

WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

BENNINGTON MUSEUM

Companies which was the Captain
part fall into sickness &
Monday 25th Story Described from
our
ser
Stanwix on Mohawk River that
our troops under Ge^r Arnold had
an engagement the same Day our
had the 16th just in this engagement
there was 1 man killed & 2 wounded
the totally routed them destroyed
two of their encampments took
50 Bras Kuttas and more than
100 Blankets muskets tomahawks
Pins ammunition Cloathing
Bear skins & a variety of Indian
affairs the enemies lost 42 under
there were 6 lying dead on the
field two of which was Indians
Wednesday the 27th several of the wounded
huskers & Waldackers Dye of their
wounds Thursday the 28th 3 Companies
of the m
in Friday the 29th we hear the
army retreated towards Lounda rega

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WALLOOMSACK REVIEW

BENNINGTON MUSEUM

*Volume 22
Autumn 2018*

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

On the cover:

A page from the diary of John Wallace, a re-discovered first-person account of the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777. Courtesy of Michael P. Gabriel, whose interpretation of this diary begins on page 6.

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Volume 22, Autumn 2018

Editor's notes	page 4
Contributors	page 5
John Wallace's Journal of the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777	page 6
<i>Michael P. Gabriel</i>	
Perry Merrill, Vermont's Forester Extraordinary	page 15
<i>Anthony Marro</i>	
Tar and Terror in Tampa: The Murder of Joseph Shoemaker	page 22
<i>Jennifer Shakshober</i>	
Vermont Funding of Public Education Begins with the Constitution	page 30
<i>Allen Gilbert</i>	
Book reviews	
Saga of a Benningtonian: And no Birds Sing	page 36
by Pauline Leader	
<i>Reviewed by Jamie Franklin</i>	
When Congregationalists Fractured into Houses Divided	page 41
by Douglas L. Winiarski	
<i>Reviewed by Lee Williams</i>	
Red Scare in the Green Mountains	page 43
by Rick Winston	
<i>Reviewed by Tyler Resch</i>	
The Vermont Story: Revised	page 46
By Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak	
<i>Reviewed by J. F. Kennedy</i>	

Editor's Notes

With his article about Perry Merrill, Tony Marro has portrayed in detail a personality who seemed to dominate Vermont government for several decades, just before the memory of many today. Merrill was the longtime director (some would say dictator) of the state's Forests & Parks, and is remembered as a remarkable innovative character by any standard. To recognize that Vermont had *no state parks and no ski areas* before Perry Merrill came into that office seems unimaginable today. It is safe to say that never again will there be a state official who made such a long-range positive difference in the livelihood and economy of the state. Merrill's heritage also includes the nostalgia-inducing era of the Civilian Conservation Corps, which did so much to put idle hands to constructive work during the Great Depression days of the 1930s.

A most unpleasant aspect of the 1930s is revealed in the stunning article by Jen Shakshober of the murder of Joseph Shoemaker, who had left Bennington when his business failed in the Great Depression. The Handee Company, with its unusual coat-hanger designs, might have succeeded in better times. Shoemaker himself makes an interesting study as a socialist whose activism got the better of him in a part of the country where corrupt government and vigilantism marked the dark underbelly of society. This article does not tell the whole story. A follow-up in our next issue will describe the public response to the murder, the prosecution of the murderers, and how the case impacted the socialist community both national (Norman Thomas) and local (Mary Robinson Sanford and Helen Phelps Stokes of Old Bennington).

On a more contemporary subject, which also reaches back to the state constitution of 1777, Allen Gilbert conveys his solid experience in the details of how, historically, Vermont has paid for public education as he describes different approaches from the earliest days of the republic up to the most recent series of go-rounds in the 2018 legislature.

This issue contains some thought-provoking book reviews. Jamie Franklin sensitively explores a book first published in 1931 by a woman whose difficult life and strong intellect reflects on the bohemian Greenwich Village culture in the 1920s and '30s plus some candid recollection of Bennington's Jewish community. Lee Williams offers scholarly insight and background on the theology that brought about the founding of the settlement of Bennington in 1761. My review of Rick Winston's recollections of McCarthyism in Vermont is a tale that needs frequent re-telling. John Kennedy widens all this perspective by recounting "the Vermont story," or at least a great portion of it.

- Tyler Resch

Contributors

Michael Gabriel is professor of history at Kutztown University in Pennsylvania and has become a leading authority on the Battle of Bennington. This is his ninth article on many diverse aspects of that subject in this journal.

Anthony Marro covered Perry Merrill as a reporter for the Vermont Press Bureau in the mid-1960s and knew him well. He is a former co-editor of this journal who is now involved with the Aiken Trail in the Hadwen Woods and is strongly occupied as board chairman of the Oldcastle Theater.

Jennifer Shakshober graduated in 2016 from Bennington College with a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Nonfiction. Always interested in researching her Bennington ancestors, she earned a certificate in genealogical research from Boston University in 2017. She now works as a library assistant at the Hartford Public Library while pursuing a Master of Library and Information Science Degree at Simmons College.

Allen Gilbert of Worcester has been a journalist, teacher, public policy researcher and consultant, and executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont. He was chairman of his town's school board when it joined the Brigham lawsuit in 1995. He is working on a book about equity in Vermont.

Jamie Franklin marked his tenth year as the curator of the Bennington Museum with the creation of a major exhibit titled *Crash to Creativity*, which provides a generous sampling of the artistic production and civic construction of the great American Depression of the 1930s.

Lee Williams serves as professor of history at Northeastern Baptist College in Bennington. His study of early modern history is currently focused on religious separatism in colonial New England, particularly as it developed and influenced Vermont history.

J. F. Kennedy is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and is a Vietnam-era veteran. Recently, as a nearly full-time volunteer in the research library of the Bennington Museum, he created an index to the first twenty-one volumes of the Walloomsack Review, available at the museum shop or by request online.

John Wallace's Journal of the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777

Michael P. Gabriel

Introduction

John Wallace's journal, which covers from July 20 to September 17, 1777, represents another account of the events relating to the Battle of Bennington and its aftermath. Like the William Boutelle Diary that the *Walloon sack Review* published in spring 2016, John Wallace's journal first appeared in a local newspaper; in this case the August 18, 1930, issue of the *Bennington Banner*.¹ The accompanying introduction explained that the paper obtained the diary from a Mrs. Amos G. Draper, whose in-laws were longtime North Bennington residents, but provides no details beyond that. How Mrs. Draper obtained a copy and whether it was an original or a transcript is uncertain. The Bennington Museum library holds a photocopy of the *Banner* article, and it has been occasionally cited, but the Wallace Diary remains largely unknown.²

The journal's author, John Wallace, was born in Londonderry, New Hampshire, in 1757, and served three tours of duty during the Revolutionary War. In 1775, he enlisted in Colonel Timothy Bedel's Rangers and participated in the siege of St. Johns during Richard Montgomery's Canadian campaign. Two years later, as described in his journal, Wallace joined Daniel Runnel's company as part of Londonderry's contribution to the troops New Hampshire raised in response Vermont's appeal for help following the fall of Fort Ticonderoga.³ Serving in Colonel Moses Nichols' Regiment as part of General John Stark's brigade, Wallace marched to Bennington but did not participate in the actual battle due to illness. He returned home in September and enlisted for his third and final time in 1778, this time serving in Rhode Island. Ten years later he married Phoebe Stickney, also of Londonderry, and the couple had seven children. Wallace and his wife eventually moved to Thornton, N.H., where he died on June 4, 1837.⁴

The author of this article found a microfilmed copy of Wallace's original hand-written diary in winter 2004 in the pension deposition that his eighty-six-year-old widow filed in 1857. In an accompanying document, Wallace's son, Lemuel, explained that his father, "was

accustomed to keep a private journal all time while he was in the war and that I have seen and read the journals which he kept, . . . that these journals were considered of no particular value and were not very carefully kept; that they all have been lost except the one that was sent to the Pension Office with my mother's declaration.⁵ If only the Wallace family had understood these journals' "particular value" and had kept them all, but at least the one relating to Bennington survived.

A careful comparison of the original diary with the *Banner* edition reveals a few differences. Whoever transcribed this journal, which is extremely difficult to read in places, omitted some passages and misread others. The following transcription restores these missing parts and indicates them with bold print. To give the reader a greater feel for the diary and its times, all spellings have been left in their original form, except in a few places to make the passages more understandable. A quick perusal of the journal reveals that spellings and punctuation were not standardized, even for the same person. Punctuation was also added in some places for the sake of clarity.

Wallace's journal is valuable because of the insights it offers into the experiences of New Hampshire soldiers who fought at Bennington. In addition to discussing the raising of troops and the selection of officers, it reveals the route of march for this part of Nichols' regiment. Wallace also provides additional information on the battle's opening skirmishes on August 14, when Stark's troops initially met Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum's command, and then fell back to construct a breastwork. Baum also dug in and called for reinforcements, setting the stage for the battle two days later.

One of the most striking features of the Wallace Diary is the sense of terror that civilians faced. Similar to Levi Beardsley's *Reminiscences* and Julius Wasmus's famous account, Wallace vividly describes civilians frantically packing their belongings and fleeing. They particularly fear the loyalists who seemingly were lying in wait, ready to strike.⁶ In one case ten bodies were found in a field, presumably killed by loyalists, and Wallace recounts their ambush of a party that was escorting cattle. This fear helps explain the treatment of the loyalist prisoners that Wallace describes and their response. He also repeatedly comments on the Germans captured during the battle and a possible escape attempt by them the following day.

Another striking feature found in Wallace's journal is the discord that

existed in the American ranks. In September, a soldier “was going to be Put under garde for Raising mutany.” On two other occasions Wallace records officers striking soldiers. In one case, Vermont militia Colonel William Williams and Adjutant Joseph Fay – of the large Bennington Fay family – cut a man in a dispute over his own horse. Foreshadowing General George Patton, who infamously struck an enlisted man in Sicily, Williams was forced to apologize in front of his troops and Fay was fined, though it apparently had little effect. Three days later Fay beat a minister so badly that the unfortunate clergyman was forced to return home. What lay behind such incidents remains unknown, but they offer vivid evidence of internal strife. They also offer some insights into officers’ interactions with their men, and the limits of their power.

Conspicuously absent from Wallace’s diary, unfortunately, are details of the actual Battle of Bennington, which he referred to as the “Battle of sancoux.”⁷ Wallace did not fight in the engagement because he was sick with “camp disorder,” a generic name for a variety of illnesses, probably dysentery. In fact, illness is a reoccurring feature found within the diary, and it vividly demonstrates another issue with which Revolutionary War soldiers dealt. Throughout his journal, Wallace records the names of sick soldiers, those left behind because of illness, and in one case a man who died from “the flux.” Many of Stark’s men contracted measles soon after the battle. Wallace’s diary shows that this was not the only malady from which they suffered.⁸ Interestingly, Wallace did not record how desperately ill he actually was. Many years later in a statement supporting Phoebe Wallace’s pension deposition, a neighbor recalled “that he [Wallace] said he was very sick at Bennington with the camp disorder and liked to have died and that when medicine was given him they turned him on one side and that his father came to see him while he was sick.”⁹ That Wallace’s father left his family and traveled all the way to Bennington to visit his sick son demonstrates the severity of the illness.

Overall, the Wallace diary takes its place among the growing list of first-hand accounts of the Battle of Bennington and helps us understand this decisive engagement. It also offers insights into the experiences of the ordinary foot soldier from the Revolutionary era. His original spelling has been retained here except where changes are required for clarity.

Memorandum Book of the transactions from the
time of our Inlistment forward.

John Wallace his Book.

July 20th 1777: We had orders at Londonderry to Raise
Every fourth man of the melitia for two months.

friday 25th: We met at Leut. Joseph Greggs and Chose
Daniel Runels for our Capt, David McCleary for our first
Liut, adom Tayler for our Second, and John Hues for our
Ensine.¹⁰

munday 28th of July: we met at Mr. Joenses and Chos our
under Officers and that Knight we stayed at mr. tomsons.
Tuesday the 29: we marcht from Londonderry through
Litchfield and merimac and amhorst and lodged at mr. licn¹¹
in wilton.

Wensday th30: we went through Pettersborough, [pass]
ed thru[?] ¹² Dublin, into New Marlborough, and lodged at
Tuckers.¹³

thursday th31: we marcht through Kean into wallpole to
Bellices¹⁴ Now utlys.

friday th1: we went to No. 4 and stayd there to munday
august th4 in the after noon then we marcht to Rockinham.

tuesday th5: Being wet we stayed betwixt Rockinham and
Kent.¹⁵

wensday th6: we marcht into Kent and Lodged at Robert
mountgomorys and there left John McKeen and matthwe
Dickey sick.

thursday th7: we went over the mountain into Manchester.
friday and Saturday we stayed at manchester.

Sunday th10: we marcht about 1O of the Clock and went
through Sunderands and allens town into a town caled
Shaftsberry and Stayed there.

munday th11: we marcht into Benington and stayed there
the remainder of munday & tuesday.

wednesday we had our orders to marcht to Stillwater and
our Packs Slung but had not marcht but a few roods¹⁶ till
we had Intiligences that an army Wase Comeing Down from
Salatogo through Cambridge and



I was takein on munday with the Camp Disorder, and wendsday I thought I could march with the company, but that Knight I was Taken so bad with Purgin Blud that the Next day I was not able to march.

wensday th 13: in the Evening Col Gregg¹⁷ went with a detachment of 216 for to make discovereys.

thursday th 14: the whole Brigade marcht from Benington and met our Scouting Partey Comeing in, who informed us the Enemy was near at hand and in number about 1500. Gen Starks hearing this Retreated back to a height and made a Breastwork. in the afternoon our Brigade went so near to them and Exchanged Several Shots with them, But the distance Being so far Did Little Execution - I had not the honour to be there as I was Lying sick at Benington. Thely having Exchanged a good many Shots it is Said [our] men killed two of ther Chief Indians and several others, then the Brigade Came Back to there Brestworke.

friday th 15: a large party was detacht, But it rained so Excessively that thely all returned to there Brestworke without Effecting any thing.

Saturday th 16 of august 1777: Gen Stark's Brigade with a number of men from Benington and the towns adjacant and some from the massachuctes Bay marcht to Pay them a visit and Drove them from there Brestwork and obtained a Compleat victory over them. took about Seven hundred Prisoners and Killed and wounded three hundred more. Recovered four Bras field Peices with their Carriges, With maney guns, Swords, and other articles.¹⁸ there was belonging to Gen Stark's Bridgade 44¹⁹ men Killed and 43 wounded of the men Belonging to differant Party's

Women & Children flying before the Enemy with there affects. women & [children] Crying, sum walking sum Rideing. the men Joyn our army, the women left to shift for themselves. sum Rideing on horses with there Children at there Brests; sum before, sum behind tyed to there mothers. People Packing there Goods, Loading there teams, torys Lyes off by.²⁰ Cattle Blating seams loth to Leave

the fruitfull Soyl. ten men found Dead Near New sitty²¹ in [a] medow Killed by the torys. a Party of our men sent to gard Catle to Stillwatr on there Return fired upon by a Party of 80 Torys took three Prisnors. the Torys killed 2 and wounded 1 of our men.²²

Sabathday August th17: our men Brought in 80 Prisoners and one of our women Brought in with them who was taken by the Indians. the Prisoners, in attempting to escape, 6 Shot by the gard, 3 got off which caused us to Keep a stronger garde.²³ the brittish, hizions [Hessians], & other Prisnors Excepting 140 toreyes Torys sent to Brekshire County by a strong garde.

tuesday th19: massachusetts Torys sent home in order for tryal. about 10 loads of Plunder Came to Day from the lines.

Wensday 20: the Post Dispatched for Exeter Court a number of Torys sent W in order for trial; about 40 Torys Cleard, they Swearing allegence to the United States.

Thursday th21: Gen. warner²⁴ arrived from the massechucets State. Same Day Dyed Archibel Cunningham with the flux.

friday th22: one of our men in our Company s[t]abed [?]²⁵ under Eye by a Tory.

Saturday th23: nothing Remarkable.

Sunday 24: Samuel Speer and Samuell Rowal & Johnathon Celzy Set out for Londonderry, and that Evning Sergent Dickey came down from the Camps and Drove me to the Camps which was the occasion [of my] Back fall into Sickness.

munday 25th:1 Tory Desereted from our gard in women's Cloaths.

Tuesday 26th of august: we had certain intilagence from fort Stanwix on [the] mohake River that our troops under Gen Arnold had an ingagement the same Day ours had the 16th Inst. in the ingagement there was 1 man killed & 2 wounded. The[y]l totally routed them, Destroyed two of there incampments, took 50 Bras Kuttas, and more than 100 Blankits, muskets, tomhawks, Spears, ammunition, Cloathing, Dearskins, & a variaty of Indians affairs. The Enemys los[s] is uncertain. there was 6 lying Dead on the field, two of which was Indians.²⁶

Wensday th27: Sevral of the wounded hushens & waldeckers Dyed of there wounds.

thursday th28: 3 companys of the massichucets Bay forces came in.

Friday th29: we hear the enemy retreated towards ticondaroga.

Saturday 30th: Col. Gregg sent his hors and brought me and Ephraim Gregg to his Lodging.²⁷

Sabathday august th31: Col Gregg in great Pain. sends after knight for the Docter -

munday September th1 1777: mayger head²⁸ Dyed he was mayr to Col Sikny²⁹ -

tusday th2: a Tory Came in and resigned himself up, acnowloged his misconduct.

wensday th3: Col williams and Adgt fay³⁰ Cut a man on the head for taking his own hors, which fay had to make up with moeny. the Col had to go to the head of his Regiment and ask there Pardon, as it ware a Soldier he Struk.

thursday th4: nothing Remarkable hapned.

friday th5: ----- 50 of the Continental troops Came in - the same day Gen Starks Brigade was ordered to Ranzly mills or Santcoix, so Called, 9 miles out of town.

Saturday th6: the said fay Cained the Revd mr Elay, so that he wase forced to go home and leave his Brigade.

Sabathday th7: the Enemies Canon was heard from this Place. a Scouting party of our men, that was out 14 miles, heard the Enemys small arms and soposed the[m] to be about 4 miles Distance.

munday th8: a Reigment Came in from the masschucets Bay. Gen. linkhoon³¹ marcht from manchester to Skeansborough in order to meat with the Continental army.

tusday th9: the melitia Come in from all Quarters and march right on to Joyn our army.

wensday th10: Gen. Stark's Brigade marcht from Ranslys mills to Stilwater. John Robinson was going to be Put under garde for Raising mutany.

Thursday th11: we have Sartain account, from a man who was taken by the Torys, that there was one and thirty hundred men Came out against ours at the Battle of sancoix, and there was not more then Six 100 Returned, but how Much more Reason have we if so meany to Bliss god for

our Conquest.

thursday th 11: I made a bargain for a hors.

friday th 12: I got the Lend of thirteen Dolars from thomas Wallace, and 5 from Col Gregg and 8 from Ephraim Gregg. Saturday th 13: I went I went and got him shod and Payed four Shillings for the Shoeing. Sabathday th 14: we have Intiligence that there is one wagon load of Plunder Come into town, that will amount to a hundred Pounds Lawfull money.

munday th 15: Nothing Remarcable.

tusday th 16: Setteleed with mr Walbridge and Payed him Two dolar for my lodging and for my hors Keeping one week, and started from there about 1O O Clock, and we had the worst Road that Ever I traveled through mire and ruts, over mountains, and through Dales and that knight we got 20 miles to Col. Williamses and lodged there.⁵²

Wensday: we Came through molborough and bratoils borough and Came 5 mils up the River out of our way into a town Called fulam,⁵³ and there we Crosseid Coneticut river in a cunow and swom our horses and Came into a town.⁵⁴ □

1 Michael P. Gabriel, "A Revolutionary Relic: Bennington Battle Soldier's Diary," *Walloomsack Review: Bennington Museum* 17 (Spring 2016): 22-31; "Diary of New Hampshire Soldier Describes Battle of Bennington," *Bennington Banner*, August 18, 1930.

2 The Bennington Museum's copy has the date August 20, 1930, penciled on it. Research shows that the article actually appeared two days earlier, Tyler Resch to Author, email, August 06, 2013.

3 Sometimes referred to as Daniel Reynolds, Runnels (1743-1795) saw extensive service during the Revolutionary War, commanding companies at the Siege of Boston, the 1776 New York Campaign, Bennington, and Rhode Island in 1778. M.T. Runnels, *A Genealogy of Runnels and Reynold Families in America: with Records and Brief Memorials of the Earliest Ancestors, so far as Known* (Boston, MA: Alfred Mudge & Son, 1873), 16-17.

4 National Archives, *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files* (2670 reels; hereafter *Pension Records*), John Wallace W27852.

5 *Pension Records*, John Wallace W27852.

6 Levi Beardsley, *Reminiscences: Personal and Other Incidents; Early Settlement of Otsego County; Notices and Anecdotes of Public Men; Judicial, Legal and Legislative Matters; Field Sports; Dissertations and Discussions* (New York: Charles Vinten, 1852), 570; Helga Doblin, trans., Mary C. Lynn, ed., *An Eyewitness Account of the American Revolution and New England Life: The Journal of J. F. Wasmus, German Company Surgeon, 1776-1783* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990), 69.

7 Rensselaer Mills or Sancoick, about two miles west of the Bennington Battlefield, was where Baum first encountered Stark's scouting party on August 14.

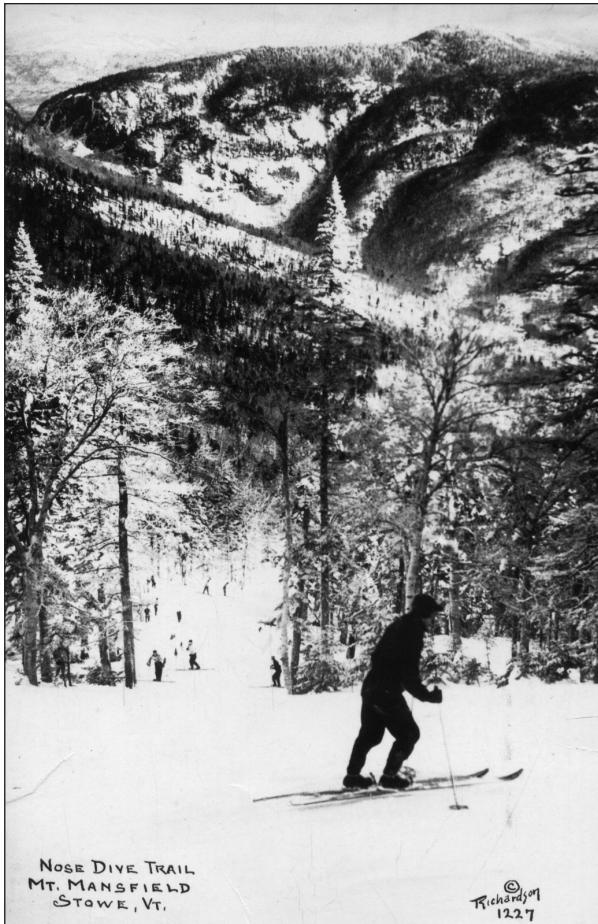
8 Michael P. Gabriel, *The Battle of Bennington: Soldiers and Civilians* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2012), 39, 75-76, 79.

9 *Pension Records*, John Wallace W27852.

10 For Runnels' 1777 company muster roll, which contains the names of the other men referred to in this diary, see Isaac W. Hammond, ed., *Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War, May 1777 to*

1780: with an Appendix Embracing Names of New Hampshire Men in Massachusetts Regiments (1886).
Reprint: New York: AMS Press Inc., 1973), 2: 199-202.

- 11 The *Banner* version of the diary has this as “molica,” but a careful reading of the original seems to say “mr. licn.” This probably refers to Seth Lincoln, a prosperous farmer who owned a large dairy in Wilton. Abiel Abbot Livermore and Sewall Putnam, *History of the Town of Wilton, Hillsborough County, New Hampshire: With a Genealogical Register* (Lowell, MA: Marden & Rowell, 1888), 435.
- 12 The newspaper version includes the town of Weare, but this does not appear in the original diary, nor does it fit the line of march.
- 13 Tuckers, established circa 1769, was a famous tavern on the road to Keene, not far from a sawmill that the same family operated. Charles A. Bemis, *History of the Town of Marlborough, Cheshire County, NH* (Boston, MA: George H. Ellis, 1881), 168-169, 189-190.
- 14 Probably the home of Colonel Benjamin Bellows, the founder of Walpole, NH, built in 1762. The building still stands and is now the Bellows Walpole Inn. Bellows Falls is located nearby on the Connecticut River. Thomas Bellows Peck, *The Bellows Genealogy or John Bellows, The Boy Emigrant of 1635 and his Descendants* (Keene, NH: Sentinel Printing Co., 1898), 25; Workers of the Federal Writers’ Project, *New Hampshire: A Guide to the Granite State* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1938), 360-363.
- 15 Present day Londonderry, Vermont.
- 16 A rod equals 16.5 feet.
- 17 Lieutenant Colonel William Gregg was the second in command of Nichols’ regiment.
- 18 For a partial list of the equipment that the Germans lost during the battle, see “Appendix: Breymann’s Loss of Matériel at the Battle of Bennington,” in Thomas M. Barker, “The Battle of Bennington in German Archives and Museums: Four Maps and Four Historical Images,” produced for and distributed by the Walloomsac Battle Chapter, Sons of the American Revolution, Cambridge, NY, n.d. These maps and the list of Breymann’s losses are also included in *The Journal of the Johannes Schwalm Association* 7 (2001).
- 19 The newspaper transcription says “84.” The first digit is obscured in the original diary, but appears to be a 4.
- 20 Wallace implies that loyalists were waiting nearby, ready to strike, as seen in the next sentence.
- 21 Present day Lansingburgh, New York.
- 22 For an account of this engagement, see Michael P. Gabriel, “A Forgotten Cattle Skirmish Preceded the Battle of Bennington,” *Walloomsack Review: Bennington Museum* 5 (May 2011): 35-42.
- 23 For details on this supposed escape attempt, see Michael P. Gabriel, “Prisoners at the Bennington Meeting House: The Day after the Battle, August 17, 1777,” *Walloomsack Review: Bennington Museum* 7 (September 2011) 31-38.
- 24 Colonel Seth Warner of the Green Mountain Boy Regiment, which had fought at the August 16th battle.
- 25 Wallace’s original diary says “sabed,” which could be a misspelling of “stabbed” or “jabbed.”
- 26 Wallace is mistakenly referring to Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett’s sortie from Fort Stanwix against the besieging British camps on August 6, 1777, while the Battle of Oriskany was occurring. Gavin K. Watt, *Rebellion in the Mohawk Valley: The St. Leger Expedition of 1777* (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2002), 189-197; John F. Luzader, *Saratoga: A Military History of the Decisive Campaign of the American Revolution* El Dorado Hills, CA: Savas Beatie, 2008), 132-133.
- 27 It is uncertain why Lieutenant Colonel Gregg sent for these men. Judging by the next entry, it might be because he and they were ill.
- 28 James Head, the highest ranking American officer killed at the battle of Bennington, died from his wounds on August 31.
- 29 Colonel Thomas Stickney, who commanded one of Stark’s other regiments.
- 30 Colonel William Williams of the Vermont militia and Joseph Fay (1753-1803).
- 31 George Washington sent Continental General Benjamin Lincoln, a Massachusetts native, to New England to help raise and coordinate militia during the Saratoga Campaign. David B. Mattern, *Benjamin Lincoln and the American Revolution* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 39-40.
- 32 Williams resided in present day Wilmington, Vermont.
- 33 Present day Dummerston, Vermont.
- 34 Chesterfield, New Hampshire.



The famous Nose Dive Trail at Mt. Mansfield in Stowe helped build Vermont's reputation as a ski state in the 1940s. The photo is one of a series taken by Harry W. Richardson of Newport.
Vermont Historical Society

Served Nineteen Governors

Vermont's Forester Extraordinary

Anthony Marro

In the Swedish winter of 1920, Perry Merrill had an epiphany that eventually would transform Vermont. At the time, he was a young worker with the Vermont Forest Service who was spending a year at the Royal College of Forestry in Stockholm and traversing the Swedish forests on eight-foot-long skis. Recreational skiing was almost unknown back in Vermont. The first ski lift, a rope tow powered by a Ford Model T engine, wouldn't be installed until 1934, at Suicide Six in Woodstock. But Merrill

became convinced while in Sweden that skiing could become as popular in Vermont as it was in Scandinavia and that if ski resorts could be built on state lands they could generate the revenue needed not only to pay for those resorts but also to fund many other state parks and state forests.

The long story short is that Merrill made it happen, despite the opposition of many. He started at a time when many Vermonters thought that spending tax dollars for public parks was both foolish and wasteful. By the time he retired in 1966, having served under nineteen governors and having been the head of the Department of Forests and Parks under thirteen of them, Vermont had gone from having no state parks at all to a sprawling empire that included 34 state parks and 32 state forests, with 85,039 acres of state forests, 11,288 acres of state parks, 8,520 linear feet of sand beach, 1,528 camp sites, 244 fireplaces, 311 grills, and 1,093 picnic tables. Outdoor recreation had helped transform the entire economy of the state, and as the *Rutland Herald* noted at the time of his retirement:

“Merrill literally invented a government power base that . . . allowed him a dominant voice in the state’s development. Merrill is generally recognized as a patron saint and guiding light of the multimillion-dollar Vermont ski industry, the man who preached its economic potential and used his power to nurture it when other Vermonters thought skiing, at least the downhill kind, was for showoffs, sissies and flatlanders.”

In his autobiography, *The Making of a Forester*, Merrill himself wrote: “I always loved Vermont, and anything that I saw work well in other places, I wanted to apply to Vermont. I was sure that her beauty was so great that people once experiencing it would want to return again and again. I wanted people to be able to swim in her lakes, canoe in her rivers, camp in her forests and drive through her hills and valleys. And especially I wanted to know that her natural resources would be developed in a way that would preserve them for future generations.”



Perry H. Merrill 1894-1993

*A CCC crew
that cut the
Bruce Trail on
Mt. Mansfield
in Stowe in
1933 and 1934.*

UVM photo
archives



During his final years in office it often was said that Merrill was the last dictator left in state government, albeit a benevolent one, and that his oversight of the state's forests was so complete that "the leaves don't turn red until Perry gives them the word." He may not have been a dictator in fact, but he had so much autonomy that Gov. Robert T. Stafford once complained that he couldn't find out how much the state had spent in building the base lodge at Killington because only Merrill knew and Merrill wouldn't tell him.

Merrill was tall and athletic in his youth. He had rowed crew at Syracuse University and sported the sort of "toothbrush" mustache that Charlie Chaplin had made famous in his movies and that was popular in this country until it later became identified with Hitler. Merrill was born in 1894 in Westport, New York, on the shore of Lake Champlain just opposite Vergennes. He began life on a farm that had no electricity, no running water and no indoor plumbing, but that usually had between twelve and twenty Jersey cows, a pair of horses for plowing, and hogs that were butchered each fall for hams, bacon, and pork. His father boiled down sap into maple syrup and his mother churned her own butter. The farmhouse was surrounded by apple, cherry, plum, and pear trees.

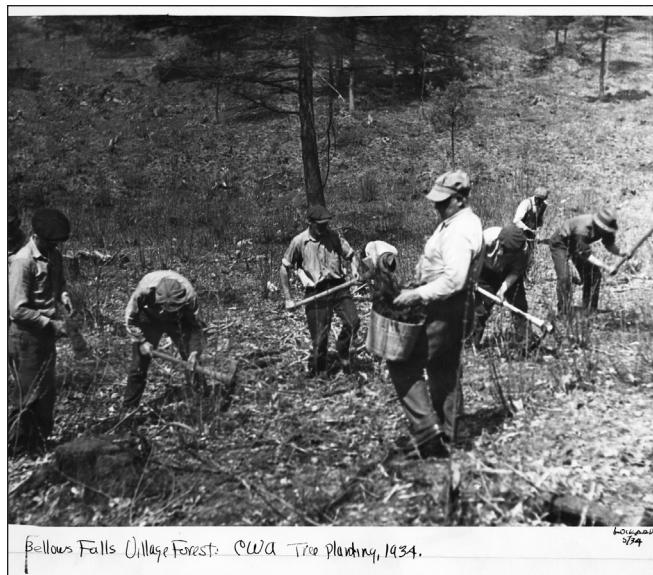
Merrill won a scholarship to Syracuse in 1913, and went from there straight into World War I in 1917 as an ambulance driver with the American Ambulance Field Service attached to the French Army. Two Americans he became friendly with in France were John Fisher, the former Columbia football player who also was an ambulance driver, and his wife, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, both of whom Merrill stayed in contact with after

he returned to Vermont. He gave them much advice over the years about managing the woodlot they owned in Arlington that today has some of the tallest white pines in the state and, at just 22 acres, now is Vermont's smallest state park.

Merrill had first worked for the Vermont Forest Service in 1916, spending the summer between his junior and senior years in college trying to halt the spread of White Pine Blister Rust in the Connecticut River towns between Wells River and Bellows Falls. He began working as a forester full-time in 1919, committed to the conservation policies that had been developed by Theodore Roosevelt and his chief forester, Gifford Pinchot. At that time he was living in a boarding house in Bristol, where one of the other borders was Anna Novak, a recent graduate of Middlebury College who was teaching at Bristol High School. The two began dating and were married the next year. Eventually they would have four children, all daughters.

The pair went off to Sweden in the fall of 1920, and three years later came to New Haven so that Merrill could get a master's degree in forestry from Yale. He was named assistant state forester in 1924 and then was given the top job by Gov. John Weeks in 1929.

Back then, the main job of a forester was to promote reforestation, advise farmers on what trees to cut and not cut, help woodlot owners find



*Workers with
the federal
Civil Works
Administration
plant trees in
the Bellows Falls
Village Forest
in 1934 in this
photo by
Charles Lockard.*

Vermont
Historical Society

Bellows Falls Village Forest. CWA Tree planting, 1934.

Lockard
1934



*Spic and span
is the word for
this Northfield
CCC barracks.*
Northfield
Historical Society

markets for their timber, and teach farm boys and girls the rudiments of forestry through classes with 4-H groups. But Merrill's own job changed in a major way with the stock market crash of 1929 and the coming of the Great Depression. In March of 1933 Franklin Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), intended to put unemployed young men to work in the nation's forests. They were given tools and clothing and meals, housed in military-style barracks, and paid \$30 a month. In Vermont, Merrill was put in charge of the program.

Although a life-long Republican, Merrill wasn't opposed to New Deal programs that were likely to improve his parks system. As he said in an interview fifty years later, he wasn't a Democrat or a backer of Roosevelt, but "on a program like that, I would support anybody." Initially, Vermont was allotted a total of 750 CCC jobs in five camps. But Merrill and Gov. Stanley Wilson told Roosevelt that Vermont could use many more, and almost immediately the program expanded. A total of 40,868 young men, based in fourteen different camps, worked on projects throughout the state between 1933 and 1942, 11,243 of them Vermonters and many of the rest from New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. The young men in the CCC program had to be unmarried, unemployed, and physically fit, and had to agree to send \$25 of their \$30 monthly pay back home to their parents.

The impact of the CCC workers on the state was enormous. They built bridges and dams. They planted about a million trees and reforested more than 1,500 acres of state land. They built fire lookout towers, cut ski trails down Mount Mansfield, including the famous "Nosedive Trail" and the

“Perry Merrill Trail,” and built the original base lodge there. They created swimming, camping, and picnic areas. They cut hiking trails. They cleared enough trees to build 105 miles of roads, mainly in state forests and parks. In cutting trees to open a 2.7-mile stretch of road near Camel’s Hump they produced 400,000 board feet of timber that was sold, along with much cord wood.

By the time the program came to its end at the start of World War II, much had been done to enhance natural areas and develop outdoor recreation sites that wouldn’t have happened — at least not so quickly — if Merrill had been forced to rely on the historically modest appropriations for such things by governors and the state legislature.

Merrill was not without his faults and not without his critics. He ran his department on the back of an envelope and detested any reports that had to be shared with others. He could be secretive past the point of common sense. He often moved ahead on things without either the advice or consent of the legislature or the governors he worked for. He was known for his resistance to cooperating with other agencies that also were involved in outdoor recreation and land management, including the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Development, the State Recreation Board, the Department of Water Resources and the Interagency Committee on Natural Resources. And, back in the ‘30s, he had been an opponent of the proposed Green Mountain Parkway, which would have funneled more than \$18 million federal dollars into building a scenic road along the flanks of the Green Mountains.

But as he neared retirement in 1966, he found himself at the center of an effort to further transform the state that was being headed by a young governor who had been just four years old when Merrill was named the state forester. Philip H. Hoff was the first Democratic governor in Merrill’s lifetime — and in fact the first in Vermont since before the Civil War. Hoff applauded Merrill’s accomplishments while sometimes opposing his methods. But at bottom, Hoff believed that with the completion of the Interstate highway the entire economy of Vermont could be transformed and that the outdoor recreation areas that Merrill had brought into being would play a major role.

With the help of his director of development, Elbert G. “Al” Moulton, Hoff set out to draw tourists to Vermont rather than to New Hampshire

or Maine. And together they launched what was widely considered to be the state's most successful marketing effort up to that time. The centerpiece was a glossy and beautifully illustrated booklet called *The Beckoning Country* that touted the virtues of Vermont for skiing, hunting, fishing, swimming, and hiking — a place whose decent and hard-working people and natural beauty made it well suited for “people from away” to relocate their businesses, vacation with their families, and build second homes. In *The Beckoning Country* the skies were always blue, the waters sparkling and pristine, the snow deep and powdery, and the autumn foliage at its peak. All of the sailboats had wind in their sails.

It was, in fact, something like Merrill had imagined forty years before, traversing the Swedish forests on eight-foot-long skis. And when he finally retired after forty-seven years as a forester, his vision for Vermont had not only been accepted but fully embraced by the governor and the legislature, and by the great majority of Vermonters as well. □

Tar and Terror in Tampa

The Murder of a Bennington Activist

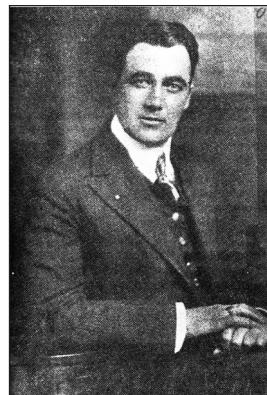
Jennifer Shakshober

Late on the night of November 30, 1935, in the Bloomingdale district fourteen miles beyond Tampa, Joseph Shoemaker, founder of the “Modern Democratic party,” lay unconscious. He had been stripped naked, then tarred, feathered, beaten, and left for dead in a wooded area. Now he was paralyzed across the entire right side of his body, and gangrene was beginning to settle in his right leg.

Several hours later, Shoemaker’s brother Jack, district vice commander of the American Legion, reached the scene and rushed Joseph to Centro Espanol Hospital, where the attending physician prescribed the amputation of Shoemaker’s gangrenous leg.¹ Eleven hours after the surgery, Shoemaker died, his injuries evidence of a crime that Dr. Winston likened to the most severe hog-whipping he had ever seen.²

Earlier on the night of Shoemaker’s assault, the Modern Democrats met at the home of Adolphus and Farleigh Herald. It was at Farleigh’s insistence that the Heralds offered their home on East Palm Avenue as a headquarters for this emerging organization, though she was absent from that night’s proceedings because she had to report to work at the county jail.³ Aside from being matron of the jail, she acted as secretary for the truck drivers’ union in Tampa. Her working-class sensibility made her sympathetic to Shoemaker’s central tenet of “production for use instead of profit.” As the Modern Democrats conducted their meeting in the dining room of the Herald home, Adolphus Herald, the couple’s teenage daughter Virginia, and a boarder sat listening to the radio in another room.

Although by this time the Modern Democrats numbered around forty, only six appeared for the meeting on East Palm Avenue that night. They were Charles Jensen, secretary for the Florida Socialist party, Walter Roush, a member of the State Executive Committee of the Socialist Party, Eugene Poulnot, president of the Florida Federation of Workers’ Alliance, Samuel Rogers, a WPA worker, Mcaskill, a Tampa fireman, and Joseph Shoemaker, chairman. That night they planned to draft a constitution and by-laws for their organization.



*Joseph A. Shoemaker,
from a portrait in the
book Urban Vigilantes
in the New South*



Clothes hanger articles made by the Handee Company in Bennington in the early 1930s. These are on permanent exhibit at the Bennington Museum.

Around 8:15, ten detectives led by Sergeant "Smitty" Brown burst into the Herald residence and reportedly announced: "This is a police raid. Keep quiet and don't move." The Heralds' visitors were under arrest for their presumed Communist activities. While all six men were initially brought to the police station for questioning, Poulnot, Rogers, and Shoemaker were from there forced into separate cars. The plainclothes officer who escorted, Poulnot to the Florida Avenue exit of the jail – a public thoroughfare – told him that he was going back to the Heralds, but when Poulnot responded saying he would walk, another man waiting in the backseat wrested him into the car. A crowd formed as Poulnot shouted for help but people dispersed when one of the officers claimed that they were bringing Poulnot to Chattahoochee, the state mental institution. Discretely, one of the men in the car pressed his foot onto Poulnot's neck as they approached the city limits. Rogers, meanwhile, was subject to similar treatment at the hands of his assailants.

About thirty minutes later, the cars transporting Poulnot and Shoemaker stopped at the docks of the warehouse district. Policemen stripped the three men from the waist down and flogged them with chains and rawhide. According to Poulnot, the officers spread tar over his abdomen, genitals, thighs, and buttocks, casting feathers on his loins. He and Rogers crept to the side of the road, where they were picked up by a passing car; but Shoemaker, who remained immobilized, asked them to get help. When he finally arrived at the hospital the following morning, he was kept under constant guard.



A 1936 cartoon depicted a Klan flogger with a gun and bucket of tar protecting gambling in Tampa.

From *Urban Vigilantes in the New South: Tampa 1882-1936* by Robert P. Ingalls.

Tampa's political machine, which condoned violence and intimidation at the primaries to ensure that the most prominent faction, represented by Robert E. Lee Chancey, did not fade from the political landscape. On one September day at the polls, Shoemaker counted over one hundred more ballots than voters, and was told to submit the fraudulent votes.⁴ As these maneuvers continued, he grew to abhor the existing administration. By the end of the primaries in 1935, he was moved to rally the unemployed and the indigent who were sorely underrepresented in Tampa politics, making for himself not a few enemies along the way.

To be sure, his grandiose plan for economic recovery, laid out in weekly newspaper installments throughout the summer of 1935, threatened the city of Tampa's corporate interests – notably the cigar manufacturers, who supplied about 65 percent of America's cigars. Historically, there had been a great deal of animosity between the workers and the bosses within this industry – five union organizers were lynched in 1910, and two decades later, rumors of a “manufacturer's secret committee” circulated.⁵ Among Shoemaker's most tendentious proposals was the institution of a 100

In his final moments, Shoemaker managed to utter the name of the men who beat him. Six police officers were subsequently arrested for the crimes committed against Shoemaker and his comrades: Sergeant C.A. “Smitty” Brown, C.W. Carlisle, Sam E. Crosby, John E. Bridges, F.W. Switzer, and Robert Chappell.

As one of eleven hundred “special policemen” on the city's payroll appointed to monitor voting during the primaries, Joseph Shoemaker had been well versed in city politics. The work exposed him to the prevalence of graft and corruption in

percent tax levied on incomes of \$5,000 and above. “The one-half million persons who would pay this would simply be doing their patriotic duty to their country, the country that made it possible for them to acquire such huge incomes,” he argued.⁶ He also supported full government control over factors of production, effectively dis-empowering the large, anti-union corporations and elevating the worker.

During the city elections in late 1935, the Modern Democrats endorsed Miller A. Stephens, independent candidate for mayor, during the city elections.⁷ Meanwhile, Hillsborough County Sheriff McLeod and Governor Scholtz snubbed Mayor Chancey in favor of Miller A. Stephens, the candidate endorsed by the Modern Democrats. Stephens garnered only 900 votes to Chauncey’s 10,000, but nevertheless the primacy of the Old Guard was challenged, due in part to Shoemaker’s influence.

Shoemaker was born February 24, 1888 in Philadelphia, making him forty-seven years old at the time of his death. Though his obituary in the *Tampa Tribune* claimed that Shoemaker suffered a physical impairment as a young man that barred him from military service (information apparently supplied by his brother, Jack), on his own World War I draft registration he declared himself a conscientious objector.⁸ And yet he had no qualms about starring in a recruitment reel called “Made In America.” In 1920, when Shoemaker was living with his wife and her family in Brooklyn, he reported his occupation as “motion picture actor,” a title possibly more aspirational than realistic.⁹

In 1925, Shoemaker and his wife, Grace, moved to Bennington, where they assumed management of the Handee Company, manufacturers of clothes hangers and dryers. They first resided at 655 Main Street before moving to 124 Burgess Road in 1928.¹⁰ Around this time Shoemaker renounced the Democratic party and joined the local Socialists, composed of bluestockings like Helen Phelps Stokes and Mary Robinson Sanford of Old Bennington, wealthy summer transplants from New York who infused local politics with a touch of Greenwich Village social consciousness. “There were many factions in the Socialist Party at the time, and the one that Sanford and Stokes belonged to was considered the conservative faction, more intent on reform than revolution and more progressive than radical,” wrote Anthony Marro for the *Walloomsack Review*.¹¹ Even so, when Ms. Sanford and Ms. Stokes were identified as members of the Intercollegiate Socialist Society in 1912, followers of socialism had only recently cast off the obloquy of the American public. Four years earlier, newspapers from as far away as South Carolina had reported a change in Ms. Sanford during

the fall of 1908, as though her political coming-of-age were a matter of widespread concern: *Miss Mary R. Sanford, a member of a wealthy family in New York City and New Haven, has become a Socialist.*¹² Following her debut, Mary Sanford orchestrated mass meetings of Bennington socialists at the grandstand in Morgan Park, pontificating, once, to a crowd of hundreds in the pouring rain.¹³

It was Mary Robinson Sanford who persuaded John Spargo, the renowned lecturer, author, and member of the National Committee of the Socialist Party, to leave New York for Vermont in 1909.¹⁴ He went on to lead the Socialist contingent in Bennington, referring to Mary Sanford as a “fellow traveler” and acknowledging their shared socioeconomic milieu on the dedication page of his Karl Marx biography: *To Mary Robinson Sanford: Greetings from “Nestledown” to “Tucked Away”*¹⁵. Unfortunately, the outbreak of World War I resulted in a schism within the Socialist party that divided Sanford and Spargo, with the latter dismissing the former as a “parlor pink” in his later years.¹⁶ Up until 1916 it was Spargo himself who was branded by fellow party members as “that dangerous radical.” Over time, he metamorphosed into a Hoover conservative sympathetic to the Republican party while the zealotry of Ms. Sanford and Ms. Stokes had merely dulled in old age.

Jack Shoemaker alleged that his brother had never been a Communist; that he “knew it was wrong and wouldn’t work.”¹⁷ And yet Joseph Shoemaker’s convictions strayed from the relatively conservative pedagogy of Bennington’s Socialists; where the other, mostly older members concentrated on reform, he agitated for revolution. In an article published in the *Bennington Banner* on October 30, 1934, Shoemaker wrote that common sense should supersede partisanship: “ . . . I am much more interested in realism than party dogma,” he declared. “Don’t waste any energy fighting other people who are also against profit for the few and the misery of near starvation for the many.” He recognized that Vermonters were disillusioned by their local party leaders and urged them to relinquish control to the national administration, which if made powerful, could affect real economic change.

Shoemaker’s endorsement of a Communist candidate for governor as a palatable alternative to the Socialist one – and indifference to the party in office so long as it accomplished his desired end – raised alarm among his fellow party members. A few days after the offending article was printed, Shoemaker appeared before a committee of Bennington Socialists who reported their charges against him: “he has publicly advocated the election of Democrats to Congress . . . he has made public appeal for support of the

National Democratic Administration . . . he has publicly disparaged the Socialist party of another state . . . he has publicly recommended voting for either the Socialist or the Communist candidate for governor . . . he has made public reflection upon the Socialist candidate for governor."¹⁸ At the next meeting, he was ousted from the group.

Henry B. Walbridge, the insurance broker who recommended Shoemaker's expulsion from the Socialist party and instigated the proceedings against him, wrote Mary Sanford on January 2, 1936: ". . . Comrade Shoemaker frequently displayed a feeling that he was being persecuted by those members who did not thoroughly agree with him." In his closing remarks to the committee, Shoemaker voiced the impression that Walbridge and his cronies meant to banish him from the Socialist party on a technicality.¹⁹ He had always harbored subversive ideas, which local Benningtonians had accepted civilly. Displaying these opinions publicly, on the other hand, carried more serious repercussions.

According to his obituary, Joseph Shoemaker left Bennington in May of 1935 when "the depression ruined his business and reduced him to the necessity of preserving his home through the Home Owners Loan Corporation."²⁰ Despite his banishment from the Socialist party, Shoemaker's death nevertheless prompted outrage in Bennington. Gage Street resident Alice Cameron Voorhis, who called Shoemaker "a welcome friend at our home" and "a valued member of

This Klan circular was distributed in Tampa after the flogging-murder of Joseph Shoemaker of Bennington.

University of Florida Special Collections

THE KU KLUX KLAN RIDES AGAIN Your Country Is Calling You

The Klan Rides to
Save America!



Stop! Look! Listen!
Think! Pray!

Communism Must Go! America, Wake Up!

YOUR COUNTRY

Love, Peace, Freedom, God,
Home, Husband, Wife & Children.
Free Speech, Free Thought.
Free Speech and Free Press.
Government of the People.
The Stars and Stripes Forever.
Right to Worship God we Please.

COMMUNISM

Hate, Bondage, Prison and Starvation.
Fraud, Greed, Children Steal Property.
Dictated Thought by a Few.
Fear to Express Thought by Speech or Press.
Overthrow of All Government.
The Red Flag of Destruction.
Overthrow of All Religion.

You have read of "The midnight ride of Paul Revere," calling the Minute Men to arms to free us from tyranny.

This is the MIDNIGHT RIDE OF THE KU KLUX KLAN, calling you to save our country and its institutions.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan is determined to drive out of the United States these vicious, alien radicals and to eradicate their radical thought from every rank, class and group of the American people, through a nation-wide concerted campaign. In this job, they are entitled to the hearty support of every true American citizen.

The Knights of the Ku Klux Klan invites and pleads for your help to save our country because it is too late. We do not want money but we need YOU and your support.

MODERN COMMUNISM CHALLENGES ALL DECENCY AND CIVILIZATION

This organization is determined to fight to the last ditch and the last man against any and all attacks on our government and its American institutions. If you are a Red Blooded, Native Born, American Citizen and believe with us, fill out the coupon below.

Fill out on this line and mail.

P. O. Box 1975,
Tampa, Florida.

I want to help save our country and am ready to ride with you.

NAME _____

OCCUPATION _____

RESIDENCE ADDRESS _____

(Leave where employed)

Several weeks after the kidnaping of Shoemaker, Poulnot and Rogers and the murder of Shoemaker by Tampa police and Klansmen, the above leaflet was widely distributed in Tampa. It speaks for itself

our family circle,”²¹ wrote Mayor Chancey on December 16, “A shocked commonwealth of the United States of America is watching Florida . . . waiting to see the murder lynchers of Joseph Shoemaker, unselfish friend of the down-trodden, brought to account for their inhuman crime.”²² She also wrote to Norman Thomas, the nationally known Socialist, who had promptly organized a Committee for the Defense of Civil Rights in Tampa, urging him to leverage his influence in federal affairs.²³ Later in December, the *Tampa Tribune* printed her elegy to Shoemaker, “Oh, Tell Us Sleeper!” The piece celebrates his restless idealism: “. . . the fair dream of a new-made world . . . Of man’s equality of opportunity – Of long, sweet days of well divided toil and ease – That olden dream of comradely profane as hell – Mumbling and snuffling at their bloody work – Like famished wolves, mouthing a bone.”²⁴ To Voorhis, comrade Shoemaker would remain an innocent.

Thus Joseph Shoemaker’s greatest legacy is also his greatest failing. America’s economic woes inspired him to test his visionary plan, while the Great Depression had turned the rest of the country wooden, fatalistic. He had established the short-lived Handee Company in Bennington prior to the Depression, but earned the admiration of his Bennington comrades not for his business acumen but for his initiative, his foresight, and above all, his integrity.

To be continued.

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20. *Tampa Tribune*, December 10, 1935.
21. Alice Cameron Voorhis to Norman Thomas, December 23, 1935. Norman Thomas Papers.
22. Quoted in “Home Town Friends Mourn Shoemaker,” *Tampa Tribune*, 17 Dec 1935.
23. Alice Cameron Voorhis to Norman Thomas, December 23, 1935. Norman Thomas Papers.
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Paying for Schools in Vermont Has Prompted Perennial Controversy

Allen Gilbert

Two facts are important to remember when discussing education funding reform in Vermont.

The first is that Vermont's constitution requires, through a mandate given towns, the education of all children. It's a universal right, since the constitution's common-benefits clause requires that any benefit the state provides must be on an equal basis.

The second is that from the state's founding, the legislature has tinkered with how best to carry out this obligation. Disagreement over school funding is not a recent creation of the 1997 *Brigham* litigation.

Vermont's original constitution of 1777 required that:

A school or schools shall be established in each town, by the legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by each town, making proper use of school lands in each town, thereby to enable them to instruct youth at low prices. One grammar school in each county, and one university in this State, ought to be established by direction of the General Assembly.

This was an ambitious vision. Money was an obvious concern. Teachers' salaries, while paid by the towns, would draw on revenue from "school lands" (so-called "glebe" land) set aside in each town. The hoped-for result was "low prices" for instruction.

When the constitution was amended in 1786, the school provision was altered. The new mandate said that:

... a competent number of schools ought to be maintained in each town unless the general assembly permits other provisions for the convenient instruction of youth.

No longer was every town required to have its own school. Tuitioning students to other towns was permitted.

Also dropped in the 1786 amendments were the requirements that a grammar school in each county, and a state university, be built. The expense must have been considered too great. (Fortunately, Ira Allen and others pulled together plans to found a university in Burlington, in 1791.)

With some flexibility given towns, a little trimming of obligations, but a “common school” mandate still in place, the legislature as the 1800s dawned must have felt it had done its job of providing universal public education, and at a low cost to taxpayers. But such confidence wasn’t justified. Funding for the system was shaky. Glebe land rentals and sales never produced the revenue hoped for. And the University of Vermont couldn’t exist solely on private funds; it needed public support too, as evidenced by acceptance of federal land-grant funding through the Morrill Act, passed in 1862.

Further, the requirement that “a competent number of schools ought to be maintained in each town” begged the question, “What’s a competent number?” The legislature gave towns a choice of operating a single school or creating multiple districts within a town, with each district having its own school. Towns opted for multiple districts. The result was that by the mid-1800s, the state had a total of 2,591 school districts. (Information about 19th-century school funding and governance is based on “Equity and History: Vermont’s Education Revolution of the Early 1890s” by John A. Sautter, which appeared in *Vermont History* in its Winter/Spring 2008 edition.)

From these circumstances emerged two of the most vexing problems in Vermont education and finance, problems that remain today. The first problem is, Who foots the bill for schools? The second is, How many schools are needed?

Typically, fees were charged parents to balance local district budgets. That didn’t yield the necessary revenue, so in 1864 the Vermont legislature

Vermont’s Declining School Enrollment

According to the preamble of Act 46, the number of grade K-12 students enrolled in public schools in Vermont declined from 103,000 in 1997 to 78,300 in 2015, a staggering 24 percent decrease. Grade K-12 enrollment declined a further 15 percent in 2016.

required property taxes be levied on all property owners in a district. But there was another problem. Enrollments were dropping. The number of pupils statewide fell 24 percent between 1850 and 1860, from 99,110 students to 75,691. By the 1880s, 420 schools had between six and 11 students and 103 schools had six students or fewer. (Consolidation of districts within a town was finally mandated in 1892 through a law that became known as the “Vicious Act.”)

Tax rates differed widely among towns, from 17 cents “on the dollar of the grand list” in one town to nearly eight times that – \$1.30 – in another. Even worse disparities existed among districts in the same town. The worst intra-town disparities, Gov. William Dillingham reported in his 1890 inaugural address, were in the town of Bakersfield. There, residents in one district paid seven cents on each dollar of their property’s listed value while those in another paid \$2.15 – nearly thirty-one times more. (The “town tax rate” reported to the state was the average of a town’s individual districts’ rates.)

Dillingham proposed, and the legislature passed, a statewide education property tax to equalize school resources across the state. A 5 percent surcharge was levied on all local property tax bills, with the funds redistributed to towns based on need. Dillingham’s bold initiative was a sea change for school funding in Vermont. It was the first time the state acted directly to increase revenue to schools and to address widely divergent tax burdens. The tax remained in place for 40 years until 1931, when it was repealed (the flood of 1927 and then the Depression had strapped the state’s tax-raising capacity).

Dillingham had a vision of greater education opportunity for all students, which was echoed by successive governors. Still, how to pay for broader opportunity became a bigger and bigger challenge. Gov. Stanley Wilson in 1931, for example, said that “considerable progress” had been

Vermont Public School Enrollment 2015-2016

Grade	Enrollment
K-12	77,078
Pre-K	6,242
Essential Early Education (special ed for pre-school)	1,059
Total public schools	84,379
Other publicly funded students	4,475
Totally publicly funded students	88,854

Source: Vermont Agency of Education 2017 Budget Book

made in “equalizing educational opportunities to the youth of our State.” Funds should be increased, he admitted, but that might have to “await a later day.”

Governor George Aiken in 1937 lamented that “we cannot afford to do as much for our schools as we would like to.”

The easing of the Depression and the end of World War II gave governors the confidence to ask the legislature to do more for the state’s children. Gov. Mortimer Proctor in 1945 recommended “the Legislature appropriate sufficient money to equalize the cost of education . . .”

In 1947, Gov. Ernest Gibson Sr. told the legislature the greatest problem facing the state’s education system was “equalizing educational opportunity and distributing the costs as equally as possible among the towns and school districts of the State.” (Governors’ addresses can be found at the Vermont Secretary of State’s archives website: www.sec.state.vt.us/archives-records/state-archives/government-history/governors-addresses/inaugurals-farewells.aspx.)

For the next 50 years Vermont struggled with the problem that Ernest Gibson identified.

The result was a succession of different funding systems: the Miller Formula in 1969, the Morse-Giuliani Formula in 1982, and the Foundation Aid Formula in 1988. Each of the formulas foundered when the state hit hard times and revenues dropped. The ferocity of school funding debates grew as political power shifted between Republicans and Democrats in the 1980s and 1990s and as the property tax gap between “poor” towns and “rich” towns widened.

The *Brigham* decision in 1997 was the result of those debates. Amanda Brigham, an eight-year-old Whiting student, was one of 13 plaintiffs who joined in the lawsuit brought by the American Civil Liberties Union. Attorney Robert Gensburg of St. Johnsbury argued that Vermont’s Constitution established education as a fundamental right and that access to that right had to be provided equally under the constitution’s common-benefits clause.

In its decision, the Vermont Supreme Court noted the high value the state’s founders attached to education. “Only one governmental service

– public education – has ever been accorded constitutional status in Vermont,” the decision stated. It said the unequal distribution of school funds under the then-current Foundation Formula was wrong. “Children who live in property-poor districts and children who live in property-rich districts should be afforded a substantially equal opportunity to have access to similar educational revenues,” the court ruled.

The legislature responded by passing the Equal Education Opportunity Act of 1997. “Act 60,” as the law came to be known, retooled the state’s education tax revenue and distribution systems. A penny on the tax rate in one town would now raise the same amount of revenue per pupil as a penny on the tax rate in any other town. School budgets would still be voted locally; towns would continue to make their own decisions about how much to spend on their schools, as the court said they should be able to do.

Act 60 has remained in place for 20 years. It’s been judged by national education policy experts the fairest school funding system in the country. While arguments persist about how school taxes are raised, there is no disagreement about how school funds are disbursed. Few people argue with the statement that all kids count.

Yet as Act 60 has aged, the attacks on it – direct and indirect – have increased. The most recent came during the 2018 legislative session. The House developed a bill to supposedly shift school taxes away from the property tax and onto the income tax. In reality, it did the opposite. The elimination of “income sensitivity,” a mechanism in Act 60 that adjusts most property taxpayers’ bills to their incomes, would have resulted over time in greater reliance on the property tax. The bill also would have decoupled a town’s per-pupil school spending and its tax rate. That would have resulted in tax rates in some towns going up twice or three times as fast as spending per pupil in other towns.

The proposal was revised by the Senate, but education funding became the football left in play after the legislative session ended. Gov. Phil Scott was angry that taxpayers had approved *any* spending increases at their town meetings, even increases within guidelines he had urged. The governor wanted school tax rates frozen – even though that wouldn’t necessarily stabilize or lower homeowners’ property taxes (both rates *and* property values must be frozen to achieve that).

The governor eventually allowed the state budget to become law

without his signature. It was a messy ending. But one positive outcome was an apparent renewed interest in moving more of school taxes off the property tax and onto the income tax. It would be simpler, fairer, and produce the necessary funds.

In an article in the Spring 2013 *Walloomsack Review*, Jamie Franklin reviewed a book on the works Edward Hopper painted in Vermont in the 1920s and 1930s. The paintings are praised for reflecting a synergy “created by the comfortable, even happy, coexistence of traditional and progressive ideals in the Green Mountain State.” Franklin calls this synergy a “happy tension;” it resulted in a particularly productive period for Hopper.

Education funding reform can perhaps be seen in the same light. An eighteenth-century belief that all Vermont citizens should be educated and treated equitably was enshrined in our state constitution. A sense of equal treatment of our neighbors became a core state value. That an ideal of such simple proportions could become an engine for progressive change throughout our history, extending into the twenty-first century, speaks to the power of this “happy tension” – tumultuous at times – but also productive.

It’s unlikely school funding will ever disappear from the state’s political to-do list. A commitment to equity requires hard decisions around what’s fair and what’s just. □

Vermont's Water Powers

A recent report of the United States Commissioner of Corporations contained the following statement: "Water power is unlike most other natural resources in that it is not diminished by use, nor is it conserved by non-use. Coal, which is not used today remains to be used hereafter, but the energy of water, which is allowed to flow by unused neither increases or decreases the future supply, but is irretrievably lost. Our supply of coal – the principal source of energy – while vast, is not unlimited. The utilization of water power results in the saving of coal for future use. In other words, the real waste of water power is its non-use, while its development effects a conservation, not only of water power, but of our fuel supply as well."

The state of Vermont is peculiarly favored by nature with an abundance of natural water powers and in the opportunity to develop other powers. Extending through the state from end to end, dividing it into two nearly equal parts, is the Green Mountain range. This system of mountains condenses the moisture and keeps the whole region well watered. The Connecticut river forms the eastern boundary of the state from the Canadian border to the Massachusetts line. Lake Champlain forms the western boundary, more than half of the distance from north to south. Almost midway along the northern border is Lake Memphremagog, which receives the waters of several Vermont streams.

From: "Industrial Vermont: The Mineral, Manufacturing, and Water Power Resources of the Green Mountain State," published in 1914 by the Vermont Bureau of Publicity, Office of the Secretary of State, Essex Junction. □

Book Reviews

**“Reality is only something
to build on”**

*A Critical Review of
And No Birds Sing
by Pauline Leader*

Reviewed by Jamie Franklin

I'll try not to mince words. Pauline Leader certainly did not. Her autobiographical novel *And No Birds Sing* is a powerful, insightful piece of literature that is simultaneously heart wrenching, fantastical, and poetic. But it is not without fault. In the book Leader painted her personal world, both exterior and interior, with words.

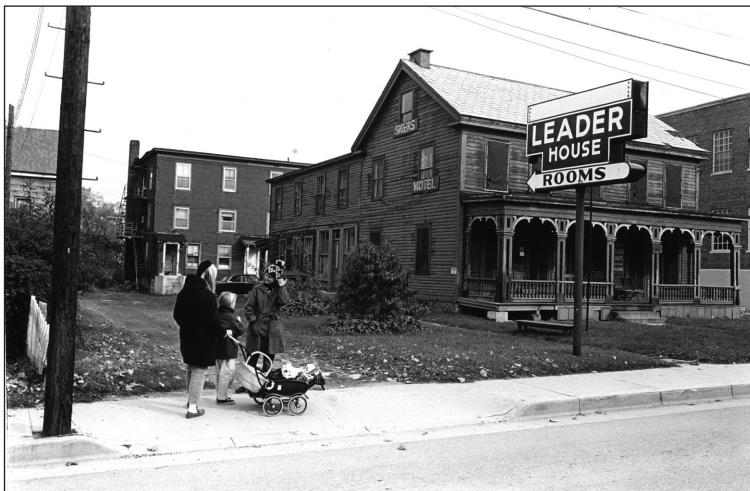
Having lost her hearing at the age of 12, due to complications from a bout of meningitis that nearly killed her, Leader experienced the physical world largely through her eyes, and her preferred form of communication was the written word. She stubbornly refused to conform to her parents or society's expectations by formally learning sign language or lip reading, as she felt this would only emphasize her difference. Leader received some of her earliest literary recognition as a poet, publishing two poems in the February 1928 issue of *Poetry* magazine, just four months after her 19th birthday. In her writing, which she began in earnest not long after becoming deaf, she crafted moving, often raw pictures based on her daily struggles, while simultaneously chronicling the intricacies of her vivid, often fantastic, and always complex interior life.

While not perfect, *And No Birds Sing* is without question significant and meaningful on many levels and for many reasons. Clearly built from a foundation of dozens of shorter individual stories or vignettes that recall and reflect upon her personal experiences, the book can occasionally feel a bit jumpy and erratic, without a consistent narrative flow or clear sense of cohesion. That said, I'd rather read Leader's gritty, passionate, and determined prose, which brilliantly captures her unique experience of the



*Pauline Leader Brand,
W. 111 St. NYC, 1957
Jonathan Brand (b. 1933)
Gelatin silver photograph,
16 x 10 inches*

Bennington Museum Collection, gift of Jonathan and Monika Brand



Leader Block, Bennington, Vt. (Linda Elowson, Monika, Ulrika & Jenny Brand), 1967 Jonathan Brand (b. 1933)
Gelatin silver photograph, 10 x 16 inches

Bennington Museum Collection, gift of Jonathan Brand and Family

world despite its rough edges, perhaps even because of them, than a highly polished, straight-laced piece of factual documentary writing any day. *And No Birds Sing* provides an intimate, insightful, and deeply affecting window onto what it was like to grow up as a strong willed, deaf Jewish girl in a rural New England town during the early twentieth century (1908-1926). Though not once identified in the book's text by name, that town was our town: Bennington, Vermont.

Originally published by The Vanguard Press in 1931, when Leader was just 22 years old, well over half of *And No Birds Sing* is built around the author's recollections and impressions of her childhood and teenage years growing up in Bennington. Despite this fact, much of the book's critical and scholarly reception has tended to focus more on other facets of the book. Beyond a solid body of mostly positive critical reviews when the book was originally published, reception of the book has been scant until recent decades. This is due to several factors. The book was originally published in relatively small numbers, perhaps 5,000 copies in the United States and a few thousand more in England, making it difficult, until recently, to track down a copy. Furthermore, Leader was not the type of person who typically has been granted a position in the literary canon until recent decades, when scholars have made a concerted effort to diversify and expand the canon to include traditionally marginalized voices.

Luckily, we have recently been given the gift of a new edition of *And No Birds Sing*, published by Gallaudet University Press in 2016. This new

edition features the text of Leader's book as it was originally published in 1931, as well as two contextual essays, "Underdog Bohemia: A Biography of Pauline Leader" by Mara Mills, a professor in the department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University, and "Pauline Leader's Disability Modernism" by Rebecca Sanchez, an English professor at Fordham University. While important additions to our understanding of Leader's life and literary accomplishments, these recent studies have focused more on aspects other than her childhood in Bennington, such as the bohemian Greenwich Village literary world that she became a part of in 1926 at the age of 18, and her almost unique status as a deaf female Jewish writer in America during the interwar period. Since this review is to appear in the *Walloomsack Review*, a journal devoted largely to historical non-fiction published by the Bennington Museum, the primary caretaker and interpreter of our community's history and cultural legacy, I want to redirect our focus to that aspect of the book.

Indeed, *And No Birds Sing* provides a rare, first-hand glimpse into the life of a type of person whom history, certainly the historiography of Bennington, has all too often overlooked or, at best, cast in minor, shallow, and often stereotyped roles. In her book Leader does not play a bit role or a foil against which the events around her can unfold. Rather, she is the lead actor, the director, the producer, and the stage designer as well. We are privileged in reading the book to be provided a first-hand account of her experiences and insight into a perspective that is all too often absent from the historic record. Leader portrays a life filled with more than the average amount of day-to-day difficulty and intense personal struggle – due not just to her status as an outsider, in both her own family and the larger community, but also her always defiant personality. In fact, one of the book's potential flaws is the author's ceaseless, often seemingly hyperbolic critique of almost everyone and everything she encounters. Yet in the end Leader also portrays the life of a deeply committed, deeply intelligent, and deeply talented human being who overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to achieve a remarkable level of success at a young age. The town of Bennington was Leader's backdrop for 18 of the 22 years covered in her book, and provided much of the raw material for that success. While she doesn't paint life in our community 100 years ago in a very positive light, she does provide us with a window onto a facet of Bennington's history that no one living today can directly recall and that is rarely, if ever, referenced in the historic record.

Pauline Leader was the daughter of Jewish immigrants, Frieda (Kovensky) and Isaac Leader, recently arrived to the United States from Eastern Europe. During their early years in Bennington, where they moved

from New York City shortly after Pauline's birth on October 16, 1908, Frieda and Isaac owned and managed the Cut Price Market, a meat market on North Street, where most of the Jewish businesses in town were located. According to Pauline, her mother Frieda did all the hard work of managing the market and making it the success that is was: "My mother never went out, she was chained to the market . . . she was ready to lift forequarters and sides of beef as other women had need to lift only their babies . . . she was ready to saw through bones, and cut through flesh, to disembowel pigs and cows" [p. 35, all page references are from the 2016 Gallaudet University Press edition of *And No Birds Sing*]. The Leader family lived in close proximity to the market, often in the same building, whether a back-room or an upstairs apartment. This was the environment in which Pauline spent her earliest years, circa 1910-1918: a Jewish-run meat market frequented by many of the other non-Yankee, non-native minorities who had arrived in Bennington to work in its many factories, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Pauline hated the market: "Why couldn't I get away from the market, from the market-smell that pursued me everywhere . . . A smell of cold meat, of cold pork, a peculiar raw smell, the market-smell, I could not get away from it . . . It ostracized me" [p. 16].

Pauline also hated her father and said so in no uncertain terms: "I hated my father . . . Why did he let my mother lift sides of beef from the hook? Why didn't he do it himself" [p. 36]. While it is never noted in the book, Isaac Leader was Bennington's first rabbi, leading the Congregation Beth El from its inception in 1909. Presumably as a result of harsh treatment by her father, from whom she received her foundational understanding of Judaism, Pauline held a life-long antipathy towards Jewish people and her Jewish roots. An undercurrent of anti-Semitism runs throughout the book. She clearly resented other children in Bennington for their American-ness: "On Sunday I was an outcast. I did not belong with them, the American little girls, all dressed up in their hats and gloves" [p. 5]. Pauline provides us with invaluable insight to what it felt like to be an outsider, someone who was IN, but not OF Bennington.

As a child Pauline wandered the streets of Bennington as often as she could. She would loiter at the train station, not far from her home, watching the trains come and go and "thinking up one-sentence stories about the people who got off" [p. 2]. In fact she seems to have been as interested in the people she saw at the station, especially the outcasts like her, as the massive steam engines: "All the bums of the town congregated there, all the men who didn't work or were out of work, and all the men who had only one eye or one arm, or one leg . . . These strange creatures fascinated me as much as the trains" [p. 2]. Pauline was often severely

scolded for these seemingly aimless excursions, family members going so far as to hide her jacket and shoes in the winter to prevent her from going outside. Yet she persisted in these quiet adventures, and her observations became the raw materials for her writing.

After less than a decade of successfully operating the market, Pauline's parents bought a large house, not far from the market, and converted it into boarding rooms. Soon they developed the property, constructing two new large purpose-built boarding houses, or what might be called apartments today, on the same lot. The rental units, which eventually became known as the "Leader Block" or simply "the blocks," continued to be operated by the Leader family until the late 1960s. They are still infamous among many Benningtonians who have recollections of growing up in Bennington during the 1940s through the 1960s. After the publication of *And No Birds Sing*, Leader wrote at least two other novels in the 1930s, neither of which were published, nor ever will be, as Leader "threw away" the manuscripts. After returning to Bennington in 1942, where she raised her two sons, Daniel and Jonathan, Leader produced a collection of humorous short stories based on her observations of life on the Leader Block, which was published in 1946 as a book titled *A Room for the Night*.

Much of Pauline Leader's life story pivots around her fleeing from Bennington to the bohemian enclave of artists and writers in Manhattan's Greenwich Village in 1926, when she was just 18 years old. Against all odds she managed to achieve a miraculous degree of success in the dog-eat-dog literary world of New York City in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Unfortunately, Leader never went on to achieve the same level of acclaim she did for her early poems or *And No Birds Sing* despite a life dedicated to writing. She astutely noted in regard to her mother's storytelling ability, though it can certainly be applied to her own writing as well: "[She] knew as well as anyone that reality is only something to build on" [p. 41]. Though it may not be based entirely upon the sort of empirical facts that historians strive for, Leader has provided readers today, thanks especially to the new edition of *And No Birds Sing*, with uncommon, often harrowing insights into life in Bennington during the early twentieth century.

Note: The author has been aided greatly in the writing of this review by access to a folder of archival materials related to Pauline Leader and her family compiled by Tyler Resch, librarian of the Bennington Museum. Of particular note is a two-part manuscript by Paul Hurlburt, "Pauline Leader: Bennington's Unsung Hero," which was originally conceived as an article for the *Walloomsack Review* but has yet to be published due to space constraints. □

A New Evangelicalism and Congregational Fractures

Reviewed by Lee Williams

Two-hundred and thirty-three years before Abraham Lincoln stood on that “great battlefield,” John Winthrop reminded his fellow colonists aboard the *Arbella* that they journeyed to establish a “city upon a hill,” and “the eyes of all people are upon us.” In New England, the governor believed, they would establish a colony united by godly living and government. Yet, instead of a model for the world, eighteenth-century Puritanism provided a rare example of a house divided. The Great Awakening, according to Douglas Winiarski, provided the “rock on which the ship of New England Congregationalism foundered.” (p. 373)

In fascinating vignettes drawn from church records, diaries, letters, and published ecclesiastical debate, Winiarski reconstructs a society experiencing the powerful, worldwide influences of a developing market economy, in which spiritual authority passed from the trained clergy to ordinary people. The “visible saints,” whose public professions of faith (later contained in written records called relations) heretofore granted them access to social respectability and upward mobility, saw their corporate religious experiment give way to individualism and conversion experiences, in which a “vibrant Congregational establishment was buried under an avalanche of innovative and incendiary religious beliefs and practices.” (p. 9) These “new” beliefs were experiential in nature, and not part of traditional Puritan theology, where a “godly walk” was the key to salvation and security. The process of “new birth,” introduced in “Whitefieldarian revivals” (p. 15) of the 1740s, “was quite unlike the more traditional seventeenth-century puritan morphology of conversion.” (p. 16)

Employing subtle echoes of David D. Hall’s *World of Wonders* (1990) combined with elements of Harry S. Stout’s *The Divine Dramatist* (1991), Winiarski recovers a world peopled by well-known clerics, but progressively modified by the desires of ordinary people in the pews. In the eighteenth-century wilderness of North America, a church defined by consensual community was swept aside by a new evangelicalism. This understanding is teased from the primary sources, which allow the author to “provide a baseline for assessing shifts of religious experience across a broad spectrum of the population.” (p. 529) Analyzing “over twelve hundred relations from more than forty Congregational churches over a period spanning two centuries” (p. 529) Winiarski documents the demise of Congregational

hegemony, where “perhaps as many as one hundred New England congregations fractured into competing factions between 1742 and 1760.” (p. 377)

The fracturing continued beyond this eight-year period, however, and is particularly relevant for my own community in Bennington, Vermont. In Part Five, “Travels,” Winiarski documents the itinerations of the Fay family of Westborough, Massachusetts. Family members John, James, and Steven, converted during the preaching tour of George Whitefield, helped lead an intrepid group of Separatists to the frontier of the New Hampshire Grants to escape the “Standing Order” of Congregationalism. (p. 386) Aided by others from the region of the revivals, the Old First Church was “gathered” on December 3, 1762, providing the new evangelicalism to three-quarters of the early settlers of this town. Ultimately, the newly gathered Bennington church would fall victim to the same splintering of Christianity aptly demonstrated by Winiarski’s research and writing.

Aside from the fascinating social implications of this work, the volume also provides a wealth of bibliographical information concerning primary source materials in New England archives. If for no other reason, Winiarski’s research provides a much-needed synthesis of disparate materials previously known only to well-trained experts. This work will certainly give rise to many further investigations, perhaps shedding increased light on the confluence of events leading to the explosive growth of Baptist, Methodist, and Episcopalian churches in this area. Winiarski’s research will shed little new light on Whitefield, Edwards, or even Davenport, but will provide myriad productive references for those seeking to understand those who left the Congregational churches of colonial New England in the eighteenth century.

Professor Winiarski serves as professor of religious studies and American studies at the University of Richmond, and has received numerous awards for this research. The monograph, containing hundreds of extensive footnotes drawn from secondary literature, journals, and primary sources, also contains an overview of major collections of relations of faith. Useful appendices allow the novice historian to read selected relations, providing a glimpse of a relatively unknown world for the non-scholar. The work is rounded out with an extensive and useful index, and is salted with charts and illustrations.

If there is any weakness in this exhaustive research, it is the dependence on percentage for all data analysis. One could wish for an occasional degree of significance. The work will appeal strongly to graduate students and those seeking to gain an insight into the complexities of New England Congregationalism in the eighteenth century. Historians of evangelical

Christianity will find the book interesting because it documents the revived growth of born-again conversion experiences, and the recurring theme of *sola scriptura* and priesthood of the believer, so characteristic of the popular Reformation and particularly the Anabaptist movement. Lastly, local historians throughout the New England area will benefit from the tantalizing references to separatist churches that constitute the earliest history of many communities. □

Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England.
By Douglas L. Winiarski; Chapel Hill; University of North Carolina Press, 2017. 632 pages. \$49.95.

Red Scare in the Green Mountains

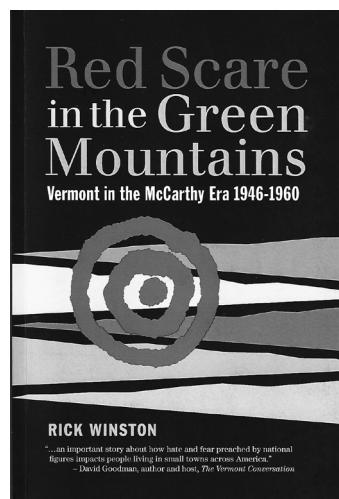
Vermont in the McCarthy Era 1946-1960

Reviewed by Tyler Resch

In the early 1950s Vermont figured prominently during the so-called Red Scare Era when Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin, abetted by some right-wing newspapers and commentators, local and national, held the nation in a state of fear and suspicion with demagogic accusations of treason. To be called a communist or even to emit the aura of “fellow traveler” was enough to ruin a career. The paranoia plague also caused many a suicide.

Echoing McCarthy, Vermont’s long-time congressman Charles Plumley even sought to persuade the legislature to censor books used in the state’s public schools; he failed but his efforts raised the level of cultural anxiety. The governor, Lee Emerson, overrode the findings of a University of Vermont committee to cause the unfair dismissal of a distinguished tenured botany professor with the Russian-sounding name of Alex Novikoff for his previous political activity.

Two Vermont newspapers vigorously fanned the flames of suspicion of anyone who professed non-orthodox thoughts or ideas, or who might be considered “pink,” in the parlance of the time. These papers were the *St. Albans Messenger* and the long-gone *Burlington Daily News*, both of which



were then owned by William Loeb. Later, as publisher of the Manchester (N.H.) *Union-Leader*, Loeb was largely responsible for assuring New Hampshire's status as first on the list of presidential primaries. For years after the McCarthy era Loeb attracted national attention with right-wing editorials that dominated his front page.

Loeb's Vermont newspapers were more than balanced by several editors who had the courage to call the Red Scare what it was. Publisher-editor Robert Mitchell of the *Rutland Herald* took the lead, joined by the editors of several weeklies such as John Drysdale of the *White River Valley Herald* (now *The Herald of Randolph*), Gerald McLaughlin of the *Springfield Reporter*, and Bernard O'Shea of the *Swanton Courier*. Mitchell, plus Drysdale along with John S. Hooper of the daily *Brattleboro Reformer*, hired a nationally known journalist, William Gilman, to write a series of articles that helped to take the wind out of the sails of the gossips. The *Bennington Banner* took a kind of woozy middle ground, alert to McCarthy's allegations but concerned about his tactics.

In 1946, Andrew E. Nuquist, a 40-year-old political science professor at UVM, decided to challenge Plumley in a Republican primary. Plumley had been the congressman since 1934, with an ultra-conservative record opposed to labor, the United Nations, and even to electricity for Vermont farmers. In spite of a vigorous and high-spirited statewide race, Nuquist was tainted by Loeb's newspapers and others as an intellectual-socialist-left-winger who had supported Roosevelt in 1944. The professor won his home turf of Chittenden County but lost statewide by 8,000 votes. He never sought political office again.

In March 1948, Luther McNair, then dean of Lyndon State Teachers College, addressed a "Henry Wallace for President" rally. He argued that "the reservoir of good will" espoused by the late Wendell Willkie (1940 Republican candidate for president) was being threatened by U.S. foreign policy. The *Burlington Daily News* published a front-page editorial that claimed McNair was "defending the Communists in their program of world expansion" and called for his resignation. Loeb sent a copy of McNair's speech to the state board of education and took credit for continuing to fuel the fire. Harassed and hounded, McNair quickly resigned. But he found more compatible surroundings after he moved to Cambridge, Mass., and became executive director of that state's ACLU chapter.

The progressive private Putney School, founded by the free-thinking Carmelita Hinton, was the proving ground for the activities in China of her daughter Joan and son William. These siblings, in their own ways, became disenchanted with the corrupt Chiang Kai-Shek regime and followed Mao Zedong's revolution and land reforms. Joan Hinton had attended

Bennington College and had worked as a physicist at the Oak Ridge proving grounds and did graduate work with Enrico Fermi in 1946. She was horrified at the use of atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and became an outspoken peace activist. Her career drew intense attention from the American government, especially after the 1949 communist takeover of China; she was often called a traitor when, in fact, she and her husband, Sid Engst, merely devoted the rest of their lives to farming in China.

“Who lost China?” became a rallying cry for the McCarthyites, which found a special target in Owen Lattimore, a distinguished scholarly authority on Chinese history and critic of Chiang Kai-Shek. Lattimore was part owner of a home in Bethel. He and other scholars aroused attention locally and were harassed by Lucille Miller, a local busybody who appointed herself to “expose” left-wing cells in the Bethel-Randolph area. She spread her poison to two nationally syndicated columnists, Fulton Lewis Jr. and Westbrook Pegler, who took full advantage. One of Pegler’s columns, titled “Vermont Yankees are Suckers for Commies,” went international. In this way, all of Vermont became tainted.

Each of these episodes, plus several others, provides grist for a chapter of Rick Winston’s important book *Red Scare in the Green Mountains*, published this past summer by Rootstock Publishing. Two of the chapters, about the firing of Alex Novikoff, and about the role of newspapers, were published in the *Walloomsack Review* (vols. 18 and 19). The book traces its origins largely to a 1988 conference titled “Vermont in the McCarthy Era,” sponsored by Vermont College and the Vermont Historical Society. Winston was one of its organizers along with Michael Sherman, then director of the VHS, and the late Richard O. Hathaway, professor of history at Vermont College. “As stimulating as the conference proved to be,” Winston explains, “I never lost the sense that we had only scratched the surface.”

The author also recounts his own family connections: “If there were such a thing as a typical childhood spent in the shadow of the Red Scare, mine was one,” he writes in the preface. Both his parents, Jews who immigrated from Eastern Europe, came of age during American Depression times and became involved with the New York City Teachers’ Union and the communist party. While Winston said he knew the outlines of his parents’ lives, he only learned the stark details when he dug into their files. His father’s, from the New York Board of Education, totaled 22 pages, and his mother’s, 60 pages. His father had quit his job rather than respond to the board of education’s “grand inquisitor,” and found work running a successful art-supplies store in Yonkers. His mother refused “to name names” but managed to keep her high-school teaching job.

This reader must agree with Winston, who wisely speculates in his

preface: “Today, in 2018, as our country finds itself facing new blacklists, fierce attacks on a free press, and a revitalized white supremacy movement, and a political atmosphere charged with intolerance, condemnation, and widespread falsehoods, this book could not be timelier.” □

Red Scare in the Green Mountains: Vermont in the McCarthy Era 1946-1960, by Rick Winston. Rootstock Publishing, 2018.

Vermont’s Natural and Cultural History

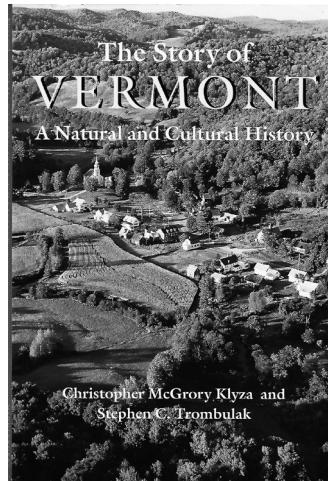
Reviewed by J. F. Kennedy

The disruptions Vermont has experienced since mankind arrived are nothing compared to those by which the state was conceived. Over a billion years ago, powerful geological convulsions formed the Taconic and Green Mountains and sculpted the Champlain and Connecticut Valleys. Then 180 million years ago the Pangaea supercontinent began to separate proto-Europe and proto-Africa from proto-North America. The most recent glacial age began two million years ago with nineteen to twenty separate glaciations. The final one retreated from Vermont entirely by 12,500 years ago.

Acting as a dam, that departing glacier formed Lake Vermont, 700 feet deeper and many times larger than Lake Champlain. Once the glacier melted off southeast Canada, seawater flowed into depressed Champlain Valley via the Saint Lawrence River to form the Champlain Sea. The earth eventually rebounded and drained the salt water, leaving the landscapes of northern New England and southeastern Canada much as they are today.

All that is a condensed account of Vermont’s beginnings as told in *The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History* by Christopher McGrory Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak. It was published in two volumes, first in 1999, and updated in 2015. Klyza is Stafford Professor of Public Policy, Political Science, and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College and Trombulak is professor of environmental and biosphere studies, also at Middlebury.

Early in Volume I, the two educators portray Vermont’s natural history for more than a billion years and its relatively brief human cultural history for only about 12,000 years – when a big-game-hunting Paleo-Indian



culture pursued woolly mammoths, mastodons, giant sloths, and giant beavers grazing on the tundra grasslands left by the receding Laurentide ice sheet. New England might be one of the first areas in North America settled by Europeans, but it was one of the last occupied by humans. The large game disappeared over the period from 12,000 to 9,000 years ago. Theoretically, according to the authors, that extinction was caused by the biggest human intrusion into the natural history of Vermont before the arrival of European colonists in the eighteenth century. Gradually over the same period, boreal forest replaced the tundra grasslands, which in my opinion at least partially accounts for the disappearance of big game dependent on tundra grassland fodder.

The two scholars relate an archaic hunter-gatherer culture that prevailed 9,000 to 4,000 years ago. With the arrival of the hardwood forest 2,500 years ago, the woodland culture of the Abenaki people developed more efficient bow-and-arrow hunting, burials, pottery, and some primitive farming. By 900 years ago the Abenaki fished and hunted birds in spring, gathered wild produce in summer, harvested and prepared produce for winter, and hunted big game like deer and moose in winter.

The French were the first Europeans to visit today's Vermont. The explorer Samuel de Champlain spent a few weeks in 1609 on the lake that bears his name, and a French missionary visited the Abenaki in 1615. Though the French did not exploit Vermont to the extent the British did later, they did establish a brisk fur trade with the Abenaki. The sparse settlements they made in Vermont were lost when French Canada fell to the British in 1760 to end the French and Indian War.

At first the British traded for furs with the Abenaki, but soon colonial settlers wished to farm the fertile land of the Connecticut River valley. The Abenaki stood in their way, but European diseases reduced their population extensively before British settlers arrived in Vermont. Then the eighteenth-century French-Abenaki wars against the British further harmed the native people already reduced by disease. On top of that, the fur trade fostered native dependency on European manufactured goods, and thus damaged their traditional woodland way of life.

Klyza and Trombulak describe a territorial dispute over present-day Vermont land between New Hampshire and Massachusetts that King George II resolved in New Hampshire's favor in 1740 by placing that border where it is today. A similar, but more contentious, dispute arose between New York and New Hampshire when in 1749, New Hampshire claimed lands as close as 20 miles east of the Hudson River, and New York claimed the Connecticut River as its own eastern border. In 1764, King George III ruled for New York. This created a volatile brew that sparked numerous

confrontations between New York officials, enforcing their citizens' land claims, and the Green Mountain Boys, a militia organized to protect the new New Hampshire land grantees.

Then in 1777 Vermont declared independence and adopted a constitution that abolished slavery and included universal manhood suffrage. In so doing, Vermont became a unique self-creation, not chartered as a colony. For several reasons, Vermont remained independent until 1791 when it was admitted as the fourteenth state on conditional demands by skeptics in New York and the U.S. Congress.

Professors Klyza and Trombulak explain the effect of European settlement on Vermont's environment in two phases: the first embraced rapid and destructive exploitation of the state's natural resources from the mid-eighteenth century through the nineteenth century; the second launched a more thoughtful proposal in the 1864 book *Man and Nature* by George Perkins Marsh of Woodstock, who advised recovery from over-exploitation and adaptation through forest and land management.

Throughout the first period, Vermonters exploited the forest in many ways, and by 1880 the forest had declined to 37 percent from the original 95 percent. This exploitation was enhanced by improved transportation with the completion of the Champlain Canal in 1822 and the railroad building boom in the mid-nineteenth century.

Mining and manufacturing declined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Though some slate, marble, and granite mining remains, textile mills have been replaced by high-tech industries mainly around Burlington.

Vermont's population declined in the late nineteenth century due to more emigration, less immigration, and lower fertility; it then leveled off early in the twentieth century and began to increase again mid-century. From 1960 to 1990 the population exploded nearly 50 percent by 173,000 people. Early in the twentieth century Vermont began to promote tourism and recreation. Several recreational activities attracted visitors as did the new Interstate highways in the 1960s and '70s. Service industries like gas stations, mechanics, hotels, and restaurants developed to support travelers, and a market for second homes augmented the building trades. Protecting and enhancing the environment coincided with the desire to attract tourists.

The state enacted laws in the late twentieth century to recover from previous excess exploitation of Vermont's land and forest resources and to prevent future disruptions. The authors detail these laws including Act 250 in 1970, a use-value tax law in 1973, and Act 200 in 1988.

Part III of Volume 1 covers the various natural communities of Vermont including chapters on forests, grasslands, and wetlands. The

authors describe the flora and fauna unique to each setting, as well as their natural processes and health. In Part IV the authors conclude by noting some potential futures. They see three possibilities: more of current trends, hyper-development, and dominant-use zones. They prefer the latter clever idea, in which separate land-use zones would be designated for urban, working farm and forest, and wild natural communities.

The first six chapters of Volume II are a condensed version of Volume I. Chapter 7 updates the favorable boom in renewable energy, especially wind turbines and solar panels. The authors also note that the population boom of the late twentieth century had tapered to almost nothing by 2012. As well, they cited promising counter-cultural enhancements since the 1970s like farmers' markets, localization, and organic farming. Between 1995 and 2012 enrollment more than doubled for the "current-use" program in which taxes are reduced for land left undeveloped. Private land conservation continued to grow, and conservation planning in Vermont connected increasingly with other states in the region and southeast Canada. The authors observed that conservation practices have improved the health of the forest, and the average age of the trees within it has increased.

Trombulak and Klyza note that, owing to the dispersed nature of polluted agricultural and urban storm drainage, non-point source water pollution is a harder nut to crack than point source pollution, which they see as at least partly solved. In Chapter 8 of Volume II they re-stress the value of establishing dominant-use zones to help reduce non-point source water pollution in addition to protecting native animals and plants.

The success Vermont has experienced improving its natural environment indicates it can solve this problem too, but that will depend on the cooperation of its own and its neighbors' varied agricultural, recreational, industrial, and conservation interests. As well, the success of dominant-use zones would depend on sensitivity to the legal rights of land owners and others within each zone.

A book the authors missed in their references is one very much in the same vein as theirs, from the perspective of Vermont's first environmentalist and historian: *The Natural and Civil History of Vermont* by the Rev. Dr. Samuel Williams, written in 1794 and updated with two volumes in 1809. The natural and cultural view from a historian who influenced George Perkins Marsh might enhance the observations of Trombulak and Klyza should they write a third volume twenty years hence. □

Christopher McGroarty Klyza and Stephen C. Trombulak, *The Story of Vermont: A Natural and Cultural History, Volumes I and II*, Middlebury College Press, 1999 and 2015

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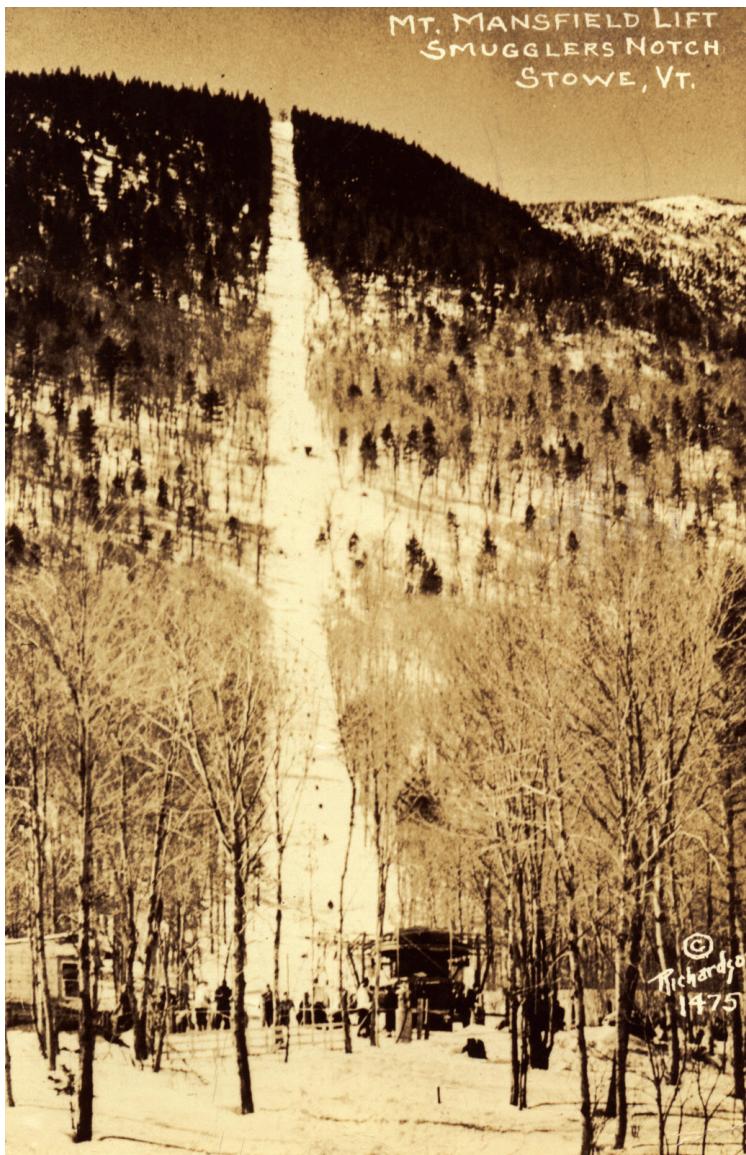
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The Mt. Mansfield lift at Smuggler's Notch was a single chair. See the article on Page 15 about Perry Merrill, who brought skiing to Vermont. The photo is one of a series taken by Harry W. Richardson (1894-1960) of Newport. Vermont Historical Society

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