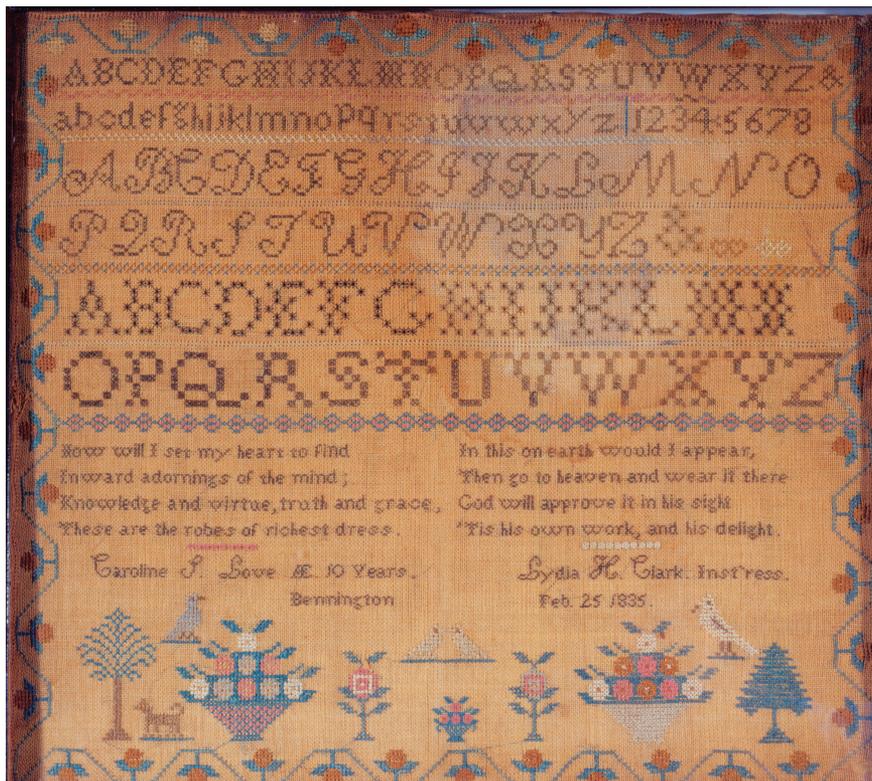


WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

BENNINGTON MUSEUM



VOLUME 21 — SPRING 2018

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Volume 21
Spring 2018

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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 the editor Tyler Resch at tresch@benningtonmuseum.org.

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

On the cover:

Ten-year old Caroline S. Love (1824-1898) made this sampler in 1835 of silk threads on a linen base. It includes the name of her instructor, Lydia Clark, and contains eight lines of verse.

Bennington Museum collection

WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

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Editor's Notes

Authors in this issue offer insightful commentary on the contemporary nature as well as the history of our state of Vermont. In particular, one can see many intersecting threads in the life story of Sam Ogden of Landgrove, written by Paul Searls, and the review of Yvonne Daley's book about the 1965-75 hippie phenomenon, by Anthony Marro.

While Sam Ogden's life was devoted to the conservative pursuit of what he called "this country life," he was also a promoter of economic development, notably the Vermont ski industry. Ogden was, in effect, encouraging newcomers to enjoy the rural ambience; and when hundreds of so-called hippies answered the call, he remained tolerant but was not especially pleased with the new lifestyles they represented.

Scholar Paul Searls wrote in these pages in spring 2013 about the unsuccessful attempt by Alonzo Valentine to lure Swedes to settle on abandoned Vermont hill farms. Paul is also the author of the book *Two Vermonts*, which developed his concept of the uphillers versus the downhillers.

Another interpretation of Vermont's country life is found in Jane Radocchia's lively review of a new history of the town of Tinmouth. This small Rutland County town has three neighborhoods separated by uninhabited mountains yet seems to project an amazing sense of unity. Jane has written several previous articles about her specialty, analyzing architectural elements.

A good many pages in this issue are devoted to the education of Vermont women and their lives in early years of the nineteenth century. Phebe Orvis, a Quaker who lived in various Addison County towns, had to confront a religious contradiction when her husband became a Baptist, according to author Susan Ouellette. The education of young women in early Bennington is the focus of a richly detailed article by Ruth Ekstrom, an author who wrote in the *Walloomsack Review's* first issue in 2010 about the early settlement of Woodford.

Another returning author is Ray Rodrigues, who reviews with some sensitivity Steve Butz's new book about the Shays rebellion settlement in Sandgate. In our issue of fall 2011 Ray described three enigmatic characters prominent in early Pownal, all named Seth Hudson.

Paul Heller's recitation of the bizarre life of William Dudley Pelley seems to fit no easy category. Pelley was one-of-a-kind, a successful fiction writer who once owned and edited the *Caledonian* newspaper in St. Johnsbury and then turned to embrace treasonous fascism – and paid for it with time in jail.

-- Tyler Resch

Contributors

Ruth Burt Ekstrom, a native of Bennington, is retired and lives in Princeton, N.J. She is a former trustee of the Bennington Museum and former president of the Bennington Historical Society. She has contributed several articles to *Vermont Genealogy*.

Susan Ouellette is a professor of history and American studies at Saint Michael's College in Colchester, and is the author of *An Extraordinary Ordinary Woman*, published in 2017 by SUNY Press, from which the article in this issue was adapted.

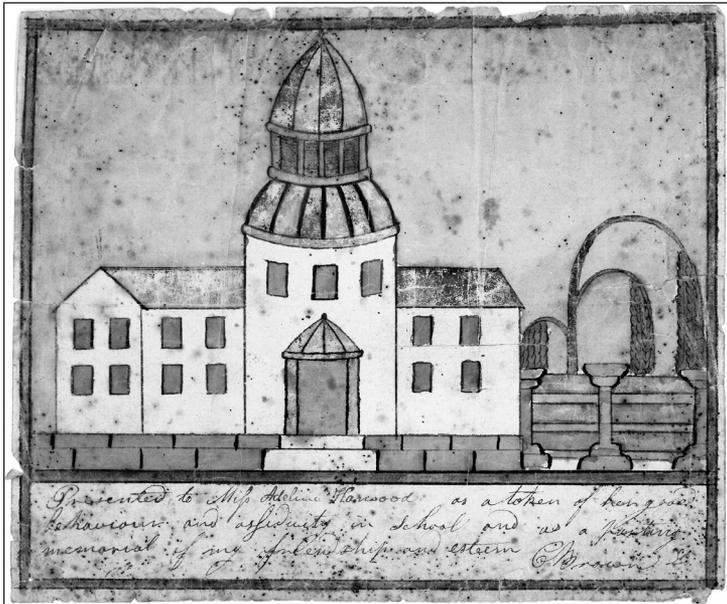
Paul Searls is a professor of history and music at Lyndon State College. His book on Vermont in the twentieth century, which focuses on Sam Ogden, is forthcoming from the Vermont Historical Society. He contributed the article "When Alonzo B. Valentine sought to lure Swedes to Vermont" in the *Walloomsack Review* of spring 2013.

Paul Heller grew up in Montpelier and had a long career as librarian at Norwich University, then ran a bed-and-breakfast in Barre with his partner Marianne Kotch. Today he describes himself as happily retired and writes historical features for local newspapers and magazines while Marianne makes quilts.

Jane Griswold Radocchia is an architect and historian, and a volunteer administrator of the Bennington Museum library's Facebook page. She is particularly interested in the evolution of construction design at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. Documenting a 1780 post-and-beam house frame in Tinmouth, Vt., as it was deconstructed, introduced her to that town's landscape and back roads. That house is now rebuilt on Long Island, N.Y.

Ray Rodrigues has been a university provost and faculty member. His work has involved a re-issue of the history of Pownal and his writings include a novel *Memoir of a Green Mountain Boy* and numerous English textbooks. He has been a board member of the Vermont Archaeological Society and he is now on the board of the Bennington Historical Society and member of the Bennington Museum Library Committee.

Anthony Marro is a former co-editor of this journal who is now involved with the Aiken Trail in the Hadwen Woods and is mostly occupied as board chairman of the Oldcastle Theater. He is at work on a profile of the legendary Perry H. Merrill, longtime director of Vermont Forests and Parks, for the next *Walloomsack Review*.



“Presented to Miss Adeline Harwood as a token of her good behavior and assiduity in school and as a parting memorial of my friendship and esteem. C. Brown.”

Brightly Shines the Female Mind

***The Education of Young Women
in Bennington, Vermont,
in the Late 18th and Early 19th Century***

Ruth Burt Ekstrom

Images from the Bennington Museum collection.

This story had its beginnings when I found a group of old books that had been handed down in my family. I was trying to downsize and needed to decide what to do with these worn volumes. One book, *The Task* by William Cowper, caught my eye because it had an inscription that read:

Miss Catherine Burt
for her diligence in learning and her
uniform good conduct in school receives
this first prize from her Instructress
as a *Reward of Merit*

*Sweet pupil of my tender care,
May the bright record pure and fair
That flows in Cowper's pious page,
Thy youthful heart, and mind engage
As I have loved, love his pure verse
Like me, with joy, his charms rehearse;
Till all his precepts firm imparted
Live bright, and lasting in the breast.*

-Almira Selden
Bennington
August 1818



***Bennington Academy, built in 1822,
later known as the Old Academy
Library, and now a private
residence in Old Bennington.***

Catherine Burt was my great-grandfather's oldest sister. Family genealogy showed that she had been born in December 1807, married Joseph Cromack in February 1829, died in September 1888 and had no living descendants.¹ After Catherine died the last member of her family distributed objects that would be meaningful remembrances to various Burt relatives. Our family was given a clock and some books; a cousin was given a sampler.

But I knew nothing about Almira Selden or the school she had operated in Bennington. The Bennington Museum library told me that Almira had been born in Bennington on April 8, 1798,² and that they had a book of poems she had written titled *Effusions of the Heart*, published in 1820, but they had no information about her school. When I found newspaper announcements about other schools I decided to learn more about the education of young women in Bennington at this time.

These years when the United States was a young republic were a time of considerable change.³ There were different views about the appropriate role of women in society.⁴ Many people felt that "the woman's place is in the home." There were discussions about what young women were able to learn, what was appropriate for them to learn, and how they should demonstrate what they had learned. The classical writers had a strong influence – some felt that content of their work was not appropriate for women. Aristotle had said that women should not speak in public.⁵ The important role of public speaking by women is evident in Mary Kelley's book *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America's Republic*.⁶

Earliest schools

Education was important in Bennington's early years. "In January 1763 the proprietors voted a tax on their lands for building a school house, and in the following April it was voted in town meeting to raise a tax to support the schools in 'three parts of the town.'"⁷ The first district school Bennington was probably erected that year. This was only the second year after the town was settled!

Vermont's 1777 constitution required that "A school or schools shall be established in each town, by the Legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth." These schools taught both boys and girls, using any books that were available. In 1797 the state passed a law requiring support for these common schools, saying that they be run a specified number of weeks and that English reading, writing, and arithmetic had to be taught.⁸ The students in these schools often ranged in age from four-year-olds to teenagers. Pedagogy stressed memorization and reciting out loud rather than discussion and understanding.⁹ Education beyond the basics was provided by private grammar schools or academies and was available only to young women whose families could afford them. Anyone could say that he or she was a teacher and open a school.

Many of the academies of the early 1800s focused on preparing young men for college; instruction in Latin and Greek was important. While some academies also admitted young women, the education provided for them was more limited than that available to the male students.

Three different types of school settings were available for young women in Bennington at this time: (1) those for young women only, which were sometimes held in the home of the teacher; (2) schools for young women located in the same building as a school for young men but not a part of that school; and (3) the female departments of academies that also educated young men. In each of these settings most if not all of the instruction of young women appears to have been done by women teachers. This situation was similar to that in other Vermont communities. In the towns around Windsor, for example, "women were mainly limited to gender-segregated instruction."¹⁰

Clio Hall and other early schools

The first grammar school in Bennington, Clio Hall, was chartered in 1780. A small story-and-a-half building, it was located in Old Bennington (then called Bennington Centre) where the Old First Church stands today. It enrolled both boys and girls.¹¹ The curriculum was first described as "the languages and higher branches of English education."¹² By 1790 the

curriculum description was more explicit, listing Greek, Latin, logic, natural and moral philosophy, geography, arithmetic, grammar, and writing.¹³ Clio Hall ceased to function when the building was destroyed by fire in 1803.

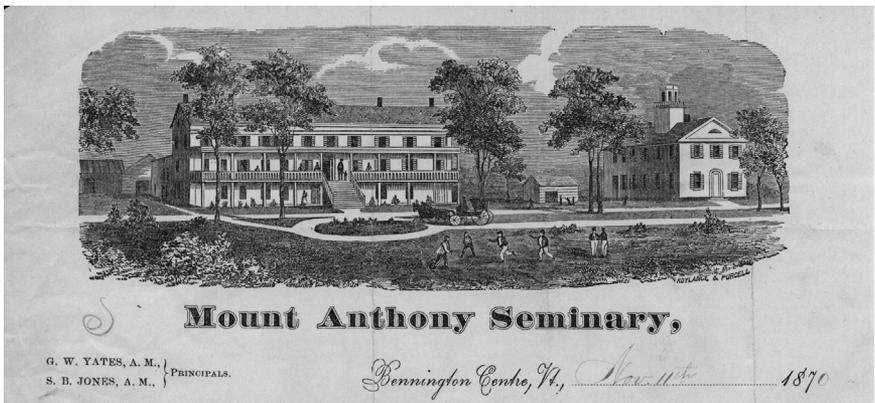
In 1796 and 1797 a select school provided education for young women. “After the lessons were recited, a part of each afternoon was devoted to ornamental branches. The girls were taught fine sewing and embroidery upon linen, silk and lace. The completion of samples of different designs was the ambition of the industrious pupils.”¹⁴

The samplers girls made in schools like this could be used to encourage their interest in education as well as to teach them the art of embroidery. An example is the sampler Catherine Burt made, probably in Almira Selden’s school. It reads:

*How brightly shines the female mind
By Educations care refined
But left uncultured fades away
Like summers rose on wintry day*

Catherine Burt, aged 9
1816¹⁵

But not everyone thought that young women should make samplers in school. In 1802 Eleanor Read, who had previously taught in several other communities in Massachusetts and Vermont, was asked to come to Bennington. She established a school for girls in a building north of the county courthouse, about where the Battle Monument is today. “The branches she principally taught were reading, spelling, writing, English grammar, defining words, composition, speaking, plain needlework, and



The Bennington Seminary, located on Seminary Lane.

religion. She thought it very unnecessary for misses to spend their precious time in learning the arts of painting and embroidery.”¹⁶

All of the early schools in Bennington that were exclusively for young women seem to have had a short existence. Almira Selden’s family provided an ideal setting for her to start a school. They lived in Bennington Centre near other community activities. Her father, Andrew Selden, was a lawyer. He also was the editor of the *Bennington News Letter*, which was published weekly from 1811 until 1815.¹⁷ The American Antiquarian Society has copies of publications with songs and poems by him given at a Fourth of July celebration in 1804, at a Battle of Bennington anniversary celebration in 1805, and in a pamphlet published by Anthony Haswell about 1810.¹⁸ The Selden household must have had lots of books. Reading and writing were everyday activities of the family members.

Selden’s student, Catherine Burt, came from a family who had a farm outside of the town. The Burt family was probably most prosperous at the time Catherine attended Selden’s school and her father, William Burt Jr., was serving as an officer of the local militia. After that, as the family grew larger and financial problems arose, the Burts had to be satisfied with the district school for the rest of Catherine’s education and for the education of the other children. The few books they owned became valuable resources.

Boarding schools

One problem in educating young Vermonters in this period was the fact that many lived at some distance from the nearest grammar school or academy. Boarding schools provided one solution. Another solution was for the young student to board with a family near the school during the week, returning home on the weekend if the distance was not too great.

Catherine Burt probably boarded with a Bennington Centre family when she attended Almira Selden’s school.

Boarding was also used when families sought better education for their children than the nearest school could provide. Hiram Harwood thought the teaching at the district

***“This certifies that master
H.H. Harwood behaves well and
makes rapid improvement”
–Wm. Southworth, instructor***



school in his Bennington Centre neighborhood was poor. He sent his daughter, Adeline, to board with a family in East Bennington so she could attend the district school there.¹⁹

Some families avoided the expense of boarding by sending their child to live with a relative in another community where a good school was available. This is what happened to Catherine Maria Sedgwick. Her parents thought poorly of the schools in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, so they sent her to Bennington to attend school there and live with her father's sister, the wife of the Rev. Job Swift, who was the minister of the Old First Church from 1786 to 1801.²⁰ This school was probably Clio Hall. The academy described in Sedgwick's novel *A New England Tale* may have similarities to Clio Hall; in this story male students routinely took part in the school exhibitions and the reading of an essay by a female student was unusual.

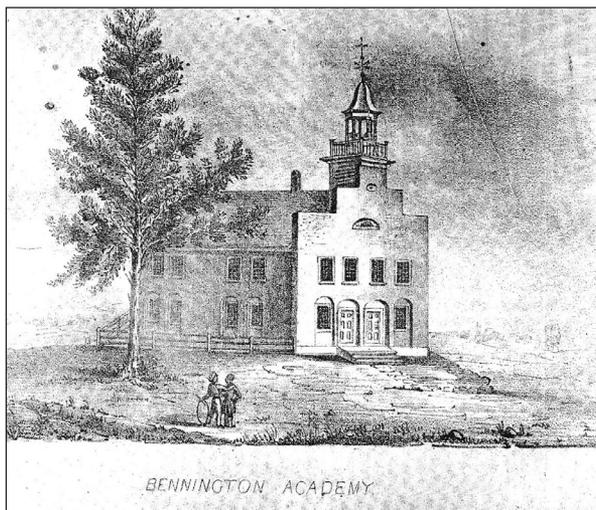
In 1811 Mrs. Mullholland opened a school in Bennington "a few doors south of the Meeting House, where young Ladies may be taught the following branches of education, viz. – Reading, Writing, Geography, English Grammar, plain Needle Work, Ornamental on Musslin, Print Work, & Embroidery. ... Young Ladies may be accommodated with genteel Boarding by Mr. Hull, in the same house with the school."²¹

In 1812 Miss Ball opened a boarding school near the courthouse "for the reception of young ladies who are interested in learning ... reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, rhetoric, history, painting, embroidery and all kinds of needlework. ... Boarding will be furnished on reasonable terms."²²

The advertisement for Miss Ball's school contains text that suggests there were community concerns about the quality of education provided in some Bennington schools. "... the citizens of the district having determined to place the school on a respectable footing, have appointed a Committee to superintend and examine the scholars weekly." This was signed by Truman Squire, David Robinson, and Charles Wright, and said they were that committee.

Exhibitions and orations

One way members of the community could evaluate schools was to attend the exhibitions or programs put on by the students. Most schools had an exhibition at the end of each term. Reporting on the quarterly exhibitions at Clio Hall, Jennings says, "These were very serious affairs, intended to frighten the pupil into more faithful work in preparation and also to appease the desire of parents to see their offspring acquit themselves well in public."²³



This sketch of the Academy building decorates the 1856 Rice-Harwood map of Bennington County.

The programs for these exhibitions reflect the content of the education provided. Comparison of the roles given, and the presentations by young men and young women, reveals gender differences in instruction in these institutions.

Exhibitions could be lengthy affairs that drew large audiences. The 1813 program at the Union Academy had an afternoon session that began at 1 p.m. and included six orations plus a comedy play. This was followed by an evening session beginning at 6 with three orations and two plays. Hiram Harwood wrote in his diary in some detail about the April 1816 exhibition at the Union Academy. It went on for two days. The first day was a shorter program intended mainly for a group of boys; it lasted from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m., with a half hour intermission for lunch. The second day the full program lasted from noon until midnight and attracted an audience of reportedly more than 400 individuals.²⁴

The early 1800s were a time of Protestant religious revivals known as the Second Great Awakening. When a new minister, Daniel Clark, came to Bennington in 1825, he is reported to have “approached moral issues with an even more zealous and intolerant attitude than his predecessor.”²⁵ The increased emphasis on religion led to the establishment of groups whose aim was to resolve social problems; some gave women an opportunity to participate in an activity outside of the home. The Bennington Female Charitable Society was in existence by 1816 when its annual meeting was announced in the *Vermont Gazette*.²⁶

Traveling missionaries also arrived during this period. Suddenly

new churches appeared to supplement the Congregational church that had been established in 1762. The Baptist church was organized in 1827, the Methodist church building begun in 1831, and the Episcopal church in 1834. A second Congregational church was established in 1836. These new denominations tended to attract more female members than male members.

Union Academy

What is now the Village of Bennington was beginning to grow in the early 1800s. A sawmill and a gristmill, known as Safford's Mills, had been built in the early 1760s on Main Street near Morgan and Beech streets.²⁷ Other development in the area, which was usually referred to as East Bennington or the East Village but sometimes called Algiers, soon followed. This included the construction of the Union Academy. The first building with this name was located on the south side of Main Street near the intersection with Safford Street. It had opened by 1811 but was not chartered by the Vermont legislature until October 30, 1817. Later laws in 1833 and 1834 made it possible for the Academy to be located in any place or building within the East Village of Bennington.²⁸

This legislation resulted in the construction of a large new building built on what became known as Union Street; it was near Valentine Street and the Baptist church. A second-floor room was used for balls and religious meetings as well as school exhibitions; the ground-floor rooms were used for educational purposes. Its 1833 catalogue says, "While the Board would be totally averse to rendering this school, in the least degree, as a

*Louisa Norton
made this pencil
drawing of the
Union Academy
from an
illustration on
the 1835 Hinsdill
map of
Bennington.*



sectarian institution, they do not wish to conceal the fact that they depend much upon the co-operation of the friends of the Baptist denomination. The Board design that this Institution shall be inferior to none in the vicinity.” Instruction included courses in natural philosophy, chemistry, and history. “The inductive method of instruction is used; the objective is not so much to crowd the mind with facts, as to make the pupils think.”²⁹ The principal was Adiel Harvey, with Mary A. Stratton and Eliza McKee named as assistant teachers. The catalogue lists 86 students, equally divided between young men and young women. Most of the women were from Bennington, two were from Arlington; six others were from nearby states.

In the 1813 and 1816 Union Academy exhibitions, the orations and dialogues were all given by young men, with young women appearing only in comedies or other dramas. By 1834 the dramas had disappeared from Union Academy exhibitions but the program still showed clear gender differences with the women reading essays and the men giving orations.³⁰

While other Bennington schools encountered serious financial problems and closed in the late 1830s – probably due in part to the recession that began in 1837 and the outmigration from Vermont – the Union Academy expanded. Its 1839 catalogue lists four departments of instruction: Classical, Higher English, Common English, and Music. Total enrollment for two terms was 136 students but each term had only about 90 students. Young women as well as young men were enrolled in each department; 26 gentlemen and 12 ladies were in the classical department.³¹ This is the earliest indication that the classical languages were being taught to young women in a school in Bennington.

Bennington Academy

The catalogue of the Union Academy for the academic year 1846-7 shows Nathan Ayer, principal; Sarah Loomis, preceptor; Louisa Lewis, assistant and teacher of drawing and painting; and Laura Norton, teacher of music. The students were 68 gentlemen and 77 ladies, with about two-thirds of the students coming from the East Village. The three departments were: Common English; Higher English; Latin and Greek. Instruction in French, drawing, painting, and music was available at additional cost. Wednesday afternoons each week were devoted to composition. In addition to exhibitions, a public examination was held at the end of each term.³²

The last evidence of Union Academy’s operation is an advertisement that appeared in the fall of 1849. The principal, Mr. H. K. Fisher, taught mathematics and English, while Charles White taught French, Greek, and Latin, and Sarah Houghton taught music and drawing.

To better understand the complicated story about the Bennington Academy and the Bennington Seminary, it is important to know that a young printer named William Lloyd Garrison was brought to Bennington in 1828 to establish a newspaper that would have different political views than the *Vermont Gazette*. He developed friendships in the community with people who shared these views. Among these was James Ballard, principal of the Bennington Academy. Later in his career Garrison became a nationally known abolitionist and was also an advocate for women's rights but there is nothing in the material from his Bennington years to show that he had developed that interest or was concerned with young women's education.

The Bennington Academy was established in 1821, but it never applied to the state for a charter. It was located in the brick building at the corner of Monument Avenue and Bank Street in Bennington Centre. Absalom Peters was president of the institution. An announcement in March 1822 said that the Academy had two purposes: 1. "To give young men and lads a thorough and systematic preparation for admission into College," and 2. "To afford to others of both sexes, a more extensive and systematic English education, than can be acquired at any common academy."³³ The school was to have two departments, one for males and one for females. The male department had been operating since December 1821. The female department was to open officially in the spring of 1822 "but young ladies from abroad however are now, and will continue to be, accommodated under the immediate care of the Preceptor "with a sufficient number of instructresses." Board "in respectable families" was available for students from out of town. There were three levels of instruction: "1. Latin and Greek Classics and the usual College studies, 2. Common Academic studies, and 3. Spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic."³⁴ Apparently enrollments did not meet expectations because the Academy did not occupy the entire building in 1822. The Bennington Centre village school was also located there with Ann Hubbard and Emma Hicks advertised as the teachers.³⁵ The district school continued to occupy this building for many years while the private schools located there experienced changes.

The Academy's curriculum soon changed. The English program was divided into five divisions: 1. parsing, arithmetic, geography and bookkeeping; 2. analytic parsing, history, rhetoric; 3. algebra and logarithms; geometry, trigonometry, mensuration; leveling, surveying and navigation; 4. natural philosophy, astronomy, chemistry, botany, geology, mineralogy and zoology; 5. moral philosophy, evidence of Christianity, rhetoric, intellectual philosophy, natural theology, analogy between nature and revealed religion. Latin and Greek were available for anyone wishing to qualify for college admission. The course in English was the same for males

and females except that females were not required to study the topics in the third division (algebra, geometry, etc.).³⁶

In 1827 James Ballard was appointed principal of the Bennington Academy. He said that students in the school must “observe the Sabbath strictly and attend public worship” and not attend “theatrical exhibitions, balls, dancing schools, and the like”; students who did not comply would be expelled. This was apparently accepted by the parents of the boarding students who were living under Ballard’s supervision. But when he said that this also applied to students who lived at home, many parents as well as the school committee felt he had overstepped his authority. Matters worsened in January 1828 when Ballard published new rates of tuition without consulting the school committee. The committee told Ballard his services were no longer needed. He then started the Bennington Seminary.

Details of the controversy between proponents of the Bennington Seminary and the new Bennington Academy were described in an article in the May 4, 1829, issue of the *Vermont Gazette*.³⁷ The controversy became a major public concern. In 1830-31 the First Congregational Church held a “church trial” of James Ballard, in which it was said that erecting a school in competition with the Academy, already established, had caused “strife” among the congregation.³⁸

The departure of Ballard led to the publication of several Bennington Academy catalogues in 1829. One shows Alpha K. Burnham as principal and Eliza Haswell as the assistant teacher, and it lists 35 gentlemen and 23 ladies as students. Most of the young women came from Bennington, with two from Pownal. Another catalogue dated Fall 1829 has Franklin Luse as principal, Elisa Haswell assistant. This names 80 students – 45 gentlemen and 35 ladies. Seventeen of the young women were from Bennington but there were also 13 from other Vermont towns, and four students from nearby towns in other states. The regular course of instruction could be completed in two years. In the first year all students took geography and arithmetic; while the college-bound students took Latin and Greek. The other students studied history, philosophy, chemistry, rhetoric, and logic. In the second year, there were differences in instruction for men and women. All students took history and philosophy; the young women took drawing and painting, French and Spanish while the young men took algebra, geometry, surveying, and bookkeeping.³⁹

Another catalogue from this same period said the school had a library of “several hundred volumes” that any student could access for an additional fee beyond the usual tuition. A Literary Society had been “instituted by the young gentlemen of the Academy, who meet weekly for mutual Improvement in declaration, composition, extemporaneous speaking and

other literary exercises.”⁴⁰ There is no evidence of a literary society for women students.

By 1831 there were further changes in staffing and curriculum. William H. Parker was principal while Minerva Brownson continued to “assist in the charge of the school.” Instruction was available at two levels: 1. “languages, mathematics, moral and intellectual philosophy, and chemistry with experiments”, and 2. “other branches.”⁴¹ Still more changes occurred in 1832 when David Sheldon was principal and Mary Foote assistant for one term. Then William Parker returned as principal with Susan Parker his assistant. Enrollment totaled 123 individuals, including 45 ladies, all but six from Bennington.⁴²

The enrollment of young women in the Academy had increased to 69 by 1834; there were 55 men. This increase in women was primarily due to young women from Massachusetts towns, especially Lanesboro. David Sheldon continued as principal and Ann Sheldon his assistant for the fall and winter terms. Thomas Hubbard was to be in charge of the summer term.⁴³

The last announcement for the Bennington Academy appeared in August 1839. It says the institution would be exclusively for “young men and lads.” William Kent was to be in charge.⁴⁴ This change is not surprising, for the programs from Bennington Academy exhibitions held in April 1830 and August 1836 make it clear that the school was focused on the education of young men; they are the only participants listed.⁴⁵ The 1839 announcement added, “It is in contemplation to open, also, in this Village a high school for Young Ladies and Misses, as soon as practicable.” But it never happened. There is no evidence of any school for young women opening in Bennington at this time to fill this void.

Bennington Seminary

In October 1828 an announcement in William Lloyd Garrison’s *Journal of the Times* said that James Ballard and Miss Eliza Ballard were opening the Bennington English and Classical Seminary for Young Gentlemen and Ladies, and indicated that James Ballard wished “to secure the morals of his scholars as well as improving their minds.” Both sexes were to be admitted; this would create a “happy influence in correcting the morals and improving the manners of each other.” A large building was to be erected for the accommodation of gentlemen as a dormitory separate from the dwelling house that was to be appropriated to the ladies. In the interim, boarding would be available at the dwelling of Edwin Safford, a deacon of the church. There were three departments: junior, senior, and permanent. The junior

department taught spelling, reading, writing, geography, history, and mental arithmetic. The senior department taught “all branches of a good English education, the more useful and modern languages, mathematics, moral and intellectual philosophy, natural history, and chemistry.” The permanent department would receive boarding students; the instructors would live with the students.⁴⁶ An accompanying announcement showing support for Ballard was signed by the Rev. Daniel Clark, deacons Stephen Hinsdill and John Whiting, and Isaac Tichenor, Noadiah Swift, Heman Swift, and Jonathan Robinson.

That winter Garrison published an article praising the Bennington Seminary that contains a description of the exhibition held on two days at the end of December 1828. He mentioned the students’ work in languages, mathematics, natural philosophy, geography, and history. He said that awards were given, not only for scholarship, but also for not whispering, punctuality in attending public worship, kindness to others, and good behavior in school. “Of the government of the Seminary, the praise cannot be too ample. . . . The superintendent and his assistants are eminently qualified for their high trust; their object is to imbue the youthful mind with the noblest sentiments of virtue and religion, while they quicken the mental powers.”⁴⁷

The Bennington Seminary catalogue for 1834 named James Ballard as principal and teacher. Sophia Sparhawk was teacher and principal of the female department, with Sarah Mack teacher and principal of the female department for the winter term. Fanny White was the teacher in the “preparatory department” while another female, Nekhemiah Hodge, served as a teacher and monitor. This catalogue listed 34 female students, 26 in the seminary and 12 in the preparatory program. Most of these young women lived in Bennington but there were also female students from other Vermont towns and from nearby New York state and Massachusetts. The 1834 catalogue also shows the names of individuals who would supply a reference for the quality of Seminary. Prominent among these is William Lloyd Garrison. Other recommenders include the presidents of Middlebury College and Williams College, as well as doctors and members of the clergy. There were no female recommenders.

An 1837 entry in Hiram Harwood’s diary says that at a meeting in Bennington Centre it was resolved to “establish a Female Seminary on the ruins of that which had just ceased” (in the building that had housed Ballard’s Bennington Seminary).⁴⁸ But there seems no evidence that this was accomplished. The Academy-Seminary competition had left the young women in Bennington with limited educational opportunities.

Some young women from Bennington attended schools in other

communities during this period. It is known that Julia Henry, Margret Hyde, Louisa Norton, Ann Marie Robinson, Samantha Swift, and Eliza Trenor all attended Miss Sarah Pierce's Litchfield (Connecticut) Female Academy (also known as Miss Sarah Pierce's Academy) in 1826 or 1826-27.⁴⁹ It seems likely that the Troy Female Seminary, founded by Emma Willard in 1821, would have attracted students from Bennington.

The schools available to young women in the Bennington area were better than most in New England at this period. But the emphasis was on providing education for young men, so young women's education was restricted. They rarely had an opportunity to learn mathematics beyond basic arithmetic. They also lacked opportunities to learn the classical languages and read the classical authors. Many families could not afford the cost of an academy or seminary education for their daughters. But young women had other opportunities to learn.

Learning and libraries

Lack of access to an academy or seminary did not stop the young women of this period from learning. This learning took place in several settings – “in homes, in social circles, in reading groups, and in various societies and organizations. . . . Most nineteenth century women and men supplemented school attendance with a variety of self- and group-directed learning activities.”⁵⁰

Schools emphasized the memorization of certain books and often mentioned their titles in the school advertisements. Young women who wished to replicate that education by themselves could try to obtain copies of these books and learn the content. In the 1820s Darius Clark sold a variety of school books – grammar books, arithmetic books, geography books with an atlas, dictionaries, and books in Latin and Greek. A book entitled *The Young Man's Companion* was “intended to help the student form not only scholarly and Christian habits, but ideas.”⁵¹

The literacy rate was high in Vermont and in the Bennington community. Nearly every household had its own small library. Data are not available for Bennington, but a study of the Windsor, Vermont, area at this period shows that most families had a library of ten or more books.⁵² The size of these family libraries varied considerably with more affluent village families, especially those of clergymen and lawyers, having larger libraries while more isolated and poorer farm families had fewer books. Almost every household had a Bible and many also had a hymnal or book of psalms for singing. Most families had some text books that had been used by the parents or the older children. This was the case in the Burt household. A

book whose title page is missing is inscribed in the front “Catherine Knox” and inside the back “Catherine Burt, Bennington.” The table of contents begins with “Rules for Reading and Speaking” followed by a group of selections (including material from Shakespeare and a speech by George Washington) where these rules were to be applied. Later chapters are titled Eloquence, Dialogues, and Poetry. (Apparently the Knoxes and the Burts did not see any problems in public speaking by women.)

That books were plentiful in Bennington is due in part to the presence of several printers. Anthony Haswell’s printing company is the one best known. Haswell (1756 – 1816) published several books obviously intended for use by students. They include *Wisdom in Miniature or the young gentleman’s and lady’s pleasing instructor*, which was published in 1808.⁵³ This probably appealed to young women who were trying to educate themselves.

If funds were not available to purchase books, young women might borrow books from friends, neighbors or a lending library. A library was proposed in Bennington in 1793 and was available “for the benefit of those who choose to become proprietors” by April 1796.⁵⁴ In 1824 the printer Darius Clark opened a circulating library at his bookstore; the subscription price was \$20 a year.⁵⁵ Clark’s library, which was added to from time to time, included a history of Vermont, books by several English authors (such as Milton, Byron, and Pope), missionary literature, and a variety of children’s books.⁵⁶ Jennings says this library was a good source of education for people in Bennington.

Most households had several other types of reading material in addition to books. Almost every family subscribed to a newspaper and most homes had an almanac. The almanacs had selections from well-known authors and often stories submitted by readers – many also had mathematical puzzles. These, along with the family’s books, provided educational material for young women when attendance at an academy was not possible.

Reading was a social activity. Families read together in the evenings. Young people visited each other bringing books to read. Hiram Harwood found books as a “link with others... Reading became as much a communal as a solitary activity for him.”⁵⁷ Reading could also be useful in a courtship. Hiram Harwood was seeking ways to be alone with Sally Parsons (whom he later married) in January 1815 so he took a book and, finding the old people gone, was able to sit down by a good light and read to Sally from a novel he liked. He returned the next evening with the same book.⁵⁸ Hiram Harwood’s long list of what he had read may seem extreme to us but it was probably not seen as unusual by his contemporaries.

While there was a literary society for young men at the Bennington Academy and a Social Society where men debated and talked about books,

there were fewer such opportunities for women. Almira Selden encouraged young women in Bennington to learn on their own by reading and in discussions with other women. In her book, which was published by Darius Clark in 1820, she mentions the Bennington Female Reading Society. No other reference to this group has been found. One of her poems says that that group read the *Life of Aristides*.⁵⁹ Other things mentioned by her that may have been part of the groups' reading include Pope's *Essay on Criticism*, Scott's *Lady of the Lake*, James Thomson's *Insects*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, and works by Addison, Sterne, and Brook. She refers to reading a book by Mary Hays titled *Female Biography* and another by Francis Augustus Cox named *Female Scripture Biography*. Literary groups like this that gave young women skills in critical thought and public speaking helped them to become community leaders in voluntary organizations as adults.⁶⁰ As these changes in women's education occurred, the young women in Bennington who had taken the classical curriculum at the Union Academy or who had heard about the Troy Female Seminary offering women a curriculum that matched what was given to men to prepare them for college began to wonder if college education might become available for women. This was to be the case.

Almira Selden left Bennington and moved to western New York state after her 1826 marriage to Orin Edgerton.⁶¹ But her efforts to inspire women to further education did not end then. She had one daughter, Sarah Antoinette Edgerton, born in 1832, who graduated from Oberlin College in 1854, making her one of the earliest women college graduates in the United States.⁶² By the middle of the 1800s educational opportunities for women were starting an advancement that succeeded to bring them into modern society. □

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3. Jack Larkin. *The Reshaping of Everyday Life: 1790 – 1840*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.
4. Nancy Cott. *The Bonds of Womanhood: "Women's Sphere" in New England, 1780 – 1835*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977.
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6. Mary Kelley. *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic*. Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
7. Hiland Hall, in *Vermont Historical Magazine*, 163. This article also contains an extract from a poem by Almira Selden about the Battle of Bennington.
8. John C. Huden. *Development of State School Administration in Vermont*, Vermont Historical Society, 1944, 34.
9. Larkin, 35.
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11. Isaac Jennings Jr., Bennington Museum, manuscript Early Education In Bennington, Accession # 1794. [Unbound, handwritten manuscript, many pages lacking numbers, sequence uncertain]
12. Hall, op. cit., 165.
13. Bennington Museum, Day Papers, Book U, 164.
14. Melvin H. Robinson, Ed., *Bennington Souvenir*. 1904, 12.
15. Sampler now owned by Sue Borgese.
16. *The Religious Experience of Mrs. Emerson, late Miss Eleanor Read, Formerly Preceptress of a School in Bennington*; printed by Anthony Haswell, Bennington, 1809.
17. Bennington News-Letter 1811 – 1815, American Antiquarian Society.
18. Elegiac poems, ca. 1800; Songs to be sung by the patriots and whigs of '77 – August 16, 1809; American Antiquarian Society.
19. Hiram Harwood Diaries, Bennington Museum, March 22, 1831
20. Sedgwick Family papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.
21. *Green Mountain Farmer*, Jan. 14, 1811.
22. *Green Mountain Farmer*, Sept. 9, Sept. 16, 1812.
23. Jennings, op. cit.
24. Hiram Harwood Diaries, Bennington Museum, 130-134.
25. Robert Shalhope. *A Tale of New England: The Diaries of Hiram Harwood*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, 195.
26. *Vermont Gazette*, Oct. 1 1816.
27. *Bennington Souvenir*, 26.
28. *Acts and Laws Passed by the Vermont Legislature*.
29. *Union Academy, Catalogue for the Summer Term, Ending Sept. 5, 1833*; Bennington Museum, Catalogue A 1637.
30. Exhibition, Union Academy, Bennington East Village, Sept. 4, 1834, Bennington Museum, Catalogue A 1637.
31. Union Academy, Catalogue 1839, Bennington Museum, Catalogue A 1637.
32. Union Academy Catalogue 1846-1847, American Antiquarian Society, A 947.
33. *Vermont Gazette*, March 21, 1822.
34. Ibid.
35. *Vermont Gazette*, May 7, 1822
36. *Vermont Gazette*, Sept. 16, 1823.
37. *Vermont Gazette*, May 4, 1829 in folder with Bennington Academy catalogues, Bennington Museum, Catalogue 1956, 159 a-d.
38. James Ballard Church Trial Records, Bennington Museum, Catalogue A 3091.
39. Bennington Academy, Catalogue Fall Term 1829; Bennington Museum, Catalogue 753A.
40. Bennington Academy, Catalogue of students during the winter term of 1830; Bennington Museum, Catalogue 758 A.
41. Bennington Academy announcement Sept. 11, 1832
42. Bennington Academy, Catalogue for the Winter and Summer Terms Ending Aug. 10, 1831; Bennington Museum, Catalogue 1956, 159c.
43. Bennington Academy, Catalogue for the year ending Aug. 14, 1834; Bennington Museum, Catalogue 758A.
44. Newspaper announcement, Aug. 27, 1839; Bennington Museum, Catalogue A758.
45. Bennington Academy exhibitions April 23, 1830
46. *Journal of the Times*, Oct. 3, 1823.
47. *Journal of the Times*, Jan. 2, 1829.
48. Hiram Harwood Diary, Bennington Museum, March 2, 1837.
49. Letter from Lynne T. Brickley to Bennington Museum, Nov. 3, 1983; Bennington Museum archives; Lynne T. Brickley, Sarah Pierce's Litchfield Female Academy, 1792-1833, Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1985.
50. Lucia McMahan. A More Accurate and Extensive Education than is Customary: Educational Opportunities for Women in Early-Nineteenth-Century New Jersey. *New Jersey History*, volume 124, number 1, 1 – 28.
51. Jennings, op. cit.
52. Gilmore, op. cit., p. 272-273.

53. See the American Antiquarian Society collection for this and other examples of his work.
54. *Vermont Gazette*, Aug. 30, 1793; *Vermont Gazette*, April 13, 1796
55. Day Papers, Bennington Museum, Book U, 265
56. Jennings, op. cit.
57. Robert Shalhope. *A Tale of New England: The Diaries of Hiram Harwood, Vermont Farmer, 1810 – 1837*. Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003, 104.
58. Harwood Diaries, Bennington Museum, Jan. 22 and 23, 1815.
59. Almira Selden. Aristides in *Effusions of the Heart*, 91-93.
60. Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education and Public Life in America's Republic*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.
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“200 Years ago in Bennington, Vermont” *Poems by Almira Selden*

Almira Selden was born in Bennington on April 8, 1798, a daughter of Andrew and Charity Selden. Her grandfather, Thomas Selden Jr., fought in the Battle of Bennington. Her father moved from Stamford, Vermont, to Bennington in 1797; he was a lawyer and served as probate judge. In 1820 a book of poems by Almira entitled “Effusions of the Heart” was published by Darius Clark in Bennington. These poems are from that book. The year 1816 experienced “the year without a summer” when ash from the eruption of Mount Tambora covered the earth and kept sunlight from reaching crops.

To a Strawberry Plant:

After the severe frosts and storms of June 8, 9, 10, and 11, 1816

*Sweet, lovely plant – who rear'st thy humble head,
Mid the soft foliage of this lonely grove;
Where the dark maple, birch or willow spread,
Such screen for thee, as still I fondly love.*

*Those chilling blasts, which laid thy sisters low,
The proud possessors of yon sunny vale,
Here in thy lone retreat, thou did'st not know,
Nor felt like them, the wildly sweeping gale.*

*Thou like the poet, oft perhaps, hast sigh'd,
For Fortune's smiles, that 'like from both has flown
Yet see how low the plant and man of pride,
By Tempests rude, to humble life, unknown –*

*Then here alone, unenvied let us dwell –
Here lonely live, free from life's dread alarms;
I'll sing the sweets, of thy romantic dell,
And copy Nature's free and various charms.*

*And though misfortune oft may be our lot,
The careless words, will heedless, pass us by
Fame's smile or frown can neither reach the spot
Where thou shalt wither and Louisa dies.*

*I first may go – then thou perhaps wilt rest
On the lone sod, that marks my humble tomb;
Or thou may'st wither then thy poet's breast
Will heave a sigh o'er thy expiring bloom -*

Lines written on July 4, 1816

*Spirits of the brave, awake-
Martyr'd heroes, now arise
Muses, Harps of rapture take,
Descend ye Seraphs from the skies –
And bless the day,
When Freedom's ray,
Shone in glory o'er our land,
When Slavery's foes,
United rose,
In glory's cause to fall or stand.*

*Father of our country, dead,
Sainted dweller of the sky! –
Sure thy spirit hast not fled
No thou leav'st thy home on high
To bless the hour,
That guilt did cower,*

*Before stern Justices' awful arm-
Thy country's fame
In Heaven will claim
From thee Affection's holy charm.*

*Angel spirits of the Good!
Who for us those blessings brought;
Here against oppression stood,
And obtain'd the prize ye sought,
From the starry seat,
On light wing fleet,
And bring your airy lyres of love –
Columbia join
With songs divine
Of praise, for blessings from above.*

*Blessed day, while life remains
In my mem'ry shalt thou live;
Distant lands, or exile's chains
Ne'er could raise what thou dost give-
No e'en stern death,
When my last breath,
Shall flee like vapour from the earth
Can ever part
From my fair heart,
That day, which gave my country birth.*

Lines composed in the autumn of 1816

*Summer tell me, why so fast
Dost lightly speed away?
I cannot bear the wintry blast
That tells thy dying day –
Summer why so fast?*

*Autumn why so dreary now
Dost come with sullen frown?
Why so soon, from summer's brown
Dost tear her vernal crown?
Autumn why so drear?*

*Autumn, stay thy course a while,
Drive not summer's charms from me!
Let her soft, departing smile,
Still lingering be!
Autumn pause a while.*

*Boreas, why with chilling breeze,
Dust sweep the hill and plain?
Why do leaves, from fading tree,
With rustling noise complain?
Boreas why thy chilling breeze?*

*Autumn, thee, I fondly love,
Array'd in mantle pale?
When the fruits of hill and grove,
Are fann'd by cooling gale.
Autumn thee I love.*

*September, why so chill,
Prelude of winter drear,
But like November, frowning still,
Blight each prospect dear? –
September why so chill?*

*Autumn quickly speed thy flight
Though winter stern I dread,
Yet will Spring, in youthful light
Her beauties 'round us spread,
Autumn speed thy flight.*

**Lines composed August 16, 1818
On the anniversary of the Battle of Bennington**

*On this glad morn, let thankful joy,
Elate each true and grateful breast;
The love of God our thoughts employ
And all our praise to Him address'd.
Though bless'd with plenty, friends and peace
No more the soldier says adieu;
Yet tender feelings ne'er should cease,
To think of scenes then dire and new,
When war's dark clouds o'er our lov'd country sail'd,
And ev'ry scene in gloom and terror veil'd.*

*Ah no – Benina, native town,
Spot of my birth, forever dear
No Lethean draught can ever drown,
The memory of that day of fear,
When the wild echo, of farewell
From parent, husband, child and wife,
Seem'd sadder than the funeral knell,
That tells the certain flight of life, -
Yet freedom spake, Faith rais'd her rampart pure,
And holy confidence gave vict'ry sure.*

*Then firmer than the native pine,
That tops thy mountains ever green,
Led by Almighty smiles divine
Facing their foes thy sons were seen,
As when the livid lightning keen
Tears from the pine some stem away,
Yet still unmov'd, the trunk is seen –
Thus Stark stood victor of the day,
And while the voice of triumph met his ear,
He, o'er the dying foe, shed pity's tear.*

*Then to the sacred throne did rise,
The pure thank off'ring of the heart,
Those tears of joy, those grateful sighs
Flew far above, not veil'd by art –
With those of seventy-seven, who live
Our hearts now join, in grateful love,
Feeling, thorough them, that God did give
Freedom, best blessing from above
And o'er the graves of those that silent sleep
The souls of fond surviving patriots weep.*



A contemporary sketch of “the great awakener” George Whitefield.

Religion, Revival, and Diversity *in a Nineteenth-Century Vermont family*

Susan Ouellette

In April of 1823, Phebe Orvis (1801-1868), as a young woman living in Addison County, Vermont, wrote feelingly of her personal spiritual concerns in her journal:

Oh what a wicked creature I am, neglect my maker as I do. Lord forbid that I should continue to live in sloth, may I not renounce the things of an earthly nature, and seek superior bliss? God grant that we may live no longer in such a stupid Backslidden (sic) condition but may we both run the race that is set before us with alacrity, till we arrive on Canaan’s happy shore.¹

This kind of soul-searching can be found throughout Phebe Orvis’s journal, which she kept faithfully from July of 1820 to October 1830. These

musings provide us with a window into her Quaker spirituality, even as life events and people interrupted her thoughts. Born into a family of Friends who settled in Addison County in the 1780s, Phebe appears to have sought to remain true to the Quaker faith of her family and community. By the time she was four years old, she was recognized as a regular at the Lincoln Friends meeting. She read avidly, both religious tracts, her bible, and travel literature, and eventually expanded her intellectual and spiritual world when she attended the Middlebury Female Seminary. There she met other young women who were also inclined toward scholarly and spiritual introspection. Throughout her life she often listened quietly for the inner guidance of the divine light even as the noise and disruption of a frontier household filled with people and children could allow:

“Sund 23rd (1824) Beautiful day, but my mind is (in) continual darkness. Will God lighten it?”²

The period in which Phebe was born and became a young adult was the end of a quiet decline in religious sensibilities. By the time she was eighteen, the first glimmerings of the Second Great Awakening began to emerge in the American Northeast. Yet Phebe does not seem to have been influenced by this early religious movement. Before her marriage to Samuel Eastman in 1824, she maintained her quiet connection to the divine in much the same way her parents and grandparents did. Afterwards, her piety was increasingly challenged. Perhaps a closer proximity to the “burned over district” of central New York placed her in the path of the ever-expanding sphere of the Great Awakening.

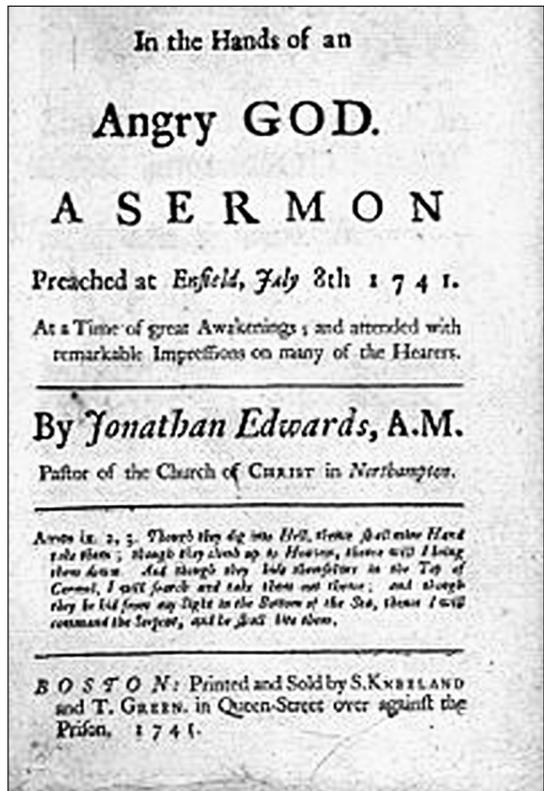
Phebe’s marriage to Eastman facilitated her move out to north central New York State on the edge of the spreading fires of revival. It is most likely that the first tests to her daily devotions came from the work and worry of household duties, the demands of a frontier farmstead on her labor, and the successive arrival of children. These demands on her time and attention were surely a distraction, but she seems to have been most gravely tried by her husband’s lack of faith and his constant irreverent attitude toward her own piety. In particular, Eastman’s refusal to accept and practice her version of a virtuous life caused her to worry constantly about the state of her husband and, as an extension of him, their children’s souls.

In this, Phebe’s worries mirror the broader sweep of American society’s engagement in the Second Great Awakening. Indeed, historians who study the religious revival of the early nineteenth century have established that

it was mainly women who led the wave of enthusiasm that broke over the country in the antebellum period.³ Conversely, Phebe's experience took a sharp detour away from this trajectory when her husband finally experienced his own brand of spiritual "awakening." The circumstances that confounded her and led to some disruption in the Orvis-Eastman household piety are almost comical.

The conflict began unremarkably with a family illness. Samuel Eastman fell ill during a time when their community experienced an epidemic of a non-specific bronchial disease. In some of the afflicted, the disease turned septic and became fatal. As his infection progressed, Eastman finally called for a physician, who counseled him on his potential mortality and urged him to put his affairs in order. Confronted with this reality, he finally surrendered to his wife's desire that they pray openly together for a return to physical health. In the process of his weakened moment, Eastman promised his wife that he would repent his ways. He also made a bargain that many individuals facing their mortality have done: if he got better he would amend his behavior, and he would go to church.

When he recovered, Eastman kept his promise. The irony for Phebe was that when her husband followed through on his promise to adopt a more devout life, the congregation of the local Baptist church was engaged in its own version of Awakening enthusiasm. Its proximity, as well as their familiarity with many members of the congregation, are likely factors that brought the couple to the service. But Phebe could not have



Poster for a sermon preached in Enfield, Conn., by Rev. Jonathan Edwards in 1841.

anticipated what would happen next. At the service, Eastman's religious fervor was stirred and he was saved, but rather than adopt the quiet spiritual piety of a Friend, he adopted the fiery evangelical enthusiasm of the Baptists. From Phebe's point of view, this was a disaster.

Rather than bringing their household together in spiritual accord, this situation created new fissures and brought tremendous pressures on their marriage. The tables were now turned on Phebe who, when her husband tried to evangelize her, steadfastly refused baptism. This was not the Quakers' way. Moreover, she adamantly refused to allow their children to be drawn into the Baptist fold and away from her own Quaker traditions. The battle over which religious tradition would prevail in the Eastman-Orvis household waged on for months. In one instance, Eastman attempted to forcibly baptize his wife by stealth, although he was not successful.⁴ How long this campaign lasted is not clear because it persisted beyond the scope of her journal. Before October of 1830, Phebe indulges neither a Baptist conversion nor a Quaker capitulation; contemporary church records are silent on her membership. What is clear, however, is that the Revival experience of the Orvis-Eastman household did not follow the conventional narrative of the Second Great Awakening.

Phebe Orvis was not the only one of her siblings who was challenged by the vicissitudes of the religious revivals that swept the northeast in this period. Several of her brothers, Isaac (1809-1894), Eleazor (1797-1879), Silas (1793-1880) and John (1816-1897) were also affected. While Isaac, Eleazor, and Silas remained Friends, they were caught up in the schism that divided Quakers. Antebellum Friends struggled with their relationship to social reform and, in particular, to the abolition movement. The split, which divided the Quakers between Hicksite and Orthodox factions, was at base driven by the same religious revival that drew Samuel Eastman into Baptist membership. While some Friends wanted to incorporate the new evangelical ideas about personal salvation with older existing Quaker beliefs and practices, others were uncomfortable with these notions and clung to the traditions of detached inner quietude. The new, revived Friends became known as the Progressive-Orthodox Quakers. Those who rejected the changes became known as Hicksite Quakers, named for Elias Hicks, one of the most vocal critics of the changes.⁵

The more radical Progressive Quakers, individuals like Lucretia Mott, for instance, became deeply invested in social movements. In Mott's case, her activism focused on women's rights and abolition. For her public reform

work, Mott was censured by the Philadelphia meeting but she refused to be bullied. In the case of the Orvis brothers, abolition became their primary cause. While Quakers generally decried slavery, many Hicksite Friends wanted to suppress public social activism of any kind, including abolition. They were suspicious of the revivalist enthusiasm for reform and even disowned some of the more outspoken abolitionists. But not all.

A few Friends on the Hicksite side of the schism embraced antislavery efforts along with their Orthodox counterparts. This seeming contradiction was present among three of the Orvis brothers. When Silas, Isaac, and Eleazor left Vermont they joined a contingent of American settlers who put down roots in southern Ontario and became part of the new community of Pickering. The majority of the settlement was populated by Quakers from Vermont, and the Friends in Pickering organized the Hicksite Yonge Street Meeting. Despite the predominantly Hicksite sensibilities of the meeting, the Orvis men became involved in the anti-slavery movement, and Isaac was actively involved in the resettlement of runaways coming to Ontario.⁶ Inevitably their work put them at odds with their Hicksite brethren. In November of 1828, all three men were censored by the meeting, along with their brother-in-law, Nicolas Austin.⁷ Eventually, Isaac was disowned by the Meeting while Eleazor and Silas were not.⁸

It is not clear what made the Friends treat Isaac differently, but his youthful rebelliousness and perhaps more passionate personality placed him at odds with the elders. According to the Meeting minutes, he was more confrontational in his response to their clampdown. In the aftermath of his split with the Yonge Street Friends, Isaac left Pickering and traveled west to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where he continued his abolitionist work. He also seems to have left the Friends entirely. Conversely, Eleazor and Silas Orvis, perhaps willing to acknowledge the authority of the Meeting, remained members in good standing in the Yonge Street Meeting and stayed in the Pickering settlement.⁹

While the Quaker traditions remained strong for the two elder Orvis siblings, Phebe Orvis's younger half-brother, John, left the fold for a new, more radical spiritual life. Attracted first by abolitionism, John became an impassioned orator and author. He published many essays and letters on the subject in William Lloyd Garrison's anti-slavery publication *The Liberator* and traveled throughout the Northeast giving anti-slavery speeches.¹⁰ Yet the broader concern that animated his passion was the corrosive effect of industrial capitalism on American society. Imbued by the reform spirit of

the era and dismayed by the results of the new industrial landscape, John Orvis became attracted to the Utopian experiment launched at Brook Farm in Roxbury, Massachusetts.¹¹ There, he met and married Marianna Dwight, the daughter of an early organizer and investor in Brook Farm. Together, the couple lived and worked at Brook Farm, embracing the Transcendentalist ideology and working for the reform of “social problems,” as one genealogist observed.¹² John Orvis was a true man of his time; he fully embraced the utopian ideals of Brook Farm with its egalitarian and Unitarian philosophies but he also supported the women’s rights movement, temperance, and complete emancipation for African-Americans.¹³

The influence of Brook Farm Transcendentalism took John Orvis away from his introspective Quaker roots and propelled him into public lectures on the evils of slavery and to extoll the virtues of Social Science as envisioned by Charles Fourier. Despite Orvis’s short-lived experience at Brook Farm – it only operated from 1841 to 1847 – his broader understanding of American individualism and democratic and egalitarian ideals were sharpened by his time there. John Orvis continued to live in Roxbury, where he worked in the life-insurance industry and also dabbled in improvements of mechanical sewing machines. His Quaker roots left behind, Orvis adopted an evangelical enthusiasm for secular reform that was influenced by the Unitarian and Transcendental philosophies and focused on social improvement. Thus, he represents the Orvis sibling who traveled farthest from the religious traditions of his family.

The rest of Phebe Orvis’s siblings spread across the religious spectrum of Protestant Christian churches. Her sisters tended to adopt the faith of their husbands; Harriet married Quaker Nicolas Austin while Elizabeth followed her husband, George Chamberlin, into the Baptist Church. One cousin, Orvis Wicks, adopted the Mormon faith and went west with the Mormons in the 1850s.¹⁴

The larger context of this family’s religious diversity is the tremendous change that took place in the religious and social world of Antebellum United States. In this, the Orvis family seems to have mirrored the social, religious and cultural whirlwinds of the era. □

- 1 See Susan Ouellette, *An Extraordinary Ordinary Woman*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2017), Journal entry, April 20, 1823.
- 2 Ouellette, Journal entry, November 23, 1823.
- 3 See Paul Johnson, *A Shopkeeper’s Millenium*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978).
- 4 See Susan Ouellette, *An Extraordinary Ordinary Woman*, (New York: SUNY Press, 2017).

- 5 Thomas D. Hamm, "The Hicksite Quaker World, 1875-1900," *Quaker History*, Vol. 89, No. 2, (Fall 2000): 17-41; H. Larry Ingle, "A Ball That Has Rolled Beyond Our Reach: The Consequences of Hicksite Reform, 1830, As Seen in an Exchange of Letters," *Delaware History*, 21 (Fall-Winter 1984): 127-37; Thomas D. Hamm, "Hicksite Quakers and the Antebellum Nonresistance Movement," *Church History*, 63 (Dec. 1994): 557-69.
- 6 August 2015 oral report from historian Heather Ioannou drawn from manuscripts in Pickering Historical collections.
- 7 November 11, 1828, entry in monthly meeting minutes, Pickering Preparative Meeting of Friends, Pickering, Ontario.
- 8 July 18, 1839, entry in Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, Book No. 3, Pickering, Ontario.
- 9 Both men are buried in the Pickering, Ontario, cemetery.
- 10 Between 1841 and 1855, John Orvis published many abolitionist and then associationist articles. Many were published in the *Liberator* as well as in the Brook Farm journal the *Harbinger*.
- 11 See Francis Richard, *Transcendental Utopias*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1997); Sterling Delano, *Harbinger and New England Transcendentalism*, (London: Farleigh Dickenson Press, 1983); Anne Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).
- 12 Francis Wayland Orvis, *The Orvis Family in America*, Hackensack, NJ: The Orvis Company, (1922) pg 62.
- 13 See John Orvis, "Spiritual Wickedness," *Liberator*, September 17, 1841: 11, 38; "Infamous Outrage," *Liberator*, January 13, 1843: 13, 2; "Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society," *Liberator*, February 5, 1847: 17, 6; "Woman's Rights Convention," *Liberator*, September 28, 1855: 25, 39.
- 14 Francis Wayland Orvis, *The Orvis Family in America*, Hackensack, NJ: The Orvis Company, (1922), pg. 51.

Recalling ‘Sparks from the Forge’

*Samuel Robinson Ogden,
Renaissance Vermonter*

Paul Searls

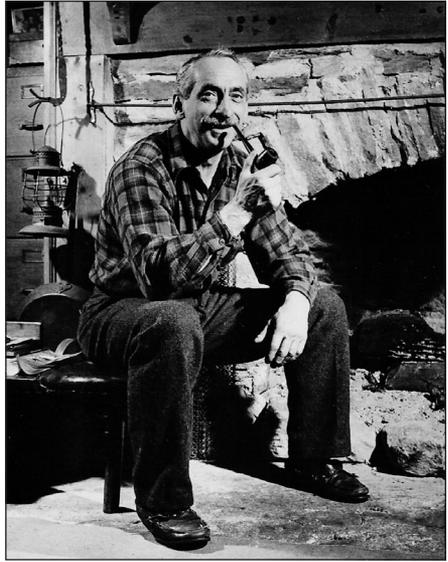
In mid-twentieth century Vermont, Samuel R. Ogden was known as “the voice of Landgrove,” a fitting title for the man who profoundly shaped that small Bennington County town. Yet he was far more than just a figure of importance in one town. Perhaps little known today, Sam Ogden also had a profound impact on Bennington County and on Vermont as a whole.

The consequences of his work can be seen all over contemporary Vermont, though his significance lies as much on what he represented as what he did. He was emblematic of the divided mind of Vermonters in an era of dramatic change. He embodied the paradoxes and conundrums of a state struggling to reconcile the contradictory goals of embracing the modern world while trying to preserve what was best about Vermont tradition.

Sam Ogden was born in 1897 in Elizabeth, New Jersey, where his ancestors had lived for many generations. Though he grew up there, he was greatly shaped by the summers he spent in the country, both at the farm of an uncle in Pennsylvania and at the summer place of family friends in Peru, Vermont. He attended Swarthmore College where he met his wife Mamie Campbell, a native of Kentucky. He withdrew from college to serve in World War I, where he won the Croix de Guerre for heroism. After the war, working for his father’s insurance and real-estate company in Elizabeth proved to be a job he disliked intensely. On the side, he flipped houses, buying dilapidated ones and then renovating and selling them.

As the 1920s progressed, he grew increasingly disillusioned with urban life and yearned for a simpler and more meaningful existence.

After his father died, Ogden felt free to escape the urban surroundings



Samuel R. Ogden at home next to the fireplace he built himself.

Courtesy of Duncan Ogden

he had grown to abhor. In the summer of 1929 he and Mamie drove around the country, searching for the place where they could live in the rural lifestyle he craved. The end of the trip brought him to Vermont and the town of Peru to visit his friends, the Grant family. One September morning David Grant set them on a trip to buy a certain kind of cheese that was available locally in the store of John Colburn in Landgrove's only village, known as Clarksville. When they arrived, the village was all but abandoned; of its seven buildings only the store was occupied. On inquiring about the availability of the empty houses he learned that he could buy them all for a little more than \$4,000. He arranged to purchase them immediately and set about closing up his affairs in New Jersey.

In the spring of 1930 Sam and Mamie Ogden moved to Landgrove full time. His project to fix up the abandoned houses succeeded right away, for within a year he began selling them to friends from New Jersey. But Landgrove became much more than a money-making venture as the Ogdens immediately and eagerly became involved in town affairs. At first his children were home-schooled, but when they wanted to attend school with the other children in town, Mamie took the lead in relocating the public

school itself from a poor inconvenient location to a former Farmer & Mechanics Hall in the center of the town. She joined the school board and served on it for decades afterwards.



Swimmers and waders enjoy the Flood Brook at Mamie Ogden's summer camp in Landgrove.

Tyler Resch

Ogden quickly joined the Landgrove selectboard, became a town justice of the peace and overseer of the poor. Within a few years he was elected moderator of the town meetings, a duty he would continue into the 1970s. All these activities are indicative of his deep passion and respect for small-town democracy, something he

considered a primary attraction of rural living.

In 1934 Sam Ogden was elected as Landgrove's representative in the Vermont House. (Each of Vermont's 246 municipalities then had one representative regardless of population.) He was motivated to serve because of his fierce opposition to the proposal for a Green Mountain Parkway that would have been built right through Peru and would have dramatically altered life there and in Landgrove. His first appointment was to the Committee on Conservation and Development, and he took a particular interest in environmental conservation. In the legislature he became acquainted with people who would remain friends and allies for years, including the prominent Dorothy Canfield Fisher of Arlington and Walter Hard of Manchester. To his great relief, Vermont voters defeated the parkway referendum in 1936.

That same year, Ogden's political stature was elevated when he became chairman of the State Committee on Conservation and Development. He threw himself into Vermont's public life, became one of the founders of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and served as its president for decades afterwards. He built an iron forge for himself on his Landgrove property and became well known as a craftsman. He became interested in the nascent ski business in Peru, which in the early 1930s consisted of people skiing down accessible parts of the Long Trail. He opened a lodge, "Ogden's on the Mountain," to serve them. The lodge burned down later in the decade



“Big Sam” Ogden leads the Landgrove children’s parade to celebrate the Fourth of July. Tyler Resch

but his interest in skiing did not wane. He was instrumental in helping his friend Fred Pabst open the Big Bromley ski resort, which took its name from the original name of Peru. He helped install the first rope tow and worked there in several capacities for many years. In the late 1930s he served as president of the Eastern Amateur Skiing Association, and was a familiar figure at the finish line of races, timing contestants in a heavy raccoon coat.

Governor George D. Aiken appointed Ogden in 1939 first to the State Planning Board and then shifted him to the Board on Conservation and Development. On the latter board he took a leading role in conservation efforts and became the adversary of many sportsmen for his activist approach to fish and game regulation. He also used the position to advocate strongly for state support for the ski industry, and led the effort that resulted in the first rope tow being installed on Mount Mansfield.

By the early 1940s Ogden had become a significant political figure statewide, and in 1942 he chose to run in the Republican primary against the incumbent Congressman Charles Plumley. Ogden got into the race late, and despite campaigning hard and receiving several newspaper endorsements, was beaten badly. The *Bennington Banner* attributed his loss, in part, to overcoming the perception that he mainly appealed to “the summer colony vote.”¹ Within a few months of his failed candidacy he enlisted in the U.S. Army for an eighteen-month term.

After completing his wartime service, Ogden returned to his political activities. Re-elected in 1946 to the legislature, he led an effort to restructure several state agencies. The chief outcome of that work was that the State Planning Board was replaced by the Vermont Development Commission, to which Ogden was named first a member and then chairman. The State Publicity Service, which promoted tourism, was transferred from the Department of Natural Resources to the Development Commission, and Ogden spearheaded promotional efforts. Significant among these was the founding of *Vermont Life* magazine, in which he played an essential part. He saw to it that his friend Earle Newton, president of the Vermont Historical Society, was named editor. Friends Vrest Orton of Weston and Walter Hard were appointed to the editorial board, and Ogden himself became an editorial consultant.

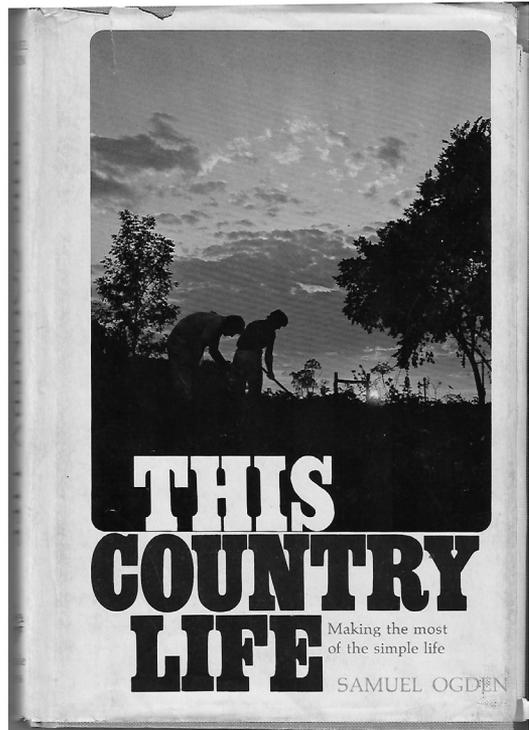
In the postwar period, Ogden continued his many activities outside of politics. He remained president of the Vermont Symphony, was active in the Vermont Guild of Oldtime Crafts and Industries, and volunteered at the Vermont Historical Society. For all his activities and prominence, and despite the success of turning Landgrove into a thriving summer community, he always struggled for money, and a significant portion of the family income came from the summer camp for children that Mamie

had started in the mid-1930s. Still, he remained enraptured with the life he had made for himself in Landgrove, and in 1946 distilled those feelings into his best-known work, the how-to book *This Country Life*. In it, he measured success as a meaningful, useful life characterized by a happy family situation and civic engagement. The book walks prospective back-to-the-landers through what to look for in selecting a house, and how to maintain and improve them. He identified potential ways to make a living in rural places and described such

practical matters as how to tend a garden, how to ensure one's children receive a quality education, and the proper way to behave toward smoothly ingratiating oneself into a rural community.

This Country Life was also Ogden's effort to lay out his philosophy of life: "In the country, life seems to be more direct and normal and satisfying, and country living seems to be to erect bulwarks against the mistakes and follies of the age."² The satisfaction he promotes is drawn from living a self-directed life. If one wants food he grows it; if one needs tools he makes them; if one wants a good school he creates it. Most of all, if one wants good government he gets engaged in it. The magic of rural places to Ogden was that the small scale of government makes it possible for each citizen to contribute to communal life and local affairs. The book's bottom line was that country living is meaningful because, as far as possible in modern society, people were in control of the forces that affect their lives.

Still in the legislature, and still chairman of the Committee on Conservation, Ogden took an interest in billboard restriction, which had become a prominent political interest in the 1930s. In the 1947 session he introduced a bill that would have forced the removal of at least eighty percent of Vermont's billboards. It was not adopted, but he had better





(Free Press Photo)

STATE OFFICIALS AT OPENING OF SHOW

Left to right, front row: George W. Davis, director of the State fish and game service; Donald W. Smith, Barre, chairman of the State board of conservation and development; Governor George D. Aiken, and Willett Foster, president of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, acting as aide to the governor.

Rear row, left to right: Perry H. Merrill, State forester; Samuel R. Ogden of Landgrove and John L. Keeler of Orleans, both members of the board of conservation and development, and Harold Chadwick, director of the State publicity service.

A newspaper photograph circa 1940 shows Ogden with other state officials including State Forester Perry H. Merrill and Gov. George D. Aiken.

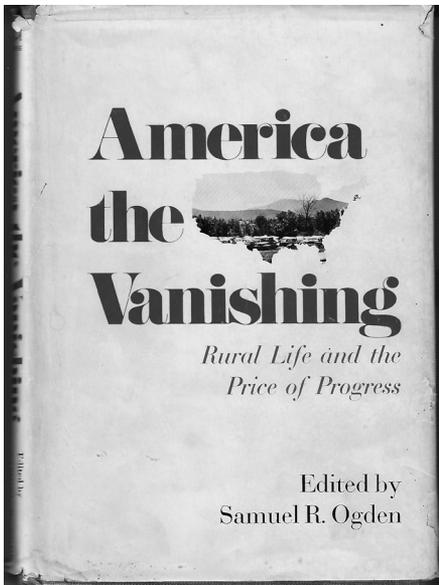
success with his bill that created the Vermont State Water Conservation Board. As chair of the Development Commission he oversaw its publicity activities, to which were added in the late 1940s the production of several promotional films. One of these, "Background for Living," features a brief shot of Ogden working at his forge while the narrator, in response to a rhetorical question, "What can Vermont mean to you?" answers, "For Sam Ogden, it has meant the creative satisfaction of restoring a once-vigorous community to life largely by the work of his own hand."

Ogden grew infuriated when Governor Lee Emerson in 1951 dramatically cut the commission's appropriation while advocating its abolition altogether. He resigned from the commission and waged a very public battle to save it.

In the 1950s Ogden began writing a regular column in the *Rutland Herald* titled "Sparks from the Forge," and in 1961 the column moved to the *Bennington Banner*. In the column he strenuously argued for the causes he advocated, such as the promotion of leisure and tourism, environmental conservation, and opposition to billboards. Most of all, the articles reveal him to be a man of deeply conservative principles and a bitter opponent

of most forms of change. He was intensely opposed, for example, to the construction of the Interstate highways. He was also greatly concerned that Vermont not be overly commercialized and sold to the outside masses as a cheap resort to be exploited. Coming from a man who had headed the Vermont Development Commission, there is some irony to these positions. Similarly, Ogden frequently expressed fears that the local control and small-town democracy he championed was endangered by the growth of bureaucracies and regulations, even though he had played a leading part in expanding state government's role in regulating many aspects of life such as the use of natural resources. But in this way he was typical of Vermonters of that era, trapped between the allure of the traditional Vermont being lost, the attractions of progress, and a recognition that old solutions could not be applied to the new kinds of problems Vermont was encountering.

For many years Ogden also wrote a regular column in *Vermont Life* titled "VL Reports" in which he championed traditional life in the state. In one article in the 1960s about despoliation of the landscape he asked, "How long can we proceed along these easy ways before we do become ruined? He lamented in particular that "Many of our mountain peaks are now scarred with the worm-tracks of ski trails – white in winter and pale green in summer." This was a strange statement from the man who rode the ceremonial first chair up the lift at Mad River Glen as head of the



Development Commission. But being torn between the competing attractions of past and future placed him squarely in the mainstream of Vermonters of that era.

If Ogden was increasingly disenchanted with how Vermont was evolving as a whole, he could take pleasure in the Landgrove that was to a great extent his creation. Landgrove thrived as a summer colony. Musicians such as the great violinist Nathan Milstein summered nearby, and Ogden held regular performances in his Landgrove house with him and other musical luminaries. One book about the town, *Landgrove: 1930 to 1980*,

mentions that in summer the village was populated by "the painter, sculptor, puppeteer, musician, photographer, doctor, architect, writer, and gourmet

cook.” Beautiful houses were constructed in the town; one was featured on the cover of *American Home* magazine. But as time moved along he feared a loss of control over some of those things that for him made Landgrove the special place. In the mid-1960s Ogden ardently fought consolidation of Landgrove’s school with those of Weston and Londonderry, a battle he lost. He was absolutely appalled in 1966 when Vermont was forced to reapportion its legislature, reducing the House from 246 to 150 members elected by districts instead of towns. Vermont would never be the same after that for Sam Ogden.

Despite his discomfort with how Vermont was changing, he remained engaged with efforts to improve it. In 1957 he was appointed to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s eighteen-member advisory committee on soil and water conservation.³ In 1963 he chaired a meeting of conservationists at Goddard College that resulted in the founding of the Vermont Natural Resources Council, and he served as its first president. For Ogden, to be a conservative was necessarily to be a conservationist. And if he was wary of the loss of personal liberty he also knew that collective action was needed to preserve Vermont’s beauty.

In 1963, when the newly elected Democratic Governor Phil Hoff established a Central Planning Office, he appointed Ogden to chair its review panel on scenery and historic sites. Ogden eagerly accepted the appointment despite – as an ardent Republican – his general opposition to Hoff. He wrote a far-thinking report for the panel that demanded increased conservation efforts. He said, “the almost inescapable conclusion to any study of land use in Vermont is that the problems of the state are but many facets of one huge problem: How are we to get along in the modern world without sacrificing the values and assets we treasure most dearly?” He called that question “a problem in conservation – of people, natural resources, scenic beauty, historical sites, land, water, tree bogs, wild flowers and birds – anything you can mention.” The report concluded, “A wise use of our land and water, which will conserve its beauties and resources for future generations, requires that a master plan can only be worked out for the state as a whole. Piecemeal planning is foredoomed to failure. Such a master plan must be not only laid down but strongly implemented by legislation. The almost inescapable conclusion to any study of land use in Vermont is that the problems of the state are but many facets of one huge problem: how are we to get along in the modern world without sacrificing the values and assets we treasure most deeply?”

The report said that “Our ancient motto: eat it up, wear it out, make it do, or go without” is in need of revision: “We have nearly eaten it up, worn it out, and made it do so long that we are going without the things that



A wintry landscape of the restored storied town of Landgrove.

Tyler Resch

make a fruitful future possible.” If Vermont did not adopt a new model, Ogden warned, its economic, educational, and environmental future was imperiled.⁴ He saw this problem somewhat resolved in Landgrove in the late 1960s when the town adopted strict zoning and land-use ordinances. Tangible results continued to come from Ogden’s political exertions. For example, the state adopted a stringent billboard restrictive law in 1968, a step he had been advocating for decades as a director of the Vermont Roadside Council. Still, he saw dangers to the state everywhere. He gave many talks around the state in these years with titles like “Beer Cans, Billboards, and Battered Wrecks.”⁵ He used “Sparks from the Forge” to pursue similar ends, complaining that in Vermont, “in place of landscaped parks and gardens, of trimmed and tree-lined roadsides we have piles of junk . . .”⁶ His kind of activism led to the founding of Vermont’s Green-Up Day in 1970.

His newspaper articles became ever more consumed with an America he increasingly did not understand. He was skeptical about much of the civil rights movement, and at times displayed an uncomfortably backward position on issues of race. He thought the Vietnam war was a folly but resented those who protested it. His beloved wife Mamie died unexpectedly

on Christmas Day 1971, and he fell into a bitter depression that culminated in a suicide attempt in 1972. But he survived and found a reinvigorated spirit for life. He still worked in his garden, and received visits from young people who had bought a Vermont farm or joined a commune or who, inspired by *This Country Life* or one of his organic garden books, wanted advice on how to successfully go back to the land. Despite his distaste for “hippies,” he invariably received them politely, patiently, and helpfully.

Ogden did not go out much during his later years and knew progressively fewer residents of the village, but he could look out his window with satisfaction at the village he had essentially created. In 1976 he published *The Cheese that Changed Many Lives*, an account of his story, and the story of Landgrove. In it he looks back at the life he and Mamie made for themselves in his beloved Landgrove village. In a world that he thought had gone crazy in its obsession with progress, material comfort, and bureaucracies, in his mind Landgrove remained a real community, an oasis of sanity, civility, independence, and virtue.

“I hope,” he wrote, “that the denizens of Landgrove will hang on; nay, more than that, will, on fact, construct a community whose brightness will shed light on other places, a light which may be ever increasing, infectious and contagious, for if this world is to be saved, this is the sort of thing which will have to happen more and more frequently all about us.”⁷

After several years living in the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington, Samuel R. Ogden died on June 26, 1985. He is buried next to his wife Mamie in Landgrove. □

1. *Bennington Banner*, Aug. 22, 1942.
2. *This Country Life* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1946)
3. *Burlington Free Press*, July 31, 1957.
4. Report of Governor’s Panel on Scenery and Historic Sites, Review Panel, Samuel R. Ogden, chairman, (Montpelier, Vt.: Central Planning Office, 1963); *Bennington Banner* Feb. 4, 1964.
5. *Bennington Banner*, April 2, 1964.
6. *Bennington Banner*, Jan. 5, 1962.
7. *The Cheese that Changed Many Lives* (Landgrove, Vt.; Just-So Press, 1978), 113.

‘America Firster’ – William Dudley Pelley

A Nazi’s Sojourn in the Green Mountain State

Paul Heller

Newspapers once called William Dudley Pelley “the most dangerous man in America.” Such hyperbole notwithstanding, this American Nazi did organize a fundamentalist-Christian militia he dubbed “The Silver Shirts” – an homage to Hitler’s Brown Shirts – and became a



Pelley wrote his own caption in the spring of 1919 to describe these members of the staff of the Caledonian in front of the newspaper’s offices in St. Johnsbury: From left, Robert MacKinnon, “who keeps the creditors sweet” and “sees that the books show a profit;” Miles S. Gilman, “who joshes the typesetting machines into getting out the news;” Mrs. Alice Massey, “our little lady reporter, who knows everybody in town and everything that happens in the community;” Miss Margaret Robie, “society editor, proof reader, and trouble-fixer;” Miss Florence Rouse, “the girl who is never in a hurry, but does more than all the rest of the office put together” and “general all-around assistant to the Boss;” The Boss (Pelley); Miss Ruth Impey, “who operates another one of the typesetting machines” and “whose proof is as pure as a baby’s smile;” Arthur Boucher, who “sees that the paper is printed on the big Duplex in such shape that the town can read it without having to go and wash its fingers afterward;” Mrs. A.M. Moran, “who never took a back seat when it came to setting ads that made the lives of the local merchants a pleasure and a joy;” and Ray Packard, “the man who bosses the whole push.” They were, Pelley concluded, “a happy bunch who never speak a cross word to one another.” UVM photo archives

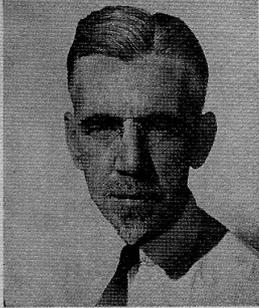
powerful force in the “America First” movement that tenaciously fought to prevent the United States from entering World War II. Pelley’s unhinged attacks on Roosevelt and the New Deal extolled a zealous anti-Semitism that was eventually judged to be seditious. Ultimately, he was convicted of treason, sentenced to prison, and lost his citizenship for four years. Many years before this, however, the gifted young writer was a Vermont newspaperman.

Pelley was born into a devout Methodist family in 1890. His father was a minister in Lynn, Massachusetts. Reared in modest financial circumstances, he found himself working at local newspapers. In 1914 or 1915 he made his way to Bennington, Vermont, where he was hired as “make-up man in the composing room” at the daily *Bennington Banner*. After the paper was printed each day, Pelley would return to the newspaper offices to write fiction.

The newspaper was owned by Frank E. “Ginger” Howe – who at that time was Vermont’s lieutenant governor – and Pelley enjoyed a camaraderie with Howe that seemed mutually agreeable. Pelley later recalled that Howe “was conservative, soft-spoken, sure to see his way to the end of any proposition before embarking on it, and content to let the *Banner* run along from year to year, making a modest profit while he climbed his way to the state’s lieutenant governorship and from there to the dizzy heights of Bennington postmaster.”

The *Banner*, at that time, was a small, afternoon country newspaper where, in his autobiography, Pelley acknowledged, “I came as foreman, make-up man, and pressman.” He and his wife Marion and young daughter lived in a small apartment in Bennington at 119 Jefferson Avenue and there, in this quiet, quintessential New

WANTED



William Dudley Pelley

DESCRIPTION

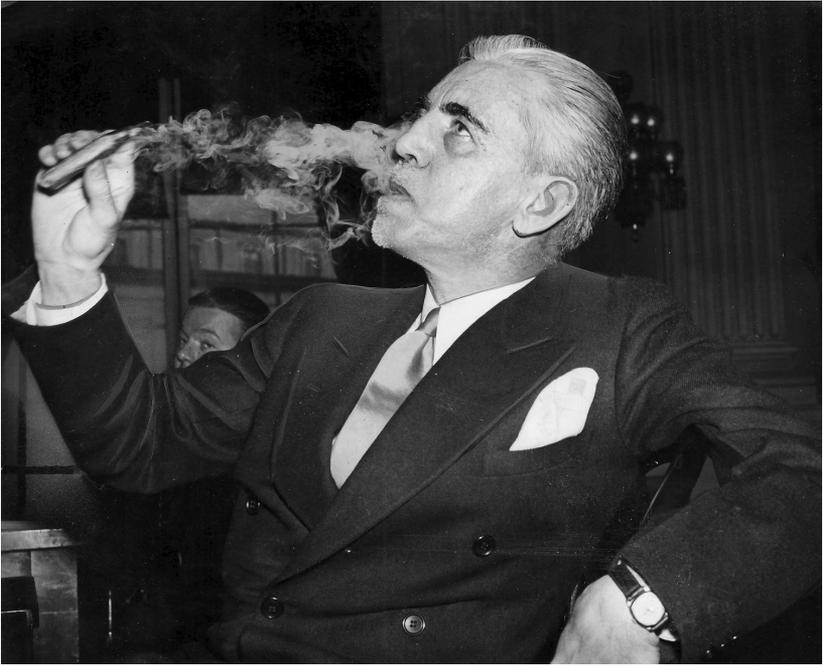
Age, approximately fifty years; height, five feet, seven inches; weight, 130 pounds; has black hair mixed with gray; heavy eyebrows; wears mustache and a vandyke; has dark gray eyes, very penetrating; has straight Roman nose; wears nose glasses; dresses neatly; distinguished looking; good talker; highly educated; interested in physic research.

Capias has been issued by the Judge of the Superior Court of Buncombe County for the arrest of the above-named party for sentence on conviction of felony, making fraudulent representation, and also for violating the terms of a suspended sentence on another charge by failing to remain of good behavior, and by engaging in, among other things, UN-AMERICAN activities.

Arrest and notify
LAURENCE E. BROWN, Sheriff
Asheville, N. C.

*A wanted poster issued in
North Carolina.*

From Scott Buchanan’s biography *William Dudley Pelley: A life in right-wing extremism*, Syracuse University Press, 2005



Pelley testifying before Rep. Martin Dies's House Un-American Activities Committee in Washington. VHS photo archives

England town, Pelley explored what it meant to be a Yankee – steeped in tradition and small-town ways. While a passion for writing stories teemed in his blood, he burned the midnight oil writing for “the slicks” – popular magazines that competed for the best popular fiction with surprisingly large publication fees for authors.

One night in the *Banner's* newsroom, according to his 1939 autobiography *The Door to Revelation*, he came across an announcement of a \$250 award for new writers from *The American Magazine*. As his weekly salary at that time was just \$16, Pelley immediately sat down at his typewriter and vowed to find success as a writer:

A thousand men and women all up the years had found success and affluence in the writing of fiction. What they could do, so could I. I made a silent vow with myself, saying nothing to my wife, that no matter what the vicissitudes I encountered, or how many rejection slips I piled up, I would hew to fiction until success came my way.

Bennington was his inspiration. He used it as a model for the fictional town of Paris, Vermont, and the *Bennington Banner* was the source for his fictional *Paris Daily Telegraph*. He used this formula for small-town fiction in four novels and more than 200 short stories. And he became a famous

writer in far less than twenty years.

In July of 1917 the *Burlington Free Press* remarked on the young writer's growing reputation:

We rejoice in the deserved recognition that is coming to Vermont's latest aspirant for literary honors in the person of William Dudley Pelley who was discovered by editor Frank E. Howe of the Bennington Banner and "given a chance." This novelist's products are now in active demand by the magazines, and his stories are appearing in various leading publication. The gratifying success of this young Vermont author is prophetic of a still more brilliant future.

Pelley's meteoric rise to success, based on a mythic Vermont town, Paris, paralleled Clarence Buddington Kelland's use of Wilmington as his fictional Coldriver, Vermont, which served as a stage for his "Scattergood Baines" stories. And a generation later, William Hazlett Upson would use the rural landscape of the Green Mountains as the humorous setting for Alexander Botts and the "Earthworm Tractor Company." One critic called Pelley's Paris, Vermont, "a Yoknapatawpha County for sentimentalists, referring to William Faulkner's fictional Mississippi milieu. Another critic cynically claimed that the stories "reflected the vivacious dullness which was the note of the period."

Pelley had a simple procedure for literary success, as recounted in his autobiography:

Always I determined my plot, my complication, and – if it were that kind of story – my surprise ending, before I started to write. I dug this method from trenchant analysis of O. Henry. I set myself to tearing every story of his apart, to study how he got his effects. I even copied portions of them on my machine to see how they looked in manuscript.

While his ascendancy was rapid, he did pay his dues. "I once compiled a collection of 175 rejection slips," he recalled.

Pelley had not told anyone at the *Banner* of his literary ambitions, but when news was bruited about town that he was paying his bills and buying a house and an automobile, his colleagues became suspicious. Their misgivings were allayed when his byline was noticed in a popular magazine. After he sold a story to the *Saturday Evening Post* for \$300, he resigned his position at the newspaper and turned his attention to writing full-time. Summoned to New York by *The American Magazine*, Pelley was contracted to write five stories at \$250 apiece for the magazine and his recollection of this relationship becomes a harbinger of what he was to become. "I don't recall ever getting a rejection slip from *The American Magazine*, but that was when Gentiles were running the enterprise," he later wrote in his

autobiography.

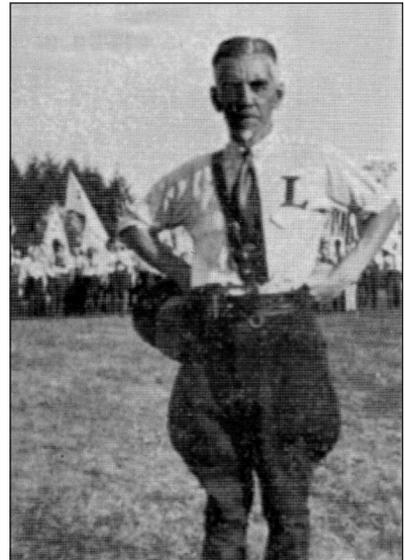
Pelley was secure in the profitable business of writing stories for popular magazines, but when *Banner* editor Clayt Kinsley told him that a newspaper in the Northeast Kingdom was for sale, Pelley jumped at the chance to buy it. With financial backing from telephone magnate T. N. Vail, the *Caledonian* had recently been remade into a morning newspaper and had failed spectacularly. On a whim, Pelley bought it at a substantial discount and moved to the St. Johnsbury area. His immediate plan was to revive it as an evening paper and, once it was viable, sell it. His reasoning was detailed in his autobiography:

Folks in New England's towns and small cities have no time in their mornings to read a newspaper. Their newspaper reading is done in the evening, sitting beside oil lamps with their shoes removed and their toe-joints creaking comfortably. I proceeded to print a six to eight page evening newspaper, concentrating on local news more than foreign, and developing reader interest by the writing of home town features.

It is noteworthy that Pelley's formula has, once again, found meaning for today's small-town newspapers.

Soon after assuming control, Pelley wrote a few editorials proclaiming the *Caledonian's* independence from outside influence. Scott Beekman's 2005 biography of Pelley describes these pieces. Pelley posited that the newspaper was an institution of the community, one that served as a mirror for the town in which it was published. For the reflection to be true, that paper "must have no politics and no religion." Pelley's ethos was, for a future fascist, remarkably progressive in its outlook. He reminded readers that poverty was, more often than not, the root cause of crime. Beekman's survey of the newspaper during his tenure revealed no traces of the rampant anti-Semitism that was to characterize Pelley's writing only a few years later. He reveled in his role as the country editor:

I am in love with my job, or I would not stay in it. When I pass onward I shall be perfectly content



Pelley in his "Silver Shirt" attire, featuring a big L for Liberator.

From Pelley's own book *The Door to Revelation*, 1939

to be remembered as a country editor who tried to do his duty by his community, and made the trains up and down the valley at four-thirty on time.

Restored to its status as an evening newspaper, the *Caledonian* began operating in the black and was accepted as the reliable standard for journalism in St. Johnsbury. By 1918, Pelley's increasing fame as both a writer and journalist led to an offer from the Methodist Episcopal Church to embark on a worldwide tour and report on, among other things, the Great War that was engulfing Europe. His trip was to be financed by the Rockefeller Foundation in the amount of \$5,000. The proposed trip was to last a year, and the financial arrangements provided accommodation for his wife as well. Pelley arranged for other hands to manage the newspaper and made ready for a year-long excursion that was to change his life.

A witness to the Bolshevik revolution in Siberia and its attendant atrocities, Pelley erroneously concluded that the Russian revolution was the result of a cabal of European Jews to foment a communist state as a Jewish state. The experience left him shaken and profoundly anti-communist as well as anti-Semitic.

Returning to an America disillusioned by World War I, Pelley disposed of his Vermont holdings and briefly found fame and fortune in Hollywood, writing screenplays as he put it, "laboring among the Flesh Pots." He wrote two scripts for Lon Chaney, who became his friend. But Pelley soon grew tired of the movie business and in 1928 underwent a spiritual transformation that can be best described as a "near-death" or "out-of-body experience." He wrote of his conversion in *Seven Minutes of Eternity*, in which he assured the reader that his esoteric experience was firmly rooted in fundamentalist Christianity. He claimed that he met with God and Jesus Christ, who told him to begin the spiritual enlightenment of America. Imbued with his newfound spirituality, Pelley moved to Asheville, North Carolina, to publish the *New Liberator* magazine, which called for a "Christian Commonwealth" based on tenets of fascism and Christianity. Jews would be excluded from this utopia and confined within special cities with restricted access.

With the ascendancy of the Nazis in Germany, Pelley organized the Silver Shirts. Modeled on Hitler's Brown Shirts, the paramilitary organization dressed in corduroy trousers, a blue tie, and a silver shirt with a red "L" (for Liberation) over the heart. There were Silver Shirt chapters formed in most states (including Vermont), but almost from the first, the nefarious organization attracted hostile attention. The June 13, 1934, *Burlington Free Press* remembered Pelley from his Vermont newspaper days:

William Dudley Pelley who got his start on the Bennington Banner

and later edited the St. Johnsbury Caledonian seems to be in plenty of trouble these days with his attempt to organize the Silver Shirts, anti Jewish organization. The House committee investigating Nazi activities in this country reports the discovery of a contract between the Silver Shirts and the United German Societies. If the scope of the investigation broadens out, it seems likely that Pelley may be called to explain his effort to form an alliance with Nazi propagandists.

The article went on to quote a former State Department employee, Raymond Morely:

The tinsel empire of William Dudley Pelley would-be successor to the Ku Klux Klan dragons, has crumbled since recent exposure of his Silver Shirt movement. Pelley himself is a fugitive. The Silver Legion, which 'marched in 46 states' is disbanding. All this is merely new proof that such an un-American, barbaric institution cannot long exist when dragged into the open.

That same year Pelley began disseminating *The Franklin Prophecy*, an anti-Jewish tract, purportedly by Benjamin Franklin, but more likely from the pen of Pelley and his cohorts. A Congressional report declared, "The Franklin 'Prophecy' is a classic anti-Semitic canard that falsely claims that American statesman Benjamin Franklin made anti-Jewish statements during the Constitutional Convention of 1787. It has found widening acceptance in Muslim and Arab media, where it has been used to criticize Israel and Jews . . ." It has since been exposed as a fabrication.

In 1936 Pelley ran for president as the candidate of the Christian Party, whose platform demanded the registration and persecution of American Jews. But the Christian Party was on the ballot in only one state and Pelley received fewer than 1,600 votes. According to North Carolina's "History Project," in 1940, when testifying before a special House Committee on Un-American Activities, Pelley asserted his desire to become "America's Hitler."

By the time that the United States was engaged in the war against the Third Reich, Roosevelt had had enough of Pelley and ordered Attorney General Francis Biddle to investigate the home-grown Nazi on charges of sedition. One indication of Pelley's influence was the appearance of aviation hero Charles Lindbergh as a witness for the defense, and Lindbergh's pro-German sympathies were well known. Nevertheless, Pelley was convicted in April of 1942 and served 10 years in Federal prison.

After his release he confined his philosophical musings to an esoteric religion he called Soulcraft. He died at his home in Noblesville, Indiana, in 1965. □

Book review

Shays' Settlement in Vermont

*A Story of Revolt and
Archaeology*

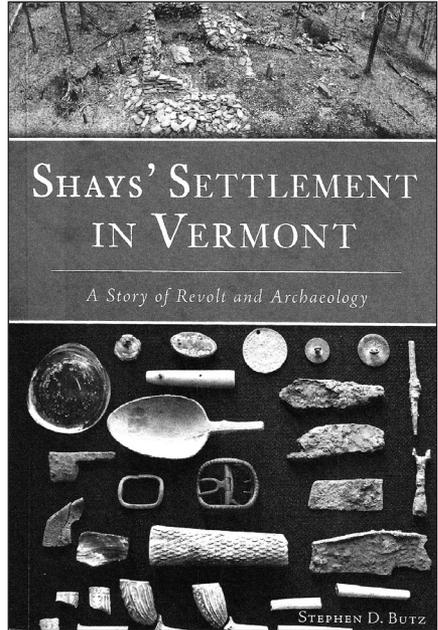
Reviewed by Raymond Rodrigues

After the American Revolution ended, the loosely centralized Congress of Confederation of the 13 original states and the states themselves were deeply in debt to the merchants and creditors who had provided needed resources to enable the rebellious states to succeed in the war. Those creditors wanted to be paid, so the states began to institute a series of taxes, notably property taxes. Massachusetts, under the leadership first of Governor John Hancock and then James Bowdoin, expected the counties to collect the taxes, and the counties turned to the individual towns.

In *Shays' Settlement in Vermont*, Stephen Butz sets out to discover what happened to those who could not pay their taxes, who rebelled against Massachusetts, and who created a historical mystery by escaping into Vermont. Butz's tale reads very much like an adventure story or, as he calls it, a "quest," interweaving the history of the rebellion with the eventual discovery and uncovering of the Shaysite settlement.

Continental paper currency had depreciated steeply in value. Soldiers, who were originally paid in paper currency and later in certificates to be redeemed by the government with real money, did not have money to pay their taxes. Since the value of both paper and certificates had depreciated, enterprising investors bought certificates at steeply reduced prices, which farmers and others quickly spent for necessities. Town assessors and legal authorities could seize cattle and other property from farmers who could not afford to lose those resources. Petitions for leniency from individuals and towns were rejected. Farmers were brought before county courts, often having their property confiscated.

Ironically, the very men who had left their farms and businesses to



fight for freedom from Britain and its unfair taxes now banded together to oppose what they saw as the unfair taxes of the Massachusetts government. In 1782, men led by Samuel Ely had attempted to close the court in Northampton. Ely was arrested, convicted, jailed, and freed by a crowd. He fled to Vermont. On September 5, 1786, a force of about 200 men marched on the court at Worcester and effectively closed it down. A series of confrontations occurred across the state, with insurgents now calling themselves “Regulators,” a term indicating their intent to regulate the excesses of government.

Daniel Shays had been present at the Northampton affair, though he denied being one of the leaders. As the rebellion grew across the state, Shays, Luke Day, and Eli Parsons became its leaders. When the Regulators attempted to capture the weapons at the armory in Springfield, Governor Bowdoin called on General Benjamin Lincoln to stop them. After an encounter at the armory in which four Regulators were killed, Shays and the men behind him escaped to the west and, despite a few skirmishes, the insurgents and their families – as many as 2,000 people carrying their personal goods – “escaped into Vermont.”

And therein begins the central mystery Stephen D. Butz believes he has solved: Where and how did Shays and his followers settle in Vermont? As readers we follow along as Butz is led up to the site by locals who know the area, shown what he believes to be a fort, and begins the excavation of the site, often using high school students.

Butz begins his history with the early rise of Shays in the army, including his service as a captain at the Battle of Saratoga. He draws upon accounts of Shays in battle, and notes that Shays was actually in charge of the spy Major Andre when Andre was in confinement and about to be executed. The Marquis de Lafayette gave Shays a sword, which he later sold because, like many of the farmers in western Massachusetts, he needed money.

Butz describes a first engagement at the Springfield courthouse, the Springfield armory defeat, and a skirmish at Sheffield, the last fight of the Rebellion. Regulators, except for the leaders, were given the chance to pledge their allegiance to the state through the Disqualification Act, which meant that they would be free, but not able to hold public office, be an innkeeper, sell liquor, or vote. Some accepted the state offer. The leaders and many of their followers did not. Butz’s research has uncovered clues to the Regulators’ escape route into Vermont.

General Lincoln sent Major Royall Tyler to capture the insurgents. Tyler learned that Bennington made no attempt to catch those passing through town. A large group of Regulators met with local authorities at the

Galusha Inn at Shaftsbury and then left for White Creek. Because Shays' sister lived in Salem, N.Y., many researchers believed he and his followers had settled near there. A former Revolutionary war colleague, Captain David Cowden, owned land in Sandgate, leading others to speculate that the Shaysites settled near there.

Butz discovers that, early in 1788, Shays purchased two large lots on Egg Mountain, on Sandgate's New York border. This provides a key clue to where Butz believes the Shaysites settled. Shays and other leaders sought a pardon from Governor John Hancock in 1788, and Hancock successfully persuaded the state legislature to grant the pardon. Butz, wondering when Shays and his colleagues learned of the pardon, discovers two land deeds sold by Shays to one John Bays around that time.

Now Butz's tale turns to the mystery of who John Bays was and why he may have bought land from Shays. Bays, it turns out, was a lawyer and had been a member of the Albany Committee of Safety, one of those many "shadow governments" for the colonies early in the Revolution. He was a patriot and, being an anti-Federalist, was most likely sympathetic to the former Revolutionary soldiers and their families. This discovery by Butz leads him to the census of 1791 and evidence that many of the Shaysites may have left their mountain settlement by then. In fact, the archaeological investigation by Butz and others indicates that the buildings may have all been burned a short while later, thus raising yet another mystery: why?

As Butz's research reveals, the settlement is on Egg Mountain.

Apparently outbreaks of typhoid or dysentery broke out in the area in 1787 and in 1798. He believes the settlement may have been purposefully burned because of this "black death." He speculates, interestingly, "Egg" may have been derived from "Ager" or "Ague," a disease characterized by fever and chills.

Butz tells us that he is not the first to have thought the settlement was located on Egg Mountain. He cites a 1940s letter found in the Sandgate town records vault in which Hugh Graham, a historian of Sandgate, mentions it, as well as a 1964 letter by Luetta Eaton in the Bennington Museum archives.

If the reader wants to learn more about Shays' Rebellion, consider these others: David P. Szatmary's *Shays' Rebellion—The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1980) helps us understand the Rebellion in terms of its impact upon larger issues, such as why the U.S. Constitution's Bill of Rights may have been added in response to the rebellion. Sean Condon's *Shays's Rebellion—Authority and Distress in Post-Revolutionary America* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015) discusses the conflicts between power and the people as existing in our country since the

time of the Revolution. And Leonard L. Richards' *Shays's Rebellion—The American Revolution's Final Battle* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) reveals that the conflict was not solely that of poor farmers against powerful eastern Massachusetts merchant and banker interests, but of people from all economic levels in the small towns of Massachusetts.

Butz's book's cover may be misleading, for it is not an archaeological report. That is, we do not see accurate diagrams of the buildings discovered on the site, though photographs do show us what the foundations looked like prior to and during the excavations. We find no technical descriptions of the artifacts. Though Butz writes about artifacts discovered and provides photographs of many of them, we do not read of the exact context in which those artifacts were found other than in specific foundation areas.

Butz describes the discoveries of various building sites, indicates that GPS sightings were made for each of them, provides a portion of a geological survey map showing the locations of the buildings, and discusses what he has learned from the artifacts uncovered. He discovers what he believes to be a mill and its spillway. He uncovers a very large home foundation that may have been where Shays and his family lived, especially because it is near a road that led to Salem, where Shays' sister lived. Among the many artifacts is a Spanish coin. A deep cellar may have been from a tavern, though Butz confesses that the evidence is circumstantial. He notes the existence of a "Doc Maxwell" map in the Bennington Museum archives that speculates this site might have been either a tavern or a school. He reports a yet-to-be-excavated site that might be a blacksmith shop. And he believes that the largest rock-walled enclosure would have been a fort, because the Shaysites, as fugitives, would have needed some protection.

Butz has attempted to date the village site based upon the types of pottery found and other artifacts. Radiocarbon dating of tobacco residue in a pipe fragment indicated a date of 1740+/- 30 years, and dating of excavated wood provided a date of 1780+/- 30 years. Both dates appear appropriate for the time when the Shaysites would have been in Vermont.

Overall, Stephen Butz's research and confirmation that the Egg Mountain settlement was probably the village of Daniel Shays and his followers when they first settled in Vermont is impressive work. The site, from the limited documentation provided, is remarkable for its current condition, almost untouched since it was abandoned in the very early 1800's. And the numerous artifacts will provide the basis for good future research, one would hope, after they are given to the state.

Given this report, the quality of the archaeological work is not clear. The lack of clear documentation for the historical research is unfortunate. We are, for example, told of a journal entry by Shays' wife Abigail, but

are not told where the journal is. We learn that the Bennington Museum archives contain some key source material, but are not given any archival source citations. Nor does the book include footnotes, so it is difficult to follow up on the research.

But if you are hoping for an interesting read, for new information to help fill out the historical record, and for a good mystery resolved, Butz's quest is worth reading. □

Stephen D. Butz, *Shays' Settlement in Vermont—A Story of Revolt and Archaeology*, Charleston, S.C., The History Press, 2017. 172 pp.

Book Review

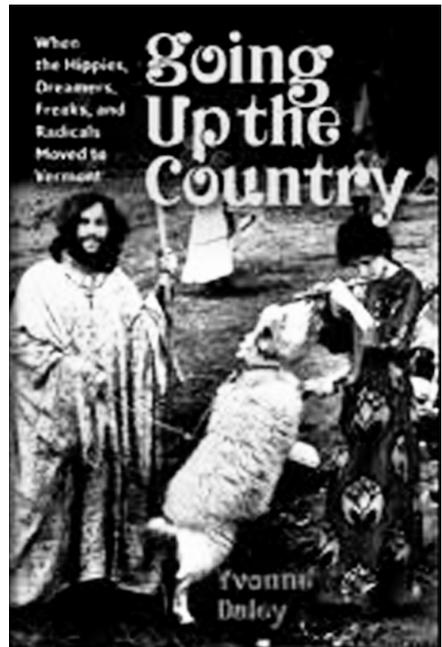
How the Hippies Transformed Vermont

Reviewed by Anthony Marro

For generations Vermont had more cows than people, and when visitors asked why they often were told, “We prefer ‘em.” The state also had so many staunchly Republican farmers of English and Scots-Irish Protestant stock — people who tended to be thrifty, taciturn, hard-working, wary of strangers and resistant to change —

that it was considered by many outsiders to be the last stand of the Yankees.

By the mid-twentieth century, in fact, that last was more myth than reality. Not only did people finally outnumber the cows but the Yankees no longer were the dominant force they had been. Many Irish Catholics had come to Vermont to help build the railroads. There were large numbers of Italians in Rutland and Barre, attracted by the marble and granite quarries. There were many Welsh working in the slate quarries around Poultney; many Poles working in the marble quarries of West Rutland, where the Sunday sermons at St. Stanislaus Kostkas Church were delivered in Polish; and many French Canadians working the farms of Addison County and in



the large mills of Bennington and Wiinooski.

Real change began in the early '60s, when so-called "brain industries" like IBM located in Vermont and began attracting engineers and systems analysts to good-paying jobs, and when the opening of the Interstate brought many more skiers and other tourists into the state. Vermont became filled with people from New York, Boston, Montreal and elsewhere who initially bought second homes here and then became full-time residents, and who took part in local government and were open to new ideas and new ways of doing things. At the same time, the number of small farms declined sharply after health officials in Massachusetts, where much Vermont milk was sold, began requiring that any milk sold there had to have been cooled while awaiting shipment in bulk storage tanks, which many small farmers couldn't afford. And from that point on the number of farms, farmers, and cows declined sharply.

A most important early sign of political change came in 1962, when Philip H. Hoff became the first Democrat to be elected governor since before the Civil War. Hoff's narrow victory — he won with just 50.6 percent of the vote — shocked the nation, even though the legislature, the Congressional delegation and most town governments remained Republican. He spent his first year in office reminding people that he wouldn't be able to do everything he wanted to do as quickly as he wanted because "I'm the only Democrat in my administration, you know." But he was re-elected in a 50,000-vote landslide in 1964 and brought Democrats into top roles as attorney general, treasurer, auditor of accounts, secretary of state, and lieutenant governor along with him. He managed to put together legislative coalitions of Democrats and progressive Republicans that brought much change, including better schools, better social service programs, serious zoning, and major environmental controls.

And then, in the decade between 1965 and 1975 there was a sudden influx — some thought it an invasion — of more than 100,000 hippies, dreamers, radicals, and self-proclaimed "freaks" that came to be known collectively as the "counterculture." They moved into communes, collectives, run-down farm houses, school buses, and teepees, many of them living in places that had no central heating, electricity, or running water. They brought with them drug use, anti-war and pro-feminist protests, casual sex, and a good deal of nudity, but remarkably many of them managed to fit in over time.

That probably was to be expected given that even the nineteenth-century Yankees had been tolerant of unusual behavior by others so long as they didn't frighten the horses and kept their fences in good repair. And in the case of the hippies, the lazy, the clueless, and the freeloaders eventually

left while the more resolute stayed, traded their tie-dyed tee shirts and sandals for more practical flannel shirts and L.L. Bean boots, and helped transform Vermont in ways that were lasting and profound.

Their sheer numbers in a state that only had 445,000 residents in 1970 made it a much more liberal place, particularly after the voting age dropped from 21 to 18 in 1971. And they had a big impact on the economic, cultural, social, and even culinary life of the state as well. For example, it was the hippies who organized the first farmers markets that now flourish almost everywhere in Vermont.

Yvonne Daley, a former reporter for the *Rutland Herald* who has been writing about Vermont people, places, and history for decades, captures this transformation brilliantly in her carefully reported, smoothly written, and riveting account of how it all came about. She describes in vivid ways just how — as Tom Slayton, the former editor of *Vermont Life* magazine, notes in his foreword to her book — “The counterculture ‘invasion’ of the 1970s was simply one more influx of immigrants that, like previous waves of newcomers, encountered some suspicion and resistance at first, but was accepted and ultimately welcomed. . .”

Vermont, as Slayton went on to say in his foreword, and as Daley demonstrates convincingly, “transformed those unconventional newcomers into Vermonters even as the newcomers, in turn, transformed Vermont.”

There was, in fact, much suspicion and resentment at the start, and it was fueled by a piece by Richard Pollak in the April 1972 issue of *Playboy* magazine called “Taking Over Vermont.” In it, Pollak described how hippies could take over and transform the state not by conquering it like Genghis Kahn but simply by registering to vote. One of the people who helped calm the furor was the then-governor, Deane Davis, the ultimate Republican businessman-politician, who said that the hippies should be welcomed and treated with the same respect as any other newcomers.

Daley herself was one of those newcomers, although she got here five years before the *Playboy* piece. Her hippie friends called her “Boston” because having grown up there she had what she said was a “ridiculous accent.” Along with her first husband, she lived for a decade in the shadow of Hogback Mountain, where she grew vegetables, flowers, and herbs and ran the area food co-op. In her circle of friends everyone had their own home but shared communal meals, VW bugs and buses, marijuana, a single electric mixer, and a rototiller. She had a loom, sewed her children’s clothes, and made yogurt and cheese from goats milk. While her husband had a graduate degree in chemistry, he abandoned high school teaching, which he had done at Otter Valley High School, and instead took to doing road work, building chimneys, and chopping wood for their two Ashley stoves,

including much elm that, being new to the land, they didn't realize was so difficult to split and generated so little heat that most Vermonters with wood stoves didn't burn it at all.

There were many different kinds of communes, and some of the best known included "Total Loss Farm" in Guilford, which survived mainly because of revenue produced by the writings of such prolific commune members as Ray Mungo and Veranda Porche; "Quarry Hill" in Rochester, where men were involved in child rearing and where the home schooling methods developed there became a model for alternative schools; and the "Redbird Collective" in Hinesburg, which was made up of lesbian political activists. There were at least seventy-five communes in Vermont between 1968 and 1974, some quite structured and others, like "Earth People's Par" in Norton, quite anarchistic. But by 1983 only eight remained.

"If there was a commonality among us it was love of the land," Daley writes. "Vermont's emerald hills and sweet valleys were better than Oz; the place felt womb-like, nurturing, simultaneously old and pristine. Beyond that, there was the promise of cheap housing in remote locations, a place that provided, as Bob Dylan put it, shelter from the storm."

The communes died away for the most part, but Daley argues persuasively that the people in them remained and helped change the state in ways that mostly were for the better. Veranda Porche, who was born Linda Jacobs but said she took the new name because "I needed a personality transplant" and because she was writing poetry that she didn't want her mother to read, was given a certificate of merit by the Vermont Arts Council in 1998 for her contributions to the state's cultural life. Others made their mark as entrepreneurs, educators, environmental activists, and political figures. And Daley believes that it was bound to happen just because Vermont is Vermont.

Vermont has "always honored independence and the right to be different," she said. And the right to be different "is what attracted the counterculture kids to Vermont in the first place." □

Going Up The Country: When the Hippies, Dreamers, Freaks and Radicals Moved to Vermont, by Yvonne Daley, University Press of New England, publication date: June 5, 2018, 288 pages, \$19.95

Tales of Tinmouth Told in New Town History

Reviewed by Jane Griswold Radocchia

A *Short History of Tinmouth, Vermont*, by Grant C. Reynolds is a chapter book for the Tinmouth Elementary School about the history that surrounds them. Every town in Vermont deserves a similar readable history, readily available to teachers and students.

It is also a history for those of us who take back roads whenever possible and have questions about the land, the economics, and the history of the places we travel through.

It is a history for historians who know that Benning Wentworth laid out the New Hampshire Grants in neat boxes that bore no relationship to the actual topography of the land he sold. To read a town history in Vermont is to learn how a particular town adapted to the geography it was given. Tinmouth, with its mountains dividing the town into three different regions, is an example of how those adaptations changed as circumstances evolved through the years.

Tinmouth is a small town with a population of less than 700. Its town office and library hold its written and recorded history: memoirs, reports, town records, videos, and the *Tinmouth Channel*, a quarterly journal of the Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society. There has not been a history of the town as a whole since the town fathers added their paragraphs to the four-inch-thick *History of Rutland County* in 1886. Grant Reynolds has written the update. He grew up in the town, graduated from Bates College with high honors in history, and moved back after a long career. He writes for the Tinmouth Historical and Genealogical Society and is a trustee of the Vermont Historical Society. While he calls himself an amateur historian, he was the right historian for this book.

His book is a good read. It is not academic. It is witty: I laughed at his chapter titles: *Really Early Tinmouth and Whose Land is This?* I looked forward to what he would say. He begins with geography, with pictures, maps, and stories. We are grounded. Chapter 2, *Really Early Tinmouth*, is geology, glaciers, and the first people. Chapter 3, *Whose Land Is This?* starts with the first people, and ends with the New Hampshire land grants and controversy with New York. I am delighted when he writes about Benning Wentworth: “He didn’t know about Tinmouth Mountain.” Such an

understatement! And, yes, he also explains his comment.

The history is not written in simple words or ideas. It is intelligent and thoughtful. A teacher suggested he add “A Few Questions” at the end of each chapter. The questions themselves came from Reynolds. They are open ended and thought provoking. With children and adults the questions would encourage dialogue. I found I stopped to consider choices, ways of looking at ideas, actions.

While the chapters are chronological they need not be read in order. I checked out Tinmouth’s dams and ironworks before reading about agriculture, schools, and industry. I met Tinmouth’s citizens along the way. I left Tinmouth during war times for next to last. I book-marked the maps for easy reference, especially the 1869 Beers Atlas map. Chapter 19, *Tinmouth Grows Again*, is the last chapter. It is about the town’s growth since the 1960s – from a population then of 228 to 613 in 2010 - and how the Town has dealt with it. This is history I have been part of in other towns so I read it with great interest. It became even more personal when I found that long ago friends, Bob and Susan Lloyd, were instrumental in setting up the Tinmouth Land Trust.

Reynolds’s appendices in the back are excellent. *First is A Glossary - Words That May Not Be Familiar*. Too often an author assumes the reader “knows,” whereas for some the ideas and words are new or not well understood. The second, my favorite, *Tinmouth Place Names*, is highly readable with a map or without.

The last appendix has an excellent title: *Some Other Sources You Might Find Interesting or Useful*. It illustrates what I like so much about the book. He used words of possibility, “sources,” which cover many kinds of references, and “might find interesting” not “the list of what I’ve read” bibliography. This choice of words and phrases which welcomes the participation of the reader is found throughout the book. It is a way of writing that can be used by anyone who wishes to write accessible history.

Grant Reynolds’s *Last Few Words* are a fitting end to this review, as he encourages us to question and write too. History never stops. Last week is already history; next week will be history in seven days. So this history of Tinmouth only takes us to the early twenty-first century. One of these days I hope one of you will write the history of the next 50 years. Do not hesitate to take a look back at what I have written. I may have made mistakes, or new information will turn up. Over in the Tinmouth town offices there are records of the town back to 1761. No one has read them all. Probably there are new things there to be learned. I hope one of you will do the learning. □

A Short History of Tinmouth, Vermont, by Grant C. Reynolds, Manchester, Vermont, Shires Press, 2017.

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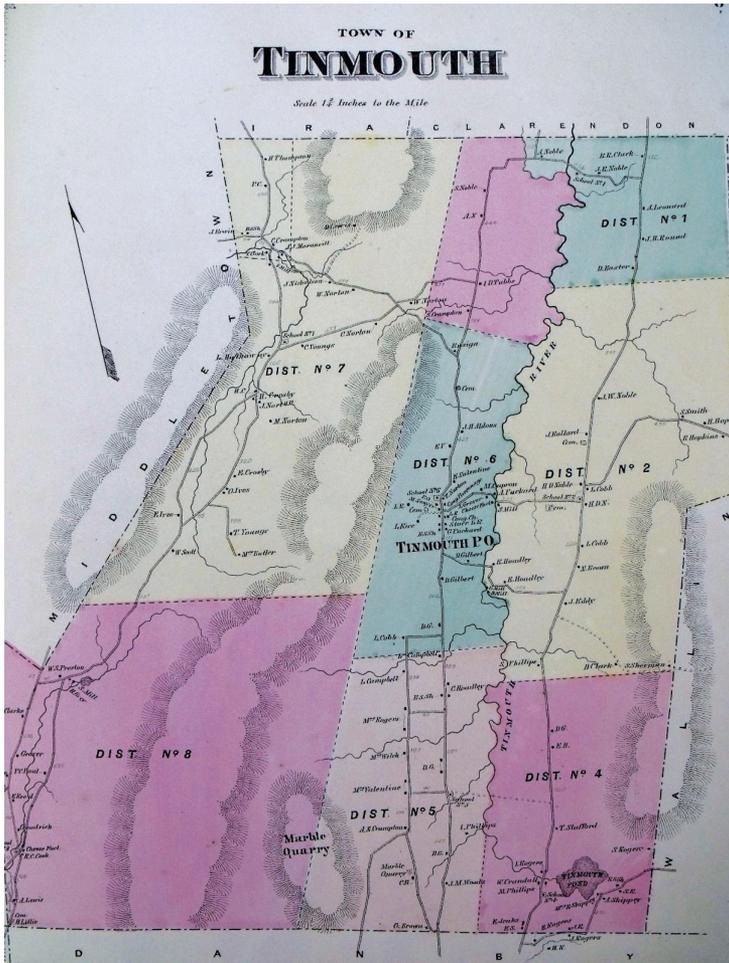
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Town of Tinmouth, from the 1869 Beers Atlas of Rutland County. Each neighborhood school district is shown in a different color. A review of a new book about this town appears on page 60.

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