Gores, Grants & Ghost Towns  •  Country Tracks & Trotters
Decoys at Shelburne  •  Vermont Princess  •  Bee Hunting
VERMONT Life

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE STATE OF VERMONT

Published Quarterly at Montpelier, VT. by the Vermont Development Commission

J. Harold Stacey, Chairman, Edward F. Smith, Robert A. Summers

Roland Q. Seward, Henry Z. Persons; Clifton R. Miskelly, Managing Director

WALTER R. HARD, JR., Editor

RALPH N. HILL, JR., STEPHEN GREENE, SARGENT P. WILD, MARI TOMASI, MURRAY HOYT, EDITORIAL ASSOCIATES

VREST ORTON, WALTER HARD, SR., ELIZABETH GAY, CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Benjamin M. Hayward, Bus. Mgr., Geoffrey D. C. Orton, Photographer

CONTENTS

1—Green Mountain Postboy
   Why the Leaves Change
   By Vrest Orton

2—Country Tracks & Trotters
   By Margaret K. Onion

8—A Way With Wood
   By Carolyn Long

10—Decoy Treasure
   Shelburne Museum Collection

16—The Wheat & The Loaf
   By Margaret Smith

20—Only Yesterday
   By Walter Hard, Sr.

22—Bee Hunting in Vermont
   By William Osgood

23—Autumn Panoply
   By Dr. Carsten Johnson

Roadside History Program—34
   By Vrest Orton

Long Way Home—36
   By Charles Morrow Wilson

Gores, Grants & Ghost Towns—41
   By Richard Sanders Allen

Gallery Alive—46
   By Dorothy Schumann

Short Line To Nowhere—50
   By John F. Smith, Jr.

Border Princess—54
   By Florence Arms with Stephen Greene

Fall Calendar of Events—59
   And Mystery Picture

The Arts in Review—60
   By Elizabeth Gay

Per copy 35¢. In U. S., possessions & Canada $1.25 per year, $1.65 elsewhere.

Copyright 1957 by the Vermont Development Commission

Re-entered as 2nd cl. matter, Mar. 1, 1950, at the Post Office at Montpelier, Vt, under the Act of Mar. 3, 1879

Editor's Uneasy Chair

Index—We'd like to remind you that Vermont Life now has a very complete index to its first ten years of publication, 15 cents.

Inevitably our spring article on modern houses drew fire from readers who (1) detest modern architecture and (2) abhor it particularly in Vermont, which they regard as a last refuge.

We sympathize with No. 2 to a degree but present this defense: Although the Vermont scene as Author Gadd stated may always be dominated by the beautiful old farm homes, it must be remembered that Vermont is not a museum piece and Vermonters cannot live entirely in imitation of the past. For Vermont Life to so pretend would be to compound falsity.

We rather feel that Vermont's real importance and difference lies more in the character and way of life of her people than in such externals as architecture. Because a Vermonter trades his horse for Detroit's latest absurdity, he has not necessarily squandered his birthright—though just possibly he lacks good judgment.

TV antennas spring from a hundred thousand Vermont rooftops, but the bemused "entertained" who crouch by the flickering screens still are importantly Vermonters, despite it all. Note: Vermont Life is not contemplating articles on television nor yet on autos.

Mystery Pictures—Our spring, No. 2, was too easy: 117 people correctly located the Shelburne Shipyard shed. First and winning reply was from Mrs. Edgar Crosby of Brandon. No. 3, in the summer issue the odd cemetery stone is located in West Fairlee Center. The winner was Muriel Burgin of Barre.

THE COVER

The old sugar house, already well stocked for the next spring, was photographed six years ago in Lovers Watertown by Aaron Fryer of Philadelphia. Connecticut river shows in distance.
At the opposite end of the year, last spring, the Postboy did a little documented bragging about Vermont maple sugaring. Now he would like to explain why Vermont's fall foliage display is the best in the world. To do so we have dipped into some rather unfamiliar botanical backwaters with the help of Dr. Jim Marvin of the University of Vermont.

To begin the lesson, you should know that all leaves (the basic part of the foliage show) contain chlorophyll (green), carotinoids (carroty yellow-orange), other yellow pigments and finally anthocyanins. This last item really is non-toxic. It consists of sugar compounds, and from these compounds stem the autumn reds.

In the summer the green chlorophyll is dominant, but when cool weather comes the green breaks down chemically. The yellow and orange carotin tints, which were there all the time, now show up. The other yellow pigments of which we spoke, now show too.

At this stage we have the conditions which in most areas are called “the glories of Autumn”—the varieties of golds and browns—but few reds. This is where Vermont with her sugar maples comes in.

Certain plants contain the red-producing anthocyanins inherently but the sugar maple can and does manufacture them. It takes bright sunlight and cool, brisk weather to bring on these reds. Acid soil accentuates the reds, but a maple in sweet, nitrogenous soil is apt to turn a purple-red, since alkalines turn the sugars bluish, just as soil conditions can affect strongly the color of certain flowers and vegetables.

And will the Postboy prognosticate on this year’s coloration? No, he has an alibi: as this is written the maple sap is waxing rather than waning. The sugar maples are bringing forth a great abundance of prime nectar. Parenthetically, this first fruit of the maple, judiciously poured on buckwheat cakes and served with Colburn’s or Harrington’s sausage, is the proper repast for these autumn days.

No, we cannot tell about the fall just yet, but if September’s early days are clear and bright and cool they will almost guarantee a brilliance in October. Opening the year last April Vermont’s maples, with an assist from the weather, outdid themselves. Perhaps they will again this autumn. WHJR.
“Vermont,” said Walter Moore some thirty years ago, “is the last place on earth where a fellow can watch a harness race just because he enjoys it and not because he has a bet riding on it.” It still is.

Mr. Moore, who was editor of Harness Horse magazine, stood talking to my father on the fairgrounds at Rutland; and they were both sure their generation would be the last to see great harness racing. Automobile races were drawing the big crowds; and most of the men who had grown up with horses were resigned to changing tastes. Looking at the packed grandstand on auto-racing day, Mr. Moore observed, “You can’t blame them. Not one in fifty knows a hobble from a knee boot, but they all know the carburetor from the fan belt.”

Yet in the decade 1946–1956, those same carburetor experts made harness racing the fastest growing spectator sport in the United States. The invention of the mechanical starting gate made the country sport slick enough to move to the cities.

It’s clear, of course, that the people who are accommodated by efficient harness racing are not the group to whom Mr. Moore referred—who just like to watch a horse race. The thousands of new recruits in the race crowds are apparently drawn from people who live on a
very right schedule and have time for racing only if they can be certain of a chance to wager every half hour. Vermont has said more than once in legislature that she is not interested in the legalized betting which might bring these crowds into the state.

Her only tracks are half-mile country fair tracks, all operated independently by local agricultural associations. (Vermont, as would be suspected, has never had a tidy pyramidal arrangement of state and county fairs.) In recent years, only Orleans County Fair Association in Barton claims to have operated at a profit. Nowadays, the purse of money these associations put up to be divided among the first five horses in a typical one mile dash ranges from one hundred to five hundred dollars. At nearby Saratoga Raceway, a comparable race offers a purse of from five hundred to nine hundred dollars during the fall meeting.

Only for sentimental reasons does a first rate horse race in Vermont any more, unless it be in one of the considerably higher-paying stake races offered at Essex Junction or Rutland and in which a horse must be registered at a fee several months ahead. A mile raced in two minutes and nine seconds is a thriller on a Vermont track today, when more than half the times recorded are slower than two minutes and fifteen seconds. Yet the bearcats of the world raced over these ovals in the 1930’s and set track records which were drawing ever closer to the then-fabulous two minute mile. No less than the world’s champion pacer, Billy Direct himself, hung up the fastest Vermont record at Rutland in 1939 when he went a mile in just three-quarters of a second more than two minutes.

Five harness racing fairs are now all that’s left of a flurry of three-day race meetings which once occupied Vermont attention a good three months of the year. Even the five survivors probably muster smaller crowds in one summer than one week brings to a major raceway. Glenn Rublee, race secretary at Rutland since 1930, can remember when the demand for grandstand tickets on the day of a big free-for-all race was so insistent that over two hundred people would feel obliged to ask him to make their advance reservations personally. In the 1950’s not more than ten people in a season get that concerned about a grandstand sellout.

Has Vermont harness racing, then, been left to die in a curious little backwater while the mainstream of the sport plunges along elsewhere? Our family made the complete circuit of five fairs in 1956 and came home convinced that the answer is, nothing of the sort.

True enough, the professional horse has left Vermont, but the horse who is a member of the family has come back into his own. Racing in Vermont today is apparently not unlike the leisurely, easy-on-the-nerves kind that went on fifty years ago when everybody had a horse, drove him to the track, and raced him against neighbors’ at fair time.

While most of the speed and all of the elegance have moved elsewhere, Vermont fairs have held on to a friendly country flavor. This hasn’t come about through any attempt to be quaintly old-time. In equipment, Vermont harness racing stays right up to the minute. Only Lyndonville hasn’t yet seen its way clear to finance a mechanical starting gate, and fair officials are somewhat apologetic about this lack. Children too young to remember racing before 1946 find the starts at Lyndonville an intriguing novelty. Tunbridge hires a starting gate for a track so narrow that only one wing of the gate can be opened.

Butler head numbers, which make the position of horses at the finish clear at a glance, are in universal use. Only Tunbridge stirs a faint memory of the 1920’s when a fair was lucky to have one set of the newfangled numbers and they were handed on from race to race. “Will the drivers of horses who are through for the day kindly return their numbers to the race secretary’s office at the

VERMONT Life 3
Horse business is transacted in the shadows of cavernous barns or stable awnings. Race secretary Donald Bean of Barton holds a battered hat from which horsemen draw post positions. Everywhere the horses are the center of attention—from the experts and the curious small boys.

north end of the barns,” the announcer intones in the middle of the afternoon.

Everywhere, of course, the powerful electric amplifiers mounted on the barns and on the judges’ stand have replaced the men with megaphones and the hard-working mounted marshals who galloped from track to barns with messages that the presiding judge wanted the track loosened with the spike harrow. Marshals now are pretty girls on pretty saddle horses or interesting retired hero-horses like Chris Spencer. Their sole duty is to lead the parade to the post.

Like the big raceways, Vermont race meetings now make use of an announcer in the judges’ stand to explain to the crowd what is going on. He fills the spot left vacant when the starter was moved to the back-facing seat in the starting gate. He tries valiantly to replace the color which disappeared from the judges’ stand with the starter.

It isn’t in the range of an announcer’s responsibility; but I suspect he knows that one thing which makes a Vermont track unique is that up on the upper turn people can still congregate and listen to the real starter-poetry as it is chanted in the days of the gate. “Take hold of them, gentlemen. Take hold of them. Come on with your three horse.”

Announcers also explain that horses parade back before the stands at the end of the race to indicate that every driver accepts the judges’ decisions. There have been less suavely well-adjusted days in Vermont racing in the past when everybody assumed a driver was satisfied unless he came tearing back up the stretch shaking his fist and threatening to punch the judge in the nose if some outrage wasn’t avenged. The grandstand was never surprised by these outbursts. They never missed a trick; and they were always ready to cheer a wronged sportsman or burst into gales of laughter at the temper tantrum of a poor loser. A judge in Vermont in the 1920’s never had to rely on his judgment alone; the grandstand never lacked an opinion.

Barton is the curtain raiser now, all that’s left of the old Short Ship Circuit which once offered at least five weeks of racing without expensive hauling. Shipping expense could be eliminated entirely by simply driving to the next meeting. For some Vermonters, fair time is a one-week stand; but for horse people it’s a season. Many of the horses and people who come together at Barton in

A trotter need not be breaking records to be poetry in motion. Practical difficulties must be provided for, however, and some trainers solve the nuisance of a horsetail streaming in their face by braiding it tightly with bandages and sitting on the trailing end. This is at Essex.
Race day traditionally calls for two handlers for every horse, but Vermont trainers today often hitch up and cool out single handed.

mid-August will move right along together through Lyndonville, Essex Junction, and Rutland, to Tunbridge in mid-September.

Where do they come from to Barton? There are horses from Derby Line, from West Burke, from South Hero, from Lyndonville, from neighboring towns and neighboring states. In most cases, the owner is also the driver and has presumably been the horse's trainer. A man like Parker Hill of West Fairlee may take nine or ten horses around the circuit in a summer, but more than half of them may belong to him; the day of the public stable is over in Vermont.

Some of the owner-drivers manage their horse training on a part-time basis in the manner of Ferris Ayer of Bridgewater. Since 1945, Mr. Ayer has kept a horse or two at the Rutland fairgrounds, coming over the mountain to work them through the winter. When race season comes, he hires a substitute for his rural mail route and sets out for the fairs.

In many cases, whole families travel along with their horse or horses. A twelve-year-old boy is likely to be giving a hand with harness; the owner’s wife or daughter may lead the horse to the draw gate at race time. No more than he would in any farm or household job, probably, does the trainer feel a need to stand on ceremony. Though already clad in his silk racing jacket and cap, he pitches in cheerfully at any of the menial jobs which in more elegant stables are left to the grooms.

The very lay-out of most Vermont fairgrounds suggests that he is following in an honorable tradition. Horse barns are likely to be the easiest part of the fairgrounds to reach from the main gate. There is no suggestion of servants’ quarters relegated to some out-of-the-way corner, but a proud farmer confidence that the first thing everybody wants to see is that speedy little horse people the other side of town have been bragging about all year.

Race announcer occupies prow-like projection of judges’ stand where the starter once presided over the wire.

Horse and driver look equally intent during a work session. Veteran trainers point out that the business of training and driving a horse calls for essentially the same skills that are required of any athlete. Quickness of judgment rates among the top requirements. Horse is a pacer.
Of course, it was that bragging about speed which created the light, graceful standardbred horse. Encyclopedia Britannica points out that, although blood alone now counts in establishing a horse’s place in the American Trotting Register, originally performance alone classified a horse as a standardbred. Sections of the country where people took their horse racing seriously, therefore, had a big hand in shaping the breed. Vermont has become so firmly associated with the Morgan horse it is easy to forget that many Vermonters who admire the sturdy little Morgan as an all-around utility horse have long had a soft spot in their hearts as well for the slimmer little standardbred. Many Vermonters remember, as I do, when the horse around the farm was a trotter who could be hitched up for a drive of a summer evening or a winter picnic and who joined some public stable for the races. Those were the days for rugged horses, because the best three heats out of five decided a race; but the standardbred was sturdy enough to do it and still keep his svelte figure.

These, then, were the horses our fairgrounds were built to accommodate; and they have been built in some of the most beautiful spots in Vermont. Before I set out to revisit all the fairs, I was afraid my memory might have retouched some of the pictures; but I think instead it hadn’t begun to do them justice. Lyndonville’s track, high in the hills above its main street, is the show-stopper. Ringed with a full circle of pastures rising to mountains, it is dominated by the breathtaking peak of Burke Mountain. Essex derives a homely beauty from its great wooden grandstand which hunches so intently over the track and its stretch of neighboring pasture across the oval where farm horses sometimes gather to watch the excitement.

Small-town atmosphere pervades all of harness racing in Vermont. It can be sensed even in the slight inefficiencies which big time racing can’t afford and which take the machine-made feeling out of the operation. Throughout the five-fair program there is the informality which usually characterizes volunteer or near-volunteer undertakings. It is almost as hard to get a Vermont horse and driver on a track punctually as it is to get a country P.T.A. meeting started on time. Rutland is brisk about reminding drivers through a loud-speaker that a fine will be levied against any driver not waiting at the draw gate when the race is called; but still the rugged individual will try to slip through the system. “No, Mr. Blake, you cannot go out on the track now” echoes the schoolroom, “No, you may not get a drink during class”; and the day nobody tries will be a day to worry about.

Weather provides fair officials with some of their most backbreaking problems. Fair day may be such a cold one that only a ski jacket feels comfortable on the grandstand, when only a week before an above-90 day kept the water wagon on the track all afternoon and spectators near the rail all turned gray with dust. Most dramatic are the days when the track is sloshing with mud. If a nightlong downpour ends at noon, race officials of Vermont tracks will work like stevedores to get footing fit for racing by two in the afternoon. This is the day the dependable small town volunteer puts his unmistakable stamp on the country fair. Over at the horse drawing contest, somebody announces: “Any of you fellows got a truck here and want to give a tankful of gas to help dry out the track, it’d be appreciated.” Almost within minutes the line on the race track lengthens as the farm trucks join the fair trucks rolling
around and around the track, spattering big clots of mud all over each other and patiently trying to dry out the track in time to have some racing.

I think of this quiet friendliness sometimes when the race announcers are urging a grandstand to cheer a winner in. Usually, such an attempt fails dismally. Vermonters are long on work but short on cheering. It doesn't mean they aren't having a good time. As a matter of fact, the Tunbridge stand on a good, gay day will give everybody a round of applause. As an announcer there once observed: "The Tunbridge folks appreciate all the horses in a horse race—not just the winner."

That probably sums up the spirit of harness racing in Vermont today. Vermont grandstands don’t too much care who wins. It’s like watching some local school activity, after which the standard Vermont remark is, "I thought they all done fine." A neighbor or somebody like a neighbor owns most of the horses that race in Vermont today. He doesn’t pretend he owns a world beater; but you help him make excuses for the horse on his off days just as you would for his children. It’s just pleasant to be outdoors on a late summer afternoon and watch again the beauty of harness horses in motion. There are probably horses racing in Vermont today about whom the owners make the illogical, but warm-hearted, remark I have heard all my life: "He never was very fast, but he was an awful nice horse around the barn."

Vermonters keep and race harness horses because they are pleasant company; and they don’t get bitter about lost races. Horse people are still the only people at a fair who tip a scorecard boy; and they’ll still carry a lame horse along to every fair, patiently soaking a bad leg day after day and planning to enter him if the leg gets better.

In spite of the polish the sport has acquired elsewhere, Vermont still talks horse and races horses with a sense of humor and a sense of friendliness. An announcer may earnestly and self-consciously explain that pacers are some times called “sidewheelers,” but there are plenty of people quietly marking scorecards at the rail to whom horse talk seems not a bit quaint nor odd. They will go over to the barns before they go home to tell some driver he went a good race. Without even knowing it, they speak some of the most colorful Yankee talk that ever was heard, casual things like a remark Charles Spoon made, talking to me about the great asset propÿ shoes are to a horse. Although he closed his public stable and left the horses in 1927, he remembers about a horse we both knew back in the early 1920’s that “without toe weights he’d travel all day in a bushel basket.”

Admittedly, it is the big money racing elsewhere which assures the future of the standardbred horse; but a wonderful byproduct has been the saving for Vermont of the pleasant, relaxed style of harness racing which she has long enjoyed. For reasons which nobody could foresee a generation ago, Vermont harness racing seems assured of a pleasant, if unspectacular, future. Vermont fairs are not in competition with the big raceways; they are providing entertainment and a kind of country excitement which the big places can never reproduce. There would seem to be room for both, even as there is little prospect that "My Fair Lady" will ever put the high school senior play out of business.

On page 59 are listed the dates of the country fairs remaining to be held this year.

VERMONT Life 7
A Way With Wood

Glen Woodbury’s speciality used to be butter and cheese-making, but after eight years of this, the fascination of woodturning caught up with him. Playing around with woodturning as a hobby in his mother’s cellar, he decided to try earning a living at it. This was in 1940. He now owns a fully equipped, two story woodturning shop in South Burlington, has four to five employees, and sells to nearly 500 department stores and gift shops in the United States and Canada.

Actually, the number of pieces produced at the shop would be much greater if Mr. Woodbury did not set such high standards for his work. Skilled work cannot be rushed. From the time the wet, green, rough-cut wood arrives from a Vermont forest until the smooth, finished bowl or tray is ready for the display shelves at the shop, seventeen different operations have been performed, and a full year has gone by.

Where to find good wood is a real problem. Although exotic woods like teak and mahogany make beautiful bowls, the price for the rough wood is so high that Mr. Woodbury only uses it on special orders. Most of the wood used—birch, maple, cherry, and butternut—now comes from Vermont, but even native woods of fine quality are hard to come by. It takes a big tree to make a block fourteen inches across and four and a half inches deep, the largest size regularly produced. The wood must be free of cracks, knots, and blemishes of any sort. This accounts for Mr. Woodbury’s estimate that half of the rough wood that comes into the shop winds up as firewood for his two kilns.

A woodturner always looks for interesting grain. Although it is almost impossible now to find curly or birdseye maple, it is always possible to make the most of woods with more usual grains. When the outline of the bowl is first cut, care is taken to put the dark or heartwood on the bottom where it will contrast with the lighter sides. The three coats of clear finish and the final polishing make the bowl or tray water resistant and smooth as silk, but do not obscure the natural color and grain of the wood.

Roland Couillard, who is a master craftsman, begins the painstaking work of forming the spinning block into a platter.
While it is very satisfying to see the finishing touches put on a piece, the most exciting part is the turning itself. After a block has been cut on the bandsaw to its correct outside dimension, it is air dried and then kiln dried until it contains only six percent moisture, and is finally ready for turning. It is here that the greatest skill is needed, for it is only after two years’ training that a man can turn out a large bowl that meets Woodbury’s standards.

The heavy block is mounted on the faceplate lathe and started spinning. Quickly at first and then more cautiously the turner cuts away the wood. Fluorescent lights and a spotlight focussed directly on the work help him see through the blast of shavings beating at his masked face, often a mere six inches from the work. He is soon covered with wood chips in spite of a vacuum attachment. Gradually, with extremely careful variations in the direction of his wood chisel, the turner brings the bowl to its final form. He must watch constantly for rough grain which might make the tool gouge too deeply. He stops the lathe frequently as the sides grow thinner to feel for thickness, curve, and smoothness. To the uninitiated observer, all the bowls look alike, but since no jig or template is used, no two bowls are exactly the same. Mr. Woodbury says he can distinguish the work of his two turners, Roland Couillard and Bob Walker, by the subtle variations which each one gives to his work. After the chisel, the turner smooths his work still more with small pieces of sandpaper, sometimes working with both hands at the same time, one on the inside and the other on the outside of the bowl or tray. The piece is then ready for finishing.

Each year, Mr. Woodbury makes three or four new designs, but retains only one on the average for future production. He has tried some of the new “free form” bowls which are turned as regular bowls and then sanded on the edges to give an irregular outline. But year in and year out, the simpler salad bowls and plain or ridged trays are the favorites. In them, the natural beauty of wood and the skill of the craftsman are shown at their best.
A thousand years ago an Indian on the North American continent fashioned a device to bring wild fowl within reach of his primitive weapons, the bow and arrow. Made in the likeness of a duck, of reeds and feathers, he colored it with his simple pigments and set it out in the marsh. It worked, and he made another, then another. So the decoy was born.

Coming closer to home, we find Baron Lahontan, the French explorer visiting our own Lake Champlain in 1687 and writing this vivid description of the decoys then used by the Indians:

"In the beginning of September, I set out in a canow upon several rivers and marshes that disembogue in the Champlain Lake, being accompany'd with thirty or forty savages. For a decoy they have the skins of geese, bustards and ducks, dried and stuffed with hay. The place being frequented by wonderfull numbers of bustards, teals and an infinity of other waterfowls—see the stuffed skins swimming with their heads erected as if they were alive and so give the savages an opportunity of shooting them either flying or upon the water."

It is quite apparent that in 1687 the use of decoys for hunting was a general practice in America.

The early settlers turned naturally to the methods used by the Indians with their decoys to secure their own food.

At first, decoy-making was confined only to those who were going to use them—each man fashioning his own. They soon learned that the fragile decoys of skins and hay used by the Indians were not sturdy enough to last long. As a result the crude, rough-hewn, wooden, block-type decoy came into use.

Of course the workmanship varied and the construction was subject to the conditions under which the decoys were to be used. Very soon each section along the Atlantic coast began to show a definite type of decoy of its own, evolved from local conditions. Decoy makers were starting to personalize their work and each man's decoys were like his handwriting. The one common object of all was to produce a decoy that would attract the greatest number of birds to within gun shot of the blind.

When the Great South Bay sportsmen began to shoot in the Barnagat Bay area of New Jersey in the late 1870's they introduced a new type of decoy. This was the hollow decoy much lighter and easier to handle than the solid block that had been so universally used.

During the latter part of the 19th Century thousands of decoys were being produced annually, many in decoy factories. Quantities of these were bought by the "market gunners," commercial hunters who killed ducks for market—slaughter ing great quantities of our wildfowl every year.

But with the turn of the Century, and the stopping of the spring shooting of waterfowl, the market gunners' demands started to drop. Then in 1918, with the passage of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty between the United States and Canada which prohibited the sale of waterfowl, the market gunner no longer required decoys in large numbers. Soon thereafter the production of decoys dropped off rapidly.

Following World War I, however, sportsmen found a
FLOATING LABRADOR GULL
Made in 1860 by Captain Ketchum of Capique, L.I. this confidence decoy commonly was used in the spring shooting of brant. It is beautifully made and unpainted as early brant decoys were. Gulls were anchored off one side of the main rig.

Photographed by
GEOFFREY ORTON

SET OF CANADA GEESE
This set of early goose decoys was made about 1849 by Captain Osgood of Salem, Mass. The geese are hollow with detachable necks. Legend has it that Captain Osgood sailed to California and while waiting to return carved these decoys.
A few typical birds are taken from the extensive Shelburne collection.
Some of the swans in the decoy collection at Shelburne.
real shortage in decoys, which ultimately developed a
great revival in the interest of making decoys by hand.
This interest has steadily increased, and in 1923 the first
decoy Exhibition ever held in America was put on at
Bellport, Long Island. The grand champion decoy at this
show was a Grey Mallard drake, made by Charles E.
(Shang) Wheeler of Stratford, Connecticut. This out-
standing bird is now on display at the Shelburne Museum
decoy exhibit.
Featured in the new exhibit is the famous Joel Barber
collection of decoys—the first great collection of its kind
ever to be brought together in the world. More than any
other person, it was Joel Barber who gathered together
the folklore and history not only of the making of decoys,
but also their use. It was he who wrote the first book on
the subject—Wild Fowl Decoys, which is the authority on
decoys among sportsmen today.
The Barber Collection in its entirety, including over
one hundred water color paintings of decoys done by Mr.
Barber, was presented to Mr. & Mrs. J. Watson Webb,
the founders of the Museum, by their three sons, Messrs.
Samuel B., J. Watson, Jr., and Harry H. Webb.
In 1958 the Museum was fortunate in acquiring one of
the three other leading decoy collections in the country
when it purchased from Richard Moeller of Rumson,
New Jersey, his excellent collection. Among the 700-800
birds at Shelburne are a large number of very fine decoys
collected by Mrs. Webb herself over a period of many
years.
This outstanding collection at Shelburne includes
practically every known type of decoy. There are diving
ducks, such as the Canvas-backs, Whistlers, Redheads,
Broadbills, Ruddy ducks, Old Squaws, Coots, and a large
collection of Mergansers.
In the puddle or marsh duck category are included
Black ducks, Mallards, Widgeons, Pintails, Wood ducks,
and the Blue and Green-winged Teal.
There are also Swan, Canada Geese, Brant and a va-
d iety of “confidence” decoys which when set up near the
hunter gave the on-coming flocks a feeling of security.
It is with considerable pride that the Shelburne Museum
has opened to the public this varied and extensive decoy
collection. So important is it that a complete building—the
famous Dorset “Castle,” moved to Shelburne from East
Dorset, Vermont, houses these rare and valuable bird
replicas.

This year the Shelburne Museum is
open to October 15th seven days
a week. The hours are 9 am to 5 pm.

VERMONT Life 15
The Wheat and the Loaf

Countries and continents may have their so-called “breadbaskets,” the large plains where the wheat is grown for the bread which feeds their populations. But Middlebury, Vermont has its own breadbasket area, and some superb whole-wheat bread.

Justin Brande of Cornwall owns a farm in the beautiful Champlain Valley. He believes in farming methods which bring back the soil to its original fertility and impart to crops raised thereon all the natural, life-sustaining elements. And here he raises the wheat for Middlebury’s bread.

Steve Baker is a baker of bread in Middlebury. He too is much interested in nutrition and its effect on people. He bakes whole-wheat bread from grain raised on Brande’s farm three miles away, and uses the freshly-ground wheat flour to produce brown loaves which would rival the famous black bread of Russia in food value. The staff of life is indeed a strong and sturdy one for those who buy this bread for their families.

At first Baker wondered if there would be a market for entire-wheat bread among townspeople accustomed to the puffy white loaves of modern bakeries. He experimented with recipes for blending Brande’s cream-colored flour in commercially acceptable bread. Sometimes he added eggs to the dough; sometimes he mixed in brown sugar,
or molasses or honey. At first he used only 75% of Brande's heavier flour. Finally he arrived at a 100% whole-wheat loaf which was a magnificent bread. Rolls of many varieties are also baked from this dough. One hostess used tiny, round rolls spread with butter and filled with cucumber slices, for party refreshments. There was none left over!

Brande harvests the wheat in mid-August. It has been planted the preceding September, staying in the ground through the winter months. When the kernels are ripe and hang heavy and golden on the stalks, Brande harvests the wheat with a combine in an operation like, though smaller than, that used on the country's large western farms. The kernels are cleaned and ground when needed in Brande's small mill. The stone with which the grinding is done revolves 3400 times per minute, quickly turning the wheat into creamy-white flour. At this point in the process air is conducted onto the stones, to keep the wheat below 125°, at which temperature food values would be lost. Brande's wheat flour contains brown particles of the kernel, which give an especially attractive texture to the finished bread and rolls.

This unusual bread has a fine appearance, and tremendous food value. But its chief attraction is its flavor. A slice spread with good dairy butter is Food in its purest sense. Wheat, properly grown and handled, contains life-sustaining elements often unsuspected. It is an excellent source of fluorine, recently highly advertised as beneficial to teeth, especially in children. And the fluorine in wheat is the natural form of the element, not the chemical artificially made for use in water supplies, toothpaste and the like. B vitamins are also present in quantity in whole wheat, particularly appropriate in this instance, where Brande and Baker combine their efforts.

The two men met by accident. But the common interest of the two in nutrition and food soon brought the conversation around to the wheat Brande was then raising for his own family's use. Baker at once asked to buy some for his bakery, and soon added whole-wheat bread and rolls to his line. Besides the bread sold by Baker, about a dozen housewives in Middlebury buy flour from Brande and feed their families bread baked at home in the old-fashioned tradition of Vermont.

Brande's raising of wheat, and wise use of his land are

By MARGARET SMITH

Photographed by JOHN F. SMITH, JR.
Soon after harvest of one crop, other fields, used in rotation, are prepared for next year's wheat. In September Brande is found drilling seed which he'll harvest next summer.

the direct result of his whole philosophy of life. He has a deep respect for the laws of nature. Long study of soils, farming methods and nutrition have brought him to the conviction that the natural methods of land management are most profitable, both in financial returns and in health for his family. Farming in the way which literally "mines" the soil is anathema to him. He is an active member of an international organization promoting natural methods of soil enrichment through the use of compost materials and special crops to replace the humus in soil, building it up by nature's processes to maintain as nearly as possible the conditions found in virgin soil.

In connection with his study of the relationship of soil condition to food values and nutrition, he learned of a farm in England where three types of farming methods are being tested continually. Lady Eve Balfour, a member of the organization operating the farm, made a tour of this country a few years ago, telling of results obtained. At Brande's request she came to Middlebury and Addison County farmers formed a capacity audience. She told how crops were planted in the traditional manner in one section; another location was devoted to chemical farming in which many synthetic fertilizers and soil conditioners are used; in a third section organic farming methods are adhered to, involving constant use of natural fertilizers, compost materials, avoidance of plowing, less spraying for pests. Crops from these differently-handled sections are tested constantly against each other, and results impartially published. Brande studies reports from many sources to utilize what he considers best from many experiments. His wheat fields have become a fertile "breadbasket" for Middlebury.

Justin Brande is no theorist, but a practical farmer and realist. He knows that good land is essential to good crops. "Good" crops mean those containing the mysterious vital elements our scientists are discovering more about with every year's research. Brande rotates crops on his fields, and the land is "sheet composted" each year. Actually, sheet composting is the easiest method of adding compost materials to the soil, with the least effort on the part of a busy farmer. He has experimented, in cooperation with Donald Clark in Waltham, on a process of subsoiling which aerates the ground without plowing the topsoil under. He practices surface tillage by means of extensive use of harrows and tillers rather than plows.

And on this good farm land Brande tests several kinds
of wheat. One variety currently being grown has small, reddish kernels. Another produces large, cream-colored kernels on a stalk several inches higher. Brande checks the gluten content (criterion of bread-making qualities) by chewing a few kernels. When the wheat comes quickly into a gum, more gluten is present than if the particles remain separate.

The keystone in the production of this superb Middlebury loaf, however, is the time element. Real whole wheat flour is a perishable product. Most commercial bakers never attempt to use true whole wheat since it is difficult to store. In fact, food values are retained in entirety only when it is used promptly. Flour shipped from Texas and the Midwest has already lost part of its nutritive elements. But the time involved in Baker's getting Brande's flour into loaves of bread is usually less than a day. The flour is not stored. The wheat is ground, carried three miles to the bakery and the mixing starts. White flour can be stored indefinitely, because the bran and wheat germ are not present. But more than 92% of the protein, vitamins and minerals of wheat are concentrated in the wheat germ. "Enriching" of white flour cannot replace elements lost when the wheat germ is removed, since the enrichment consists only of adding some of the B vitamins in synthetic form, and a small percentage of the iron and other minerals found in whole wheat flour. Enriching of white flour and claiming for it real food value is somewhat like the logic of considering oneself enriched when an automobile thief kindly leaves you a tire and jack after stealing your car.

Baker tells of the problems of handling the "heavy" wheat to make an acceptable loaf. Americans would not buy a hard bread, he felt sure. He must produce a light loaf, well raised, but the wheat needed careful handling. Whole wheat is harder to make rise than white flour. At first Baker feared that the gluten would break down if beaten as long as is usual for white bread. Now he has discovered that Brande's flour permits mixing fully as long as white flour. Baker makes a light loaf because of general public demand. But others in the community have made the more solid loaf, similar to European bread. One family even buys the whole grain and grinds the wheat on their own mill before baking loaves to the family's taste. But many have been introduced to the rich flavor and wholesome goodness of whole-wheat bread simply by trying it, as a novelty, upon hearing of Steve Baker's new loaf. He does no special advertising of the bread; pleased customers are his best salesmen.

And so the team of Brande and Baker continues. Brande works continually to maintain his acres as rich, vital soil. Baker takes the flour raised and ground so carefully and brings to the people of Middlebury all the wholesome, health-giving vitamins and minerals of a 100% whole-wheat bread.
Doubtless what I am about to say should have come as a prologue to my first offering under the heading “Only Yesterday.” Before I get in any deeper I will divulge something John Spargo told me when I was talking over a book I was writing which involved some research. John of course had written of matters historical for many years, and was then living in the very midst of history, being curator of the Bennington Historical Museum.

I had been telling him of something new, as I thought, in regard to Ethan Allen, and spoke of my source as being reliable. That led John to warn me to be very, very, careful about putting down anything unless I had double checked it. “And” he added as a final blow “do not ever put in print something you yourself remember, without checking that most thoroughly.”

I must be getting very forgetful, I recalled this fact.

Your father met your mother for the first time at that funeral. They were married almost a year later.

Many years ago our local historical society had the brilliant idea of collecting history from some of the elderly citizens who could remember the events. With that end in view Charles Orvis, of fishing rod fame, and Mrs. Ahiman Miner, whose family had been active in town and state affairs for many years, were invited to attend a meeting of the society, and advised that they were to come with memories sharpened. Unbeknown to them a stenographer was hidden behind the door.

The two sources of live history were given the best seats in the house and the previously appointed member started with the first of a prearranged group of questions which were supposed to be “leading.” They were but

---

**ONLY**

_A Remembrance of Vermont_

By WALTER HARD, Sr.

**YESTERDAY**

By then I was wondering whether I really wanted to be a historian after all. But John went on to explain. After the First World War, before he returned to this country, he had stopped in Britain to see his last surviving uncle. He had not seen him for many years and they spent all of the first evening catching up. Finally, when a brother of this uncle, long since dead, was mentioned, John began to speak of him and of the affection he had had for him. His present uncle fell quiet and let his nephew reminisce of the dead uncle quite at length. He recalled many intimate details including certain peculiarities of speech and also a slight dragging of one leg as he walked.

Finally the uncle leaned forward and looked at John intently. “John” he said, “you have described Edward to a T. But I must tell you, you never saw him. He died two years before you were born.” Incredulous John soon retired for the night.

The next morning after breakfast, the uncle took John to the burying ground where the family rested from their labors. There he showed him the stone marking the other uncle’s grave. The date of death was two years before John’s birth date. “Lying awake last night, trying to straighten it out, after you had almost persuaded me that they led in opposite directions. At once Mrs. Miner’s answer to the question very mildly, with a beg-leave-to-differ-with-you apology, was questioned as to a detail by Mr. Orvis. Mildness and beg-leaves shortly withdrew and there developed a real ‘tis-so-t’aint-so chewing match.

Having given due warning I would like to recall my first visit to the Shelburne Museum, when about the only place open was the large stable where all kinds of vehicles of the horse and buggy days were on display. Friend Wife and I, after observing only a few of the equipages, felt perfectly at home there. We were back in our youthful days when buggy riding had meaning for the teenagers.

I was born and grew up in what was then considered one of the very smart summer resorts and my father’s drug store, across the street from Vermont’s largest summer hotel, offered an opportunity for observing the customs of the “city people.” Noticing a fine example of what was known then as a “Victoria” there in the Museum barn, I could recall such being driven up to the front entrance of the Equinox House. The horses were caparisoned in the style of the day. Silver plated trimmings on the harness, which was of finely polished leather. (You’ll see them there in Shelburne.) The team itself pranced and danced to a
stop. Its coats shone, its hooves were oiled and polished. Heads were held high by a tight check-rein and already flecks of froth were evident from the curb-bitted mouths. The docked tails moved incessantly in a vain attempt to ward off the voracious flies.

The coachman, sitting erect on the box, with his whip held at the proper angle, would acknowledge the approach of Madame by a slight raising of the whip. No matter how hot the day she would be wearing the proper long and much beruffled skirt— I may be getting in beyond my depth here—and a high collar which looked as uncomfortable as the horses check-rein. The maid would doubtless have an extra wrap and certainly the parasol to keep damaging rays from milady's delicate skin. Ensconced in the well-cushioned seat the signal would be given and at once the steeds would appear to be about to burst loose. Having been put through their circus stunts, taught them with great care, the equipage set forth down the tree lined street. Milady was taking the air.

Perhaps an hour later the party would return, the horses' coats now covered with lather. There was a mild show as jump the grooms to hold the horses, and to set up the small ladders so the veiled ladies and the capped and bedustered gentlemen, could clamber down. The Whip, the owner of this most swanky of all equipages, would yield to the coachman, after giving him detailed instructions about this or that. It didn't take much stretch of the imagination of a Dickens-reading youth to set all that back to the merrie days of olde England.

Of course all of our roads being gravel, as traffic wore them, dust developed and usually ascended in clouds from under the hooves of shuffling steeds. To make the close-in area of the village more bearable a group of young summer people decided there should be a sprinkling cart. They got up a grand entertainment and had a carpenter build an oblong box of planks. This was made fairly leak proof by calking and was painted a bright blue. The day its services were inaugurated one of the younger set who had initiated the movement for the cart, insisted that the chief actors in the sprinkling enterprise, should initiate the dust-laying journey of the blue sprinkler by riding on its flat top. She it was who only a short time before had made a series of calls along the street of summer homes, being transported from house to house in a wheelbarrow propelled by a young student at Norwich University, a son of the lady mentioned early in this offering, Mrs. Miner. He was "Major Miner." (Later editor of the Paris edition of the New York Herald.) Probably the others having this still talked of unprecedented bit of daring in mind, the initial trip of the blue sprinkling cart was made with the same very daring young lady sitting alone in her glory on top, waving her parasol at the amused or more often shocked occupants of the piazzas along the street.

Friend Wife and I had found ourselves so much at home in the midst of these so familiar surroundings in the museum stable that we suddenly felt we might be laid hold of and placed there among the other antiques. We quietly withdrew.
Back in the hills and mountains of Vermont are untold thousands of wild bee hives. These are not the vicious ‘Yellow Jackets’ or paper wasps or bumblebees, but the honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. Jeremy Belknap, the early historian of New Hampshire, says that honeybees were not native to that state, but were imported by the white settlers. Belknap enlarges his thesis to include all of New England so Vermont presumably was a honeyless region before the homesteaders came. The Indians, not quite able to comprehend the nature of this insect, called them the “white man’s fly.” Thus it appears that these wild bees of today were formerly part of some domestic hives. Indeed, year by year, occasional swarms escape the watchful eye of the apiarist and set up housekeeping in the deep woods. These hives gone wild, if they survive the winter, will throw off additional swarms to add more game for the bee hunter. Vermont’s heavily-forested countryside is ideal hunting ground for those interested in finding bee trees. The best hunting may be found in wooded areas adjacent to cultivated land or in the upland. Perhaps here the wild bees have derived from domestic stock once kept by a farmer long since removed to the West.

In the warm languid days of Indian Summer the wild bees hasten from flower to flower knowing well that soon the season’s change will wither the blossoms now so rich in nectar. This is the time of year that the bee hunter prefers to stalk his unwary prey, for the bees, so eager to stuff their combs against the awesome cold of the Northern winter, look on his freely-offered syrup as manna undiluted with a plot against their whole existence.

Bee hunting relies on the bees’ instinct to take the most direct route from the flower to their hive. The expectant hunter equipped with an ingenious contraption ventures forth some pleasant day ready with knowledge of this instinct and anxious to track the bees in their airy flight to the wealth they have hidden in some ancient tree or hollow stub.

The bee hunter’s contraption comes in several models all of which are time tested. Perhaps the simplest design is a rectangular box of well-seasoned pine about three by four inches which holds a bit of honeycomb filled with concentrated sugar syrup. This box has a closely fitted superstructure composed of a glass cover and a movable slide set an inch or so below the glass. The superstructure may be lifted off the box and is used to catch bees.
On a day in autumn when the goldenrod and asters are beginning to pass the peak of their glory, the hunter with his box moves stealthily among the fading flowers searching for a bee at work. When he finds one settled on a blossom he deftly scoops it up into the box and closes the slide. A glance through the window will reveal if a catch has been made. Once the bee is inside, the next step is to get it into the section containing the honeycomb and sugar syrup. With one hand the hunter pulls out the slide between sections and places it over the glass to darken the interior of the box. The bee, now cloaked in darkness, gives up the futile attempt to get out and settles down to the bottom of the box to find there a delectable bit of honeycomb filled to the brim with sugar syrup.

Now the hunter removes the bee box to a point some distance from the flowers and puts it on a short pole or rock. As soon as the bee has filled up with as much syrup as it can carry, it clammers up onto the rim of the box and carefully launders its wings and legs in preparation for the homeward flight. Then, without a moment’s warning, the bee launches out and spirals upwards, circling the box in order to get its bearings. If the hunter is alert now he will see the bee momentarily pause in its upward spirals and then dart out in a ‘bee line’ toward the hive.

The chase has begun. Now success hinges on whether this lone bee, after it has poured its contribution into the common store, is able to perform a strange dance in the hive so that hive-mates will return with it to the box.
This dance, so unique and important to the life of the hive, signifies to the other bees that there is an important new source of nectar—in this case the sugar syrup in the bee hunter's box. The dancing bee can also tell the other workers what the odor of this unusual new 'flower' is. Some hunters see to it that the box is just barely anointed with the scent of anise extract. This gives a valuable clue and landmark to help the original bee and his cohorts find the box on the return trip.

Whether or not the bees find the box on the return flight is a crucial point. Many times the first bee flies off never to return again. Some hunters seek to improve their chances in this phase of the hunt by capturing not one, but several bees. In any event there is bound to be a very quiet period after the first flush of excitement over catching the bees and watching them leave, until the approach of the returning squadron—if it comes.

Perhaps by now the hunter is drowsing a bit while back in the hive the bees are excitedly preparing to make a clean sweep of the syrup-laden comb. From under drooping eyelids the hunter may see not one, but several bees drop in out of the sky to cautiously circle the box and alight either on it or nearby. Eventually all the bees in this flight section will get to work in the box if they are not disturbed. The time has come for the hunter to give up his drowsing and carefully engineer the rest of the proceedings.

If the bees make a round trip in eight minutes or less, the hunter can usually walk in along the bee line and stand a good chance of finding the hive. Otherwise the hunter will have to move the box in along the line to a new location. To move the box and still maintain the line, the hunter traps a few of the bees that are working on the comb in the box and takes his equipment along the line to a new location. In some cases the box may have to be shifted several times for bees have been known to make round trips of sixteen miles.

If the hunt began in the morning it may well be that by the time several changes have been made in the location of the box, the sun is setting in the West. In this event a piece of honeycomb filled to the brim with syrup may be left for the bees to begin work on next day. If time is available the hunter picks up the line from the honeycomb and continues the fascinating chase.

As the hunter closes in on his quarry he becomes aware of a tremendous increase in the number of bees using his lure, until when he is almost to the tree the box will be literally coated with bees all feverishly trying to get at the syrup in the comb. The hardest but most exciting work begins now, for the hunter must scour the woods, quartering back and forth like a well-trained bird dog, until he finally spots the point he has been searching for. The hive may be high in a tree, the opening obscured by leaves and branches or it may be in a hollow stump or old building.
Even, on rare occasions, the bees may have built their combs out in the open air using tree branches for a foundation. Also—and this is the most frustrating experience—the hunter may find that he has been on the trail of domestic bees and they have led him to a carefully tended apiary.

According to ancient bee lore and tradition the wild bees and honey belong to the hunter who has only to boldly carve his initials on the tree in order to establish his claim. Back in 1917 the Vermont Legislature, evidently recognizing the value of wild honey in war-time when white sugar was scarce, enacted a law which makes it possible for a land owner to post every twenty-five acres of his land to prevent bee hunters from exercising their traditional rights. Experience has shown, however, that most landowners do not post their land against bee hunting. Nevertheless a conscientious hunter will always ask permission of the owner before proceeding to capture the bees and their honey.

Presuming that the hunter has permission to chop down the tree, the next problem is how to do it without being ferociously stung by angry bees. The best solution to this problem is to wait for late October or early November when there is a cold moonlit night with the temperature hovering near freezing. When the mercury falls below forty-five degrees Fahrenheit, the individual bees are paralyzed. However if the night is very cold that does not mean that the bees cannot defend the hive; for inside the tree the bees are snug and warm and as soon as they sense that they are in mortal danger they will sally out to protect their community. The particular advantage of taking a tree in late fall is that the bees will soon get numb after they fly out of the tree. Prudent honey-snatchers wear thick clothes with tight cuffs, gloves, and they protect their faces with special bee nets. This armor combined with cold weather should make it possible to harvest the fruits of the bees’ labor without danger to one’s person.

With domestic honey so inexpensive and easy to get nowadays there is no great incentive to take the wild honey. Some hunters prefer to capture the bees and bring them home together with the honey in order to set up a hive in the back yard. Still other people do not even bother to take bees or honey. They enjoy finding the tree and make the finding their reward. Indeed there is an unusual degree of satisfaction to be gained from using simple means to accomplish something very much akin to finding a needle in a haystack.

Back in October of 1909, Marshall O. Howe, writing in the New England Magazine, tells about his bee hunting experiences in Windsor County, Vermont. Mr. Howe was an experienced observer of bee habits and he made a number of interesting comments about the way bees worked different blossoms in spring, summer and fall. In the early spring, the bees fly out to the alder catkins to collect pollen, and even when this pollen was scarce Mr. Howe reports seeing the bees carry off sawdust from the piles next to mills. The first nectar, typically for Vermont, is the sap of maple trees. Any sugar bush operator can tell of seeing bees on the sap spouts or on the end of broken twigs. As the summer progresses the bees tap successively such plants as buckwheat, clover, the ubiquitous wild red raspberry and goldenrod and aster. Mr. Howe says that he has seen honeybees at work on over seventy different species of plants in fifteen towns in Windsor County. Thus, the reader can see that the wild bees are amply provided with a variety of flowers here in Vermont. That, of course, means that the bee hunter can enjoy his unique sport with the assurance that he will have plenty of game.
Autumn’s Panoply

leaves little that need be placed in words. Nothing that is said will conjure up the full aura of autumn’s brilliant beauty. Mere pictures, too, never can create the feel of autumn in Vermont as in actuality it pervades all the senses—not only the illumined eye; the rustle of brittle leaves scuffed under foot; the pungent smell of wood smoke borne on the light wind; the touch of golden sunlight tempering soft air.

Pictures even as these will not suffice to capture autumn in Vermont, but perhaps they’ll serve as a loving reminder to those who cannot this year take part in autumn’s panoply. END
Tyson Lakes, by Arthur Griffin

Shrewsbury, by Newell Green
Weathersfield
by John Vondell

Near Woodstock
by David Witham

Peacham, by
E. L. Gockeler

VERMONT Life 29
South Woodstock
by David Witham

30 VERMONT Life
View from Pomfret Center, by Newell Green
VERMONT'S ROADSIDE HISTORY PROGRAM

By VREST ORTON

On the highways of Vermont today there is a stimulating idea about history and it's easily expressed in a sentence: history is not just for the professionals, it's for the people. That is why it's got to be put where they can see it.

History, of course, everything that happened from the last second to the beginning of time. But in no sense is all that valuable or even interesting. The professors may, and probably ought to cherish everything infinitesimal bit. But we amateurs, the public, are more arrested by the meaningful highpoints. That's why in Vermont only the most significant mileposts in our history have been selected for preservation, or for marking on our highways by the state's official Historic Sites Commission.

When you drive up and down and across the state you will see some 75 handsome green and gold metal markers. These are official historic sites markers, put up for your pleasure and information, and signifying that at or near these points something happened of national or state-wide importance. For example, we’ve heard a lot about Joe Smith. But at Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805, was born a Joseph Smith who is the most famous of them all: he founded the Church of the Latter Day Saints, known as the Mormons. And he first saw light on a remote Vermont hill farm. And Brigham Young, the other Mormon who led the greatest pioneering trek in U.S. history and founded Utah, was born on another hill farm in Whitingham, Vermont. Both are typical of our historic highpoints that have wide interest and significance.

If you drive south from Brattleboro you will see another marker indicating the site of Fort Dummer. Neither the Fort nor the land where it stood are visible today because the Vernon Dam put the spot under water. But our marker points up its importance as the first permanent settlement in Vermont and the birthplace of the first native Vermonter, Timothy Dwight (1726) whose son became first president of Yale College.

And so when you tour the state and see all these highlights of history, you will not only enjoy, I think, visiting the actual physical location where stirring or important events took place, but you will obtain a pretty fair idea of the course of Vermont history. In no sense do I offer this as a substitute for reading the book. It’s only an invitation to the books, and perhaps even a way better to understand them. For this history of Vermont is quite a story going all the way back to 348 years ago when Samuel de Champlain discovered not only the lake but the state. In 1959 Vermont is joining New York and Canada in celebrating this great event. The 350th anniversary is planned as an all summer festival that will also make history come alive and exhibit meaning to everyone.

More and more in these days people from all over are beginning to realize the value of history. In 1961, for example, nearly all the states will take part, led by the Presidential Commission, in the celebration of the centennial of the Civil War. How many folks know that even Vermont had a Civil War conflict? It was no great shakes as a battle but 22 Confederates actually invaded the state and shot up the town of St. Albans, robbing banks, stealing horses and giving Vermont the distinction of having the most northern engagement of that war.

To tourists a visit to a battlefield reveals new values and deeper understandings of not only history but of ourselves. Nowhere is this more evident than in some of the nation’s lesser-known spots such as the field at Hubbardton, Vermont. On this beautiful plateau took place the only battle of the Revolution fought on Vermont soil. But this was also one of the finest examples of a successful rear guard action of that war. Here Colonel Seth Warner, leading our Green Mountain Boys, stopped the British and Hessians cold and whipped them so fiercely that they licked their wounds and returned to Fort Ticonderoga. Here on the field the state has built an interesting building of Vermont slate which will, when done, house four dioramas depicting at the place where they were enacted the four phases of this decisive battle that constitutes the first resistance to Burgoyne.

Here in Vermont we also have gone beyond marking sites; we have restored and rebuilt several so the traveler can see the physical symbols of our history just the way they were. For example, there is the state-owned Coolidge Homestead at Plymouth where Calvin Coolidge took the oath of office as President of the United States; there is the 306 ft. high Bennington Battle Monument, also state owned, where now you can go up in the new elevator and enjoy a magnificent panoramic view of the Green Mountains. These and all the rest I hope to describe in sub-
sequent issues of Vermont Life, not only as symbols of our history but also as interesting places for you to visit. The first Journey to Vermont's Historic Sites appears at the end of this piece.

This birds-eye view of Vermont history, which you can get from seeing our historic sites, will intrigue you to look into Vermont's long record. And in understanding this, you can not help but gain a deeper appreciation of the Vermont way of life as well as a new sense of understanding of what makes Vermon ters tick. Without our unique history we Vermon ters might be like everyone else! But a people whose forefathers with one hand hewed a home out of the wilderness and the other beat back either Indians or a spell of inclement weather, are not a people easily dismayed by the superficial exigencies of life. The sententious and quaint sayings which you hear so much about may have meaning, but you won't get this meaning until you get the history.

**JOURNEYS TO Vermont's Historic Sites**

**No. 1. THE ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE, on Route 103, in the township of Rockingham.**

"To find four Gallons of Rum to Raise the frame said house," was the order issued by the town fathers of ancient Rockingham in 1774 as the first step toward building "a Meetinghouse place for the use of the First Settled Minister." This temporary structure was replaced in 1787 by the present handsome building which, with the Thetford Congregational Church, is the oldest now standing in Vermont.

Probably nowhere in the state is there a more classic example of the modern architect's credo that form follows function or that simplicity is the keynote to architectural beauty. This arresting structure, severe and eloquent in its stark simplicity, is rectangular in shape and has two entryways but no steeple or embellishment of any sort whatsoever. Yet all this was done because it had to be built to withstand the buffeting of storms on the hill where it was built. And because it was built to a definite purpose, which it achieved so admirably, it also at the same time unwittingly became beautiful.

The amusing yarn is told about how they got janitor service at the Meetinghouse. They had an auction at each town meeting and the honor of sweeping out the building four times yearly was auctioned off . . . to the lowest bidder. Called the "Keeper of the Keys," he was fined 50 cents if he did not do his job and if he did was paid $2.25 for the year!

Used from March, 1792 for town meetings (we sometimes forget that the early New England Meeting House was not just a church) this function had to be abandoned when in 1869 the annual town meeting was moved to the big village of Bellows Falls, in Rockingham township. The Meetinghouse had already been given up as a religious center thirty years before this date.

The shift of Vermont population from the originally settled hill villages (such as old Rockingham was) down the hills, into the valleys and on the streams and rivers because of power and transportation was never more graphically illustrated than in the case of Rockingham. The rough bustling river town of Bellows Falls was too busy for matters of the soul or for aesthetics so the lovely old Meetinghouse still sitting back in the now almost abandoned village, was forgotten.

After almost 40 years of neglect and misuse, a group of other-minded persons, led by Mrs. Horace W. Thompson, restored the building in 1907. They formed an association to care for this historic structure, and to hold an annual pilgrimage each August to this delightful spot. At these annual summer celebrations, which are well worth attending, they always have two outstanding speakers, one civic, one religious.

Yet the casual tourist driving by and looking up to the heights of the hill, as he gets ready to follow the curve in the road, can not help but gasp with wonder and awe that our forefathers possessed such a fine sense of proportion and beauty. And also, if he has time to reflect, that some good folks over a century later had the sense and vision to know that this was worth preserving.

Information about Vermont's historic sites program and the function of the Historic Sites Commission, which is a part of the state government, may be obtained by writing West Orton, Weston, Vermont. A list of historic sites is now available, and in the summer of 1938 the Commission plans to publish a Guide Book to the Historic Sites of Vermont.
LONG WAY HOME

A DISQUISITION ON VERMONT’S BACK ROADS

By CHARLES MORROW WILSON

Illustrated by HAMILTON GREENE

Town records list it as Brook Road; the town road crew call it Old Brook. That’s a fairly accurate designation and label for this two-hundred-year-old backroad which links and channels us into the world outside. Approximately two of the final three miles of the old road parallels and hugs closely an even older brook.

But this old road, so definitely and perennially a way of life and survival for my family and the hilltop Dodds, seems to deserve a more adequate title. The only one I can seem to come up with is Rhapsody Road, which sounds dismally like the title of a Grade B movie or one of those sneaky Broadway comedies which just attach themselves and leech, like a tick on a dog’s ear. Actually “rhapsody” is a fairly honest twelve-cent word which set out to mean selections from an epic poem suitable for recitation.

And that’s my backroad! The year around, and like hundreds of others throughout Vermont, Old Brook, whether dozing or wide awake, whether in green-gold summer or blue-white winter, or in-between, sparkles with epic poems suitable for recitation—though perhaps not always suitable for mixed company or certainly not invariably appropriate for pure, pristine print. The road commissioner can attest to this, on a basis of what he has been mistakenly and misguidedly called, at and around ‘Town Meetin’; or on a basis of what his valiant and good Samaritan crewmen have said when after giving their all to haul some misguided amateur adventurer off the glare ice or out of the deep mud they find themselves rewarded by the offer to a swig of the worst whiskey that ever trickled out the shabby mouth of a half-pint bottle.

But these are the lesser asides of the recitation, oftentimes mistaken, usually miscued. Only today I was reflecting on this and the more definitive qualities of Vermont’s backroad rhapsodies. It is autumn again and I follow Old Brook down Blood’s Hill between the great sentinel rows of now ancient sugar maples—holding light years of sheerest glory wherein a picture is worth a thousand words, and a living look is worth a thousand pictures.

I walk down the steep hill where the road narrows to a stingy nine feet. Our new super-highways take an average of twenty-five acres of land, much of it, alas, very good land, to the mile of right-of-way. With tacit Vermont thrift, Old Brook uses only a shade more than two acres per mile of roadway.

Yet as really as any road anywhere, it is a road of life. I reflected on this while strolling the turn-around in front of Quintard’s old and paintless sugarhouse, where my right-of-way was being challenged by a proud partridge cock who clucked officiously—quite probably to followers looking on from the browning ranks of roadside ferns. The night before, on the comparative straightway where the brook plays close against the roadside, I had backed my auto to a dead halt in order to avoid a head-on with four fat raccoons (possibly fat from my sweetcorn patch) who occupied the road middle—in rapt conference.

This is a road of life, of many lives. When you drive or walk the old road in early morning or at dusk, chances are at least even that you will see at least one deer, frequently a fawn and doe together. Through many years, and on the same old road, I have watched the going and coming of foxes, both red and gray; rabbits,
young and old and in-between; skunks, in wobbly babyhood and perilous maturity. Also fast waddling woodchucks, scurrying squirrels, both red and gray, and lon­eprowling bobcats.

The Old Brook Road is used as a saddle trail and intermittently as a hiking trail by the nearby Putney School. And by miscellaneous strollers who include natu­ralists, artists, magazine salesmen, bill collectors, jail escapees. And during that overly long and much addled marathon of sheerest sportsmanship called Deer Sea­son, when the multitudes of Massachusetts truck drivers and Connecticut short order and sandwich men, bearing shotguns, large calibre rifles, pistol, knives, and other instruments of mayhem, including backpacks or sidepacks of sloshing li­quids, tinkling cans and clinking bottles come hellbent on slaughtering all or any deer and whatever luckless thing comes within line or range of fire.

But it is the year-around, live-or-die resident traffic which establishes the ever­vital worth of the backroad, a worth which transcends all favoritism of season or person. Like all others of its kind, Old Brook waits and serves to carry the old man to his grave, the very young man to his playpen, the bride and groom to the preacher. Through the years, personally and impersonally, Old Brook proves its function. Like the time Old Jim Fuller, the down-road neighbor died of a bad heart while buggying through the April slosh—and the old logging horse dutifully turned about and brought the old man home.

It was an early June day when my bride and I drove over Old Brook to our home and farmstead, such as it was. And early the second June thereafter, we traveled the old road again, this time with a third member.

Our first son was five months old then, and vehemently in need of a rest stop. I drew up at a roadside where the grass grows green and velvet soft. My mother spread a midget blanket and took care of the situation. Then tranquilly, our son, to us ever beautiful, lay on his back and looked down the road and up at the new leaves which frolicked in the sunny
breeze and cast alluring traceries of shadows. For a time our son gazed in wonder. Then he laughed, a gay and lusty laugh, and I am absolutely certain that God was laughing, too.

For God is forever with and on Vermont backroads. If He weren't, they couldn't possibly endure, serve, and perpetuate a great and distinguished heritage.

The backroads heritage is only partly statistical. As this is written Vermont has a total of 13,695 miles of roads, of which 1,847 miles are state highways, 9,063 miles are exclusively township roads, and 2,784 miles are township roads maintained in part with state aid. "Backroad," of course, is a relative designation. But it includes a very strong majority of the total road mileage of our state. Seventy to 80 miles of town-built and town-kept roads is an average resource and stint. Nine towns have over 100 miles apiece; eleven have less than five miles apiece (Buel's Gore in Chittenden County with .69 mile of town roads crowds out Avery's Gore in Franklin County, 1.02 miles, for last place in township mileage); thirty-one towns have less than ten miles of roads. Old Brook is part of Putney's 64.248 miles of which 14.27 miles, not including Old Brook, receive state aid.

Behind this easy lifting of fairly typical figures is a great deal of basic history and economics as well as sincere if variable rhapsody. The Vermont backroad is peculiarly typical of some 1.7 million miles of local roads—township, district, municipal, county or parish which are the sustaining vein systems of surface transportation in the United States. All too frequently these are the unhonored, unsung, and poorly attended beginning and ending ways of surface transportation which is so basically our American living and heritage. It is easy to talk of the great new era of super-highways, parkways and turnpikes. With reason, even if perhaps with excessive frequency our newspapers, radio and (ugh) television tell of our now materializing 33-billion-dollar, 41,000-mile "program" of Federal aid superhighways. The concept is a big one, and this onlooker believes, a good one. But as usual "Federal aid" and "state aid" are just synonyms for us, the inevitable taxpayers.

We will pay for the great new roads exclusively, but certainly we will not use them to the exclusion of other routes, notably the local roads, which stay the inevitable beginnings and endings of land travel. The principal body of automotive traffic which has become completely indispensable to our lives and works begins and ends not on the super-highway nor even the numbered routes, but rather at the home garage, the barnyard, the store or shop or factory parking lots, or always basic in Vermont the farmstead driveway.

Thus, the spotlight of importance turns to our backroads, and this with a new and mighty impetus. The astonishing truth stands that with God's grace, the town road crew's work, planning and devotion (usually the town road crew consists of the commissioner and an average of two year-around employees), and near miraculous scrimpings, our Vermont backroads must and in great part do keep the pace and carry the burdens of an ever changing and accelerating world.

All this, in the honest words of Paul Carr, our local road commissioner takes a "lot of mighty fancy getting along." For the state as a whole one dollar on each hundred dollars of real property assessment goes for township roads; around 50 cents for winter road maintenance, and less than 20 cents for road patrol. Yet in less than half-a-century, the speed of backroad travel has increased close to tenfold; from horse-drawn or foot-propelled averages of two to three miles per hour to year-around averages of 20 to 30 by truck and auto, but not excluding the carefree days of spring and summer when certain of our luck-happy, self-conceived Barney Oldfields dare and do up to 50 m.p.h. even on the backroads.

The strain and the wear-and-tear ratios are very much higher than the proportional increase of speed and load. Only in theory are the latter dispensable. Heavy trucks, roaring and spluttering under vast burdens of logs, lumber, grain feeds, oil, coal, milk and many other heavy cargoes
have become unavoidable users of backroads as well as highways.

Anybody can say that it can’t go on; anybody can see that it has to go on. And any experienced road man will find himself including the survival and growing usefulness of our Vermont backroads well forward among the wonders of the world. "How can it be?" is much easier to ask than to answer. The writer's first salary job was on and for a state highway system. I sweated a lot more than I learned. But I did learn, even as every road builder or road tender does, that there is no such thing as a perfect road, even as there is no such thing as a perfect whiskey, or woman, or for that matter, man; granting that some are a lot better than others. And as with shoes, socks, breeches, autos and good intentions, all roads wear out—beginning the first day they are put in use, if not before.

Soils, subsoils and basic geology, grades, terrain and contours, natural drainage (or the lack of it) rainfall, cold and heat remain the age-old basic deciders of the best type of road for a given locale. Vermont’s backroads have all of these denominators in kingsize amounts. By overwhelming majority all keep with the real, however much repressed conviction held by every experienced and honest-spoken road-builder which is that law, traffic, boss and politics permitting, the good earth, well-drained, well-graded, and as needs require gravelled, is the world’s best road material.

Our town backroads have this sometimes debated advantage of material. All hard surfaces wear out and yield to the ravages of weight, speed and weather; meaning all roads require unending upkeep. Nowadays, the practical life of an excellent paved highway is commonly estimated as 25 years. But as every backroad Vermonter knows, the life of a tended dirt road is practically immortal. Historians believe that a great many of our backroads began as "Indian paths;" they cannot be dated with any degree of accuracy. But it is a very reasonable guess that at least a third of our present mileage of town backroads was in use during the years when Vermont was the Green Mountain Republic; that hundred of miles were in use when Vermont was the good Indian land called "Iroquoisia."

Whatever the calendar dates, the good of any road is in the using, and our backroads have an almost fabulous record for good. The cause and the hope is in the upkeep. "Tendin' " stays the prime rub and payoff. That is as true of Old Brook today, even as during the long bygones years when its vaguely paralleling boundary walls were being raised by strong hands long dead to clear fields in great part long abandoned. It is as true in the bounding year, 1957 as it was during the ruining summerless year, 1816. Or in 1811, when the big massacre of and by Indians took place on Fuller's Hill nearby. And during the following decades when four families of neighbor kin named Blood began planting their roadsides to fairly straight lines of rock maple saplings in order to provide handy bush during the slush and mud of sugarin' time.

And in the "moderatin' " 188o's when Squire Cal Reed, a not too distant ancestor of the present road commissioner, penned his nineteen fox hounds, and put up his Civil War muskets long enough to "act as" the town road boss, thereby engineering by eye and pointing finger several miles of side drains, building four wooden bridges across the sometimes too companionable brook, and designing and helping sled up a succession of hug-me-tights on which to "set" the log wagons in order to rest the oxen or horses by day, and perchance by night to facilitate a bit of reasonably muscular courtship.

Old Squire Cal had ways which even the more charitable neighbors reported as right peculiar. He was a stubborn advocate of ox power; pointing out with accuracy that a good "yoke" works better on snow and ice than any other draft power, and insisting that speaking roadwise horses were a fad that couldn't last. Squire Cal opposed sanding, on the hard grounds that a man or beast who couldn't keep balance has no business trying to. He favored tamping the snow rather than plowing it—plowing clogs the side drains and mars the beauties of sleigh driving. But the hunting Squire did build some very fine backroad traditions. His devotion was never subject to doubt or question, and he had a positive
and durable genius for recruiting the interest and active help of backroad neighbors.

Road work remains commendable. The other day a West Hill neighbor named George David Aiken, our senior U. S. Senator, was recalling how back in his very early teens working the town roads piled headdeep with crusted snow provided his first high-paying employment—fifteen cents an hour—three times what the Senator got for his summertime employment at weeding the neighbors’ gardens. But the road work was big-time and for big things, such as going three years to the one-teacher high school then at Putney, and a final graduation year at Brattleboro High. Thus the second youngest of Ed and Myra Aiken’s five children worked the backroads and went ahead; for that matter keeps going ahead.

The same holds for Paul Carr, our old-line Vermonter road commissioner, except that Paul, unlike George, isn’t obliged to room in Washington in order to keep going ahead on and with the 58.65 miles of town-kept road of Putney Township, Vermont.

Paul Carr, a native of Newfane, son and grandson of old school Vermonters and distant kin of Squire Cal Reed, the road-tending devotee of oxen, hounds and hunting, also started at road work in his early teens. He knows oxen. His brothers used to drive their bull buggy in the town parades and sometimes just for the fun of it. But Paul began road tending with horses and with early maturing talent as a teamster. He early learned the very old principles of tending backroads which are to keep the side drains and underdrains open and working, keep the road center or crown drainably high, fill in the developing ruts and sinks, check, mend and when the timbers rot replace the wooden bridges. But first and last you drain and you crown.

Whether with hand tools, or ox power, horse power or these newfangled $20,000 graders, and Putney has a pretty good one, the fundamentals of backroad tending show little change with passing time. There are not many oxen in our countryside nowadays. Farther down Old Brook Floyd Fellows still draws in his sugarin’ wood with his oxen, and Happy Clark, in closer to the village, keeps a fine yoke of young steers which he designates as calves. Like any other good oxen these would fit the roads right handily in times of owl-grease ice, like we had last winter. But there are only two good ox teams left in the whole town and barely half-a-dozen buggy rigs.

The auto age calls for sand and salt, and truck-borne sand spreaders, bigger snowplow blades for the big grader, and a diesel-power caterpillar tractor to snowplow the steep hill roads. The bed wagons and “bull” carts which Cal Reed “favored” are replaced by three spanking new dump trucks which Paul Carr directs ably and more or less continuously. The tall-cabbed grader, and other tractive equipment are now supplemented by increasing arrays of working “fixtures;” including plows and scraper blades, harrows, tillers, spreaders, and sand throwers.

But tending the town roads continues to reach into the past with numerous hands and hand tools—picks, shovels, axes, saws and bush snips always well sharpened and handled to fit strong and workbrittle Vermont hands and back. In terms of man-hours the requirements of manual labor do not diminish markedly, even as mechanization grows stronger and more versatile. The total work requirements keep on growing, along with yet necessarily beyond the growing utility of the town roads, backroads included.

Meanwhile the year-around job of the town road commissioner and his helper or helpers grows more technical and exacting, more hurried and more abjectly dependent on weather. A lifetime ago, Cal Reed figured on using a full day to plow out after a light snow, two days for a medium, and three days or longer for a whopper snow. Paul Carr and his men have very nearly substituted hours for days in terms of snow plowing. A great many of the hours are extremely late and extremely early, including all-night plowing during heavy snows. We year-around backroaders know and appreciate. It’s the town road men who save us in winter—insofar as we get saved. It’s the town road men who cause dead roads to come alive; and old roads to stay eternally young.
The vacationists, with their trailer-tent, had spent a good night in the little roadside picnic area and were cooking breakfast. A road crew pulled up and the men filled their jugs at the spring. The campers went over with their map.

"Say, where are we? Near as we can figure, it’s somewhere between Morrisville and East Berkshire."

The foreman of the road gang laughed. "That’s right, folks," he said, "You can tell your friends that last night you slept in Avery’s Gore!"

Despite the bloody implication, the campsite is actually located in a small tract of land known as a “gore.” Vermont has four of them in existence today, little known except to hunters, fishermen and those who love and seek out the more remote and unpopulated sections of the state. Administered by state-appointed supervisors, they are all practically uninhabited areas of “wild land.”

The four gores are the result of hurried and uncertain mapping back in the days before Vermont was settled. With lavish grants of generally square-shaped towns being made by both the provinces of New Hampshire and New York, there was bound to be great confusion and overlapping claims. What was left over when a semblance of order was reached amounted to tracts of unclaimed land in irregular shapes. On the map they appeared to be wedged or “gored” in between larger towns, and so received their odd name. Vermont once had a couple of dozen of them. There were odd bits and pieces called

By Richard Sanders Allen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town or tract</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AVERILL</td>
<td>24,534</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERY'S GORE</td>
<td>10,625</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Essex County)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AVERY'S GORE</td>
<td>3,929</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Franklin County)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUELL'S GORE</td>
<td>2,204</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FERDINAND</td>
<td>28,079</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLASTENBURY</td>
<td>27,341</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEWIS</td>
<td>21,150</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOMERSET</td>
<td>16,119</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARNER'S GRANT</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WARREN'S GORE</td>
<td>5,678</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

140,659 acres 46 people (over 219 square miles)
Johnson’s Gore, Coit’s Gore, Parker’s Gore—and many others whose names are forgotten today along with the men who owned them.

Major Elias Buell was typical of the land speculators who saw opportunity in the overlooked gores between the town grants. Buell was one of the original proprietors of the Town of Coventry in Orleans County. Along with Coventry went a 2,204-acre gore some sixty miles away,—a V-shaped portion of Chittenden County. Major Buell was mostly interested in this last piece and moved up from Connecticut to settle on it. He bought up all other claims until he owned the gore outright, and then planned to have it expanded to make a new town called “Montzoar.”

A bit of schoolboy doggerel written many years later, went:

All hail to brave Major Buell  
They say he was nobody’s fool,  
Not asking for more,  
He carved him a gore,  
And conquered the wilderness cruel.

Fool or no, the Major made the mistake of not having his titles recorded, and neglected to pay a land tax of half a cent an acre on his property. As a result, the gore was sold to satisfy a tax bill of only $1.10!

Despite occasional attempts to annex it to other adjacent towns, Buell’s Gore exists today, a wedge of land laid down between Starksboro and Fayston. Only two people live there. Most of its mountain land is part of the Camel’s Hump State Forest, with the peaks of Molly and Baby Stark Mountains carrying the Long Trail along the ridge of its eastern border. Major Buell would be amazed to see the aerial chair lift and the skiing activity going on every winter, up on the nearby mountains.

Top gore-grabber was Samuel Avery, a Connecticut lawyer who had Vermont land granted to him in at least ten separate pieces. Avery was heir to an immense tract of 52,000 acres comprising some of the most fertile portions of the Otter Creek Valley in the Middlebury area. The lawyer-turned-land-speculator spent months in surveying the tract, and for years afterward trees were found with the initials “S.A.” blazed on their trunks. After camping out for days in the wilderness locating his lands, Avery hoped that his claim would be valid. New York sold what he could of his Vermont gores for a dollar an acre, and moved to Athens, Pennsylvania. There he started all over again, becoming involved in conflicting land titles between Connecticut and Pennsylvania,—and again lost his shirt. Eventually he settled down to his law practice and died a rich man.

This was the man whose name is perpetuated by the two remaining “Avery’s Gores” in northern Vermont. The one in Franklin County was originally a great deal larger than it is today, with a population of nearly fifty. It even had a post office of its own. Montgomery long ago annexed the inhabited part, leaving the gore with its present proportions. Today there are two houses and a hunting camp, with a total population of nine. The most pleasant feature of the gore is the state roadside picnic area, tucked in a valley of the Cold Hollow Mountains between Rt. 118 and the infant Trout River.

Over in Essex County is the larger Avery’s Gore, an uninhabited 10,625 acre tract of wild land dominated by the peak of Gore Mountain. No highways cross this gore except the temporary roads made by the lumber companies that own the forests. The Brown Company of New Hampshire and the St. Regis Paper Company of New York log this area systematically as the trees grow big enough for pulpwood, and ship it out by rail and truck to their mills. The lonely forest-fire lookout on Gore Mountain is reached by a steep trail with a wilderness view in all directions to reward the climber. The mountain is on the watershed, with the brooks on one side draining into the St. Lawrence and on the other into the Connecticut River.

Adjacent to “big” Avery’s Gore is Warren’s Gore, originally granted by Vermont along with the Town of Warren, seventy-five miles away. This tract, not being geographically connected with the mother town, was called a “flying gore.” Town and gore are named for General Joseph Warren, a Boston doctor and Revolutionary patriot who fought at Lexington and died at Bunker Hill.

Narrow Norton Pond lies mostly in Warren’s Gore,—a beautiful sheet of water over two miles long, with wooded
shores and little islands dotting its surface. For many years only the whistles of locomotives broke the stillness of the pond, and an occasional fisherman dropped off the train at Lake Station to try his luck. Finally a highway was built from Norton south to Island Pond. This road, with its gravel base and undulating surface, wound through the woods for fourteen miles. At the right speed, many a couple in the rumble seat of a roadster felt that it was just as good as Coney Island, and the road became known as "The Roller Coaster Highway."

Tax money from the gore once went to the Town of Warren, but through the years the "flying gore" proved hard to administer, and jurisdiction was turned over to the state. The Roller Coaster Highway, now State Rt. 114, has been paved in recent years, and its dips and rises smoothed out,—but it still promotes an enjoyable, swooping ride. A dozen camps are strung around the north end of Norton Pond, but Warren’s Gore has no permanent residents.

West of Warren’s Gore is the only tract of land in the state still called a "grant." This was a free gift by the first legislators of Vermont in recognition of the services rendered by the famous Revolutionary hero, General Seth Warner. General Warner had captured Crown Point, held the British at Hubbardton, and turned the tide of battle at Bennington, but he died before his little republic became a state. The grant of 1000 acres was made to the General’s widow, Hester Warner, and her three children.

Even some of Avery’s Gores were not as remote as Warner’s Grant, tucked like an afterthought in a corner of Essex County. Although she was supposed to “cause settlement,” the Widow Warner, living from hand to mouth down in Connecticut, could do little about persuading pioneers to find her grant, let alone settle on it. Backwoods timber land had no value 160 years ago, and Mrs. Warner probably received very little from the sale of her lands. What was meant in good faith to be a generous gesture from a grateful state came to nothing, with only a name on the map to recall the deed.

Warner’s Grant, now as then, is composed of a range of mountains called the “Beechnut Ridge.” It is reached only by trails from Norton Pond, Morgan Center and Holland. There are two hunting camps in the Grant, but only restless lumberjacks have ever lived in it for any length of time.

Considered in the same category as the Grant and Gores of Essex County are its three unorganized towns,—Averill, Lewis and Ferdinand. All six tracts are administered by Supervisor Tom Canning of Island Pond. Here are over a hundred square miles of wilderness with eight permanent homes, and a population of only thirty people. As supervisor, Mr. Canning has to clear everything which concerns the unorganized towns and gores. His main duties are the inspection of roads, investigation of land titles and rights, and of course the billing and collection of taxes for the state. In Essex County the bills go mostly to absentee owners, some forty hunting and fishing camp owners, plus the ever-present lumber companies.

Though granted by New Hampshire in 1762, the three unorganized towns were never settled, and remained virgin wilderness for over a hundred years. King Lumber gave them their sole prominence. In the 1880’s David Beattie owned 10,000 acres of Ferdinand. He had a huge steam saw mill at Wenlock, from which he shipped out dressed timber on the railroad. Only a deserted siding marks the spot today. Less than thirty years ago, a sugar refining company had a lumber railroad running from Bloomfield up through Lewis into Averill. The timber was made into staves and heads for sugar barrels.

Though it once had the railroad, unpopulated Lewis never had a road. It continues to be the big challenge to those who wish to belong to the Vermont Historical Society’s enjoyable but select “251 Club”—made up of people who have visited every town in the state. Access to Lewis is usually made on foot or by jeep up a back woods road north of Island Pond. Other hardy hikers have tramped the seven miles along the old roadbed of the “sugar railroad” to the site of the refining company’s lumbering operations. One man cut overland from Wenlock, thinking to make an easy walk into the town. He floundered about in the Yellow Bogs of the Nulhegan River for several hours. Then, after an abrupt encounter with a hornet's nest, he was never quite sure whether he ran out of Ferdinand, Brunswick, Bloomfield or Lewis!

Best-known of Essex County’s unorganized towns is Averill, mainly because it is the site of Miss Hortense
Quimby’s camps. These consist of Quimby’s Inn on Great Averill Lake, Quimby’s Cold Spring Club on Forest Lake, plus a lodge and a number of housekeeping cottages on both lakes. Word-of-mouth advertising has spread the fame of Quimby’s to far places. Last year, dozens of cars with out-of-state license plates could be seen gathered at the Averill Lakes. Nearly a third of Quimby’s guests are repeaters, and some who like the wilderness life with modern conveniences have established their own camps along the sparkling sand beaches of Great Averill Lake.

Many people are introduced to the unorganized towns and gores by following a fishing rod or the muzzle of a gun. Just the idea of miles and miles of uninhabited wilderness acts as a magnet to sportsmen. Even a good stiff hike with heavy waders won’t faze a fisherman whose mind is on well-stocked waters with lake, rainbow and brown trout, land-locked salmon and small-mouth bass waiting to be hooked. In the fall, the ends of the old tote roads are filled with cars from which emerge red-clad hunters with a good chance of bagging a deer or bear.

Far down in the southern end of Vermont are two more towns which belong to the “unorganized” group. These two, Glastonbury and Somerset, differ in that they once supported small populations, but have gone back to the wilderness.

Again, lumber was the product that gave these towns a temporary prosperity. Spruce, hemlock, fir, beech, maple and ash grew in profusion on the mountainsides. A railroad to bring out the timber extended up into Glastonbury from Bennington, and another from Wilmington reached into Somerset. There were log drives on the Deerfield River, and some days the sky was blackened by the smoke of dozens of colliers’ fires on the mountains, where short lengths of wood were being made into charcoal. At the peak of population, Somerset and Glastenbury had nearly 500 people between them.

With the big timber gone, and little demand for charcoal, the towns began losing their inhabitants. The hill farms were abandoned one by one, and the second growth timber began to fill in the old pastures. By 1930 Somerset was down to twenty people and Glastenbury to only seven. Of necessity, a few persons in each town held most of the town offices simultaneously. Ira Mattison in Glastenbury and Katie Taylor in Somerset practically ran all the towns’ affairs right up to the day that a state act declared them “unorganized” in 1937.

Most of Somerset is owned today by the Green Mountain National Forest and the New England Power Company. The latter maintains the big Somerset Dam and Reservoir as a standby to hold water for the company’s Deerfield River electrical-generating system. The state-maintained dead-end road passes several hunting camps along the West Branch of the Deerfield, with woods roads and hiking trails branching off in all directions. Farther up are a few fishing camps on the reservoir, which rewards anglers with yellow perch, pickerel and bullheads.

The only permanent resident of Somerset is Laurence Leonard, overseer of the Power Company’s property, and government weather observer. He lives with his wife and three children in a trim white house on a knoll below the big Somerset Dam. A former town selectman, Mr. Leonard has lived in Somerset for twenty-five years and enjoys the isolated life. About the only drawback, he says, is driving the children twelve miles to school and back each day.

In adjacent Glastenbury, the last of the Mattison family left the town in 1940, and their 100-year old house is now used as a hunting lodge. A beautiful summer home, owned by a Michigan physician, occupies a knoll beyond the old Mattison farm, with a sweeping view to the west. Except for three small parcels, lumber interests have gradually bought up all of Glastenbury, and it is being held intact for the new-growth timber which is already well-started in recovering the mountains. Deer and bear continue to multiply until some day the lumbering cycle will commence again, and the woods will ring with the blows of the axe and the whine of the powered saw.

Except in the dead of winter, it is seldom one can penetrate the mountain fastness of Vermont’s unorganized towns and gores without meeting at least one or two kindred spirits,—hunters, fishermen, or hikers who enjoy the solitude of shaded pathways. There is a challenge to know the old roads and trails which wind through the friendly woods, and every year more travellers plan their trips to visit these out-of-the-way chunks of Green Mountain country.

VERMONT Life 45
A steady stream of cars winds uphill on a private road through wooded acres in Manchester. The sound of tuning musical instruments becomes more distinct as they reach the summit of the hill and approach a white Colonial-style mansion surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens. Hundreds are gathering in the adjoining auditorium.

This is the prelude to any of the six or seven Sunday afternoons on which well known artists are scheduled for the season’s summer concerts at the Southern Vermont Art Center. Here, too, the strains of dance music will echo from the surrounding hills on many a balmy evening in July, August and September, when folk and square dances and recitals will take place. Throughout the season the eleven galleries of the spacious house which, together with the added wing and some hundreds of acres, constitute the home of Southern Vermont Artists, Inc., will be hung with the high quality art work of Vermont painters, lithographers, sculptors and photographers, in the season’s dozen or more exhibitions. Manchester is the home of one of the finest and most popular art centers in the east.

Southern Vermont Artists was already well known for staging one of the country’s largest, most democratic and most lucrative summer art exhibitions. With the purchase of the large house and acres of the former Webster estate, the Southern Vermont Art Center came into being in 1950. It is being maintained by its activities and through the generosity of its friends and members.

With the completion in 1956 of a new auditorium as a separate building, to accommodate larger exhibitions, orchestral and dramatic productions, as well as a place for expanding activities of the related arts, Southern Vermont Artists is offering to the public this season the most comprehensive cultural program of the 31 years of the organization’s existence.

A few Dorset artists started it all by exhibiting their paintings in a local school room more than 30 years ago. The idea of an annual show was then born. In 1926 the group had grown to 17, and the exhibitions were then held in Manchester village. In 1933, the growing group incorporated into Southern Vermont Artists, Inc. There followed a long history of development from a small annual exhibition to one of the largest in New England.
A lively home for all the arts is the Southern Vermont Art Center at Manchester.

The successful growth of Southern Vermont Artists may be traced in part to the widespread interest in its original democratic idea. The annual exhibition includes not only the well-known favored few, but all residing in Vermont for a minimum of three months between annual exhibitions and within a 50 mile radius of Manchester. At least one picture from any artist thus qualifying is accepted. This policy introduced many newcomers to the fun and cultural value of the palette and brush. Unknowns saw their work hung alongside those of national reputation. Perhaps no other regional show in the country portrays so much quality and diversity, representing the work of nationally known artists, hobby painters and students.

Not only interested in showing pictures, S.V.A. created an opportunity for artists to sell their works and art collectors to buy them. The “New Collectors’ Gallery” is an ideal way of encouraging more people to experience the thrill of collecting art at reasonable prices. Small pictures by the more established artists are offered for sale in this gallery at a price not exceeding $30. Opening of this gallery is always a highlight of the first day of the Annual Show.

After many years of temporary lodgings, S.V.A. purchased a home of its own. With the valuable wood lot supplying income, and money coming in from interested friends, the Art Center was able to pay off the mortgage in less than two years, and now S.V.A. plays host to thousands who come to enjoy each summer festival. During the opening summer of 1950, the work of 500 artists was viewed by more than 8,000 visitors at the twenty-first Annual Show. Sales totaled $14,000. The different media shown included oil, water color, lithograph, woodcut, etching, sculpture, and the modern mobile.

The acquisition of the new Art Center enabled S.V.A. to expand to other art forms. In 1950, a series of musical programs was held outdoors in a natural amphitheatre in the garden. This successful season has been repeated each year since the opening of the Center, with the addition of more activities. In the new galleries 60 very successful One-Man shows have enabled art admirers to see a larger number of pictures by artists who exhibit in the group shows. They have added greatly to the popularity of the Center and are financially rewarding to the artists.

An annual state-wide Photography Exhibition was

By Dorothy Schumann
Wives of the Center's trustees serve refreshments during opening of painting exhibit.
Autumn Events

Southern Vermont Artists' Annual Show; August 24-September 2, incl.

Concert: Afternoon of September 1.

Southern Vermont Artists' Fall Art Show: October 1-12 incl.

initiated in 1954 and has become larger each successive summer. There are six medals awarded by Vermont Life magazine and three by Southern Vermont Artists, for excellence in this show.

The S.V.A. Permanent Collection is on display at the Art Center when gallery space is available. This fine collection of contemporary American art, valued at $40,000, represents the work of 100 artists, mostly from Vermont.

With continued growth, the Art Center soon felt the need for even more gallery space and particularly a sheltered auditorium for the musical events. A campaign was launched and enough additional funds raised to start the erection of a new auditorium carefully designed, and with an eye to economy and future needs. Generous response from friends resulted in 1956 in the formal dedication of the new building by Governor Joseph B. Johnson, followed by a Vermont State Symphony orchestra concert, with Stell Andersen, soloist. At the same time the first State-Wide Exhibition opened.

Although not entirely completed until this year, the new wing housed many enjoyable events last season. Activities of special appeal to young people were instituted. Folk dancing and square dances attracted crowds every Wednesday and Saturday nights. Seven concerts and two dance recitals featured many top ranking artists.

The auditorium enables the Art Center to schedule larger concerts with more symphonic music. Since the years of informal outdoor concerts, music lovers have heard many Vermont artists, among whom were Rudolf Serkin, Maxim Schur, the Trapp Family, Stell Andersen, Eugene List, Carroll Glenn and Estelle Best, pianist. Vermont composers whose work was performed were Eliot Carter and Carl Ruggles. Robert Frost was heard reading his own poems. There were two choral groups, the Manchester Village Chorus and the Poultney Welsh Male Chorus.

Many other events scheduled this season include various craft displays, historical society exhibitions, flower shows, and sculpture exhibits. Lectures, fashion shows and even wedding receptions are often part of the life at the Art Center, as well as poetry readings and band concerts.

This year ushered in the first Invitation Art Exhibition, with invited artists from all of New England and New York state participating.

Looking to the future, the new facilities will enable Southern Vermont Artists to accept loan exhibitions. More dance events can be featured and ballet instruction given. It is hoped to be able to include good professional theatre at some future time.

In the meantime, the Southern Vermont Art Center through its annual program of interrelated arts, through widespread interest and support, is rapidly taking its place as a vital force for cultural understanding and enjoyment.

END
If you were to meet Howard Nash and his sister Margery Ludlow, you probably would not think there was anything particularly unusual about them. They would seem to be very much like many other people who have found in Vermont an ideal place for retirement. And, at first glance, their house appears to be like any other well-kept Vermont home.

However, a peek into Mr. Nash’s study—with its piles of books, papers and photographs—would soon inform you that these people have a great and consuming interest in an unusual field—railroads and railroading.

It is well that you have this forewarning for it prepares you for the sights to be seen in back of the house. Few backyards in Vermont, or anywhere else for that matter, can boast of a full sized, honest-to-goodness wooden caboose. The caboose was once in regular operation over the tracks of northern Vermont’s St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County Railroad but had finally ended up on a siding waiting to be scrapped. Mr. Nash and Mrs. Ludlow heard about this and with some misgivings decided that they would save the old timer from the scrap heap by buying it themselves. Buying an old caboose is not so much of a problem as deciding what to do with it once you have bought it. The St. J. & L.C. was happy to cooperate in moving the caboose as far as they could over their own tracks (with the new owners as delighted passengers) and the remainder of the trip was made over the Rutland Railroad to a siding near North Bennington. From here on the journey was made on a large truck-drawn trailer. There is some talk that one un-warned spectator took the pledge after being confronted by the sight of a bright red caboose meandering over the Vermont countryside some miles from the nearest railroad. As it was being loaded an old lady turned to her aged husband and said: “George, I think this is going to make history.”

The caboose now stands proudly behind the house on
In the North Bennington back yard of Howard Nash and his sister an amazing hobby seems almost to be running away with them.

Written & Photographed by John F. Smith, Jr.

The ex-corncrib station.

Mrs. Ludlow checks records in the stations.
Scale model of Delaware & Hudson steam locomotive

Inside the caboose.
its own railroad—the Our Farm & St. Johnsbury—one-hundred and twenty feet of salvaged rails laid by volunteer crews from the Rutland Railroad’s section gang.

This is what can happen when an interest is coupled with boundless enthusiasm. What was originally a collection of tickets, timetables and photographs has expanded into a unwieldy but fascinating collection of all kinds of railroad equipment.

Sharing the yard with the caboose is the cab of the Rutland Railroad’s Engine No. 100 complete with firebox doors, throttle and other controls. (I suspect there was some thought of trying to get the whole locomotive). The cab is fastened to what was once the corncrib but is now remodelled into a replica of an old station.

Each day’s mail brings information and questions about railroading and often items of equipment sent by fans who want to see them cared for and preserved. With the influx of equipment has come the problem of finding more storage space.

So the 75-foot chicken house was turned into a freight house, which also houses one of the more spectacular items, presented by the Delaware & Hudson Railroad, a scale model of one of their unusual steam locomotives. If you have had trouble finding space for the children’s electric trains you can appreciate the problem this acquisition created, for the model turned out to be 31-feet long and seven feet high. Next to be made over was the old barn, which is now a pattern shop and signal tower.

Because of their collection—and their interest in railroading—Mrs. Ludlow and Mr. Nash are welcome visitors among railroaders everywhere. Their field trips take them into railroad shops and offices in search of photographs or information or often just to talk about their favorite subject.

When we see the amounts of time and effort which have gone into building the collection of equipment plus all of the files, records and correspondence involved, it is obvious that the Our Farm & St. Johnsbury Railroad has grown into quite a project. These two have proved that retirement can be productive and that life can continue to be exciting.
Border Princess

By FLORENCE ARMS with STEPHEN GREENE

Agnes Joy, the daughter of a saddler, was born on Christmas Day of 1844 in Franklin County, Vermont, close to the Canadian border. She died many years later in Germany, having married a prince, taken part in three major wars and enjoyed the friendship and confidence of presidents and royalty.

If she had been an heiress or merely a beauty one could weave a fairy tale about a simple Vermont girl who became the Princess Salm-Salm and daughter-in-law to a German ruler nearly a century ago. But Agnes was no romantic pawn in an opera libretto: she was an actor in great events of the 1860's—a leading figure in one of them—and to a degree unusual in her day, and remarkable even among women at any time, she knew how to get her way.

Nor was she simple, unless simplicity was following her own maxim that “the only way to success is not to believe in impossibilities.” She wheedled a New York regiment for her foreign-born husband during the Civil War. She held a captain’s commission from the Governor of Illinois to give her authority in organizing help for wounded soldiers. And later, at the end of the ill-fated Mexican Empire, she worked brilliantly and tirelessly to save Emperor Maximilian from a firing squad—bribing, stalling, dithering the Mexican higher-ups until General Mariano Escobedo, leader of the opposition forces who was alternately cajoled and browbeaten by Agnes, declared that he “would rather stand opposite a whole imperial battalion than meet the angry Princess Salm.”

Next to nothing is definite about Agnes’ early years, and she chose not to talk about them. Records show that she was born Agnes Elizabeth Winona Leclercq Joy, the fifth child of William Joy by Julia Willard, his second wife. It is believed that she was still small when her family moved across the border to Philipsburg, Quebec, and that she worked as hired girl for her neighbors. Even in those days she was by her own account “extremely lively and daring,” traits which were to inspire border legends after she became a world figure. And indeed her spunk so impressed an American relative that he left her, years later, a handsome legacy because he had admired such spirit in a child.

Then comes a gap, closed by the casual statement in her memoir that she had spent several years in Cuba before arriving in Washington, D.C., to visit a married sister. In “Ten Years of My Life,” her personal history of the decade beginning in 1862, Agnes says that she reached the capital in the Fall of 1861, when the Union forces were regrouping after the first Battle of Bull Run. It was then a diversion for the ladies to visit nearby encampments and take tea with the officers. On a junket to the headquarters of a German division in the Union Army com-
manded by General Louis Blenker, Agnes Joy met a
prince just sixteen years her senior. By coincidence he,
too, was born on Christmas Day. Apparently it was love
at first sight; they were married in August of 1862.

Prince Felix Salm-Salm was a younger son of the
reigning prince of Westphalia, a handsome fighting-cock
of a man who described himself as a soldier with all of his
soul. “War,” he declared, “was my element.” As an
officer in the Prussian army he had distinguished himself in
the fighting against Denmark, and then transferred to the
Austrian army. But he so enjoyed peacetime Vienna that
he was soon heavily in debt; and, since the American
Civil War promised both relief from his creditors and the
action he craved, Salm left for the United States. The fact
that he was a prince, President Lincoln gravely told him in
Washington, “would be no impediment to your success
with us,” and he was named Blenker’s chief-of-staff.

Life for the newlyweds combined rough military exist­
ence with pleasure. Because Agnes refused to be separated
for long from Felix—she felt that her absence brought
him bad luck—she was at his side when he took command
of a regiment under Sherman in the South.

She had a wonderful time, typically salting the social
whirl with practical help where it was needed. She set up
canteens for the troops and, even more important in those
days when nursing was haphazard employment for well-
meaning amateurs, she organized hospital services for the
sick and wounded.

She worked just as hard at entertaining and being enter­
tained. Once, an impulse to visit a neighboring head­
quarters led her to commandeer a railway engine and to
ride for three hours through guerilla country on the cow­
catcher—”It was glorious fun!” she wrote later. She took
with her everywhere her little black-and-tan terrier
Jimmy, named after his donor, James Gordon Bennett, Jr.,
and to oblige her an entire troop train was halted until
Jimmy, who had gone A.W.O.L. at the last stop, could
be found.

So far, dashing good looks and vigor could account for
her successes. Even in faded portraits Agnes Salm’s face
shows character, with dark eyes to match her hair, well-
cut features and a deep cleft in her firm round chin. A
contemporary has described her as “young, beautiful and
intelligent.” She was soon to make extra demands upon her
intelligence.

By the end of the war Salm was a general, a promotion
he deserved and one confirmed after Agnes went to
Washington to snip red tape, and had been named civil and
military governor of North Georgia. When the fighting
ended he turned his back on a peacetime career in the
United States army and looked around for a fracas.

There was one, made-to-order, down in Mexico.

For years the Mexican conservatives had dreamed of
promises of troops and money from Napoleon III of
France, they imported an emperor. He was Archduke
Ferdinand Maximilian, younger brother of the great Franz
Joseph of Austria.

A man less trusting than the young Austrian would
never have taken the job. The United States frankly dis­
liked the idea of an empire next door; his chief backer,
Napoleon, was notoriously shifty, and other European
monarchs were lukewarm to the venture. Moreover, Mexicohad executed her last emperor only a few years
before, and by the time Maximilian stepped ashore at
Vera Cruz he found the country rising to support the
democratic leader, Benito Juárez. To make things worse,
the new emperor was, although personally charming, ir­
resolute. He was by turns imperious or romantically
liberal, thereby frightening off potential supporters and
chilling the ardor of the conservatives who had staked him
to his crown.

The struggle had everything that appealed to Felix

VERMONT Life 55
PRINCE FELIX Salm-Salm

Salm—military action, the chance for glory, personalities wonderfully refreshing to a man of his birth after five years in democratic America. It drew him like a magnet. He and Agnes arrived in Mexico to throw in their lot with the emperor despite the fact that by 1866 Napoleon was withdrawing the French troops who had kept Juárez at bay, had reneged on his money, and Maximilian's cause was all but lost.

The scene was set for Agnes Salm's greatest effort and she swung into action.

She had not been allowed to follow Maximilian and Felix, now the emperor's aide-de-camp, to Querétaro, where part of the imperial forces were making a last stand against Juárez' forces. Her first move was suggested by the Prussian ambassador. With two million dollars in her luggage she was to go secretly to Washington to persuade the United States government to withhold support from Juárez.

"I was well acquainted not only with President Johnson and most of the influential persons in the United States, but also with the best ways and means in which to work upon them," the princess said.

However, Agnes was up against a new and insurmountable obstacle: Maximilian himself, the person with the last word but a person who would not make up his mind.

She was obliged to give up the ambitious scheme to reverse American sympathies because the emperor, learning of the illness in Europe of his beloved wife Charlotte, made a sudden decision to give up the empire and rush to her side. Yet almost immediately he changed his mind: leaving would not be fair to his Mexican supporters; he must remain.

Agnes Salm took impatient time out to recover from a bout of diphtheria and renewed her campaign. Sensitive to political overtones, she feared for Maximilian's life and that of her husband. Why not persuade the foreign imperialist troops, left behind in Mexico City, to surrender; and in return to win a guarantee of safe conduct out of the country for the emperor, themselves and any foreigners who could not leave otherwise?

Negotiations along these lines lasted for weeks. Agnes disregarded personal danger and—accompanied only by her terrier and a maid—rode day and night from one Mexican official to another, juggling terms, getting permission to cross enemy lines, arranging transportation over Mexican roads that taxed the strength of the hardiest. She was involved in more than one road accident and twice imperialist troops shot at her by mistake. She was awaiting word of the safe conduct from Juárez when Querétaro fell—after a siege of 68 days—and Maximilian and his entourage were taken prisoner.

Agnes's immediate concern, after she secured suitable lodgings for the emperor, was to gain time, time for his lawyers to prepare his defence in the trial that was before him and to arrange for his escape if worse came to worse.

She had the archduke write a letter to President Juárez, asking that the trial be delayed; she persuaded Maximilian's captor, Escobedo, to let her visit the Mexican leader and present the appeal in person. After a several days' journey she arrived at the president's headquarters. She gave him the letter, argued in favor of delaying the trial, and won her point. She returned to a Maximilian light-hearted over her success. When he became free, he told her laughingly, he would certainly make her his Secretary of Foreign Affairs.

Working against the precious time Agnes had gained, they started plotting in earnest for the archduke's escape, with the princess delegated to fetch from Mexico City not only the lawyers but money enough to meet all contingencies. Once more she was checkmated. The lawyers arrived—without extra money—before she could leave for the capital, and the escape plans foundered and finally broke up on the rocks of Maximilian's disbelief: he just couldn't be convinced that he might ever be executed. Nor would he have countenanced any escape plan which did not include two imprisoned Mexican generals who had stood loyally by him.

As the days drew nearer for the trial which almost everyone except Maximilian was sure would result in his
death, Princess Salm took charge of one last plan for his deliverance. Believing that for effective action one should always go straight to the man in charge—"It is one of my practical rules if I wish a thing always to ask it directly from the highest authority"—Agnes embarked upon the most complex project of her career.

She bribed one of the two colonels charged with guarding the emperor to let him escape, arranging for a guard of one hundred men to escort him safely to Vera Cruz where an Austrian ship awaited him. The other colonel, the Indian Palacio, had to be handled more carefully, and now as always a shortage of money proved a dreadful handicap. Maximilian gave her a check for one hundred thousand dollars drawn upon the imperial family monies in Vienna, a promise of five thousand dollars in cash to be delivered later and a signet ring to be returned to him as a token that the interview had been successful.

Agnes interviewed Colonel Palacio at her apartment. She began by speaking of the emperor and found out from the illiterate colonel that, although he had hated Maximilian as an invader of his country, now that he had known him in prison the colonel felt a great deal of sympathy for him. After twenty minutes of this, Agnes swore the man to secrecy, then showed him the check. Surely it would be no reflection on the colonel’s honor if he were to turn his back on Maximilian for just ten minutes? In return for this the check would be his. But a check to the Indian was not the same thing as cash. Palacio considered the offer until midnight, then told everything to General Escobedo, his superior officer.

When the trial ended, as everyone expected it would, with the luckless archduke sentenced to death, Agnes had one last interview with President Juárez:

It was eight o’clock in the evening when I went to see Mr. Juárez, who received me at once. He looked pale and suffering himself. With trembling lips I pleaded for the life of the Emperor, or at least for delay. . . . The President said that he could not grant it; he would not prolong His [Maximilian’s] agony any longer; the Emperor must die tomorrow.

When I heard these cruel words I became frantic with grief. Trembling in every limb and sobbing, I fell to my knees, and pleaded with words which came from my heart, but which I cannot remember. The President tried to raise me, but I held his knees convulsively, and said I would not leave him before he had granted his life. I saw the President was moved: he as well as Mr. Iglesia [one of Juárez’ ministers] had tears in their eyes, but he answered me with a low, sad voice, “I am grieved, madame, to see you thus on your knees before me; but if all the kings and queens of Europe were in your place I could not spare that life. It is not I who take it, it is the people and the law; and if I should not do its will the people would take it and mine also.”

In my raving agony I exclaimed, he might take my life if blood was wanted. I was a useless woman, but he might spare that of a man who might still do so much good in another country. All was in vain. The President raised me up, and repeated to me that the life of my husband should be spared; that was all he could do.

The end was as Juárez had said: Maximilian, with his two loyal Mexican generals, died the next morning on a hilltop north of the city. Salm, although condemned to death, was released and sailed for Europe; his wife, after a stopover in the United States where she was given a celebrity’s welcome, soon joined him.

The Salms’ life abroad was anticlimax. The Prince’s old creditors were after him again, and he enlisted with Prussia at the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War. He was appointed major in a guards’ regiment and Princess Salm obtained permission to accompany the staff of the army of invasion, something unheard of for a woman in the tradition-bound Prussian army. On August 18, 1870, Felix was killed leading his battalion in the battle of Gravelotte.

Both before and after her husband’s death, Agnes Salm worked in her characteristically effective manner, procuring supplies when they were needed, raising a hospital brigade, doing everything in her power for the casualties,
French as well as German. After the war she visited America at least twice again, once to return the flags of her husband’s two New York regiments, and again in 1900 to raise funds to equip an ambulance corps for the relief of wounded in the Boer War. Some time later she married again, this time to a British diplomat named Charles Heneage, but separated from him. She was decorated by Prussia, pensioned by the Emperor of Austria and given a bracelet by the Empress Sophia, Maximilian’s mother.

A number of questions about the life of the princess remain to puzzle the researcher. For one thing, we know little about her early life; for another, her later marriage to the Englishman is baldly recorded, no more. And in the best source, her memoir, Agnes is not disposed to help us. “Ten Years of My Life” is not a biography, she says, and therefore she feels under no obligation to unburden herself “for the amusement of some curious people.” In truth, she adds, it gives her malicious pleasure to disappoint those who, in revenge for her silence, have concocted the “most romantic and wonderful stories” regarding her youth.

Prominent in the Agnes Salm apocrypha is the story that she ran away to join the circus when she was a girl and performed as equestrienne under the name of Mlle Agnes Leclercq. Still, if she arrived in Washington in 1861 (at the age of seventeen) after spending several years in Cuba—as she says she did and we have no reason to doubt—she must have learned her arduous trade at a tender age indeed, and had not many years thereafter to practice it. Nor do her remarks on her experience in Mexico, where she was an almost continuous traveller, lead one to believe that she was especially at home on horseback.

It is unfortunate that this is the case. If Agnes Salm is ever cast as the heroine of a historical novel, as she deserves to be, the writer should not be forced to discard picturesque details so in keeping with her character. Agnes, another story goes, learned horsemanship on the back of a stallion named Monarch who belonged to the neighborhood doctor in the border country along Missisquoi Bay. Monarch, as with other stallions in fact and fiction, was not to be ridden by the timid; it was considered something of a feat to stay on him at all. Yet he could often be seen galloping through the village, the young rider bareback astride him urgently digging small heels into his flanks.

The story has a sequel, which we would like equally much to believe. Agnes had married her prince and been through two wars at his side. Back from Mexico she revisits her birthplace in Franklin County and saddles her friend Monarch for one last fabled ride. And a farmer, looking out over his fields one summer day back in the 1860’s, has a glimpse of the Vermont girl who became a princess and the friend of emperors, fearlessly racing her horse across the green acres, her hair streaming behind her in the wind.
## Going On In Vermont This Autumn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Details</th>
<th>Oct 24</th>
<th>Event Details</th>
<th>Oct 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An. SVA Art show</td>
<td></td>
<td>Benson</td>
<td>Turkey supper &amp; sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champlain Valley expos.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tunbridge</td>
<td>Chicken pie supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100-Mile Trail ride</td>
<td>Oct 3</td>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>Foliage Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Woodstock</td>
<td>Oct 3-5</td>
<td>Maple Cor. Calais</td>
<td>Chicken pie supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-Mile Pleasure ride</td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Danville</td>
<td>Fall Foliage Festival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L. Bomoseen</td>
<td>Oct 4-6</td>
<td>No. Pomfret</td>
<td>Turkey supper &amp; fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail rides</td>
<td>Oct 5</td>
<td>S. Woodstock</td>
<td>N. E. Morgan foliage ride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Home day</td>
<td>Oct 5-6</td>
<td>S. Wardboro</td>
<td>Baptist church pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Oct 6</td>
<td>Bellows Falls</td>
<td>Vt. PTA convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Woodstock</td>
<td>Oct 8-10</td>
<td>Vernon</td>
<td>Chicken pie (5:30-7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>Oct 9</td>
<td>Jericho Ctr.</td>
<td>Chicken pie and sale (5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Day</td>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Weston</td>
<td>Chicken pie supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peamah</td>
<td>Oct 10</td>
<td>Georgia Plains</td>
<td>Turkey supper (4:35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>No. Pownal</td>
<td>Turkey supper (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rutland Fair</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Bennington</td>
<td>Chicken pie (Ch. of God)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Windham</td>
<td>Harvest supper (5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flower show</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Quechee</td>
<td>Smorgasbord (5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshfield</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Williamstown</td>
<td>Chicken pie supper (5,6,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pie supper</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>E. Arlington</td>
<td>Chicken pie supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tolland</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Adamant</td>
<td>Harvest supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World’s Fair</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>St. Albans</td>
<td>Chicken short cake (5:15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Wells River</td>
<td>Turkey supper (5:30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVA, one-man shows</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Turkey supper (5), Ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pie (noon &amp; eve)</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
<td>Ham supper &amp; bazaar (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pie (noon &amp; eve)</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Deer Hunters’ supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pie supper (5:30)</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Newfane</td>
<td>Hunters’ supper &amp; dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicken pie supper (5,6,7)</td>
<td>Oct 12</td>
<td>Burlington</td>
<td>Vt. Handicrafters’ fair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note:
Advance reservations are necessary at many suppers. Write to Vermont Development Commission, Montpelier, for additional dates.

---

### MYSTERY PICTURE

**NO. 4**

*A Vermont lake in its entirety is shown in this undoctored photograph. The earliest correct identification, postmarked after Aug. 26, will win one of our special prizes. Residents of the town pictured are disqualified from entering. Details on the Summer and Spring issue Mystery Pictures and the winners are carried on the title page of this issue.*
Fall, like spring, brings changes in our daily habits that extend all the way from what we wear on our feet to what we cook and eat. As we turn indoors and begin to close our houses against the frost we practice a sturdier kind of cooking than prevailed during the summer. Cold weather sharpens our appetites and our culinary imaginations alike.

Old-style Vermont cooking was strong in cakes, breads and pies. Men worked harder, longer hours and needed three heavy meals a day. Standard equipment for a household starting out the winter was a barrel of salt pork, another of salt codfish, hams and sausage, dried beef; flour and sugar came by the barrel too, as did apples. Shortening was chiefly lard. Butter and cream and eggs were supplied on the farm. The root cellar held potatoes, carrots, beets and cabbage. Maple syrup and sugar were home-produced sweetenings. It was with these basic supplies that Vermont cooks worked their magic.

Vermont cookery should, I suppose, be considered as a sub-variety of the New England cuisine. At its pure and classic best it is as mouth-watering as any in the nation and Vermont cooks as gifted as the best. Apples and maple syrup are among the more notable contributions to the American larder, so it is natural that cookbooks devoted to these products should be of particular interest.

The very names of apples call up visions of edible bliss: Northern Spy, Greening, Baldwin, Delicious, Cortland, Macintosh are all varieties that are still being grown in New England orchards. Fameuse, Red Astrachan, Duchess, Russet, Pippin—these are not as common as they once were, but still bring to mind evenings round the fire, pies by the dozen, Halloween fortunes.

A is for Apple is the engaging title of the recipe book written by Jean and Freda Smith of Windy Wood Farm in Barre. Apples from the Windy Wood Orchards are sent to satisfied customers in many corners of the world. What could be more logical than to compile a book of recipes to encourage the further use of apples.

Each letter of the alphabet has just four recipes under it, which accounts for some curious titles: Indian Summer Stuffing, Kokonut Krunch, Quaint Apple Butter, Unbeatable Relish for Pork. Anyone who plays scrabble or anagrams will understand how tough these letters can be.

All the standard recipes will be found here and many new ones that will send cooks straightway to the apple barrel or its modern equivalent, their mouths watering in the only appropriate response to a cookbook. To make their book a pleasure to the eye as well as a stimulus to the culinary instinct the Smiths have had it printed in dark green type on pale green paper, with a bright red plastic binding. Decorations are scattered among the recipes.

Even more than apples are maple products truly Vermont made. Vermont Maple Recipes, by Mary Pearl of the Maltex Company, is not a new book, but it is so authoritative and complete that it should be mentioned for the benefit of those looking for interesting ways to use the last of that gallon of syrup that came from the old homestead last spring.

A quick glance at the collection would indicate that maple syrup can be used on almost every occasion when brown sugar or honey would be used in other parts of the country. It is logical to expect rules for maple cakes, candies, desserts, sauces and pies. It is a little more unexpected to discover maple syrup going into baked beans, mince meat, party drinks, glazed carrots and sweet pickles.

In the end, however, the happiest use for maple syrup is to pour it over waffles, biscuits or pancakes, or simply to eat it from a saucer with a spoon—new syrup, pale as spring sunshine, with a raised doughnut fresh from the kettle. Or to pour hot syrup, boiled down to the proper consistency, over well-packed snow and eat the waxy sweetness that results, tempering it with sour pickles and eggs boiled in sap.

Alas, it’s six months to spring and sugaring off. We must finish last year’s syrup first, or perhaps go to a Maple...
Museum like the one in Williamstown, where the snow is made fresh every day in a machine.

Some of the most characteristic Vermont recipes are to be found in the cookbooks put out by churches and other community groups to raise funds for their good works or for a new furnace. The Ladies Aid of the First Congregational Church in Newbury has published such a book under the title of the *Cracker Barrel Cook Book*, featuring favorite recipes from Newbury kitchens.

Anyone who has been to the Cracker Barrel Bazaar knows what care and good taste go into the posters, publicity and organization of this pleasant annual event. The same care has been used to make this attractive cookbook of nearly 200 pages, with entertaining sayings and household hints from the last century among the recipes. Frances Parkinson Keyes who has had a house in Newbury for many years has contributed an introduction and Mrs. Eisenhower has sent two recipes.

*Recent Books*

This season's haul of books is all for the younger generation. *Mr. Charlie's Camping Trip* continues a series for 3-6 year olds written by Edith Thacher Hurd and illustrated by her husband Clement Hurd. Mr. and Mrs. Charlie, sturdy and expressionless as Mr. and Mrs. Noah, set out on their trip with a full load of equipment, meet a raccoon, go blueberrying, are rained on and bothered by mosquitoes and return home tired and happy. The style is lively, matter-of-fact and believable. So are the pictures.

Another book in which pictures and text cooperate successfully is *Annie's Spending Spree*, again for 3-6 year olds, written by Nancy Dingman Watson and illustrated by Aldren A. Watson. Annie gets a green paper dollar for her birthday from her fairy grandmother. What she buys with it at the storekeeper’s wonderful shop is the surprise at the end of this lively story. The six year old in our family wanted to hear it again as soon as it had been read to her once. It is always a pleasure to encounter a book in which the text has distinction as well as charm.

For children quite a bit older—9-13 according to the jacket—there is *Susan's Secret* by Hildreth Wiston, with pictures by W. T. Mars. The secret concerns a grown-up problem of a hundred years ago that has its contemporary echoes. In the Montpelier of that far-away time Susan's parents are involved in public meetings, midnight journeys, hostility from their neighbors and matters of principle rather complicated for a little girl to understand. How Susan learns the secret and helps in one of the important journeys makes a dramatic ending to the story and a skillful pointing of a moral.

Boys of 10-14 who enjoyed Kay Avery's *All for a Friend* and *All for a Horse* will welcome *All for a Ghost*, her newest story of Tom and Andy. The two boys are allies in this latest adventure and together solve a variety of mysteries, while learning that almost everyone they meet is inclined to be superstitious and willing to believe in ghosts. The small-town background and characters appear with all the sureness and authenticity that marked the earlier books in the series. Girls will enjoy the story too.

All the stories mentioned so far have Vermont settings and characters. The final book in the group is by a Vermonter but its subject is exotic and remote. Bradford Smith has written a brief but thorough-going account of *The Islands of Hawaii* in the Lippincott series called Portrait of the Nations for young people 12-16. Those who have read his *Yankees in Paradise* will already be aware of his interest in the Islands and his skill in relating a certain phase of their history. Now he extends his range to include geography, history, culture and contemporary life in a well-organized little volume that could serve as a guidebook to this earthly paradise for grown-ups.

*Printed in U.S.A.*

LANE PRESS, BURLINGTON, VT.
There are times in the year when anyone with an itch for travel must think of those parts of the earth that God favored above others when He handed out the seasons. There are two of these that I have enjoyed many times but still find myself goggling and marveling every time they come around. One is the English spring and the other is New England in the fall.

Alistair Cooke, “One Man’s America”