majority Leader. That was a morning ritual that lasted for twenty years and generally involved just coffee and English muffins. He stopped having bacon for breakfast when the Senate dining room upped the price. "Ten cents a slice and it's nothing but salted pork fat," he complained. "Four pieces don't make a mouthful." The usual work day ran until about 6:30 p.m., when Aiken would come out of his office and say, "Why don't you people take the rest of the day off?" Aiken and the staff also worked until noon on Saturdays, which made for a long work week.

Anyone doing research for him was expected to boil down reports

to a single typewritten page, with Aiken saying “I don’t want them oversimplified, but I want them uncluttered.” Aiken read all the mail that came into the office, which was something that senators from larger states couldn’t begin to do. He put stamps on all his personal mail, rather than using his Senate franking privilege, and paid for all his personal phone calls. He also saw almost any Vermonter who showed up at the office. I remember one morning when a family with six young children who were moving from Connecticut to Essex Junction showed up. Lola ushered them into Aiken’s office and he said to the wife: “Are these all yours or is it a picnic?” Before she could answer him, Aiken said: “I know. They’re all yours — and it’s no picnic.”

When he was told that the husband had taken a job with IBM, he said that when he had turned over the first shovel of dirt for the new IMB plant he had told himself, “It’s a good thing this is going to be used for industry because it ain’t worth a damn for growing anything.”

When the husband said he had been reading the *Free Press* editorial page and found it to be rather conservative, Aiken said, “Oh, yes. If a fellow’s lost both legs and is starving, it’s his own fault.”

The following are notes about things Aiken said or did that I made at the time:

\* “The problem with (Gov. Philip H.) Hoff is that he always tries to please everybody. That’s no way to get votes. You’ve got to have enemies to get votes, but you’ve got to be careful to pick the right ones. I picked the railroads and the utilities and they were the best enemies I ever could have had.”

\* “I’ve never taken a nickel of out-of-state money. Come to think of it, I’ve never got an awful lot from inside the state either.”

\* Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara “may wind up a fall guy for the administration one of these days. That’s a big business in this town, looking for fall guys.”

\* “I guess I’ll go down and get a haircut this morning. I think a haircut would be in the national interest.”

\* “Government money goes for three things: public services, investments, and rat holes.”

\* “I opposed building the new Senate Office Building. I didn’t think we needed it and thought it was too expensive. I even voted against it the first time around. But then I found out that the entire exterior was going to be Danby marble, and that complicated the situation.”

\* “Both Barbara Snelling and Joan Hoff have their feet closer to the ground than their husbands do. It’s too bad they didn’t run for governor. We would have gotten a good one, and a prettier one too.”

\* “God, am I a fool. I told (Senator) Ed Brooke (Republican of Massachusetts) that he made a good speech last night. I didn’t read it, but I didn’t think it would hurt to tell him I did. So then he stood up and made the whole damned speech over again. Kick me if I ever tell anybody that again.”

Two of the projects Aiken had me working on while I was there were the reconstruction of the West Wing of the Capitol, which many thought was unnecessary but which would involve the use of much Vermont marble, and negotiating with the Department of Labor to allow Vermont apple growers to import pickers from the Caribbean to harvest the apple crop.

The reconstruction of the West Wing eventually was done, but not until 1983. Aiken told the Vermont marble officials who came to lobby him that he’d support the project, albeit quietly. “If this goes through, I don’t want any bands playing,” he said. When I told Aiken that I’d found correspondence suggesting close ties between George Stewart, the capitol architect, and Vermont marble executives, he said, “Oh, yes. Mr. Stewart has always been partial to the use of marble in public buildings.”

The Department of Labor, on the other hand, was not partial to allowing apple growers to import foreigners, and Aiken insisted that W. Willard Wirtz, the Secretary of Labor, was “no friend of the fruit grower.” The Vermont apple harvesting season was only three weeks long, and back then it needed about 1,200 pickers. The orchard owners usually could recruit about 600 on their own, and the Vermont Department of Employment Security could round up another 300 or so. The Wirtz Labor Department wanted the rest to be black migrant workers from the South, but the orchard owners wanted 250 pickers from the Caribbean. Part of their reason was that southern pickers could head back home whenever they wanted to, and sometimes did before the harvest was complete. The imported workers, on the other hand, came and were shipped back as a group, and had to stay until all the picking was done.

The Labor Department felt the orchard owners wanted a “captive” labor force. The orchard owners said they didn’t want their apples left rotting on the trees. I thought the Labor Department was right but argued the case for the orchard owners.

When Aiken sent me to negotiate, he told me that, “What Mr. Wirtz doesn’t know about agriculture would fill a large book.” He also said that the southern blacks were used to picking citrus fruit and hard apples, and tended to manhandle McIntosh apples, which bruised easily. The result was many bruised apples that had to be turned into cider, which brought much less money to the orchard owners. “The apples they pick down South are so hard that you could kill snakes with them and not bruise them,” he said.

I negotiated 160 workers from the Caribbean, which probably was as many as the growers actually needed. So the main result of my short time on the Senate payroll was to advocate a Capitol reconstruction project that many considered a major public works boondoggle and to take migrant jobs away from southern blacks. It probably was good for the country that my time in public service was as short as it was.

On the whole, however, it was a memorable summer. I wrote speeches and magazine articles for Aiken. I sat in on hearings about the Vietnam War. I spent many evening hours at the Library of Congress, which I enjoyed, doing research on nuclear regulations and agricultural price supports. I ate often in the Senate Dining Room, where I became addicted to the Senate Bean Soup that was on the menu every day.

Jackie often came down on weekends, taking a train from Manhattan on Friday nights. On her first trip down she arrived at Union Station just as a huge full moon was rising over the Capitol, which we thought was stunning. We went on late night tours of the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, which were lighted at night. We visited all the museums. We took day trips to Gettysburg and to Mount Vernon, and went to Arlington National Cemetery to see John Kennedy's grave. We ate at more elegant restaurants than we ever had in Vermont. Back there our usual dinner out had been at Bove's in Burlington, where we could get big plates of spaghetti and meatballs and two glasses of wine and change from a five. We enjoyed the outdoor evening concerts that the military bands staged, and once at the Jefferson Memorial found ourselves listening to the Marine Band while standing right next to and chatting with Lynda Bird Johnson and her fiancée, Marine Captain Charles Robb, who was soon to ship off to Vietnam.

When my internship was over I went to Columbia and instead of going back to work at the *Herald* became a reporter at *Newsday*. We lived in New York until the autumn of 1971, when I was transferred to *Newsday's* Washington Bureau, where I covered Watergate and all of the scandals that led to the resignation of Richard Nixon. We were still there in July, 1976 when Aiken sent me a copy of his new book, "Senate Diary," with an inscription saying, "To Tony Marro — Come on home and stop making trouble."

At that point, I had no interest in doing either. □



*Using hammers and chisels, William Owens and Richard Glyn Williams split slate in the Eureka Quarry, North Poultney. This photo originally appeared in an early Vermont Life magazine.*

Photographs and map courtesy of the Slate Valley Museum

## **VERMONT'S SLATE VALLEY:** *Ancient Origins and Multi-Cultural Workers*

*C. A. King*

**L**ong before Vermont was a named place, activity was brewing underground that would turn the state into a well-known, and almost singular, supplier of “buried treasure.” In addition to massive



quantities of granite and marble, another valuable but less abundant treasure is slate, and Vermont is one of few places in America where it slate is found.

Formed during the Ice Age some 450 to 550 million years ago, slate was originally formed in horizontal folds, which were pressured over the eons into strange angles. To quarry it, sophisticated tools are necessary. Beginning on top of a ridge, the slate is followed downward at a severe angle, sometimes even perpendicular to its surroundings at ground level. This action can continue for 100, 200, or 300 feet, the average depth being around 150 feet. As the industry developed throughout the nineteenth century, integral tools became more complex, precise, and costly. With continually improving equipment, today's quarries might go as deep as half a mile. The rock would first come out in massive chunks, then to be fashioned into workable pieces.

In the Slate Valley where western Vermont joins eastern New York, the overall deposit containing this versatile metamorphic rock is barely 25 miles long and roughly six miles wide, running from Benson and West Castleton in the north, through Scotch Hill in Fair Haven south to Poultney, Pawlet, and Rupert, then west into Granville, New York. Small deposits are found in nearby New York towns of Salem and Hampton, barely over the state line, but there it stops. Some records claim that the first viable Vermont slate quarry was found in 1812 in Guilford near the Connecticut River, though it did not last long. There are no other significant working slate deposits in the eastern U.S. until one reaches eastern Pennsylvania.

The Vermont slate belt is part of the Taconic range of mountains. In color, slate is found mostly in varying shaded of gray but it can also be called weathering sea green, unfading green, purple, variegated, and unfading red (New York only). Black is not found anywhere in the Slate Valley today, although Newmont Slate in West Rupert still works a fairly large seam that is very dark grey, with striations.

Slate is importantly non-porous, acid resistant, non-conductive, and fireproof, qualities that are deciding factors in the length of time-in-place for almost any construction. As a roofing material it endures for well more than a century; evidence of that can be seen on the roofs of certain New England houses or barns, where the date of construction has been spelled out in numerals using different colors of slate.

Over a period of nearly 200 years the Vermont slate industry has become a multi-million-dollar business, employing hundreds of workers, with finished product shipped all over this country and around the world. The publication *Mineral Resources & Industries* in 1904 reported: "Slate has been quarried in Vermont for over 100 years, in earliest cases producing larger items like headstones and hearths, [from large chunks of slate,



*Fifteen slate workers pose in front of a barn at the Owens Brothers Quarry, circa 1900 to 1910.*

which would not need much paring down]. The Cedar Point and Scotch Hill [operations] produce ‘mill stock.’ These thick pieces are then cut for mantels, billiard tables, and tiling.”

Poultney “owes its prosperity to development of the slate industry,” declared an 1891 study called *Industries & Wealth of the Principal Parts in Vermont*, which included data from twenty-seven cities and towns. “These quarries . . . in connection with other [commercial enterprises] employ a large workforce. Poultney Slate Co., incorporated and quarried since 1890 . . . has a large Western trade . [Furthermore], Parker & Son Slate Co. produces red/purple and variegated [product] in Hampton, recognized as the most desirable roofing material on this continent.” Another source counted “100,000 slate pencils per year” made in Vermont in 1850.

In the early 1800s, Col. Alonsen Allen, a relative of Ethan’s, operated an iron forge and nail mill in Benson. When a new slate deposit was uncovered in 1839 in the Scotch Hill section of Fair Haven, he purchased it. Allen and his partner Caleb Ranney made slates for school lessons, which briefly became a thriving business. In some years in the 1840s, 600 wood-framed slates per day were shipped to market. But by 1858 their enterprise had switched to far more profitable roofing slates to meet new-found demand.

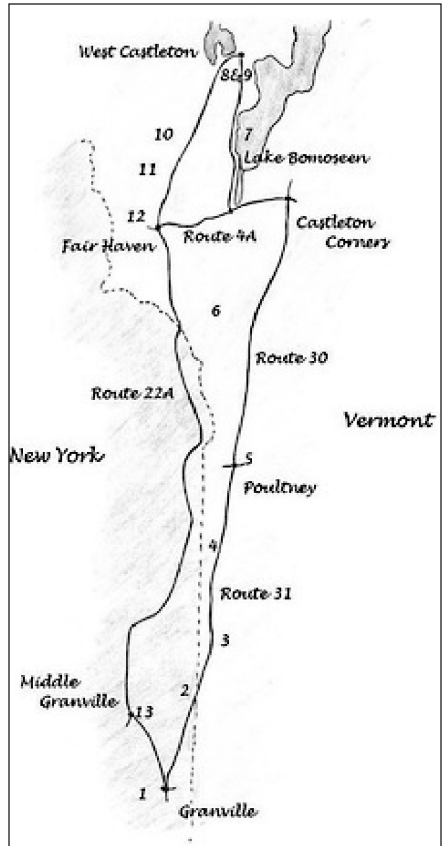
Slate was abundant in this narrow seam on the New York-Vermont border, and as more deposits were discovered, an urgent need for skilled quarry workers was created through the 1870s and beyond. Immigrants became critical to the industry itself. The early influx of experienced workers

from Wales was quickly followed by men from Ireland, then Slovakia, Italy, Austria, and Portugal. Quarry owners in Fair Haven, Castleton, and Poultney actively recruited skilled workers from Wales and Ireland, which had mature slate industries. Serendipitously, in Wales, the feudal landlord-peasant system spawned a fair amount of discontent among quarry workers, who turned their sights to this country. For the Irish, it was the well-known potato famine of the 1840s that forced many to look to America for any kind of work. Together, the skilled Welsh and Irish contributed significantly to Vermont's slate industry growth in the latter part of the nineteenth century and beyond.

Gwilym Roberts, author of *New Lives in the Valley, 1850-1920*, focuses on Welsh migration to America and describes the hardships involved in making passage from England to America. Bethesda, Caernarvon, Dinorwic, and Llanllyfni in the north-west of Wales were the towns most Welshmen left.

The trip to the coast took several days, then headed to Liverpool, England, the most common departure port. For most, travel was on older, less speedy sailing ships, engaged so that limited incomes would cover the 40-day journey. Time of year hugely influenced the rigors of the voyage, as the north Atlantic is seldom friendly in winter. Even going the southerly route, first down to Spain, then crossing to New York, was difficult. Most immigrants had little money for the trip, so comfort was not a given. A few "friendly aid societies" at the port of New York offered voyagers help to reach trains traveling north along the Hudson, most often to Whitehall, New York.

From there it was by wagon or cart or on foot into Slate Valley, where



***Slate Valley spreads over the border between Rutland and Washington counties.***

in the early days there were no familiar faces. Later, in some instances, friends or relatives already in the Valley helped newcomers adjust to “all things new.” Often, as with immigrants arriving, then settling anywhere, newcomers had to do their best to make it on their own, and this became easier as more countrymen arrived. Those reaching the Slate Valley ultimately found a life-changing advantage.

A somewhat romantic take on traveling time was written years later by Welshman William Hughes, who recalled his experience at age 7: “Having reached the port of New York, we were taken from the ship and . . . kept in the city for two days. The Rev. Griffiths remained to minister to the Eleventh Street Church, and we came to Fair Haven. We started in the afternoon . . . again in a boat . . . all night to Albany. After that in the steam cars until we reached the haven at mid-day. . . Great day ever memorable to me, was the first day of June, 1853. I remember well our descent into the undistinguished station at Fair Haven. I could not, on account of my age, realize the circumstance perfectly, but [I was in a new world, very different from Wales]. I remember my happiness at getting to trod on the green grass, to breathe the healthful air and the sweet smell of flowers . . . on the way to the home of my uncle, Humphrey Griffithh.”

The second wave of a diverse labor source, following the Welsh and Irish, consisted largely of Slovaks from the northern Carpathian mountains, emigrating from what was then, through 1918, the Kingdom of Hungary. Next, due to a bad national economy over sixty years, Italian poor were



*Three men load pallets of slate onto a large truck at the Big Boy Quarry, owned by Hugh G. Williams. The gentleman posing with them in the slate yard is Thomas Barrington Sr., quarry superintendent. Photograph dates to about 1920.*

also leaving for America. Some Italians stayed in the cities, some resumed farming, while others from northern Italian slate quarries gravitated hopefully to jobs in the Slate Valley. Later, other Italians came and opened mercantile businesses for other newcomers.

Then Jews from Russia and central Europe began choosing ways to escape increasing pogroms and arrived in the Slate Valley to open mercantile businesses for needs of recent emigrants. These newcomers left behind the horrors and ravages of World War I. Most would not have enough education to understand what was simmering politically within the entirety of central and eastern Europe, where their homes and histories had been for years. Those who made the exhausting voyage no doubt realized quickly there was safety in starting again, even in unknown environs. The majority came alone to the Slate Valley, and families followed as soon as money was sent for their passage. Often, marriage took place after friends and families arrived.

Religion was fundamental to each ethnic or national group, certainly during the decades recapped here. Once settled, immigrants often constructed whatever structure was necessary to serve as a place for worship. Some built entirely new churches while others used existing vacant buildings.

Throughout the late 1800s into the early 1900s, other emigrants continued to arrive in the Slate Valley, including from Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary and even Canada. Today, some workers from Guatemala are employed.

### *Those Who Came First*

#### **The Welsh**

Once in America, the Welsh unwaveringly retained their native language in home and social circles. Weekly classes on Sunday, for children and adults, provided education to becoming American – but taught only in Welsh. Their churches, primarily Presbyterian or Calvinist Baptist, were integral to Welsh life, forming the core of Welsh cultural life, which continued into future decades. In Poultney, for example, there was a Welsh men's chorus still performing in either the Welsh Presbyterian or Baptist church through the late 1950s. There still is an active St. David's Society; occasionally a celebratory festival, plus ongoing research of Welsh ancestors. Additional influence of Welsh steadfastness is demonstrated by the director of the Green Mountain College chorus who has incorporated Welsh music into the repertoire for the past several decades through today.

One Welshman, Thomas Lloyd of West Pawlet, was "one of the finest

practitioners of the Welsh triple harp, which he called his 'Mrs Lloyd.' A quarryman by day, Lloyd made and mastered this complicated instrument, and by chance entered an International Eisteddfod in Chicago, which included a large cash prize and gold medal. Lloyd won. He returned to Wales with his fortune and acclaim, though ultimately lost the money. He survived by manufacturing triple harps and giving music lessons. Today his prize-winning instrument is exhibited at the Museum of Welsh Life in Cardiff.

Welsh surnames are fairly easily recognized and well-known – though anglicized – such as Thomas, Jones, Williams, Roberts, Lloyd, Humphrey, Nichols, Lewis, Rowlands and Griffith(s). Intriguingly, some “given” first names have less familiarity today yet remain lyrical. Occasionally these names from the old country are honored and perpetuated among residents in Poultney, Fair Haven, and Castleton. Most are likely now only found on gravestones: Blodwen, Eluned, Owen, Emrys, Dilys, Llewelyn (also a surname), Kathryn, Gwilym, Myfanwy, along with Moses, Hugh, and Evan.

## **The Irish**

For the Irish, similar truths held: the Catholic Church was central to their very being. At first they spoke Gaelic and encountered prejudice and contempt. Again, young single men worked to get a footing to make a living. When more families formed, the Irish persevered. English was adopted at worksites when it benefitted all. Those Irish and Welsh who knew English prior to coming had an advantage that eased integration.

Quite a number of Irishmen came earlier in the nineteenth century to build the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825, then toiled to construct the budding national railroad system. With some of those projects complete, a number of workers turned to Vermont's Slate Valley for employment.

Some Irish in the mid-1880s stayed where they landed, chiefly New York or Boston. For those determined to work in Vermont, those from Irish quarries found work most easily. These quarrymen were not as skilled as the Welsh yet their experience allowed faster rise in status than for other emigres in the early 1900s. The first Welsh and Irish in the Slate Valley often accepted direct invitations from working quarry owners.

This early Irish influx made it easier for relatives and friends to follow; the numbers encouraged them all. The Irish learned quickly and, like the Welsh, purchased quarries when the opportunity arose. As did the Welsh, once comfortable with jobs, family, and church support, they mixed mostly with their own. These men prove to be industrious, dedicated, diligent, devoted to families and friends, and many soon became respected and prominent citizens.



*By 1920, when this photo was taken, trucks began to replace horse-drawn wagons. Leaning on the truck are John and Harriet Pritchard Quinlan. In addition to transporting the material, the driver was responsible for properly loading it into freight cars. There was a trick to it: the teamster had to handpack the slates tightly, laying them along their edges and stacking them up three high.*

Irish descendant surnames are Keagan, Mahar, McNamara, Markrow, Harrison, Rodgers, McSweeney, Gleason, Bolger, Cook, Kelley, Flanagan, Keenan, Roche, Cronin, and Barrington.

## **The Slovaks**

When the Slovaks arrived, they revived their traditional religious and national festivals; musical groups were recreated exactly as in the old country. Male migration to America in the late 1800s was for unskilled workers, leaving behind wives and children, if any. These men worked hard to master the requisite skills, for a scant few had brought knowledge of the processes to Vermont's slate works.

In the early twentieth century, Slovak families from other regions came through Ellis Island to the Slate Valley. Culture focused around dialects from home, plus the organization of Byzantine or Greek Catholic churches. Individual choice to join either church replicated whichever path was sown in Europe. The centrality of the church for the Slovaks nurtured solidly anchored cultural groups, which sponsored dances, sports, entertainment, and community needs. A striking example was that of 1902, when at a cost of \$4,000, the 400-member Hungarian Society of Granville laid the

cornerstone for the Church of Saints Peter and Paul. A priest from Hungary presided. As recent as 1997 the congregation was still heavily Slovak.

This immigrant group re-formed fraternal societies, some of which provided assistance with health or accident benefits. Early methods of quarrying were exceptionally dangerous. Tools were crude and in some cases not yet adequate to the tasks. Accidents occurred often, some resulting in terrible handicapping injuries, and just as often, death. The fraternal societies assisted with medical costs as well as offering moderate pensions for widows.

The Slate Valley has recorded a story from 1965 in which Slovak immigrant Susie Macura, after 50-plus years here was able to reunite with her sisters from Kiyov, Czechoslovakia. Susie came to Granville in 1911 and met and married Adam Macura, who had arrived a few years earlier. Susie was one of a few women who served the hundreds of slate workers who resided in Granville boarding houses and tenements. The women cooked, packed lunch pails, cleaned rooms, and washed clothes for husbands, sons, and lodgers.

Slovakian surnames include Hadeka, Maslack, Labas, Rupe, Tatko, Dumas, Turanak, Euniski, Stansik and Srsil. The Slovakian community in Granville remains active.

## **The Italians**

Italians, once committed to life in an entirely new environment, encouraged first their relatives, then friends, to emigrate for the opportunities available. Italian children already here were encouraged to excel in American ways of language, education, and social customs while cherishing the old values.

For example, when Frank and Marianna Bertolino settled in Poultney they acquired space in a building next to the railroad tracks and opened a general store to serve other Italian families. The family grew to include eight daughters. Everyone lived above the store, with heat only in the parlor at the front of the building.

Four of the daughters married local men, some of whom attended Green Mountain Junior College, which since 1834 has anchored the west end of Main Street. (Later, three granddaughters also graduated from the college.) One husband started a home repair and construction business, which continues today; another daughter married the man who originated the Journal Press, only recently closed. Another married the man who started the town's pharmacy. Yet another and her husband opened a restaurant in the former train station, across the tracks from her parents; later this couple closed the restaurant to open an antiques business. The last



daughter, Helen, died in 2015. Both the family building and the station still stand; the former is a popular bar and restaurant; the station now serves as an approved independent school for general and special-education students in grades 6 to 12. The Bertolino family is a lasting example of the hundreds who came in one century and set down roots that are still evident two centuries later.

Italians names existing today: Sbardella, Bertolino, Covino and Labate.

## **The Jews**

It is common knowledge that for centuries Jews from all over the world have been subject to persecution, exclusion, and literal confinement no matter where they lived. Whether in Germany, Central Europe, Russia, Poland, Hungary, or Ukraine, these people were second-class citizens, forced to live in ghettos or shtetls (a totally Jewish small-village environment), or move on.

Despite such restrictions, the men were extremely literate. Learning and education has always been paramount in Jewish male culture: poetry, fiction, drama, and commentary on classics and other scholarly works – a pattern that’s been true throughout their existence. In central Europe during the 1800s, non-Jews began to comment loudly and negatively on such activity. Jews’ daily language was Yiddish. Hebrew was used only for religious purposes, or to deal with “others.” Jews in much of Europe were physically separated from each other, not knowing or speaking the native tongue of neighbors.

The political climate in much of Europe turned sour in mid-to-early nineteenth century, causing riots, violence, and general discontent; fingers often pointed directly at Jews. Large numbers began to emigrate to America: German Jews in the 1830s and 1840s, Central European Jews in the 1880s and beyond. For decades, male Jews were severely restrained as to the kind of work they could follow; thus a majority became traders and moneylenders. Times grew even harder in the late 1800s.

As with other newcomers, Jews focused strongly on maintaining familiar customs. Early on, itinerant peddlers gathered in Poultney for weekly Shabat (Sabbath), to be with fellow Jews and to assure that ten would attend to warrant the service. Anti-Semitism was not absent in the Slate Valley, yet Jews adapted quickly by serving their new country. Jewish children entered local schools, excelling in classes and athletics.

Work for the men fell into hands-on settings; educational or academic pursuits weren’t readily nearby. Pack peddlers moved to commercial sites, selling everything from groceries to work boots, to their own and to Welsh, Irish, Slovak, Italian, and Polish. In the early 1900s, there were ten

Jewish-owned businesses on Granville's Main Street. By the end of that century, all were closed, due the big-box stores and shopping malls.

There are no known records of any Jewish men working directly in the slate industry itself. Yet their presence, in their created niches, was as necessary as the rest. Numbers of Jews now in the Slate Valley are nominal; later and later generations married outside the faith.

One particularly enterprising success story tells of immigrant Sigmund Weinberg, who left central Germany in 1873, then became hugely successful in Granville. First he established a hardware store, which he ran with his three sons for more than fifty years; this space later was known as the Weinberg Block. He also built dozens of homes for low-income quarry workers. When Welsh emigres arrived with their own minister, Weinberg loaned money to build a church. When the loan was paid off, he bought an organ for the church. Additionally, he successfully bought and then leased land to quarry owners.

There are still several very active quarries in the Slate Valley. Newmont, Evergreen, Sheldon Slate, Greenstone, Camara, Hilltop, Vermont Structural, and Taran Bros. all sell on the open market. Newmont has the largest inventory, holds many patents, and makes other roofing components; Sheldon Slate and Vermont Structural are more involved in structural slate (floors, building facades, countertops) and are about the same size as Camara; Greenstone has the most employees or partners; Evergreen has sold the most slate in recent decades. □

## 569 letters from Robert Frost *'At present I am living in Vermont'*

*Reviewed by Lea Newman*

Volume 2 of *The Letters of Robert Frost* will be of special interest to the readers of the *Walloomsack Review* because Frost was a neighbor of ours during the years that it covers, from 1920 through 1928.

"The stone house it is," he proclaims to his daughter Lesley in the letter he wrote from Franconia, New Hampshire, on October 19, 1920, confirming his decision to leave Franconia and move to the Stone House in South Shaftsbury, Vermont (which is now the site of the Robert Frost Stone House Museum). He adds: "There's a lot of fun ahead touching it up to our exact ideas. From now on we write ourselves as of South Shaftsbury, Vermont." (p.88)

It would not be until November, however, that he and his family could move in because of the extensive renovations the farmhouse needed, not much "fun" after all. It was Dorothy Canfield Fisher who had helped Frost find the Stone House, and she arranged for their temporary stay in nearby Arlington until then. Two letters he writes from Arlington in October explain his motivation for the move. To John Haines he says: "We ask a better place to farm and especially to grow apples." (p. 94) To another friend, George Elliott, he elaborates: "I have moved a good part of the way to a stone cottage on a hill at South Shaftsbury in Vermont on the New York side near the historic town of Bennington where if I have any money left after repairing the roof in the spring I mean to plant a new Garden of Eden with a thousand apple trees of some unforbidden variety." (p.103)

Frost never did succeed in growing a thousand apple trees during these years. He found success of a much higher order as a poet, gaining national and international critical recognition. He published three new volumes, including his first Pulitzer Prize in 1924 for *New Hampshire*, much of which he wrote while in South Shaftsbury. He may have called the book *New Hampshire*, but he closes the title poem with the line "At present I am living in Vermont." It is in the Stone House where he wrote one of his best known poems, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening." And it is in this second book of Frost's letters that we can find the source for what Frost thought about that poem. In a letter to Louis Untermeyer he calls it "my best bid for remembrance." (p.339) The Robert Frost Stone House

Museum commemorates that “little poem” (as Frost called it) in the very room in which he wrote it.

What the editors have done in this second volume of Frost’s collected letters offers proof positive of the success he had garnered during these eight years. Not only were his books best sellers, but he was recognized in the academic world as well. In 1921 he was one of the first to hold what today would be called the post of poet in residence at the University of Michigan, and he continued to serve as a faculty member intermittently at Amherst College in Massachusetts (based on his poetry alone since he had never completed even a bachelor’s degree). At the same time, he was constantly in demand as a speaker throughout the country. In October of 1922 he had commitments for a typical grueling reading tour, this one that included New Orleans, plus Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, and Waco, Texas, and Columbia, Missouri. Such a lifestyle eventually caught up with him so that by 1925, he writes to a friend: “I am weary of this scattered way of living. Either I mean to become an explorer and live homeless entirely or to settle down and raise chickens with a single post office address.” (p. 753)

Of course, he chose neither of these options, but continued to move himself and his family repeatedly, so that while he claimed South Shaftsbury as his permanent address, he was more often than not, not there. The majority of the letters in Volume 2 were written elsewhere, nevertheless providing insights into the man who did once live among us. The recipients of these letters were family and friends, colleagues, fellow writers, visual artists, editors, publishers, educators, and even some fans. The family member who received the most letters – and the longest ones – was his eldest daughter Lesley. The friend to whom he wrote most often and also at long length was Louis Untermeyer. The informality of these letters allows us to see Frost in a less guarded manner. With Lesley, who was finding her college experience frustrating, he expresses his concerns as a father with his educational philosophy clearly articulated. With Untermeyer, his grasp of the publishing world is revealed as is his wry sense of humor in what appears to be a lively battle of wits. His many letters to former students and to aspiring poets are filled with encouragement and advice, giving readers an inside look on the techniques and methods he believes are essential for creative poetic expression.

We also get to see the skillful negotiations Frost handled over royalties, stipends, and speaking fees, always with the goal of supporting his family while continuing to write poetry. His own prose style is engaging, often amusing, filled with anecdotes and allusions that entertain and inform. The letters in this volume – 569 of them, nearly two-thirds of which are here collected for the first time – provide insights into the varied relationships he

maintained.

In a sense, they speak for themselves, but the editors have enriched the reader's experience immensely in three distinctive ways: through footnotes, a chronology, and a biographical glossary of correspondents. The first of these, the footnotes, are a standard feature in almost all letter collections, but the meticulous detail and specific relevance that characterize the notes in this collection are exceptional. The editors make good on their promise to use the footnotes to identify "persons, poems, and events alluded to or mentioned in the letters." (p. xxiii) For example, in the letter to his English friend John Haines, quoted above, Frost wrote, "Arlington, Shaftsbury, Rupert, Sunderland, Manchester, Dorset, Rutland, the towns and counties are named after courtiers of Charles Second. It looks as if some gunpowder plot had blown them up at a ball and scattered them over our map." (p.94). Footnote 197 at the bottom of the page lists who the courtiers were, for example "Henry Bennet (1618-1685) 1st Earl of Arlington who after the Restoration of the Stuart Monarchy in 1660, was made Keeper of the Privy Purse" and "Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1st Earl of Shaftesbury (1621-1668), one of the principal architects of the Restoration." To clarify the context of Frost's reference to "some gunpowder plot," the footnote adds "The Gunpowder Plot of 1605 was a conspiracy to assassinate James 1st."

Another typical informational bonus for the reader can be found in the first footnote in the "Introduction." It accompanies the statement that Frost was to be Fellow in Creative Arts at the University of Michigan for a year with no teaching responsibilities "on a stipend of \$5000." (p.1) The footnote reads: "\$5000 in 1921 had the buying power of \$66,232 in 2016." This is especially significant in context with the focus of the "Introduction" that emphasizes "just how much Frost did, and how early he did it, to fashion the kinds of institutional support accorded creative writers in the second half of the twentieth century, support that continues to the present day." (p. 5)

Chronologies too are not uncommon additions to letter collections, but what makes the chronologies in both Volume 1 and 2 of Frost's letters unique are the apposite passages from the letters chosen to capture Frost's feeling with his own inimitable words. The statement in the 1924 segment: "Confesses his dissatisfaction with teaching" is followed by this quotation from one of his letters: "One year more of little Amherst [where he was teaching] and then surcease of that particular sorrow . . . I may take to the woods." (p. 750)

The distinctively new feature in Volume 2 is a Biographical Glossary of Correspondents at the back of the book. Here the reader will find brief but revealing accounts of all 160 of the letter recipients, alphabetically arranged

from Lascelles Abercrombie to Charles Lowell Young. They cover a wide range of vocations and experience, reflecting the myriad personalities that Frost interacted with and was influenced by. Bennington County's own Dorothy Canfield Fisher of Arlington is among them.

In keeping with my attempt to make my review of Volume 2 particularly of interest to readers who feel a kinship with Frost because of the years he lived in southwestern Vermont, I will close with a letter Frost wrote to Dorothy Canfield Fisher in August of 1926 that refers to this area. According to its accompanying footnote 38 (p. 559), she had sent him a draft of a short essay about the Stone House, titled "Robert Frost's Hilltop," to be published in the December 1926 issue of *The Bookmark*. He writes:

*"Dear Dorothy,*

*My children and grandchildren (singular) will believe it when you tell them it is an interesting old historical house they live in. If I told them they might put it down to professional poetry. You go just the right way about fostering their fondness for the place and perhaps planting the family on it forever. There is no time like the present, right on top of this to start making it the ancestral home of the Frosts. Five years isn't much toward making it so, but five years is more than four.*

*We can surely stand having our house praised over our heads, if you think our new neighbors the cast off countesses can who have been buying in among us. What you say is balm of compensation to us for having been left out of the articles in the Banner on the historical houses they have been recently taking up in the Shaftsbury's." (pp. 559-560)*

As vice president of the Friends of Robert Frost, which owns and operates the Robert Frost Stone House Museum in South Shaftsbury, I can't help but wonder what Frost would think about our having indeed claimed it as one of his "ancestral" homes. However ironically he may have meant it, we hope it would be a "balm of compensation" from us to him for the amazing poetry he has contributed to American literature. We are grateful to the editors of Volume 2 of *The Letters of Robert Frost* for their due diligence and dedication in putting this impressive book together. □

Donald Sheehy, Mark Richardson, Robert Bernard Hass, Henry Atmore, eds., *The Letters of Robert Frost: Volume 2, 1920-1928*, (Belknap Press, 2016), 848 pp.

# Shirley Jackson Revisited

*Reviewed by Tom Fels*

No one has ever doubted that Shirley Jackson was a writer. This alone is a notable accomplishment, and in the era in which she lived, a rarity. She fought throughout her life to support this aspect of her identity. In early life a willful child and then a rebellious daughter, she moved in her college years toward the bohemianism of Greenwich Village, and shortly after to the unfamiliar life of a small New England town and the progressive cultural scene at Bennington College. Throughout her few allotted years (1916-65, she died at 48) she wrote continuously and devotedly as if her life depended on it. In important ways it did.

Later arbiters have approved of her work. From a young, relatively insecure writer she progressed in regular, comparatively swift stages to one widely reviewed, then accepted, and finally respected, a trajectory the envy of writers of all stripes. Along the way, though, many questions arose about both Jackson and her work. Its content, its origins; how could it be both consistent and yet so surprisingly diverse? Its relation to her life: what was the role of heritage, marriage, children, family life? Its often disturbing subjects: how did these arise; what meaning did they hold? These and many other questions persisted as Jackson forcefully, if at times fitfully, moved on with her life with writing as a constant, sometimes the most constant, companion.

Beyond this largely public view it is instructive to look at the internal world in which she lived. Jackson is known particularly for two types of writing, as a master of psychological mystery and suspense, and as a purveyor of endearing tales of family life. Why such differing objects of focus? One way of understanding this is that these two differing modes represent the dissonance between Jackson's internal, personal, and external, social, lives. Following the now fairly well understood chronology of her life, her story might unfold, in capsulized form, something like this. Youth in San Francisco with growing disparity in parent and child views, especially in regard to her mother. During this period Jackson began her extensive journals and letters, and despite her young age produced some public writing as well. College in upstate New York; continued friction with family; embrace of a new world of magic, myth, anthropology, and cultural history, notably her discovery of James George Fraser's *The Golden Bough*. Meets and marries equally serious and studious future scholar and literary

critic Stanley Edgar Hyman. They begin married life in Greenwich Village, moving on to New Hampshire, Connecticut, and eventually the haunts of Bennington College where they lived the rest of their lives.

Salient in this period are continued friction in the forms of marriage, parents, and home and community life. The internal component of the friction arose from Jackson's insistence on continuing, and hopefully advancing, her life as a thinker and writer, and the various demands on her that made that voyage difficult. The outward solutions to smoothing the friction included making the most of what she now had: a brilliant husband, a large and largely happy immediate family, and a supportive environment in the form of a small rural village and a large Victorian house, not to mention publishing success and strong ties to *The New Yorker* magazine. On the interior track she now had a world of her own, which we could perhaps call fantasy, which she had cultivated since childhood, and that now included shades of the more developed view of mankind she had gleaned over her difficult years, both from experience and study. It is worth noting, in this regard, that while a personal, internal world is not uncommon, even perhaps required, on the part of writers and other artists, Jackson's was of a particularly vigorous sort.

The result was that Jackson came to occupy two worlds, the external one in which she coped with, and largely managed to conquer, the demands of daily life, and an internal world of reaction and creation that was entirely her own. The latter, in its personal component based often on her response to her mother and later her husband, strongly influenced her writing and occasionally crept into her external, social life as well. Thus, readers have the mysterious and looming Jackson of "The Lottery," *We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, and various other haunting novels and tales, and also the chatty, upbeat, sardonic mother of four writing in a more populist vein. In line with this division is another matter of importance: the mysterious, looming Jackson, we might note, was largely the literary, intimate Jackson, while the chatty, upbeat writer was – the success of the work and the strengths it represented in Jackson's own writing and life notwithstanding – the professional and increasingly well-paid author helping to support her family.

In her new biography of Jackson, Ruth Franklin has paid attention to all of these and more – the role of Jackson's husband, Bennington College professor Stanley Hyman, for example, and Jackson's life and work as commentary on the status of women in her era. Franklin's book is not the first study to take notice of Jackson. These begin with responses to her early publications, move on to the first popular biography of the writer, *Private Demons* by Judy Oppenheimer, published in 1988, and continue on up to the present. There are several full-length books and numerous essays about



Jackson's life and work. Not the first, but for years to come Franklin's will without doubt be considered the best. With immense amounts of reading and research Franklin has laid out and amplified the basic lines above. She has a biographer's theories about Jackson and her significance, of course, but what she has particularly given us are the tools to make such decisions ourselves. Among the insights Franklin has offered for which we can be grateful are close readings of Jackson's novels, great clarity about the role of Stanley Hyman in the life of his wife, and Franklin's own reading, which seems largely correct, of Jackson's congruence, and fight against it, to the era in which she lived. The evidence in *Shirley Jackson: A rather haunted life* of Franklin's archival research, original interpretation, interviews, and fortuitous rediscovery of lost material make it clear that this version of Jackson's life and work will stand us in good stead for some time. For local readers there are also liberal doses of local geography and intrigue, making the book a perfect candidate for a good spring or summer read.

In George Orwell's "Why I Write," an essay published not long before the appearance of Jackson's classic short story "The Lottery," he wrote:

"I had the lonely child's habit of making up stories and holding conversations with imaginary persons, and I think from the very start my literary ambitions were mixed up with the feeling of being isolated and undervalued. I knew that I had a facility with words and a power of facing unpleasant facts, and I felt that this created a sort of private world in which I could get my own back for my failure in everyday life."

This could easily stand as a summary of Jackson and her work, as indeed it might for many an artist and their endeavors. This general principle aside, the completely understood Jackson is an elusive quarry, and as in her own work, the truth about her is often to be found, in Franklin's treatment of her, between the lines. □

*Ruth Franklin, Shirley Jackson: A rather haunted life*, New York: Liveright, 2016. 607 pp.

# Was it Not a Turning Point?

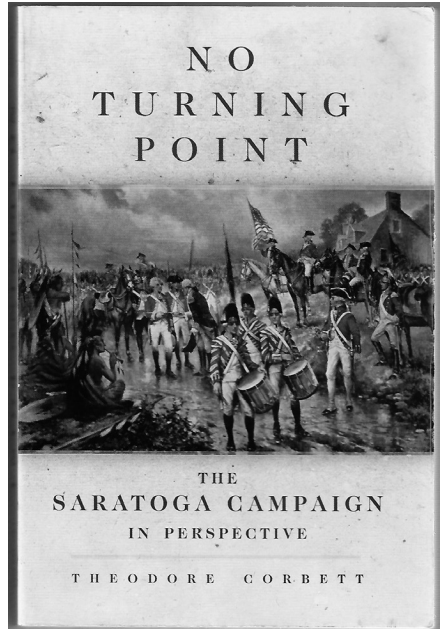
*Reviewed by Phil Holland*

Theodore Corbett's title announces a contrarian thesis: the defeat of Burgoyne's British force at Saratoga, "turning point of the American Revolution," as it has long been known, was, according to Corbett, not a turning point at all but rather one event in an ongoing civil and military conflict in the Hudson-

Champlain region. Burgoyne's campaign was one episode in a "regional war" that predated it and continued well after it. Corbett's book is not "alternative history" (though Saratoga has inspired that as well), nor does it depend on what have lately come to be known as "alternative facts." The book sustains its provocative perspective in well-documented detail. Some readers may cry "Tory," but I found Corbett's unsentimental attitude toward, among others, Ethan and Ira Allen, to be a welcome corrective to more "patriotic" views. The point of view Corbett adopts will deepen anyone's understanding of the complex civil, social, political, and military situation in the Hudson-Champlain valley and adjacent territories in the period before and after the Revolution, and how those conditions affected and were affected by Burgoyne's ill-fated invasion. No book covers this ground so well.

The "turning point" idea of Corbett's title ultimately derives from (as he explains) Sir Edward Creasy's influential *Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World* (1851). Of Creasy's 15 battles, only one took place in the Americas, namely Saratoga. Creasy does not actually use the phrase "turning point," but he leans hard on the idea. No military event, Creasy claims,

*can be said to have exercised more important influence on the future fortunes of mankind, than the complete defeat of Burgoyne's expedition in 1777; a defeat which rescued the revolted colonists from certain subjection; and which, by inducing the courts of France and Spain to*



*attack England in their behalf, ensured the independence of the United States, and the formation of that trans-Atlantic power which, not only America, but both Europe and Asia, now see and feel.*

Corbett concedes the importance of Saratoga for the future course of the War of Independence, but discounts its effect when the British defeat is viewed from the perspective of the Hudson-Champlain region, including the area of the newly minted Republic of Vermont (formerly the New Hampshire Grants). In this region, Corbett contends, the struggle for dominance persisted between British forces directed by Canada's Governor Haldimand (who replaced Sir Guy Carleton in 1778), aided by Loyalists and Indians, and rebel militias in the region (most Continental forces having left for points south after Saratoga). For Corbett, Burgoyne's campaign was simply the second and largest in a series of annual British forays south from Canada into the region, the most successful of which reached Ball's Town, just west of Saratoga.

Corbett provides a close look at the leading political personalities in eastern New York and Vermont, sketched against a background of the economic structures and kinship relationships in the region and the presence of diverse groups of settlers each with its own history and interests. Some of the players he treats are well known, such as Philip Schuyler, others less so, like Philip Skene, whose advice to Burgoyne to attack Bennington proved so disastrous. He shows how divided in political sympathies the region was, sometimes within families (including the Allens, where brother Levi sided with the Crown).

What made one man (or woman) a Loyalist, another a Patriot? "The rebels demanded and Burgoyne asked for loyalty from the countryside, but existing religious, ethnic, economic, social and personal alignments were more crucial in deciding which side one supported," writes Corbett. One element in Burgoyne's strategy was to try to win the hearts and minds of the settlers in his path. His objective, says Corbett, was to pacify the region by encouraging and consolidating Loyalist support (Loyalists could supply provisions and act as soldiers and spies). "Pacification" and "hearts and minds" will have an eerie familiarity to anyone who remembers Vietnam (where the policy failed). Burgoyne later blamed the lack of Loyalist support for his demise, but, as Corbett notes, Burgoyne's initial plan of invasion did not rely on Loyalist soldiers. He began with only 83, which grew to 800 as various Loyalist corps were assembled, such as those that fought at the Battle of Bennington.

Corbett suggests that if Philip Skene had persuaded Burgoyne at the last minute to send Baum's raiding party to Arlington, then a hotbed of Loyalism, of instead of Bennington, a rebel stronghold, the outcome of

the foray might have been different. It was not local support or resistance, however, but the presence of Stark's New Hampshire force (undetected by Skene) that decided the battle that ensued (which goes by the name of "the battle at the Walloomsac" in this book). Corbett contends that Burgoyne was not seeking provisions or ammunition at Bennington, but only horses, carts, and draft animals, another disputable claim. In a book filled with vivid and pertinent details, some details elude the author, such as the number and placement of cannon at – let's call it "that battle" (Stark's forces had captured four, not two, by the day's end).

Corbett shows how events in the Hudson-Champlain valley helped create not one but two nations. If the War of Independence called the question in the region, it was Burgoyne who forced the answers. When he surrendered his army at Saratoga, most of his Loyalist allies and their families managed to slip away to Canada, some to fight again as the war dragged on. They left their property behind, but their new settlements north of what became the border prospered. Vermont's further settlement and eventual statehood, by contrast, were delayed, as the conflict between New Hampshire and New York land rights resumed and the Allen-Chittenden faction within Vermont (Corbett calls it "the Junta"), operating outside of control by Congress, cozied up to Haldiman for (Corbett claims) personal advantage.

Corbett's contrarian book concludes on an open-ended note: "And the debate continues." *No Turning Point* is essential reading for anyone seeking to understand – and debate – this region's most formative years. □

Theodore Corbett, *No Turning Point: the Saratoga Campaign in Perspective*; University of Oklahoma Press, 2012



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