The Editor's Uneasy Chair

Vermont Life with native contrariness is regarding at this writing the rather amazing expositions on the Vermonter which blossomed late last year, first in Holiday, then in Time and finally in Harper's. We really don't think it our duty to "answer" these portrayals. Vermont Life's readers, now perhaps a quarter-million of them, have their own ideas of what is Vermont and a Vermonter. All we can suggest is that if you take Holiday's faintly musty, old-timey flavor, spice it with the stark gall of Harper's and then mix in Time's ineffable journalese, you may pretty well approximate that odd dish, the Vermonter, as he looks from here. "At least they're talking about us," speaks one Vermonter, unreconstructed and perhaps (sob) tinged with a Madison Avenue viewpoint.

Affadivit—Turning to the striking centerspread picture of this issue countless readers, we fear, will then write us in wrath: "This is an early Fall scene and we won't be tricked into the notion it's Spring." In anticipation, therefore, we are preparing with Mr. Derick, the splendid Vermont photographic artist, a sworn statement that this view really was filmed in April of 1957.

Farewell—In Vermont Life's eleven years perhaps no one has contributed more to the magazine's growth, stability and financial well-being than Benjamin Hayward, its business manager since 1947, who has left for more rewarding, challenging work. His staunch counsel and his ability carried the magazine through a dangerous period of financial troubles to a firm business footing. His many skills will be much missed by his associates.

And Hail—At the same time we welcome Robert L. Dothard Associates of Guilford, whose art direction talents are first seen in the complete design of this issue.
The rural operator at an ancient switchboard, who kept track of village life and everyone’s business and whereabouts, is withering on the copper-cored vine. At this writing more than 50 dial exchanges serve an even larger number of Vermont communities—serving them better perhaps, but leaving a dwindling residue of nostalgia for the personal touch lost. But the party lines are still with us, with all the exasperation and challenge that Miriam Chapin describes on page 34 of this issue.

Some Vermonters have reported themselves bemused by the inscrutable minds of the public utilities, as they came to assign exchange names to Vermont communities being converted, physically speaking, to dial service. Some, such as Bethel, Tunbridge, Rochester and Randolph, retained their town names, but others obviously less adaptable and distinctive in sound, apparently just wouldn’t do.

Montpelier logically is labeled CAPitol; Barre is GRanite; Burlington (in part) UNIVERSITY; Stowe, after some local hollering, ALpine. Inexplicably Brattleboro also is ALpine, just as South Londonderry and Charlotte, some 100 miles apart, are both VALley.

Other exchange names lead to wild conjecture. Could telephone historians have conned Barnet’s records and, noting it once was the head of steam navigation on the Connecticut, have dubbed it, therefore, NEptume? What lies behind Isle La Motte’s PYramid? Has a secret monolith been concealed on this historic island?

HOMestead seems to suit cozily the charm of West Burke; Jeffersonville quite logically is MIDway between somewhere and somewhere else. One couldn’t go far wrong, either, in calling Newfane (or any other Vermont town for that matter) FORest.

Other exchange names are more puzzling. Does Richmond’s TEMple refer to her famous, many-sided church? Are the residents of Washington particularly addicted to dressing in the TUXedo? Can it be that STerling indicates silver deposits in the Thetford hills? Who is Middlebury’s mysteriously immortalized DUDley? Does Putney’s EVergreen make oblique reference to Senator Aiken’s former nurseries? Does Springfield’s TURNer allude slyly to a prototype lathe worker? Is Westminster destined for a racy future? Why else the name of SARatoga?

Instead of the insipid CHerry, we suggest as both euphonious and appropriate for Waterbury the new exchange—CHildhood, named in honor of R. L. Duffus’ fine recollective writings of that town. Or in substitution for East Corinth’s vague IDlewood, we would memorialize the town’s famous views with IDyllic.

Vermont Life has refrained from interviewing telephone officials on these matters, fearing instinctively that all-too-logical explanations and scientific ramifications would lie behind their choices. And this would destroy all the pleasure of conjecture and substitution.

Our Alaskan correspondent, George E. Allen of Spenard, probably reflecting (figuratively) in the long Arctic nights, has noted to us that the mirror of vt. is TV. “When will the value and entertainment of the latter,” he asks, “equal the enjoyment and pleasure of the former?” Never, we aver with confidence.

The state which pioneered in restricting billboards and signs generally—on the judicial theory that a view is public property—is, of course, Vermont.

At times however, and usually within the law, signs somehow proliferate and come to destroy part of the natural beauty which the unwilling sign-viewer has come to enjoy.

Stowe, a region especially endowed with these beauties, has citizens with the perception to see the threat. Without recourse to anything more than pride and cooperation, last fall Stowe people, led by Robert Bourdon, called a halt to the race for more and more roadside signs. In one day of exuberant destruction practically every roadside sign in the township was pulled down.

Stowe is even more beautiful a New England town today because of it. Each business now has equal footing with its neighbor, and the sign race has stopped. Driving now toward Smuggler’s Notch or along Route 100, the visitor realizes that Stowe somehow is attractively different, that it is pleasanter than the approaches to many nameless towns, which someday may follow suit.

END
On the first Tuesday in March, 1856, the then blood red and modestly towered town hall of Richford, Vermont, some two miles below the Quebec boundary, was the scene of two highly significant events. One, of course, was the annual March Meeting; always a significant event in any Vermont town. The wrestling “antics” performed by Eliphalet Dunn (alias Dufer, Dufur, Duford, and occasionally Durfus) and Eliphalet’s four teen-age sons: Noah, John, David and young Henry Moses, provided the other special event.

“Special” did not connote unusual. Actually, Irish style, or more graphically, Collar and Elbow, wrestling was spreading far as the distinguished sport of the upper Green Mountains. E. L. Persons, the Grantland Rice of the 1870’s and ’80’s, was presently noting that “... wrestling is and for long years has been the popular sport of Vermont’s sturdy yeomanry. ... Town meetings, fairs, cattle shows, house raisings, etc. being incomplete and void of special interest without a wrestling tournament to wind up with. ...” Sports writer Persons could have expanded this statement considerably without abusing the known facts.

Wrestling is one of man’s oldest recorded sports. The Greeks had a word for it. In Early Dynasty China, ancient Persia, as among pre-Columbian American Indians, wrestling was a national or “civilization” sport. Medieval France produced Graeco-Roman wrestling, dregs of which are still visible on our television screens.

Indian wrestling is a Pan-American sport of great age and tradition. From England and Western Europe, as from the gutsy American frontiers we inherited “Catch-as-catch-can,” or Abe Lincoln wrestling, oftentimes clumsy and usually more or less dirty. Judo, commonly known as Japanese wrestling, appears to be Oriental somewhat in the manner of chop suey; reportedly invented in San Francisco.

But the light green sod of Ireland had early developed a highly distinguished style of “country” wrestling, which in Vermont was developing into the unique and highly skilled Collar and Elbow. In time the same Ireland-Vermont style scuffling became the basis of collegiate “Olympic,” sometimes called leverage wrestling, in which approximately 2000 American preparatory and high schools, colleges and universities now lead the world.

Sports writer Persons could have recorded, too, that Collar and Elbow wrestling appeared in upstate Vermont during the 1830’s, part and parcel of the first substantial Irishmen’s immigration of that decade. The number of Irishmen, and devotees of Old Sod wrestling among them, increased strongly during the 1840’s and ’50’s. Railroad building was one factor; farmer immigration was a still stronger one. So, unquestionably, were the early five volunteer mission priests—who came directly to the rural Green Mountain “stations” from Ireland’s College of All Hallows. At least three of the five had wrestled in the Old Country. Understandably clan feelings came with the immigrants. Clan feelings found expression in manly wrestling—“fingering collars” and “putting to grass.”

By the 1870’s when Collar and Elbow wrestling began coming into maximum flower in the Green Mountains,
country origins were largely forgotten. Irishmen who had worked to farm ownership as country blacksmiths, Irishmen who had manfully chopped out their own hill farms, and Irishmen who had changed from railroad builders to Persons' "sturdy yeomanry," were steadfast and wholehearted Vermonters.

Not surprisingly, Franklin county, which led Vermont in numbers of Irish settlers, developed as a world stronghold for Collar and Elbow, with the strongly Irish Fairfield—Center, Station and East—a world capital and fountainhead for champions.

Three-quarters of a century ago the Fairfields had about 3,000 people—almost twice their present census. The town lists included the most extensive array of proved potential Collar and Elbow champions anywhere. In the Fairfields little boys, big boys, and staid farmers wrestled Collar and Elbow just for the honest fun of it. When a likely looking stranger appeared, there was the distinct probability that he would be "taken on for size" and for fun in a cordial but highly muscular manner.

Back in those days the buggy or surrey-driving drummers came lusty and frequently late. Senator E. Frank Branon recalls how these travelers used to pull up to Soule's Inn well after dark, but nevertheless in a mood for a tilt with one or more of "them so-called Vermont wrestlers." Innkeeper Soule was ever accommodating. Even at bedtime or later, he would dispatch a livery stable horse, buggy and driver to a backroad homestead, to bring in—as needs required, a local wrestler. For the fun of it, and happily disregarding the hour, a Fairfield Collar and Elbower would ride in, set the lusty drummer on his backside (and by rule, shoulders) then amiably return to home and bed.

We had begun earlier to tell of Eliphalet, the wrestling Irishman from County Cork, who cleared a hilltop farm in Sutton and, around 1850, moved his wife Jenny and his four husky sons to Richford. There, quietly but firmly, he passed out word that he was set to take on any man who chose to finger his collar—also that he had "learned" all four of his sons just about all he knew about Collar and Elbow—except how to put down their pappy.

As the dutiful voterate gathered at the town hall on March 4, 1856, Eliphalet opened an impromptu scuffling tourney. His first exhibit, and victim, was Noah, his towering 19-year-old son, who outweighed his pappy by some 30 pounds, wrestled well, but not well enough. The same held for sons John, then 17, and for David, then 16.

Onlookers viewed the classic grace and strategy of what many still regard as the most distinguished school of wrestling. In Collar and Elbow the contenders face each other—standing. Wrestler A places his left hand on Wrestler B's shoulder, clutches B's forearm with his right hand. Wrestler B takes an opposite position and pose.

Neither is permitted to relinquish the hold until he succeeds in breaking his adversary's; should he violate the rule he automatically loses the fall. Once the initial hold is broken, the bout is open to all legitimate holds,—but barring toe or head twists, body kicks, hair pulling, throat gouges, strangling holds and other "tricks" of dirty wrestling.

In 1856, as since, the first move in Collar and Elbow is to trip or otherwise push one's opponent off balance—this without reliance on boots or shoes (the wrestlers must be barefoot, in sock feet, or in light slippers).

Having put the opposition off balance, without relinquishing the starting hold, the next move is to get him out of the way, having first caused him to break his hold. When, and as possible, A off-balances B, turns his right hip, and seeks to hoist B across his torso and over his left shoulder. This "flying mare" calls for tremendous arm strength and perfect timing. It's a neat trick if you can do it. Eliphalet did it well—one after another his first three sons flying through the frosty air, to thump shoulder down and unhurt into the piled snow.

As a meant-to-be climax Eliphalet and his four sons, including the youngest, 13-year-old Henry Moses, a "mere lump of a boy," as the eventual world champ later recalled, joined in staging a windmill. This was a "spectacular" wherein the defender, or pivot, sidesteps, or tries to, a succession of diving charges comparable to the flying tackle in football—this by grasping the lunging opponent by shoulder and thigh, whirling him about without loss of momentum and thereby causing him to fly away with ease or even with grace. Obviously this was a refinement of the "hip wring," the classic opener (and if correctly done, closer) of Collar and Elbow bouts. But the feat requires lightning reflexes and perfect timing.

Papa Eliphalet had demonstrated ably with the first three of his sons. Then came the surprise entry. Thirteen-year-old Henry Moses came bounding into the frozen arena, dived at his pivoting papa, dodged the latter's grasp, went down with a deft "bridge" (on his elbows and stomach), then whirled, grasped his tutor's shoulders, off-balancing and sending Papa hurtling through the frosty air.

Even before the cheers of the crowd had subsided, the paternal tutor took after his youngest and with enormous effort succeeded in downing the lump of a boy, four points, or at minimum three points, to the ground.

The town meeting audience continued to cheer for little Henry Moses and to declare him the winner. The same occurred and recurred throughout the 177 record bouts which Henry Moses won during a world-noted wrestling career which lasted for 26 years or until the tall (6 feet, 193 pounds) poetic-featured Vermonter from Richford eventually tangled with the short (5 feet, six inches, 156 pounds) but no less poetic-featured George Edwin Decker...
Collar and Elbow bouts began with the classic position—the “Arm Box.” Each contender hand-grasps the other’s shoulder and forearm, maintaining this hold until one of them breaks it. Tripping—using feet, ankles, or lower leg to get opponent off-balance—was the classic first move.

of Swanton Village and adjoining Highgate, and lost; then lost again to the handsome, black-mopped, medium-built (5 feet, 9 inches, 183 pounds) John McMahon, son and lifelong resident of Bakersfield.

During the wonder-filled four decades which separated the first public debut of Dufer, Vermont’s first world champion, and 1896, the final year of big time exhibit bouts of Collar and Elbow, Vermont literally and victoriously wrestled the world. From its first American home, preponderantly in Franklin county, Vermont-styled Collar and Elbow spread through the state, to much of the East, including most of New England; to big-time bouts in New York, Boston, Detroit, Chicago and west to San Francisco, presently back to Ireland and the British Isles, south to cattle-rich Argentina and then east to rough-grappling Australia.

But the peak of popularity remained in upstate Vermont where Collar and Elbow stayed the number one sport to farm-raised champions and barefoot farm boys alike. Through two generations tens of thousands of Vermonters participated. Again and again local tournaments drew hundreds of aspirants from the length and breadth of the Green Mountains and from half-a-dozen neighboring states. The biggest of the tourneys held at “Great Bethel” in 1871 attracted more than 1200 registrants and saw more than 200 falls won and lost on the open greens.

During the long generation between 1856 and 1896 Vermont brought forth at least 100 truly outstanding Collar and Elbow wrestlers. Twenty-one Vermonters earned accredited championships in the sport. Fourteen of the 21 came from Franklin county; at least 17 of the 21 were of Irish descent. Nine were sons of the Fairfields. All but two were farm-raised; a baker’s dozen remained career farmers.

The list of champions shows other common characteristics. Most of them were smallish men; only one weighed above 200. Five feet eight can be given as the average height; 165 to 170 pounds was somewhere near the average ring weight.

One of the “great twenty-one” was a Negro—“Black Sam” (Viro Small) of Rutland. So far as this writer is able to discover he was the nation’s first professional Negro wrestler. Black Sam was born a slave in Buford, South Carolina in 1854; his owner’s name was Small. Viro came to New York at the age of 26. After eight years of employment as a sideshow strongman and saloon bouncer at Owney’s Spa, and an exhibition wrestler for Owney Geoghean, the proprietor thereof, Viro settled in Rutland in 1889.

During the same year Black Sam emerged first as New Hampshire champion, then wrestled and won a total of 66 recorded bouts, mostly in Vermont. For a brief time, in 1890-91, Viro held the Vermont championship. The Irish grandsons in Franklin county presently “put him to the grass.” Yet one after another they wrestled Black Sam as a friend and equal, thereby proving three-quarters of a century ago Vermont’s remarkable freedom from the taint of the color line.

Our great Collar and Elbowers had many points in common. Collectively and individually they wrestled for fun much more than for money. The late Tim Tobin, longtime Swanton newspaper publisher, served several of the
On grass or mat, Throavn Man "bridges," arcing body to side, or Belly-up or Belly-down, to avoid being "Pointed" or "Backed" Down. Here Challenger bridges Belly-up in readiness for ballerina-style leap to footing, as Champion circles in to Point Him Down.

happy scufflers as for-free bout maker and advance of purse and travel money, without interest or formal security. He gave a great deal of time and work but never lost a cent.

Jim Manahan, now a St. Albans banker, was born and raised on a farm in the Fairfield-Bakersfield Collar and Elbow paradise. As a child he knew many of its great wrestlers. He recalls: "Those great wrestlers were good, hardworking farmers. They weren't rich men; they just didn't hanker for money. Wrestling was what they really loved. They kept in perpetual training with hard farm work and on good home-raised food. "Those Collar and Elbow champs were great dancers, too—beautiful dancers. Dancing kept their feet and legs, ankles and knees spry and graceful. In wrestling they moved like dancers—had the timing and grace of expert ballet dancers. That was one good reason why they were so hard to trip or hip wring. . . ."

According to the records, the great wrestlers of Vermont were likewise hard to trip into matrimony. All but four of the 21 champs lived and died—bachelors. Collar and Elbow was not only their sport; it was their life. They grew into it. Though several lived far into their eighties, they never grew out of it.

Henry Moses Dufer—there are old-timers who insist that Dunn was his true surname; that Dufer, Duford, Dufur or whatever were adaptations of the colloquial French for "strong man," vim, vigor, vitality—was an outstanding wrestler at 13, a champion at 18.

George Flagg of Braintree, Vermont's big man in wrestling (he stood six feet and weighed 220 pounds) became a local champion at 15, unofficial national champion at 21. At the outbreak of the Civil War Flagg enlisted in the 2nd Vermont Infantry, won the wrestling championship of the Army of the Potomac, went home to farming. During the years between 1866 and 1879 he wrestled 41 professional Collar and Elbow bouts, won 40 of them, lost only and finally to Richford's Henry Moses Dufer.

John McMahon of Bakersfield, whom many regard as
Vermont’s champion of all champions, won his first professional (money paying) match at 15, became a claimant of the national championship at 20 when he downed the mighty Peter English for $1,000 in side money, won the official Collar and Elbow champion belt in 1877, kept ownership of it until his death at Bakersfield in 1912 at 71.

John (5 feet 9, 183 pounds, curly black hair and mustache), was exceptionally handsome. Like his lusty contemporaries, including his non-kissing cousins, James Owens (5 feet 7, 170 pounds) and Ed Cox (5 feet 8, 165 pounds), both of Fairfield and both illustrious Collar and Elbow champions, he made few boasts; the exception being “When the money’s up I puts him down.” He put down a recorded 117 men for money or side purse; many hundreds, perhaps thousands, just for the fun of it.

John McMahon as the respected “King of Collar and Elbow” calmly abolished state and national boundaries in his eager willingness to meet all comers. For example, in 1884, when John Tedford, “The Terrible Welshman,” challenged all comers for the world championship in wrestling (“You name the style; I tear you to pieces.”), John McMahon took leave of the roughland farm which he kept with his brother, Tom, worked his way to Southampton on a cattle boat, floored the Terrible Welshman in barely five minutes, then worked his way home.

The following year he took the Argentinian championship, this time working the long round-trip on a horse boat. Two years later John pooled his earnings, journeyed all the way to Sydney, Australia. He was a rough frontier in those days. A man’s standing was commonly measured by the size of the gun he wore. As he entered Carpenter’s Hall in Sydney, McMahon heard the loud assertion that no bloody Yankee would leave alive with the Australian cup. John McMahon did.

Oldtimer John Leach, now of St. Albans, grew up in the Fairfields, remembers many of its great wrestlers. “John McMahon was the champion—either as a wrestler or good neighbor. . . . He was champion woodchopper, too. Used to head up bees for getting in winter wood supplies for old ladies or sick folks. My father would give the trees; John McMahon headed the wood squads.

“Recollect when he finished up one big helpful bee, about twenty of the helpers swarming the cider barrel, decided it might be funny to lock John up in the barn. He couldn’t handle all the mob at once. They dropped him in the barn. Pretty soon I commenced to see all the twenty come flying through the barn doors and windows—first one, then two at a time.”

Farm-raised Edwin Decker of Highgate and Swanton, who stood five feet six, never weighed more than 158 pounds and as a young man looked remarkably like the poet John Keats, was Vermont’s third world champion. Little Ed, born December 23, 1861, on the small Highgate farm which he kept to his death in 1945, was the local schoolboy wrestling champion at 12. At sixteen he was lightweight Collar and Elbow champion of Vermont. Even at 13 the shape of things to come was apparent.

On an autumn afternoon in 1874 Constable Abe Towers posted himself on the corner of Grand and Canada Streets to enforce the selectmen’s orders to Keep the Village Green Free of Them Young Upstarts Who’ve Been Cutting Up with Amies. Constable Tower could see only one youth in the park. Little Ed Decker sat on a bench whistling a merry tune. Dutifully and perhaps officiously, the constable ordered the whistler to get moving.

“Public park, ain’t it?”

“Git out, or I’ll toss you out.” Constable Towers shouldn’t have said that; he realized as much while flying through the clear autumnal air and settling face down in the mown green grass. The Constable preferred no charges. After regaining his breath he reportedly summarized, “Right exceptional boy!”

Barely three years later, Edward Cox and Edward McEghan, both already renowned wrestling residents of Fairfield, expressed the same sentiments after the right exceptional boy, then 16, had successively tossed them out of the lightweight Collar and Elbow championship of Vermont.

Until 1880, when he was 19, Little Ed Decker kept on “scufflin’ for fun,” winning an estimated 400 no-money bouts during the three years. February, 1880, the shortest month of the year, was long enough for George Edwin
John McMahon’s silver, gold buckled “Champion of the World” belt was presented by the admiring “Citizens of New York”. It is now a cherished remembrance of the champion’s grand-nephew, Frank Hale of Burlington.

Decker down Mike Horagan of West Fairlee in 17 minutes and for $100 a side; to depose Dan Monohan, also of West Fairlee in 10 minutes at $150 a side, and to down the mighty George Flagg of Braintree in three straight falls (the others were single fall bouts) at $200 a side. As usual, each contender put up his own “side” of the money.

Next the gentle-voiced, kindly featured Highgate youngster celebrated March by taking the New Hampshire title and $200 in side money. He celebrated April, June and August by winning and claiming the light heavyweight Collar and Elbow championship of America.

Outside of Vermont, America appeared to be fresh out of light heavyweight contenders. Tom Tierney of St.

James McLaughlin of Detroit finally lost to Dufer in 1885.

Albans promptly posted with The Police Gazette a cash reward of $1,000 for any man who could throw Ed Decker—no holds or applicants barred. Sam Lamson, “The New Hampshire Thundercloud” was the one contender to appear. The Thundercloud did not win the $1,000, but he did last long enough to provide Little Ed Decker’s claim to the national championship for Collar and Elbow wrestling.

The Highgate-Swanton youth kept on claiming; also taking and winning every available match. He won a score of “big” matches with small purses—$50 to $200 was average; though he won a “big time” $1300 gate prize in New York. In his march of victories the 5-foot-6 Vermonter wrestled all prevailing styles including Graeco-Roman and Catch-as-Catch-Can. His particular delight remained Collar and Elbow, and in this he won the second though disputed champion’s belt, inscribed, “Champion of U.S. Collar and Elbow Wrestling, Won by Edwin Decker from H. M. Dufer, November 10, 1887.”

Little Ed was 26 at the time; Henry Moses, six inches taller, and at the time some 40 pounds heavier, was 44. John McMahon, Vermont’s other frontline champ, was 46.

Nevertheless, Decker and McMahon each sported a glistening champion’s belt. Decker’s, a petite 32-incher, declared its wearer U.S. Champion of Collar and Elbow. McMahon’s is a three-notcher which Strong John wore at the 44-inch notch. As fate and careers presently decided the two Vermonters took on each other approximately 300 times—but never with an absolute or official decision.

It happened this way; Little Ed joined the circus, specifically Barnum and Bailey, at the time (1881-7) Barnum, Bailey and Hutchins. The story goes that the great P.T. Barnum came personally via the Central Vermont to St. Albans and there hired the exceptional young strongman from the Highgate farm. The story is probable. Certainly Little Ed joined the Big Top. During the year 1886 while circusing from Montreal to Mexico City, Little Ed wrestled and downed 113 impromptu
Col. McLain’s first of three matches with Henry Dufier, recorded in detail below, was preceded by eight years in this 1876 Boston st

challengers. The circus posted an open offer of $100 for anybody who could “throw” the Little Wonder from Vermont; $50 to anybody who could remain upright in the ring with him for three minutes. The circus never had to pay a cent. Little Ed took on all contenders, and regardless of wrestling styles or weights the rather slender and not conspicuously muscular little man downed them all. His most used play was the right hip “wring” by which he flipped big ones and little ones alike over his left shoulder, thereby leaving the opponent on the mat, breathless but otherwise unhurt.

After one season the Barnum and Bailey’s Feature Wrestling Act found itself fresh out of challengers. Next year the circus took on John McMahon of Bakersfield as the Little Wonder’s daily contender. The two Vermont champions, handsomely garbed in scarlet jackets, green trunks, and purple tights gave a daily exhibition of Vermont’s own and ever spectacular Collar and Elbow Wrestling. On the first day McMahon, wearing his gleaming silver, gold buckled champion’s belt would stride on stage to be challenged. Ed Decker (without his link-silver belt), 20 years the younger and 25 pounds the lighter, would call hands and win a bout which lasted approximately 20 minutes. Next day, belt-wearing champion Decker would stride on stage. Challenged and after about 20 deftly athletic minutes, he would find himself downed by McMahon. And so on—on a strictly 50-50 basis. Perhaps not strangely, each Vermonter remained convinced that he could take the other any time he really wanted to.

The act stayed strong for two full-length seasons. Then both champions quit the circus to return to their hilly Vermont farms.

The champs stayed lusty and devoted. It was Collar and Elbow, which, brilliant and dramatic as it was, gradually and rather mysteriously faded from the public interest and eye; granting that like a Vermont sunset it faded gloriously.

You take that March Tuesday night in 1880 when John McMahon of Bakersfield, and Henry Moses Dufier form-
erly of Richford, met in Boston’s Music Hall to decide the Collar and Elbow championship of the world. The Boston Transcript described the crowd as the “biggest and most enthusiastic in the sporting history of greater Boston.” At 1:00 a.m. the following Wednesday—the contest had wrestled for four and a fourth hours without a fall, the referee called a ten minute rest period for the audience.

Both wrestlers took refreshment; McMahon a two-pound sirloin steak (rare); Dufer a sandwich containing a pound of boiled ham. The contest continued. But at 2:30 a.m. (the bout was still thundering along) Manager Peet of the Music Hall mounted the stage to announce that his lease of the hall had expired, and that he could not renew it. Referee John Erwin therefore declared the bout a draw—without division of money.

And there was the night at the Detroit Opera House (Tuesday, January 29, 1884) when Collar and Elbow touched its all-time high in crowd appeal. The contenders were Vermont’s first world champion, Henry Moses Dufer, representing the East, and James H. McLoughlin, the Happy Railroad Conductor (on the Detroit and Lansing), former wrestling champion of the Grand Army of the Republic and at 40 and 256 pounds, the contender of the West.

The Great Bout had been advertised as “Pure” Collar and Elbow. Big Jimmie McLoughlin admitted a liking for Collar and Elbow. In previous Catch-as-Catch-can contests he had suffered the slight misfortune of having three opponents fall dead, either in the ring or shortly thereafter. Admittedly Big Jimmie’s medicine was the best; the opposition just wasn’t quite strong enough to take it. Vermont’s Henry Moses Dufer was strong enough; and Collar and Elbow was different in that it is implicitly clean.

East vs. West was a mighty bout. The Detroit Free Press of January 30, 1884, did a good job of reporting it: “...Mr. Dufer wore a white flannel shirt, scarlet trunks, white tights and red stockings. He had a pleasant smile and word for all who called to pay their respects...”
"Col. McLaughlin was attired in a white flannel shirt, dark red trunks, light brown tights. . . . He sat upon a stool while his physician watched every respiration. By the Colonel’s side stood his son, about twelve years old, weighing not less than 140 pounds whose large frame and glow of health showed a miniature edition of his father. The Colonel drank homemade coffee, and Dufer lemonade before making their way to the stage. . . .

"George H. Penniman, the master of ceremonies, made a brief but telling speech. . . . 'Ever since Jacob of old wrestled all night with the Angel of Light, wrestling has been among the most popular of Athletic Sports. . . . A brief period of time might produce a Gould or a Vanderbilt . . . but it required several generations to produce such splendid specimens of manhood as these. . . .'

The match paid $500 a side, plus all net receipts, close to $2,000. McLaughlin was serious. Dufer came onstage "with a swinging movement . . . waved his hand in a friendly tip to the audience. . . . The Vermonter appeared slender and small. His India Rubber legs seemed remarkable for the prominence of the knee caps."

Time was called at 8:12. Dufer took the offense, made the first spar with his left toe. After exchanging a dozen or so toe taps, Dufer charged in for a grapevine thigh hold. The big man broke away, latched a grapevine thigh grab, crushed Dufer to the mat. But the handsome Vermonter bridged the fall on knees and elbows, hopped to his feet and with a sort of bobcat leap caught an outside twist on Big Jim’s right leg.

This was a deception play. When the big man turned to break, Dufer charged from the left, toppled Big Jim on his right side, and a moment later pinned him four points to the mat. The referee shouted, "First fall for Mr. Dufer! Time seven minutes net!" The audience roared its applause. As the wrestlers disappeared backstage for a breather Colonel Mac was heard to appraise his adversary, "Strong as a steam engine, quick as lightning, and knows every point and trick in wrestling."

Big Jim had the brute force and used it. In the next fall the oversized passenger conductor opened by shaking, or as the newspaper said, "twitching" the Vermonter completely across the stage, . . . "tossing him around like a toy" and "swinging him to and fro . . . like a baseball bat," then hurling him to the floor for a no-fall.

When the Vermonter hopped to his feet, Big Jim met him with a crusher of a thigh grapevine. Dufer stiffened his slight legs and with muscle flexing slipped free of the hold, then leaped to his toes with all the grace of a ballerina. . . . "It was the prettiest and most skillful move of the evening," vowed The Free Press.

The Vermonter bowed to applause. That was a tactical error. Big Mac charged in to grab another grapevine hold and hurled him down so hard that Dufer was unable to make his favored turn or bridge, thereby losing the first exhibition fall of his professional career.

Dufer also lost the third and decisive fall when he permitted the bout to become a wide open contest of brawn, instead of skill.

Before leaving the stage, Henry Moses took time to scribble an I.O.U. for $1,000 as his half of the side money for a return match. He lost that one too, but challenged again and at 42 won back his world championship, only to lose it to fellow Vermonter John McMahon and Ed Decker.

As the not altogether gay Nineties high-kicked along, American preferences showed a rapid evolution toward team games. Baseball was swooping over the nation, football following in its wake. Exhibition wrestling meanwhile was trending toward European patterns and personalities, such as Evan (the Original Strangler) Lewis. Also, particularly in New York, Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, wrestling was tending to become a police force sport.

But the almost classic discipline of Collar and Elbow, which encourages long bouts, accentuates subtleties and timing, gracefulness and astute strategies, discourages muscular dramatics, and show-off antics and prohibits dirty tricks, tended to return to the green hills of Vermont. Practically all the Vermont champions went home with their beloved sport.

In 1895 John McMahon joined his brother Tom on the old rough farm near Bakersfield—in time to help get in the hay. He deposited his handsome champion’s belt in its purple velvet case on the parlor table next to the Bible, leaving Katie, his sister-in-law, the privilege of keeping and cherishing the oversize scrapbook. John rarely spoke, never boasted of being a champion; he figured the world knew that already.

Devout Catholic John McMahon returned happily to the old farm and village. He worked hard, drank occasionally, smiled a great deal, kept a multitude of friends, including Collar and Elbow devotees from six to sixty and beyond. His one luxury was "high stepping" trotting horses, which he delighted in driving to an oldtime racing sulky. Two sad entries met the grand champion. His nephew (Tom’s only son) became Vermont’s first casualty in the Spanish-American War. Uncle John grieved for years. Then around 1905 arthritic rheumatism changed John’s character. Uncle John grieved for years. Then around 1905 arthritic rheumatism changed John’s character.

Col. McLaughlin was attired in a white flannel shirt, dark red trunks, light brown tights. . . . He sat upon a stool while his physician watched every respiration. By the Colonel’s side stood his son, about twelve years old, weighing not less than 140 pounds whose large frame and glow of health showed a miniature edition of his father. The Colonel drank homemade coffee, and Dufer lemonade before making their way to the stage. . . .

"George H. Penniman, the master of ceremonies, made a brief but telling speech. . . . 'Ever since Jacob of old wrestled all night with the Angel of Light, wrestling has been among the most popular of Athletic Sports. . . . A brief period of time might produce a Gould or a Vanderbilt . . . but it required several generations to produce such splendid specimens of manhood as these. . . .'

The match paid $500 a side, plus all net receipts, close to $2,000. McLaughlin was serious. Dufer came onstage "with a swinging movement . . . waved his hand in a friendly tip to the audience. . . . The Vermonter appeared slender and small. His India Rubber legs seemed remarkable for the prominence of the knee caps."

Time was called at 8:12. Dufer took the offense, made the first spar with his left toe. After exchanging a dozen or so toe taps, Dufer charged in for a grapevine thigh hold. The big man broke away, latched a grapevine thigh grab, crushed Dufer to the mat. But the handsome Vermonter bridged the fall on knees and elbows, hopped to his feet and with a sort of bobcat leap caught an outside twist on Big Jim’s right leg.

This was a deception play. When the big man turned to break, Dufer charged from the left, toppled Big Jim on his right side, and a moment later pinned him four points to the mat. The referee shouted, "First fall for Mr. Dufer! Time seven minutes net!" The audience roared its applause. As the wrestlers disappeared backstage for a breather Colonel Mac was heard to appraise his adversary, "Strong as a steam engine, quick as lightning, and knows every point and trick in wrestling."

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Henry Moses never swore, smoked, drank liquor, missed Mass, or abandoned his blue serge suit—except to change to his tight-fitting, double-seamed wrestling jacket and shorts.

Ed Decker, last of Vermont’s great Collar and Elbow champions, went back to his old Highgate homestead in 1900 and farmed it lone-handed for more than 40 years. Little Ed remained a bachelor. But he had many friends; it was sometimes said too many for his own good. Ed Decker was a generous man—generously provided with friends in need.

But Little Ed Decker stayed a champion to the end. He became the idol of countryside youngsters. He taught many of them the rudiments of Collar and Elbow wrestling, permitting them to try on the bright red “grapple harnesses” which helped the teaching of the basic holds.

Year after year farm and village boys came visiting, listened wide-eyed to the champion’s recitations of great moments on the mats and with the circus. “Mister Ed never exactly preached to us” recalls Truman Bosworth of Swanton. “He just showed us by example that kindness and cleanliness are the best way to live.”

Like John McMahon, Ed Decker loved trotting horses, revelled in riding to town in a racing sulky; particularly cherished his beautiful mare, Nellie. For her he kept ever ready a pocketful of sugar lumps. Even at 75, Mister Ed continued to move with the grace of a ballet dancer; to spring aboard his sulky or farm wagon lightly as a forest sprite.

And he revelled in wearing old clothes. One day when the champ was a youthful 77, or thereabouts, an oversized junk dealer chanced to be doing a bit of countryside buzzarding. Near the ramshackle Decker homestead the junk man noted a huge and ancient iron kettle waiting in the open, climbed the fence to take the kettle away. That night in Swanton the towering junk man recited:

“I was merely driving along minding my business when I see that big kettle and started to tote it to my truck. Just then a little stumble bum, no taller than a school boy, comes high stepping out of the woods and tells me to leave the kettle be. “Says who?” I asks. He doesn’t say a word—just lifts the big kettle out of my hand, bumps my leg with his little right hip, gives me a arm hoist . . . next thing I know I am flyin’ over that fence, like shot out of a cannon.”

Ed Decker continued to share his meager savings with the needy until he became the neediest of all. Late in 1943, with most of “his boys” gone away to war, Ed sickened and reported to the poor farm, where for about two years he received public care. As soon as he was able to leave, obviously too soon, Mister Ed returned to the old farm, there at 82 to “start afresh.”

Winter was settling. Mister Ed recovered from a neighbor’s care his grand old horse, Nellie, treated her to sugar lumps, and headed home in an early blow of powder snow. He got only as far as the yardway. There he tumbled to the ground dead.

There are plenty of worse ways to die. Nellie waited nearby while the soft snow covered him. Since childhood Ed Decker had always loved the snow just as he had always loved Vermont and wrestling.

Without exception, Vermont’s great Collar and Elbow champions stayed champions to the not too bitter end. Even more importantly all lived to see a new generation of Collar and Elbow enthusiasts, on school grounds, country pastures, village commons, or in sheltering shops or barns scuffling cleanly and for the invincible fun of it. In that way, Collar and Elbow became a living part of Vermont’s history, culture and endurance.

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VERMONT Life
Not many fishermen in Vermont are any better than Fred Fauchs of Orleans. Certainly none in the Northeast Kingdom can do better in producing a catch of fat trout to the photographer’s order. And by the banks of this clear Vermont river, which shall be nameless here for obvious reasons, who better than Mrs. Fauchs could fry up a tempting supper of trout, crisp and golden in salt pork and corn meal?

But Mrs. Fauchs doesn’t tag along just to be camp cook. A look at the river, the soft green hills and the sunlit, fresh Spring air, will give some of her reasons.
The wealth and warmth of Vermont history reaches deep—in this instance almost a thousand feet deep. The wealth includes a probable 3.5 to 4 million tons of ores, which during the past 164 years have been taken out and put to varied and historic uses. The warmth maintained in the big underground stopes or ore hollows measures out an unvarying 53 degrees Fahrenheit, whether the above-ground temperature be a frostbiting minus 40 or a sweltering plus 90.

Obviously but inconspicuously our subject is a mine, the nation’s oldest operable copper mine. The name is Elizabeth. She was first opened in 1793, two years after Vermont became a state. The place is about two miles south and up country from South Strafford village, an easy though highly curvaceous half-hour’s drive up country from White River Junction and nearby Connecticut meadows. Several of Elizabeth’s miners (as this is written there are 220 mine employees sharing a payroll of approximately a million dollars a year) commute even greater distances. The work force, preponderantly of rural Vermonters, comes a-mining from sixteen townships of the area, mostly from farm or village homes.

This has been going on for a very long time. So has Old Elizabeth, now a memorable landmark for American mining, Vermont, and all the Green Mountains. She was five years along in 1798 when Strafford became the cradle of the Universalist Society; six years along when the Vermont-born society of faith “settled” its first minister; a world-renowned mine in 1833.

History lingers in and around South Strafford, Vermont, the birthplace of Justin Morrill, father of the land grant colleges. One senses this in many ways and places, including the lone general store—George E. Varney’s IGA. Varney’s is a whopper of a country store, so big that the undersize town post office is all but lost among its merchandise, shelves, and displays which include much that is new, and quite a lot that is old.

Varney’s Store also has notable customers, including those who stand and walk like miners, show the occasional smudges and callouses which mining is bound to leave, yet talk like farmers—of crops, gardens, pigs, chickens, and inevitably of cows. Easy-going chats with the miners come shopping leaves no doubt of their being good farmers. Even a brief visit to the grand old mine erases any doubt of their being good miners.

For Old Elizabeth is an exceptionally well dug and well kept institution. She has become a big mine, with stopes deep as a medium skyscraper is tall, meaning 400 feet or more, and long as a football field. She has remarkably little timbering or other reinforcements. Yet by the records she is one of the safest mines anywhere. A half-dozen generations of rural Vermont miners have worked her with primitive tools but with an undeniable, even if intuitive, feel for under-surface dependability. Nowadays the new generation of Vermont miners work with air drills, powered lifts and carriers and various another mechanical aids and technical skills. Their present ranks include geologists, mine engineers, chemists, electricians, welders, machine operators, mechanics and many other specialists. But the accent on “carefulness” remains as strong as the Vermont accents.

Wages remain good. So does the “ore take ratio” per workman. Copper yields have repeatedly reached 8 million pounds per year during the 1950’s. Since October, 1943, when the present “resurrection” began, approximately 2.9 million tons of ores have been taken out of Old Elizabeth, some 15 per cent of the total mined from the huge open cut.

All this is just another proof of the unique ingenuity by means of which the old timer stays alive. Save for comparatively brief runs of occasional rich ore veins, Old Elizabeth has never been a rich-yield operation. For most of the past century she has been commonly listed as a “marginal producer”, a rather drab label suffered by practically all contemporary copper mines in North America whose total yields of metallic copper now average below one per cent of ore weights.

Furthermore, Old Elizabeth is not and has never been
for any prolonged period a “true” copper mine. During her first four decades of operation, from 1793 through 1833, copperas or iron sulphate, was her decisive ore yield. At present it is chalcopyrite. Chalcopyrite is a composite of copper, sulphur and iron (and small amounts of gold, silver, selenium and thallium) and pyrrhotite, which is made up principally of sulphur and iron. Even so, the wonder mine of Orange county, Vermont, must dig hard and skillfully in order to survive.

The same holds for just about every other American copper mine, including the long-commanding Montana monsters; even the newer big timers in Bolivia and other Andean treasure chests for minerals. For South Africa, particularly Rhodesia, has now become the global wonderland of rich copper ores—with recovery ratios five to six times U. S. averages.

For good reason, not many operators of copper mines belong to Optimist Clubs. World markets and prices for copper can be—frequently are—boomed by a three-percent drop in world production, or ruthlessly depressed by a peacetime increase of an even smaller percentage. In all this the factor of necessary processing time is a tough one. You just can’t drill out copper ore one day and sell the copper next morning. Ninety days is a rather usual wait between ore taking and copper selling; pricewise, plenty can go wrong in an even shorter processing wait. In the case of Elizabeth, mine operation does not include final smelting. The ore is merely taken out, sorted, milled, and “float concentrated”, then trucked to railroad and railshipped to a Long Island smelting works for final processing. This is time-consuming, shirt-risking, but necessary; in some respects highly advantageous.

But at skillful best, copper-getting is no longer peachy. Along with lead and zinc, copper remains a “base” or basic metal of mankind. U. S. average consumption is holding the impressive highmark of 16 pounds per capita per year. Yet the great metal which is taken from the “royal red” ore (Elizabeth’s is closer to “green”) even while gaining new uses, keeps losing volume demands. For example, only a decade or so ago, your auto “carried” close to 50 pounds of copper. Your new car has barely 20 pounds. In the giant electrical industries, aluminum is grabbing away many important outlets for copper. Thus for good and numerous reasons Old Elizabeth’s latest reawakening is regarded by experts as a remarkable demonstration of superior “coppering”.

The current chapter of the too-little-heeded Green Mountain saga began back in 1942 as copper shifted almost overnight from a surplus metal to one of the most crucial shortages of primary materials of war and national defense. Following a comparatively short run in 1929, ’30 and a few weeks of 1931, Old Elizabeth had been “sleeping” for more than a decade. Early in 1942, a group of Vermonters headed by former Governor Stanley C. Wilson of Chelsea and the Ellis Brothers (Edward of Castleton and George Adams of Bennington), all well beyond...
Ben Benson, Business Manager

military service age, set out to aid the war effort by reviving the nation’s oldest copper mine—more literally, copper-kin mine. With plenty of able help they organized, and put in work, the Vermont Copper Company, Inc., which during October, 1943, succeeded in putting Elizabeth back into valuable production.

The venture was soundly successful—thanks in greatest part to Vermont leadership and Vermont miners. It supplied some 40-million pounds of copper to help meet critical needs of World War II and the Korean War; also substantial amounts of iron and sulphur, as well as copper, for important peacetime uses. During June, 1954 the Vermont company was purchased by the Nipissing Mines Company, Ltd., of Toronto which promptly made the Elizabeth properties a subsidiary, Appalachian Sulphides, Inc.

There was no important change of personnel, not even of hats. John F. Cowley who in 1951 had become head of Vermont Copper, remained general manager of the mine, with Clarence B. Benson his assistant. Benson, a pioneer executive for the reinstatement of Old Elizabeth, was born and raised in Colorado. He came East to attend Dartmouth, was graduated as an economics major in 1931, stayed on at Hanover to work for National Cash Register, and by deliberate stages became a Vermonter. He married a Vermont girl and in 1942 moved across the river to help organize Vermont Copper, Inc.

Manager-President Cowley, by contrast, is oldline Yankee, a native of East Concord, New Hampshire, who followed his parents to Oregon, studied mining at Oregon State and promptly “took” to career mine operations in California, Nevada, and Arizona. When World War II began he joined the able and powerful RFC corporation called the Metal Reserves Company for a five-year stint as an investigating engineer. That finished, he served another five years as head man for all mine operations in Turkey; titlewise he was senior mine consulting engineer for the Turkish government. In March, 1951, he joined Old Elizabeth as her head man, and promptly changed to a confirmed Vermonter.

Both Cowley and Benson are hardworking mine executives who delight in “philosophizing”, though either would drop dead before he would describe himself as either outstanding or even slightly historic. But separately or together both can be forced to admit that the mine they direct is both outstanding and historic. Even so, John Cowley admonishes, “Picking out mine history’s a lot like picking wild strawberries. Takes a lot of searching and bending.”

The writer, a long-addicted picker of wild strawberries (Vermont, naturally) has been doing a great deal of searching and bending to assemble comparable morsels of Old Elizabeth’s history, which is sparser, at least in documentary background, than any historic subject I have even tried to “research”. The gist of the seven-generation story is this:

On July 4, 1793 a group of eight country neighbors from the Straffords and nearby towns, assembled in James Courtney’s front yard and voted to form a “Farmers Company”, actually a multiple partnership dedicated to
"digging for Vitriol ore." This was a commonplace Vermont expedient of the times; the group was not formally incorporated until 1844 when the original eight holders of "single shares" had increased to nineteen.

But the eight founders evidently knew what they wanted and went after it with maximum directness, mallets, mauls, picks and shovels and ox carts. They were not interested in copper as such. They were ardently interested in finding copperas or green vitriol, and possibly by means of several brackish and foul-tasting surface springs they had figured out where to dig for it.

So far as I can discover, there was no market for, or industry in copper ore, in New England or elsewhere in the United States during the 1790's. But copperas was already valuable, comparatively precious; in fact, a key ingredient for curing, setting color and otherwise producing quality leather and pelts. Vermont of 1793 was entering its economy-shaping era of soap making. Three years earlier, the first U. S. patent had been issued to Vermonter Samuel Hopkins (with the very personal signature and blessings of George Washington) to "protect" a process for making pearl ash.

Animal fats, particularly tallow, were the other prime ingredients for commercial soap making. Vermont of 1793 was a cattle-and-timber frontier. As on various later frontiers leather and tallow were the marketable products from cattle, thanks to the already flourishing soap and leather industries. Copperas, a crystallized iron sulphate (FeSO₄ ⋅ 7H₂O), frequently occurs in iron-copper composites, is readily recognizable by its glassy appearance, is fairly easy to process. As long ago as 1793 copperas, or green vitriol, had medical uses, including that of a mordant. It was also used for making inks and pigments, but most importantly for curing and setting color in hides and pelts.

Quality leather was a very particular need of the upper Connecticut Valley communities which were beginning to grow up as Vermont. Competent tanneries were all too few to meet the needs, and as already suggested, copperas was a well-proved boon to home processing of salable leather. Thus copperas mining was a profitable farm sideline, particularly during the long winters.

The community mine began as a local utility. During its first year, James Courtney recorded the copperas take as approximately 200 pounds. During its third year, the take had catapulted to about 200 tons, practically all of which was wagon-freighted or shipped by riverboat well beyond Strafford boundaries. The diggings on Elizabeth Hill were shaping in as a real mine, as partners and their kin began to discover that a month or so of winter digging paid more than a laborious year of farming, or for that matter, kettle-style soap making.

The reasons were not long related to leather processing. Commercial tanneries were already shifting to acid pack methods. But their patronage of copperas was being replaced by a still more lucrative customer—the already
mighty fur trade, including its premier member, the Hudson's Bay Company. By 1797 the latter was buying Vermont copperas ores by the hundreds of tons, processing the powder and distributing to fur agencies and cache stations as far West as Vancouver. Copperas prices boomed to fifty cents a pound. The farm neighbors up Strafford way deepened their diggings and began changing to miners. They began “allowing” friends and kin to dig on shares. Wagon trains grew longer and trended westward.

There were compelling reasons. These included the Western buffalo (Great Plains bison) which, circa 1820-40, are believed to have numbered as many as 60 million, and the Western longhorn cattle, which some historians believe numbered up to 40 million by 1840. But all too soon the era of the Great Slaughter began changing all this. The buffalo were being massacred for hides and, alas, for “sport”; the longhorns mostly for hides and tallow.

While studying multitudes of records and references to and of the era, I have found scores of references to the commonly accepted need for “copperas from South Strafford, Vermont” as a standard supply for the Western trapper and hunter. For, the bitter and noxious powder served not only to “set” the hides or pelts but to discourage the too plentiful wolves, coyotes and other varmints from molesting out-of-door caches.

The American buffalo robe was already getting to be a winter comforter for better-off citizens of northern Europe, Scandinavia and the western Russias. By 1820, or before, the American beaver had become an international standard for fine furs, while the American winter ermine (otherwise the snide weasel) was being accepted as “royalty pelt”. In all instances copperas, or green vitriol, preponderantly from Vermont, played important contributory roles.

The same held for “military furs,” which by 1810 had grown to be the most potent stimulators of the fast-multiplying American fur trade. One Napoleon Bonaparte was a prime motivator. Years before his tragic overture of 1812 the Little Corporal had set out to cloak the “flower” of his armies, particularly those on northern conquest, in rich, warm American furs. He came nowhere near covering the entire subject. But he did set another precedent for others to imitate and he did contribute to the rapid exhaustion of the American beaver supply.

But the American fur trade had peculiar talents for ready substitutions. By the 1830's and '40's, when the armies of Russia, Prussia and Sweden began buying great quantities of American furs, the wolf pelt became the foremost replacer of beaver. For more than a quarter-century, beginning around 1840, the fairly steadfast bid price for wolf pelts was $1.25; 75 cents for large Western coyotes and an average of 25 cents for the common foxes.

Meanwhile wolf “pelting” via poisoning was emerging as the most lucrative one-man enterprise of the U. S. West. Strychnine, from the East Indies mix vomira tree, and copperas, mostly from South Strafford, Vermont, comprised its basic supplies. The latter, when duly sprinkled over the flesh side of the pelt, provided a first amateur’s “cure and color set” for changing wolf coats to soldier coats.
Strychnine was the ever-lethal kill element. From the Rio Grande to the Montana Plains and beyond, wolves swarmed the American West. The kill technique was to “water” the meat or entrails of buffalo, the carcasses of antelopes, or common birds (such as horned larks) with strychnine solution, then plant the bait, and return in a few days to collect and skin the victim predators. The takes were big. Many a reformed Indian fighter, or, later on, jobless Civil War veteran, made his first stake by “snagging in” wolf pelts, with earnings sometimes totalling $2,000 or more per month. The work, however, was hazardous and rugged. But whatever its fortunes or misfortunes, copperas in great part from South Strafford, Vermont, remained a basic ingredient well into the 1870’s.

Decades earlier the same green vitriol had become the able trail blazer to commercial copper mining. In 1831 and again in 1833, Boston newspapers spoke of “rich discoveries” of vein copper in the Elizabeth mine. By 1837 there were records of wagon freight shipments of Elizabeth mine “pure copper ore” to Carter Foundries in Cambridge. The sale of crude ore to available buyers apparently continued rather haphazardly until 1845 when copper demands, probably strengthened by Mexican War needs, moved the by then “Elizabeth Mining Associates, Inc.” to attempt mineside smelting of their copper ore.

Meanwhile across in Vershire (now South Vershire) some thirteen miles away, Elizabeth had acquired a significant competitor. During 1820 the Vershire neighbors had formed another farmers’ company, again a multiple partnership, to “dig copper on Dwight Hill”. But the partners’-choice venture was clearly ahead of its times. Though the country neighbors gamely built and put in work the state’s first copper smelter, they apparently failed to find markets for the “take out”. In any case, the Dwight Hill enterprise died a prompt and natural death.

In the early 1840’s a Boston banker set out to refurbish the Vershire mine, but got nowhere. But in 1854 when Captain Thomas Pollard, an experienced miner from Cornwall, England, organized the Vermont Copper Mining Company, hired brawny Vermonters, and put them to work on Dwight Hill, the venture began to succeed. For, almost instantly, within four feet of where his predecessors had quit digging, Pollard and his men struck a big vein of rich copper ore. Almost instantly Vershire, later Copperfield, changed to a boom town. U. S. Army, Navy, and presently, Civil War demands for copper extended the splash of Green Mountain prosperity.

In 1864, as the Civil War copper boom reached an apparent peak, Smith Ely, a wealthy New Yorker, bought the company and property and by 1870 succeeded in making it the nation’s largest copper mine. In the early 1860’s, when age and blindness overtook him, Ely made the soon-to-be fatal mistake of relinquishing control of the mine to his sporting-blood grandson, Ely Ely-Goddard. At the time, the Ely Mine was producing around 3 million pounds of copper yearly, with prices and employment strong.

But Grandson Ely-Goddard, who meanwhile won a seat in the Vermont Legislature and there succeeded in
Smith Ely, New York furniture manufacturer, put his fortune into developing the Ely coppermine, one of the nation’s largest—and hoped his grandson would continue its ranking position.

Ely Ely-Goddard, grandson, became notorious for his extravagant ways. This uniform typical of the flamboyant costumes he ordered.

The entrance to Copperfield still exists, high on the hill—if you can find it.

Copperfield’s sole remaining house is this one located opposite the site of the country store on Main Street.

Copperfield’s dam, which fed water through a penstock to the boilers in the smelting plant, still stands. Although filled with silt, the dam itself appears to be in fairly good shape.
Ely Goddard has had recorded here his elegant facilities for entertaining
such frequent visitors as Mr. and Mrs. Frank White. White was a minor official in the company.
(Print owned by Mrs. H. C. Johnson, West Fairlee.)

getting the town’s name changed to Ely, promptly ran
out of lucky cards. When copper prices slumped to 15
cents a pound (in 1883) the gay blade posted closing
notices. This led directly to Vermont’s first labor riot.
Some 400 employees seized the village and sought to oper­
ate the mine. They did not succeed in the latter. The
operation sagged to a halt and has stayed halted. Resur­
rection, though not impossible, remains strongly improb­
able. The Ely Mine, meanwhile, has tumbled into
oblivion. Forest and brush have now taken back Copper­
field—alias Ely Village.

But Old Elizabeth has carried on. During the Mexican
War era she prospered from both copperas and copper.
She deepened and worked on during the 1850’s, even as
Michigan began to crowd ahead of Vermont as the lead­
ing copper producing state. During Civil War times she
began to acquire impressively big stopes or ore hollows.
During the 1870’s the copperas trade began declining as
better processes for curing hides and furs gained wide­
spread use. Nevertheless Elizabeth continued giving the
Ely neighbor a run for the copper. She came back strongly
in the 1880’s, despite depression and the opening of the
giant Montana mines. Even while ever richer and bigger
copper holdings were being opened in Mexico, South
America and presently in South Africa, Old Elizabeth in
sleepy Strafford, kept pecking along, peculiarly stubborn
and peculiarly Vermont. In the Spanish-American War
period she enabled Vermont to contribute strategic copper
as well as Admiral Dewey.

Elizabeth’s Twentieth Century history has been one of
significant stops and goes, climaxxed as already mentioned
by the brilliantly productive fifteen-year go which began
in 1943. The Korea “action” was the fifth consecutive
war which the old mine has helped the nation through.
The World War I “run”, which flourished from January
Sugaring is an eternal vocation, one that seems to have changed little since Vermont’s first sugarmakers abandoned their tomahawk slashes. These scenes, preserved on glass negatives now in the custody of Roger Conant of Burlington, hark to a different era, however. They were filmed about the turn of the century in Westford and Essex Center, came originally from the files of the Burlington photographers Barstow, Burnham and LaPierre. Maples themselves do not change much, as the laden giant at the left attests. The old fence gives the date, just as high buckets prove a snowy winter. Hand tapping below.
Oxen are found working in some Vermont sugar bushes even today, but the flat-slung collection cask is from an age long past.

Even in the '90s this was an obsolete technique. Probably the open kettle served in a remote section of bush for partial boiling down.
Old-time sugaring was done in a flat pan without compartments or flow of fresh sap. When boiling sap approached syrup stage pan was pulled off fire onto cribwork at right.

In the old tradition town and country friends sit in the sugar house doorway and enjoy eggs hard boiled in maple sap. Sugarmaker at right appears to be the same man pictured with yoke on page 23.
Sugaring-off arch, needed before the advent of accurate evaporators, stands in shed. Sap boiled at sugar house just short of the syrup stage was brought here and boiled down under finer controls.

This is an early but genuine evaporator. Sap from boxed tank at right was fed to the cylindrical float valve to right of firebox.

More has changed here than the pigtails and high-buttoned shoes. The spout or spile is an obsolete type and the wooden bucket now is an antique collector's item.
Patterns in Maple Time

NEIL PRIESSMAN
Let it never be said that I was oversold on installing that phone. Never was a business enterprise more reluctant, more coy about peddling its merchandise than our company. When I confided to the proprietor that I didn't really want a phone, but that my children were hounding me into applying for one, he murmured, "Can't you talk 'em out of it?" Only after he betrayed himself into admitting that if I put down the required deposit, the public service regulations said I had to be given service, only when I thereupon took the money out of the bank and handed it over with due solemnity, did the wheels begin to move. A man came and looked at my house, standing high on the hill and a mile from the nearest neighbor, and he groaned. He went away, and not until the next spring did another man come. He groaned too, but he paced off the distance and stuck sticks along the way. Then the neighbor in whose land he had inserted the sticks said he wasn't going to have those telephone poles in his pasture, they spoiled the look of the place, and how'd he know sometime they might think they had a right to build a barn or a pigpen along that right of way.

So the men came back again, by this time in midsummer, and we all spent days climbing the mountain side, wandering through my sugarwoods and another neighbor's woodlot, trying to map out the shortest way over the shoulder of the mountain to the west. We got lost, we separated to search for the blazes that marked an old trail, and when we met again we greeted each other with "How! What tribe injun you?" We found yellow ladieslippers and maidenhair fern, we spotted a beech-tree to be remembered in the fall, we started up partridges and once a black bear scrambled up the hill through the sumachs far above us. At last the right of way was marked, the necessary signatures of owners obtained, and for a couple of weeks nothing happened at all. I got a neighbor with a powersaw to cut a swath twenty feet wide through my woods, mourning the slaughter but thereby providing myself with fireplace wood for a long time to come, beech, birch, twisted old maple and tough elm. I waited. Suddenly one morning work began, men were blasting holes in the ledges, setting poles, stringing wire. It went fast. And if the linemen had a few moments waiting for their truck to pick them up, they chopped kindling for me and hauled it in wood. I felt like a pioneer on the Wilderness Road.

At last the thing was done, the wide pathway which will make a ski trail all cleared, the shining wires catching the sunlight as they stretch up the hill through the woods. Doubtless they will be a lineman's nightmare when the snow comes and bends the branches over them. But it worked! I had a number, I became a member of the community. I can call the store and ask them to give Johnny Jones a tin of tomatoes to leave by my mailbox where I can go to fetch it; I can be called from the village when someone "stops by" on the way through. When I am going to be away for a day or two, I call Mrs. Central and tell her so. She thanks me because then she won't keep ringing for nothing. I ask her to ring the Gaineses, and she tells me they've all gone to the fair, there's nobody home. It's true, the bell does ring a lot, but it's a cheerful sound. I might even have that extension in the cellar some day, so I can fall downstairs in the comforting knowledge that I can then call central and she will send somebody to put me together again.

END
A Remembrance of Vermont
By WALTER HARD, Sr.

ACCORDING to many reports which I have read, keeping the Sabbath in the old days was not conducive to joyousness. Not among the younger folk at least. I've wondered how it happened that my recollections of Sundays back in the late eighties and early nineties were not overshadowed by dark clouds. I'm sure that with a deacon grandfather and deacon father the day was always properly observed.

There is a story of a member of another branch of the Hard tribe living in Arlington perhaps a little earlier than my time. The boy in the family had withdrawn after the Sunday dinner but not, as his paternal ancestor had done, to take a nap. Shortly the mother was startled and then superseded the Sabbath in such a manner, brought up by Christian quietness; "To think that a son of mine should desecrate the day of rest?" The boy kicked the dirt into a little pile. "But Ma" he finally said, "How can a feller rest when he ain't tired?"

No doubt that boy explains much of the murky atmosphere which hangs over so many accounts of boyhoods in those days. I am sure I was not lacking in the usual supply of youthful energy. As I look back it seems to me that sufficient outlet may well have been supplied by my attendance on the various gatherings each Sunday at the church. I'm sure I began going regularly to morning preaching service when I was quite young, due in part to the fact that there was nobody with whom I could be left at home. There is oral record handed down which would certainly show my extreme youth. This related to my first contact with the communion service. When something was being passed and I observed the bread, I whispered to Mother; "Can I have some ice cream when it is passed around?"

There was morning preaching service, as remarked above. Then at the close of that, which I'm sure did not last over an hour, there was Sunday school lasting another hour. Probably due to there being no such parental helper as a baby sitter in those days, I went to the evening preaching service at 7:30 sooner than was the case with many children. As a special favor, I sometimes went, when I was somewhat older, to Christian Endeavor meetings which preceded the evening preaching service. I was at first escorted by two young women who were neighbors. Later, of course, I joined the organization.

What with a rather late Sunday dinner, this did not leave too much time in which to be "not tired" in the afternoon. Then often I went to walk with Father—usually to the cemetery, be it said. Oh, yes. I used to go down to the other end of the village street after dinner quite regularly, carrying a few pieces of precious candy selected from the larger bag which my storekeeping father always supplied for Sunday dinner. I went to call on a distant and elderly spinster cousin. She had a whatnot which offered enough excitement to bridge over any conversational lags.

Getting back to the original question as to why my Sunday memories are not cloud shadowed: I think it was because of Father's and Mother's habit of entertaining clergymen. When the church was without a settled minister there was often quite an interval during which a "supply" filled the pulpit. There might be one who came more or less steadily, or a candidate for the position of settled leader of the congregation. If possible, each was a guest at our house. Not only did my parents like these men, who were usually endowed with scholarly minds, but they felt that such contacts were of educational value to their young son. So I came early to respect and like men of the cloth as plain human beings. That having supplied for Sunday dinner.

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alter chasing me from one end of our once quiet home to around with coattails flying. A bicycle still clad in his clerical garb, and thereafter tore

the mind behind it struggled to grasp the point. Once numbers and heard him gladly. J. Douglas Adam was earnestness personified. He was broad shouldered, of medium height with a round face, clean shaven and pink with health. He was filled with tireless energy. He wore a clerical broadcloth coat, a round, rather broad-brimmed, flat-crowned hat, and a clerical collar. That this collar (unusual for our church) was accepted, was proof of his early popularity. The town was his parish and he visited the sick and needy, paying no heed to church affiliations.

It wasn’t long before Mother knew he was not getting proper food. And certainly no man should be living alone in that big barnlike building. So he came to our house as a paying guest. I may have been somewhat disturbed by this idea of having a guest, especially a minister, all of the time, much as I had always enjoyed our clerical weekenders. This also was my first close contact with a “foreigner” and he certainly seemed awfully serious—funny too at times. Such as when he learned to ride a bicycle still clad in his clerical garb, and thereafter tore around with coattails flying.

But any misgivings about our new guest were soon dispelled. He was only twenty-five and he was strong, as I soon learned when he engaged me in a grand roughhouse after chasing me from one end of our once quiet home to the other. American humor was difficult for Mr. Adam. He had a keen Scotch wit but our jokes were too much for him. So I would gather some from the current magazines of humor, Puck or Judge, and spring them at table. The round Scotch face would get even redder than usual as the mind behind it struggled to grasp the point. Once grasping it I would usually be chased from room to room until punishment had been imposed.

Once returning in our surry from an overnight stay attending a convention in Rupert, Mr. Adam’s quick sympathy and immediate determination to help those in trouble, was the cause of a never-to-be-forgotten scene observed by Father, Mother and myself. Jogging along we drew near a lumber wagon on which a farmer was carrying a large crate containing a number of small pigs. As we approached one of them managed to squeeze through between slats, and with a squeal it fell onto the road. Recovering at once it went through the fence by the roadside and tore off across open meadow. In a minute the farmer sensed his loss and set out in hot pursuit. At once Reverend J. Douglas Adam’s desire to help came to the fore in spite of Father’s protests of the hopelessness of the undertaking. Saying “Poor manny, poor manny!” he jumped over the wheel. He managed to get under the fence, and retrieving his clerical hat, set out at top speed, his coattails streaming out behind. How the race ended I do not remember. I only recall Father’s shaking body and soundless laughter and Mother’s wiping her eyes, her face showing signs of imminent apoplexy.

Then there was one memorable evening when there had been a convention at our church. After a day of serious thought and talk, our three clerical guests, Father, Mother and I (keeping from being noticed lest I be sent to bed) were relaxing with tea and toast before our livingroom fire. They were all three Scotchmen: Our minister; Mr. Ewen, fresh over from his homeland, who had succeeded Mr. Adam in the Rupert church; and Donald Sage MacKay of St. Albans, already known in the state as an eloquent preacher. The group was about to separate for the night when Mother brought out a copy of beside the Bonnie bairn bush by Ian MacClaren, one of the group of Scotch novels which were then on the list of best sellers. She had tried out a few passages of extra Scottish conversation on Mr. Adam already. Knowing as she did that the other two visiting Scots came each from another section of the homeland, she asked Mr. MacKay to read just that one paragraph. The gathering came to life at once as each disputed the other’s manner of speech. Mother never did learn just how it should sound.

So perhaps by now it seems evident that I had a rare chance to know a number of preachers when they were out of the pulpit. One more thing I must add. In exchange for my instruction of Mr. Adam in American humor, he made an attempt to teach me the rudiments of Latin. Considering the eventual success in the teaching, I can say without undue vanity that my pupil came out far, far in the lead. Or perhaps it wasn’t the teacher after all.

So you see, it came about that religion was ingrained as a thing of everyday natural living. It was accepted just as the things I learned in school were. Clergymen were at home just like my Father except that they could preach sermons, while all Father could do in that line was to offer prayer on prayer-meeting nights. There was certainly nothing about those ministers I knew that would make any day dull or drab or to be dreaded. Theology? I never heard the word.

END
Trapping Brain Waves
IN A VERMONT BARN

A completed large model encephalograph awaits shipment. Finished portable model runs off a test brain wave record on paper tape.
FINDING an electronics laboratory in a South Woodstock back road barn seems as unlikely as tumbling on a farm in a large city, but there are such things. Lovett Garceau, for example, is producing and selling to 55 countries electronic equipment from a 150-year-old barn, relying primarily on U. S. mail to keep up with the customers of his firm, Electro-Medical Laboratory, Inc.

Garceau and his wife came to Vermont from Holliston, Mass., in 1950, to find "more room for our four horses and Newfoundland dogs." The move was a wise one. Besides enjoying their 106-acre Vermont farm, they find refreshing the northern New Englanders' acceptance of an unusual undertaking.

Garceau, whose staff primarily makes electroencephalographs for measuring brain waves, recalls a humorous incident in Holliston. His wife was lying down, testing a respirator he was making. The work was being done in the cellar. A passing neighbor happened to look in; passed on in a state of shock. "Rumors circulated that I was a murderer," Garceau recalls. Eyebrows went even higher when one of the respirators, packed in a coffin-sized box, was carried from the house.

Garceau is a research engineer who built the first commercial electroencephalograph in 1935. Earlier he was with Harvard University's department of psychology. He went on his own then, starting his firm in Holliston. After 15 years, he and his wife began to find it too congested. They came to Vermont, looking for a secluded life and an opportunity to raise dogs and horses.

The isolation from cities and other industries has not hindered his work. Many of the materials for the machines his four workers assemble are made in the barn, except for standard parts obtained from the outside.

In addition to the electroencephalograph, Garceau has developed other devices, including his latest—a chin-operated page turner for hospital patients and handicapped persons.

His chronograph has reached the big leagues. At White Sands, New Mexico it is recording short time intervals for the arrival and departures of rockets; International Business Machines is using the chronograph to line up electric typewriter mechanisms.

How does Garceau get his biggest machines shipped out?

"Some days we don't ship," he admits. But when roads are passable, the problem isn't difficult. The crate of the largest electroencephalograph fits neatly into the back of a jeep station wagon and the 560-pound load is then driven to the Express office in Woodstock or to a trucking company in White River Junction. The portable models weigh only 48 pounds.

Because of the fine materials and specialized labor needed, selling costs are high. The smallest 11-tube model costs $575 and the larger ones sell for $4,400 and $8,800. Hospitals and medical schools are the most frequent customers.
One electroencephalograph is working for the Atomic Energy Commission in California and another has been ordered for special research in the operating room at Mary Hitchcock memorial hospital at Hanover, N. H.

Garceau’s eencephalograph work at Harvard was not patentable, but he does hold patents from 1940 for basic improvements. One eliminated the need for using batteries and another cut out the necessity of sheltering the patient in a special cage. Formerly, this was required to suppress outside electrical interference. The cage had added considerably to the cost of installation.

Garceau, 51, is a native Bostonian. He and his wife, the former Dunlop Scott-Glen of Oklahoma, spend a lot of time with their horses: Sonny, a 20-year-old black Morgan; Jupiter, a nine-year-old Arabian thoroughbred; Gypsy, 22, a retired saddle mare; and Donald Smith, a racehorse who once did a 2:08.1 mile. One of their favorites is a miniature mule, a cross between a Shetland pony and a Sicilian donkey. She stands only seven hands high, and “has no useful purpose, except that she’s a mascot and a companion for Donald Smith,” Garceau says.

Garceau’s laboratory, one of a half dozen of its type in the United States, has four employees: Mrs. Marjorie Smith, secretary; Walter S. Hughes; Earl Lovell, an experimental machinist from Springfield; and Harry Tatro, maintenance man and caretaker.

One of Garceau’s problems has been to locate experienced men for the highly skilled work. One indication of this is that Hughes, an electronic wire specialist, drives 53 miles daily from Castleton Corners to that unlikely business in a Vermont barn, Electro-Medical Laboratory, Inc.
TO many people Bread Loaf is merely an odd name on the map of Vermont, or a collection of buildings on the western slope of the Green Mountains that flash by the tourist who takes the Middlebury Gap across the main range. To a special few each year, however, Bread Loaf is an experience, an idea and an inspiration.

The summer campus of Middlebury College is the home of the Bread Loaf School of English, one of the language schools that has made Middlebury outstanding in this particular field of education. But what writers mean when they say Bread Loaf is those two weeks of stimulus, frustration and enlightenment that take place each August, known officially as the Bread Loaf Writers Conference.

Not everyone at Bread Loaf is a professional writer. A good many teachers acquire there a better understanding of the creative process to transmit to their students. They and the other auditors have the easiest time of it. The contributors, about half the conference members, have brought their heart's blood with them in cardboard boxes and Manila envelopes, for the kind of truthful technical criticism that may make or break them as writers.

For the Bread Loaf staff is professional. Its members agree on a few basic points. One is that writing and what it is to be a writer can be, if not taught, at least communicated. By means of lectures and analytical clinics, by individual conferences and perhaps most of all through the informal discussion that runs night and day like a grass fire, the word is spread.

Writers are notably solitary workers, tending to be suspicious of each other. That so many of them can live at close quarters for two weeks and not leave dead bodies strewn across Bread Loaf's clipped lawns is a tribute perhaps as much to the peaceful influence of the Green Mountains as to the Bread Loaf Administration. Yet it is the concentration and intensity with which the staff members try to communicate their ideas about writing that creates out of this varied lot of individuals a group in joint search of enlightenment, not a collection of egos.

For many a beginning writer the Bread Loaf experience is the initiation into his craft. Perhaps he has lived in a small town where there is no one to talk about writing with. He may have come as a Fellow, on a scholarship. He may be waiting on table to pay part of his expenses. Or she may be a housewife, a part-time writer, whose precarious arrangements for getting to Bread Loaf may include persuading her husband to look after the children for two weeks instead of taking a vacation. For all of them it is valuable to listen to such proven writers as Kay Boyle, Catherine Drinker Bowen, Mildred Walker, Nancy Hale, Stewart Holbrook or John Ciardi saying—"I don't know how it will be for you but this is the way being a writer is for me."

What Vermont provides is the perfect physical setting for such a retreat. Joseph Battell's inn is where the conference members dine, his Morgan horse barn is their recreation center, they walk the trails in his acres of forest. Students at Bread Loaf will forever associate the refreshment and discovery of these two weeks with the Vermont landscape. They will remember crossing the highway to watch a special sunset; they will recall Robert Frost reading a poem in manuscript and telling how he feels about it, for Frost has always been a good neighbor to Bread Loaf. They will have liked certain people intensely—and disliked others—and will send them all cards at Christmas. Soon Bread Loaf takes on the quality of a
dream, but its effect can be as mysterious and lasting as any dream's.

**RECENT BOOKS**

Many of Vermont's products are intangible ones, and one of the most unusual is the Experiment in International Living, of Putney, which recently celebrated its 25th anniversary with a book by William Peters called *Passport to Friendship*. Travel with a purpose is much more commonplace for young people than when Donald B. Watt first sent a group abroad to spend the summer in European homes. But the formula for international understanding that he and his staff have developed has not changed much since those early days, though it has been extended to more than 40 countries.

A group of ten young people, 16 to 30, with a leader, travel to a foreign country during their summer vacation. Half the time they spend as guests, living the daily life of a French, Mexican or Japanese family; the other half they take their hosts for a camping or bicycle trip. These travelers see what the ordinary tourist seldom sees—the way of life of another culture. The experience is likely to be an eye-opener for both guest and host, and in most cases to lead, on both sides, to the breaking down of prejudices and the permanent establishment of tolerance.

The Experiment also brings young people to this country, and for those of us who can't afford the cost of a trip abroad, to be host to a foreign student is the next best thing. Mr. Watt began thinking in international terms considerably ahead of some of the rest of us, who now realize how pressing, even desperate, is the need for understanding between peoples.

Along with the *A is for Apple* cook book and the Vermont Maple Recipes we now have the perfect addition to the Vermont kitchen bookshelf, *The Venison Book*, by Audrey Alley Gorton. The first half of the book deals with catching, dressing and cutting the creature up, the rest is concerned with well chosen recipes for cooking the various portions you have hewed apart. Even if you may never be faced with the problem of what to do with a deer carcass you may well be given some venison and not know how to treat it. Or you may know a hunter who knows how to shoot but is neither a butcher or a chef. In fact, I cannot imagine anyone who could not find a use for this excellent little book. George Daly's sinister decorations are perfect.

For girls who like to ski and have put away their equipment for the season, or just any girls, here are two stories laid in Vermont with teen-age heroines. In each a widowed mother decides to run a guest house for skiers and the daughter has to help out. However, the girls are quite different. Angela, in Betty Cavanna's *Angel on Skis* has to learn to temper her fiery independent ways on her climb to skiing success. She learns on home-made skis, breaks a leg, fails to make the grade in her first race and almost gives up. Finally she achieves success, romance and a degree of maturity.

Mary Wolfe Thompson's heroine, Arleigh, in *Snow Slopes*, is cut off from skiing herself by a rare bone condition following polio. Her ambition is to go to college, and by working at the information desk at the ski slope she learns to adjust to her disability, earns money for her college course and meets a young man. The girls are believable and their problems real, with that dash of romance and inspiration which makes them readable at any season.

A couple of Vermonters have produced a book on *The Folklore of Maine*, tasty as a clam bake, with layer after layer of sea-going stories, legends, songs and proverbs. Horace P. Beck, the author, teaches American Literature at Middlebury College, and Arthur K. D. Healy, who has done the cover and chapter headings in black and white, is also a Middlebury resident. Except for one chapter on the logging camps, the book centers on the coast, the islands, ships and other salt-water matters. It would be interesting to see what the same team would do with a similar book on their own state.

*French Meadows*, by Nellie S. Richardson, is a collection of verse, friendly and colloquial, harking back to old days and ways, which will appeal especially to Springfield, Vt. people, where Mrs. Richardson lives.

*Memories of Arlington, Vt.*, by Dorothy Canfield Fisher is a reprinting of the now out of print *Memories of My Home Town* (reviewed in our Autumn 1957 issue). A new introduction by the author and eight new chapters have been added to this edition, available from the Arlington Historical Society and bookshops generally.

**ITEMS LISTED**

*Passport to Friendship*—William Peters, Lippincott, $3.75 1957

*The Venison Book*—Audrey Alley Gorton, The Stephen Greene Press 1957, $1.95 and $3.50

*Angel on Skis*—Betty Cavanna, Morrow Junior Books, $2.95, 1957

*Snow Slopes*—Mary Wolfe Thompson, Longmans, Green, $2.75, 1957

*The Folklore of Maine*—Horace P. Beck, Lippincott, $5.00, 1957

*French Meadows*—Nellie S. Richardson, Springfield Printing Corporation, 1957

*Memories of Arlington, Vt.*—Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Duell, Sloan & Pearce, $3.50, 1957

42 VERMONT Life
ANY DISCUSSION of railroad tunnels in New England usually comes back again and again to the “Great Bore”, the famous old Hoosac Tunnel in Massachusetts.

“Why,” snorts a veteran railway engineer, “compared to that one, all the rest are just king-sized rat holes!”

Two of these little-known lesser tunnels of the East are located in Vermont. Admittedly, they are only a tiny portion of some 320 miles of subterranean railway passages in the United States, but the stories behind these two are unique.

Well over a century ago, Vermonters had ideas for tunnels even before a flanged iron wheel had turned in the state. A Brattleboro group financed the survey of a possible rail line north to Rutland. Two Young Boston civil engineers, Waldo Higginson and Martin Inches, clambered through the tangled glens of the West River valley with transit and chains. Their derailed report of 1844 recommended a 5,070-foot tunnel between the headwaters of the West River in Weston and those of Mill River in Mount Holly.

Though some were for it, the majority of the Brattleboro promoters threw up their hands in defeat at the thought of digging a tunnel nearly a mile long. Higginson and Inches sadly rolled up their carefully-drawn maps and elevation charts and went back to Boston. Yet their plans were later proved entirely feasible, and within a few years work began on a project to pierce the Hoosac Range to the south with a tunnel not just one mile long, but five!

In 1851, the same year that the Hoosac Tunnel was begun, engineers and contractors for the little Vermont Valley Railroad had a problem. Their twenty-five mile line, building from Brattleboro north, needed an entrance into the town of Bellows Falls. This was not an easy matter, for the village stores, streets and power canal were all squeezed in narrow tiers between Oak Hill and the Connecticut River. A tunnel was the only means of making a junction with the other railroads at Bellows Falls. The Vermont Valley set out to dig one; tight behind the houses on Westminster Street and burrowing diagonally under the town square.

Often a tunnel which will be situated only a little below the surface is dug as an open cut and then roofed over. This was impossible at Bellows Falls, and the Vermont Valley boys dug gravel down below the busy square, shoring up their hole with timbers as they progressed. Because of the buildings up above they couldn’t make use of the black powder normally used to blast out boulders and rock outcroppings. When a rock barrier was reached the workmen had to drill it and then pick it laboriously apart.

This early rock drilling was usually accomplished with the teamwork of three-man gangs. One trusting individual held the drill, a chisel-like wedge, and turned it in the hole, at the same time pouring in water to cool the drill and flush out the dust. Two hammermen synchronized their mighty blows upon the wide top of the drill. Crude and slow as this method had to be, it was the only way to eventually bore through a “heading”, as the top segment of a tunnel is called. The rest was a matter of using pick, shovel and wheelbarrow to the best advantage.

Vermont’s first railroad tunnel was nearly four hundred

Bellows Falls bore has weathered three major floods in 107 years.
feet long. Huge granite and limestone blocks from back up on the mountain behind the village were carefully keyed and mortared within the long excavation to form the arched vault of its ceiling. The builders made the stone-lined bore more than ample to clear the balloon stacks of their little wood-burning engines.

Holed through and safely encased, the Bellows Falls tunnel stood complete late in 1851. A rickety wooden bridge was hastily thrown across the power canal beyond so that the long-sought connection with the trains to Rutland was at last accomplished.

"Take a deep breath", a locomotive engineer would tell a new fireman, "Here's Bellows Falls!" And for a few moments smoke and gases would engulf the open cab before the steamer emerged from the tunnel to clank across the canal and into the depot.

Scarcely a dozen years later, that canal was nearly the tunnel's undoing. In April, 1862, the Connecticut River began to rise rapidly as the result of a sudden thaw. Water poured over the guard gates of the canal below the tunnel, and the waterway began to overflow its banks.

Superintendent Madison Sloat of the Vermont Valley saw the danger and rounded up men from all over town. Then began a battle to save the tunnel and the whole lower end of Bellows Falls. Sloat's strategy was to build a makeshift dam at the upper end and thus keep the tunnel from becoming a giant drainpipe. Carts and oxen were commandeered and a never-ending procession began to creak and rumble across town to dump gravel into an earthen dam. Water continually came swirling over the banks of the canal and eddied about the rising mound of dirt. Men tamped down the gravel with shovels and whacked it solid with flat boards, only to have it go sucking away in muddy whirlpools under their feet.

All day the contest between man and water raged. At dark the rising river boiled two feet above the banks of the canal and in a few hours more it was six feet above the railroad tracks at the tunnel dam. Superintendent Sloat went around to the south end and inspected the inside of the tunnel. In the blackness he could hear noisy trickling and a lantern's rays confirmed his fears. Water had seeped around the dam above and was beginning to spurt between the granite blocks of the tunnel walls in half a hundred streams.

"More gravel", bellowed Sloat, "On the sides, too!" His cries were relayed to the frantic workmen above, and the straining oxen were urged to even greater endeavors. Near midnight the pressure of the leaks inside the tunnel was seen to lessen and the rampaging river began to drop as quickly as it had risen. A few weeks later a portion of the square sank without warning due to partial undermining around the tunnel's walls. Bellows Falls merchants agreed that they had had a narrow escape.

Succeeding railroaders and power company officials read their history well, and whenever a disastrous flood has threatened Bellows Falls a first precaution has been to stoplog and sandbag the tunnel. These measures saved both tunnel and lower town in the great flood of 1927 and again in the ice-jammed, overflowing waters of 1936.

Today the old Vermont Valley tunnel is unseen by casual Bellows Falls visitors, and is best reached on foot down a narrow street south of the square. It carries the valley traffic of the Boston & Maine Railroad, including crack trains like the "Ambassador" and the "Washingtonian", which the B&M runs in conjunction with the Central Vermont. Protected by signal lights that glow in the darkness at the south end, the big black, white and blue diesels growl slowly through. The builders of a century ago surely never envisioned such streamlined behemoths, but their stone-lined bore still serves beyond the age of steam.

Though only a handful of Queen City residents can tell you just where, Vermont's other railway tunnel is in Burlington. Going out Rt. 127 toward Mallett's Bay, it can be found down a wooded bank about sixty feet below North Avenue, with its tracks popping out between stone wingwalls to skirt Lake Champlain.

The infant Vermont & Canada put through this line in 1861 as part of its extension from Essex Junction to Burlington. The eight-mile spur involved building three sturdy...
wooden bridges over the Winooski River, but the real obstacle was a ridge where for centuries the winds off Lake Champlain had been blowing up sand on one side while the river left deposits of silt on the other. Though this ridge appeared solid enough, it was actually a hundred-foot bank of treacherous, shifting quicksand.

Daniel Linsley, the railroad's chief engineer, sized up the terrain and set to work devising a method of piercing the ridge. Ordinary digging was impossible, since sand filled in as fast as it was thrown out. Nobody in the United States had ever dug a shaft through quicksand that was big enough to accommodate a train. Linsley decided on a unique plan of tunnelling never before attempted, and let a $60,000 contract to get the job under way.

The engineer devised a shield in which holes in the form of a semi-circle were bored. Through these holes wooden poles were driven into the bank, tight together to form an arch, and the earth beneath them excavated to make a small vault. This process was repeated over and over, on deep into the hillside.

As fast as their half-circle heading was completed, the tunnellers dug down the sides so that the excavation resembled a block letter “A” with high bar and rounded top. Thousands of feet of lumber went into framework to brace the hole as it proceeded, keeping back the creeping quicksand. As soon as room allowed, a brick horseshoe arch was built and the walls between the masonry and wooden planking were packed solid with concrete.

Linsley had eighty-five men working on the Burlington tunnel all through a bitter cold winter, for he wanted his freight cars on the docks below the city, ready to load from the boats when the ice went out in the Spring. The tunnellers worked around the clock in two shifts, shovelling, scooping, scraping and driving deeper and deeper into the tricky ridge. Brick and concrete work went on while the digging beyond still proceeded. Little stoves furnished heat and a small gas apparatus threw faint rays of light about the gloomy hole. A pipe system, with a fire kept continually burning outside, made a draft to draw off the fouled air in the excavation.

In spite of all the ingenious effort and wealth of manpower, the best progress that could be made through the unpredictable shifting sands in the central portion of the bore was only about 36 inches a day. But in a little over six months Linsley's Burlington tunnel stood complete; 340 feet long, and turning on a four-degree curve.

Central Vermont trains have been trundling through the brick horseshoe tube beneath the ridge now for nearly a century. A way freight, pulled by a brightly-painted diesel switch engine, still makes daily trips through Dan Linsley’s old curved smoke hole, America’s first tunnel to be dug through quicksand.

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**Mystery Picture**

**NUMBER 6**

Marking stones to memorialize a local tragedy or historic event were erected not uncommonly in Vermont, as in the rest of New England and Britain, a hundred years and more ago. The rude lettering on this stone has been retouched in this photograph.

Earliest postmarked correct locating of this stone will win one of Vermont Life's special awards.

Winner of the Winter contest No. 5, a detailed relief on the state office building, Montpelier, was Miss Frances Holmes, Montpelier.
The mortal remains of Ethan Allen, Vermont leader, fighter, writer and philosopher, lie in this cemetery beneath the marble statue, but his spirit is in Vermont now.

That the “last resting” place of Ethan Allen should be in a Christian cemetery is almost a contradiction in terms. Ethan Allen never rested in his lifetime, and, as Ralph Hill says “Deist Ethan Allen eschewed all formal religion . . . and expounded his views in the first anti-Christian book published in North America.”

At any rate there was unveiled on July 4, 1873, in Greenmount Cemetery on Burlington’s Colchester Avenue, a 42-foot Tuscan shaft, topped by a heroic statue of Ethan Allen. It was modeled by Paul Stephenson and cut in Carrara, Italy. It depicted Ethan capturing Fort Ticonderoga. Here amongst other Revolution soldiers, Vermont’s great historic and legendary hero rests for the first time, but not necessarily under this memorial shaft.

It would be like Ethan to fool posterity a little.

Forty years ago old Tom Teachout of Burlington, used to relate how his aunt, who died close to 100 years of age, was present at the burial of General Allen and that she told him that Ethan Allen was buried in quite a different part of the cemetery from where some years later folks said he was. This legend has persisted so today no one can prove just exactly where old Ethan’s mortal remains do lie. But, as our official marker illustrated above says:

His Spirit is in Vermont Now

It doesn’t make much difference precisely at what spot his dust was mingled with the earth. But it makes a lot of difference in Vermont now that, in this age of conformity, we have not forgotten his virtues of independence, of untrammeled and fearless thinking and of willingness, nay even eagerness to blaze new trails.
SHINING silver suspension bridge now tames a rough portion of the Long Trail where hikers formerly feared to tread. Fifty-five feet from tower to tower, the bridge is the work of a young engineer, formerly employed in Rutland.

Emile Boselli’s bridge, more than 50 feet above Clarendon Gorge on a part of the Long Trail visible from Route 103, replaces the old carriage bridge over Mill River that had been destroyed some years back.

Several log bridges were placed down in the Gorge but none lasted more than a few days due to rising waters. “Hikers on the Trail were finding it a great inconvenience and were writing to tell us so,” Boselli said. “I decided to do something about it and the members approved.”

Boselli belonged to the Killington chapter of the Green Mountain Club.

From his drafting board sketches Boselli produced, with Cecile, his fiancee—two years later—a silver suspension bridge anchored in cement.

“That was the hardest part,” he said. “We hadn’t dug more than a foot when we hit rock. The builders of the old bridge had backfilled the roadbed with boulders, and we had to go down six feet. Those were some of the most miserable weekends I ever spent. While the temperature soared to 103 degrees, our crew swung sledges all day making small boulders out of big ones. But that wasn’t all, we needed so many wire rope clips for the bridge that we cleaned out Montgomery Ward’s mail order supply house in Albany.”

When winter set in, the couple decided to prefabricate the parts and move them to the bridge site in the spring. By the following June they were at it again, building forms and then pouring cement. All supplies arrived at the site by wheelbarrow from the roadside, some 500 feet away. Finally a tramway had to be constructed to carry cement and other materials to the far side of the Gorge.

“We spent the summer eating sandwiches and creosoting cross timbers,” said Cecile. “I probably should have been collecting a trousseau, but this was more fun.”

The towers for the bridge are ten feet high and made from welded four-inch I beams donated by the Central Vermont Public Service Corp., where Boselli worked. Struggling through the rushing water and over rocks, five volunteers carried one of the towers across the Gorge.

Boselli’s bridge has four-by-four cross timbers, creosoted as are the planks for protection. Two-inch hemlock planks run lengthwise with the bridge as flooring. These were fastened down with seven-inch carriage bolts.

The Green Mountain Club paid all the costs for materials, about $700. Boselli and his fiancee, with part-time volunteer help, donated their time. But for all their work—and no pay—the Bosellis aren’t sorry. They’ve left a bit of the big city in the wilderness of Vermont. Their mark in Vermont is a permanent one.
Vermont Life presents here with pleasure the medal winning photographs awarded last year in the Seventh Annual Photographic Exhibition, held at Manchester's Southern Vermont Art Center. Regrettably space does not permit reproduction of the Honorable Mention awards: in color to Cecile Briggs, Newell Green and Bertha McCormick; in black and white to Robert Bourdon, Lawrence Eberhard, John Titchen.

Judges were John W. Doscher, FPSA, FRPS, John H. Vondell, FPSA, and Vermont Life's editor.

Details on the 1958 Exhibition will be given in our Summer issue. It will be held in Manchester July 19-27. Entry blanks with rules may be obtained by writing Vermont Life or the Southern Vt. Art Center, Manchester.
LIKE most other folks, thousands of miles over the world have I had the good fortune to travel, but the trip that made the most indelible impression was a 14 mile Vermont journey in 1906. My grandparents hitched up Betsy, the bay mare and drove me from North Calais to Montpelier. The narrow dirt road skirted a brook down the valley, led up hill and down to Adamant, wound around the hills and under the trees and passed several ponds to the final breath-taking view above Clay Hill in Montpelier. My grandfather told of events that had taken place along the way, of the covered bridge where he first kissed my grandmother, of men he knew who used to live on or did live on the farms we passed, what fish he had caught in the ponds, and what pieces of woodlands he had logged. Betsy was too old to trot so the trip consumed a good four hours.

The years can’t erase it. I did not view the country, see the sights or just glimpse the scenery ... I stored them all in the deep recesses of my mind and heart.

DON’T RUSH THROUGH
It’s a pity we don’t all have time these days to take trips of 14 miles that consume 4 hours. If we did, what Vermont has to offer would impart more meaning.

Recently I passed a sign, erected by an individual in Clarendon which read “To Really See Vermont Don’t Rush Thru”. Even with the faulty grammar and modified spelling this is a wonderful statement and it surely exhibits the correct psychology. Incorrect is a sign put up in Bridgewater warning (they ought to have put a skull and cross bones on it) the traveller that ahead is a winding, tortuous and difficult mile dirt road to Plymouth. What nonsense! The sign should read “Old-fashioned Vermont Road: Drive Slowly and Enjoy It.” Just as the recipe for a happy life is relishing the secret nectars, so the recipe for enjoying Vermont and its lavish bounties is in exploring slowly our winding, adventuresome and enticing back country roads and lanes.

TAKE AS DIRECTED
There are hundreds of these roads. Many of them are not on the Vermont Road Map, but you can get the County Maps put out by the Highway Department showing every road no matter how minor.

Just as an example, I drove over that road from West Bridgewater to Plymouth. This is almost the last unpaved part of Route 100. It is about five miles, it is of course winding, and by the same token it has hidden surprises and sudden beauties. I stopped about a dozen times to take it all in. Most of the way, for example, the road meanders under a living arch of trees that meet overhead with a shimmering pattern of sunlight and shade. Fortunately for those who love trees, the engineers have not cut them down near this road. Running alongside the road, north from the first pond called Woodward Reservoir, is an untailored, unhurried and obviously clean brook. Much of the road leads through deep, dark and cool woods and here as it used to be in the woods, the road is smooth and firm. From the pond south the brook runs south toward Plymouth. You will pass a striking red barn and a real, early 19th century Gothic house.

And I should answer the timid girl by saying; “Yes Miss, there are curves, lots of them, but they won’t be there long because engineers abhor all curves but yours.”

OTHER REMEDIES AND WARNINGS
This road is only one. I can cite many others but I hope you’ll explore and discover some for yourself.

For wild high mountain scenery try the Green Mountain National Forest Road from Danby to Weston; for breath-taking views of our most spectacular mountain, Camel’s Hump, take the back road from Jonesville down through Huntington Center, Hanksville and So. Starksboro; for a thrilling dip from the heights drive the Hazen’s Notch Road from Montgomery Center to Lowell, with so many distant vistas of the northern mountains such as Jay Peak; and for upland farms, graveyards and nostalgic rural scenes drive Route #140 from Wallingford to Tinium or explore from East Dorset to South Dorset.

On these and other adventuring journeys, don’t expect all hard surfaced highways: some of these roads are narrow and of gravel. Don’t expect motels, roadside eating places, ice cream stands, information booths, and explicit sign boards. You may have to stop and figure where you are on the map. If you want to be sure, and be told where to go exactly and precisely, don’t take my recipe for seeing Vermont; stay on the main roads.

One warning: we have some funny customs in Vermont. One of them is the feeling that when you pass a Vermont car it’s polite to blow your horn to indicate you want to go by. In other states I know that habit is impolite. But if you try to pass a Vermont car on one of these narrow back roads, and don’t blow your horn you will readily see why the fellow ahead considers you very, very impolite and often very dangerous.

Another thing: don’t expect every native you see on the way is going to know all about the roads and where this road you may be on leads. Some townships (six miles square) have over a hundred miles of back roads. Some folks in these towns don’t know all these roads because they just haven’t had time to travel over all of them. Some don’t go anywhere, anyway.
Mysteries are always intriguing. So this summer many a tourist will puzzle over a secret room hidden in the kitchen of a stately old house in the Vermont town of Addison. What was its purpose? Who planned it? Behind the answers to these questions lies a story that is literally stranger than fiction.

Now owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution of Vermont, this is the house John Strong built between 1794 and 1798 near Chimney Point on Lake Champlain. Today, as your gaze travels from its rosy brickwork and Palladian window to the blue reaches of the Lake, it is hard to imagine this place as a onetime scene of horror and confusion. Yet less than 200 years ago, when Burgoyne’s Indians swept down from Canada in a red torrent of destruction, these waters were dotted with war canoes. And along these shores, whose present serenity is marred only by the whir of a passing motor, war whoops mingled with the sobs of frightened children.

Actually, the “John Strong Mansion,” as it is commonly known, is the third home of the family in Addison. Between this house and the Lake shore are the ashes of the cabin John built for his wife and children in 1765, shortly before they migrated from Salisbury, Conn. And a short distance south is the house said to have been the Strong’s second home on the Lake shore.

Although the Mansion is open to the public only during the summer months, my first visit fell on a bright fall day after the caretakers had left for their winter quarters. But this post-seasonal glimpse was compensated by the fact that a direct descendant of John Strong, Mrs. Samuel Wagstaff, was my guide. The Wagstaffs, who live in the house built by John’s second son, Samuel Strong, in Vergennes, possess a remarkable collection of historic heir-
looms. But along with these material mementoes they treasure such a fund of family anecdotes that as Mrs. Wagstaff chatted about her forbears, I felt that I was literally traveling from the present into the past.

Today Samuel Strong is remembered as the commander of the Vermont troops at Plattsburgh. But in 1766, when his father transported the family from Connecticut by sleigh across the frozen Hudson to Fort Gurney, over Lake George to Fort Ticonderoga and across Lake Champlain to their new Vermont home, Sam was a four-year-old youngster to whom the long cold journey must have seemed endless.

The first thing John did after choosing his cabin site was to “chop a fallow,” which was planted to corn and potatoes the following spring. But by June his one-man battle with the forest had undermined even his rugged constitution. He was tormented by “fever and ague,” and Sam often saw his father fall exhausted by a heap of logs, only to stagger up after a brief rest and go at it again.

That same summer John Strong, Jr., arrived on the scene—the first English child to be born in Addison county. He was not the first white child to see the light in this region, however, for Chimney Point, earlier known as Pointe à la Chevalure, was once part of a French seignory with a windmill, a fort, a church, gardens and apple and plum trees. In 1759, when Ticonderoga, called Carillon...
by the French, was taken by Amherst, the inhabitants burned their houses and fled to Canada, the blackened chimneys giving the peninsula its name. Six years later, when young John Strong trekked north on a fall hunting trip to the salt licks not far from the present location of the mansion, he may have chanced on one of those apple trees reddening in the autumn sun. At any rate, he decided to build a home of his own on the site of one of those old French houses.

To John’s young wife, accustomed to the bustle of a colonial Connecticut village, the little clearing on the Lake must have seemed a grim and lonely place at first. But lacking other company, there were always the bears, the “Yorkers,” and the Indians.

A favorite story of the Wagstaffs concerns a mother bear and her cubs who invaded the cabin one September evening when the men of the settlement were away. Mrs. Strong had just placed a kettle of steaming mush on the hearth to cool when the mother bruin pushed aside the skin that served as a door and, followed by her cubs, made a rush for the table. Catching up the baby and herding the other children before her, Agnes had barely time to climb to the loft and pull up the ladder before the bears made a dive for the food, upsetting the milk and scattering bowls and spoons on the floor. Dipping her black snout in the kettle of mush, the mother bear engulfed a generous serv-
In downstairs parlor hang portraits of General Samuel Strong, active in the War of 1812, and his wife Mercy Bloomer, Dorset resident.

ing, but as soon as the meal began to scar her mouth, she tried frantically to push it out, letting forth a roar of anger that brought her cubs up standing. Convulsed at this sight, the children broke into shouts of laughter, which so enraged the animal that she tried to follow them to their place of refuge. It was almost morning before the bears lumbered out of the cabin and the Strongs went to bed supperless.

If the bears threatened to take the food out of their mouths, the “Yorkers” tried to pull the ground out from under their feet. Among those claiming the lands John and his neighbors held under a grant from Benning Wentworth was one Col. David Wooster. A claimant under a grant from New York, he sued at Albany all who would not relinquish their holdings. Then in 1773, after John and a group of Green Mountain Boys led by Ethan Allen had succeeded in ousting the Scottish tenants of another Yorker from the Falls at Vergennes, they returned home to find the colonel with a sheriff’s posse trying to take over their lands in Addison. Fortunately the men of the settlement outnumbered the Yorkers and after the colonel and his sheriff had been threatened with the painful “beech seal,” they beat an ignominious retreat to New York.

The most unwelcome visitors of all were the Indians who paddled up the Lake, lurking in the woods until they saw the men of the settlement start off on some all-day expedition. As these callers grew bolder, the Strongs began to feel that nothing was safe from them. The cherished family pewter was hidden in a barrel of sour milk by the door and John even built a secret nook between the chimney and outer wall where Agnes could hide the baby.

A few days before one such invasion, John had brought back from Albany a bright-colored silk “short gown” for his wife’s birthday. Not long after, while the men were in Stillwater, N. Y., at the nearest gristmill, a band of braves trooped into the cabin, smeared their faces with cream from the milk pans, rubbed soot from the chimney on their hands and then took turns admiring themselves in a hand-mirror. As they were leaving, one of them saw the new dress hanging in a corner, tore it from its nail, flung it over his head, and capered out of the cabin. Agnes’ last sight of her beloved new gown was of a strange, bright figure dancing and yelling as it vanished into the forest.

But it was not until the Strongs’ old Salisbury neighbor, Ethan Allen, captured Ticonderoga and Lake Champlain became a focus for Revolutionary maneuvers that the threat of Indian massacres took on nightmare proportions. Situated as it was on the direct route to Crown Point, John’s cabin was a convenient resting place for weary scouts, a sounding board for rumors of the huge army of British regulars and fighting red men that might descend at any time on the settlements.

In June of 1777 Burgoyne’s army of about 8,000 men, which included 500 Indians, embarked from St. Johns and sailed up Lake Champlain to the mouth of the Bouquet river near what is now Willboro, N. Y. There, on the deserted estate of William Gilliland, the Iroquois and Waubanakees were harangued by their British commander. Then, while the army set out for Crown Point and Ticonderoga, 300 Indians were sent to the mouth of
Otter Creek to raid on the settlers.

If you look for it, you can still find the spring between the mansion and the shore that furnished the Strongs with their family water supply at that time. That summer morning as she paused there, listening to the birds and gazing out over the glassy surface of the Lake, she heard the dip of paddles and suddenly saw, rounding a point, a war canoe filled with painted braves. Fluttering from a pole at the bow was a bloody scalp with soft flaxen ringlets lifting in the breeze. With a start of horror, Agnes recognized the yellow locks as those of a dear friend’s child across the Lake and when she returned home she was not surprised to learn that during the night six people had been massacred and their houses burned.

After such an experience, most people would be more than ready to leave. But many of the men of Addison were reluctant to turn their backs on the land they had worked so hard to hold. And most of them had a job to do. To Captain John Strong was often entrusted the task of procuring supplies for the troops at Crown Point and Ticonderoga. Thus on the morning before Burgoyne landed at Crown Point, John was on his way back from Rutland with a herd of cattle. And his two oldest boys, Asa and Samuel, had left the house at dawn to round up some cows that had strayed into the woods. Family tradition has it that Agnes was sitting at the breakfast table with the rest of the children that morning when a white-faced girl burst in gasping, “The Indians are coming and we are all flying! There are bateaux at the Point to take us off. Hurry!”

As she was still recovering from a long illness, Mrs. Strong wondered whether she would be able to walk to the Point. But she made up a bundle of clothing for each child, placed her very young baby, Cyrus, in a sack and tied him to his big sister’s shoulders, then sped the youngsters down the road. Finally she put out the fire (an ironical precaution in view of later events), closed up the house and started on her way to the boats.

When she reached the north bank of Hospital Creek she fell by the roadside exhausted. A friend from Panton, so the story goes, called from his horse, “Are you crazy? The Indians are in sight! The Lake is covered and the woods are full of them!” When she said she could go no further, he lifted her up to the saddle and took her with him to the Point. They arrived just as the last boat, carrying her children, was being pushed out from shore. And not a moment too soon, for according to a local historian, as the men began to row a group of Indians broke from the woods and bullets flew like hailstones. That evening the fugitives landed at Whitehall, N.Y., where they scattered, some returning to their old Connecticut homes, others traveling east into Vermont. John’s friend, Zadock Everest, chose the eastern route, taking Agnes and her children with him.

Meanwhile, toward nightfall, Asa and Samuel returned from their cattle hunt and knew from the columns of smoke rising from the clearings that Addison had been raided. Afraid to go too close, they hid in the woods until dark, then crept cautiously through the trees to the cabin, which was now only a pile of embers. As Mrs. Wagstaff told me this tale, she pointed out Snake Mountain, where the boys caught a partridge and roasted it for breakfast. With youthful optimism, they then began their search for the family and after a week had found their mother and the others, hired a log house, and by working for neighboring farmers, were managing to support the household.

But things did not progress so smoothly with the head of the family. On the morning of the raid, learning that Burgoyne was on his way to Crown Point, John left his cattle at Brandon and hurried for home. That night he was surrounded by several hundred braves commanded by a Tory who had learned that John was on his way north with beef for the American troops. When the officer asked where the cattle were and Strong said they were “safe,” the furious Tory was ready to have his stubborn captive scalped on the spot, until an old chief who had known John intervened, suggesting that he be taken to the guardhouse for further questioning. The next morning John introduced himself to Col. Frazer, explained his anxiety for his wife and children, and was given a parole on condition that he return by mid-November and accompany the army to Canada.

Finding no sign of his family on his return to Addison, John went back to the fort and took passage to Whitehall. There he was told that his wife and children had probably returned to Connecticut. But in Salisbury there was still no trace of them.

The dramatic outcome of this story is vividly described just south of the Mansion lies this house, which some historians believe the Strongs occupied before the Mansion was completed.
by a local historian, the Reverend John M. Strong, in his history of the town of Addison in Hemenway’s *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. One evening, after weeks of searching, Strong rode warily into the Vermont village of Dorset and asked a night’s lodging at a small log house by the side of the road. He had just seated himself by the fire when a “smart little woman” bustled into the dimly lit room carrying a pail of milk and said, “Moses, won’t you take the gentleman’s hat?” The voice was unmistakable. “Agnes,” he shouted. And “John, Oh John,” his wife cried, “We thought you were dead!”

Today in Dorset Hollow you can still see the farm to which the Strongs moved shortly after this reunion and where they remained until the return of its Tory owner, Asa Baldwin, from prison in Bennington. Apparently John was as well thought of by his fellow townsman in Dorset as he had been in Addison, for he served as their representative in the legislature from 1779-1782 and was assistant judge of Bennington County in 1781 and 1782. In 1783, with the war over and the danger of Indian raiders removed, the Strongs and many of their former neighbors returned to Addison. But the ties with the southern part of the state remained unbroken, for both Samuel and John married daughters of Reuben Bloomer, who operated in Dorset the first commercial marble quarry in the country.

Back in Addison the Strong family lived for fourteen years in the house which was their second home on the Lake. Here John continued to prosper, cultivating his extensive acreage, filling his pastures with cattle, and still finding time to represent the town of Addison in the legislature from 1784 to 1786. In 1785, when Addison and Colchester became half shire towns, he was elected presiding judge, with Gameliel Painter and Ira Allen as his assistant judges, and from 1786 to 1801 he was judge of the probate court and a member of the Council. One of his last public services before he retired from public life in 1801 was to serve as a member of the convention that ratified the U. S. Constitution when Vermont was admitted to the Union.

Although the gracious mansion John built before his retirement contains no portrait of its owner, it speaks eloquently of his way of life at that time. The decorative pattern of the brickwork on what is now considered the back of the building recalls the days when Lake Champlain was a cargo of cattle or wheat and deliver supplies but also to leave distinguished visitors. In the same way the ballroom on the second floor and the twin wine cupboards on either side of the dining-room mantel bear witness to the hospitality for which the family was famous.

In the lovely old parlor the portraits of John’s son Samuel and his wife gaze down stiffly at admiring strangers. Like his pioneer father, Samuel was keenly interested in his country’s welfare. In 1812, without waiting for orders from the Governor, he collected 2500 volunteers for the relief of the garrison at Plattsburgh. In recognition of this service the State of Vermont placed a golden eagle over the doorway of his house in Vergennes. Also, like his father, Samuel was the soul of hospitality and a letter the Wagstaffs showed me refers humorously to a convivial evening when his friend Commodore MacDonough was dined and wined so royally that he thought it unwise to attempt to return to Burlington that night.

The family urge to be in the thick of things is shown in a story about Samuel’s son, Samuel Paddock Strong. When Samuel, Sr. was preparing to leave for Plattsburgh, Samuel Paddock, then a young man of twenty, wanted to go with him. But his father ordered him to stay home and look after the family. However, the next morning, when the Sabbath quiet was broken by the distant thunder of artillery, filial obedience broke under the strain and Samuel Paddock rode off to Burlington to report for duty. Among the family documents are Samuel Paddock Strong’s commission as a lieutenant signed by Martin Chittenden in 1814, his commission as a lieutenant colonel signed by Jonas Galusha in 1820 and his commission as a brigadier general signed by Ezra Butler in 1827. On his father’s death in 1833, Samuel Paddock inherited a considerable property but along with his other activities he served as president of the Vergennes Bank for 17 years and was a member of the first board of directors of the Rutland and Burlington Railroad.

Although General Samuel Strong was probably the most prominent of John’s sons, they were all active in civic and military affairs. And when in the restless 1830’s the first Vermonters took their part in settling the middle West, several of John Strong’s boys were in the vanguard of the procession.

In 1934 the D.A.R. of Vermont decided to preserve this final home of a Green Mountain pioneer as a patriotic shrine and state headquarters. Since its purchase the same year the house has been carefully restored. But of the several hundred acres originally acquired with the property, only a few are still held by the Daughters. Most of the land has been given and the rest leased for a 50-year term to the State of Vermont as a state park. Today where John Strong’s children and grandchildren used to hunt and fish another generation enjoys the Lake and its wooded shores.

Perhaps we should have called this story “The Houses that John Built.” But looking back on John Strong’s useful life and the contributions made by successive generations of Strongs to the growth of Vermont and the nation, the original title still seems apt. For long after these structures of brick and timber are gone, the enduring courage that went into them will remain. And this is the house that John built.
A new enterprise in Norwich represents what is probably Vermont's most modern farm. The farm, named Starlake for a natural star-shaped body of water on the premises, is owned by P. G. Cole and A. M. Herrick, who both have homes on the 700 acre farm located near Route 5 on the Connecticut River. Through high mechanization and modern dairy methods the farm hopes to break records in Golden Guernsey milk production and breeding.

The modern farm keeps about 80 head of cattle, with about 50 milking head. The stable features an automatic barn cleaning system for manure which adds to sanitation and ease of operation. Donald Galick, a milk tester from Dairy Herd Improvement Assoc., is seen at the end of the barn checking the milk for butterfat content. A D.H.I. man tests the milk once a month.

Traffic often gets heavy on the road to the fields, and the smaller vehicles give way to the larger.
ShirLike believes in the use of "comfort stalls". They give the cows more freedom of motion and minimize the chance of teat injury when the cows get up. The flat grain floor makes it easier to keep the feeding areas clean. In winter the cows are outside four hours a day.

Leonard Anderson, herdsman, is seen dipping the milking machine teat cups into two disinfectant solutions. This is done before each cow is milked. To avoid barn dirt, the milk is always kept covered.

Before each milking the cow's udder is washed and a mastitis test is made by drawing the milk over a black slate. If the milk is yellowish or shows small particles, the cow is thoroughly checked for further symptoms and is immediately isolated.
Modern equipment is the answer to running a large farm efficiently. The 200 acres of tillable land can be worked in record time, thus making its yearly yield larger. Last year the farm won an award for crop rotation planning. Three farmers plus an additional summer hand are enough to keep the farm running easily and efficiently. Starlake's barns and machinery shed are seen in the background at left, and manager Herrick's house is seen at right. In the foreground, left to right, are Charles Philbrook, herdsman; Leonard Anderson, who is in charge of outside work; Allan Herrick, manager; Dick Cutting, a summer helper; Scott Gibson, assistant herdsman.
Allan Herrick, manager and co-founder of Starlake.

The production of each cow is recorded at each milking. If the cow does not produce at least 10,000 pounds of milk a year after its second calf it is either sold into another herd or beefed. The farm believes that if the cows do not make 10,000 pounds a year under the modern treatment of the farm they never will produce more elsewhere.

Scott Gibson is seen checking for leaks in the milk pipeline transfer system, which pumps milk from the cow barn to the milk house where it is cooled in bulk tanks. This system provides ease of handling and greater milk sanitation. The milk goes through the line on a partial gravity flow, to avoid "milk pockets."

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A task often overlooked on farms is the cleaning and maintenance of equipment. Charles Philbrook looks on as Leonard Anderson cleans a manure spreader. The hose is coupled with an air pressure system so that the water has about 175 pounds pressure behind it.

The Cole and Herrick children often follow the work crews with their miniature tractor which is used for cultivating. Phil Cole, Jr., discusses an out-of-gas problem with Allan Herrick, Jr., while his visiting friend Andy Love calls for aid. Allan wants to be a farmer.
Vermont is not a democracy; it is not a theocracy or a bureaucracy or an autocracy, heaven knows.

It isn’t a limited monarchy or republic.

It is just a lot of lovable but pigheaded individuals divided up into townships widely scattered on mountainsides and in valleys who will not let even their chosen officials command them or their chosen leaders lead them.

Burges Johnson in *The Saturday Review of Literature*