SOME election-minded Vermonters will remember the strange scene at Windsor, pictured here and recalled by Aubrey Janion. When Teddy Roosevelt stopped at Windsor in 1902 he was feted and entertained by his close friend, Maxwell Evarts. But the Vermonter, a son of President Hayes’ secretary of state, changed his views a decade later when TR bolted the Republican party.

And so, when Roosevelt came campaigning to Windsor as a Bull Moose in 1912, Evarts had a hostile reception prepared. “We are farmers. We are for Taft,” street banners proclaimed.

And to taunt the Moose, Evarts sent his four daughters to the depot with three yoke of bull calves. The animals took fright and bolted, but in the general fun TR remained definitely unamused. “Just like the Republicans,” he stated, “running off in all directions.” And the friendship of Roosevelt with Evarts was henceforth a thing of the past.

Ever since an article appeared a year ago readers have been asking about the lullaby which Indian Joe and Molly used to sing. Here it is, from the hand of John B. Viets, now of California, as recorded seven years back in Vermont History:

```
\[Mystery Picture
NUMB ER 17
On many a New England green stand the traditional “parade rest” statues, memorials to the Civil War. Most were made from metal but this one is stone. The first correct location of it, postmarked after midnight February 20th, will receive our special award. The Winter issue mystery picture, a large chicken house on Rte. 107 in Bethel, was first identified by Thelma Hoisington of Windsor and George Aiken of Marlboro, Mass.
```
Whittle a Willow Whistle

SPRING means different things to different people, but for many a country boy it is the time to venture forth to swamp or thicket and cut a new whistle. In this season when hungry trout are leaping in the riffles, and a warming sun brings new life to leaf and bud, the bark on a willow branch is not yet too tight to the wood... and that is the time to try your hand at the homely art of whistle making. All you need is a sharp jackknife and tolerant neighbors. Willow is the wood most commonly used, but ash, sumac, basswood—in fact any smooth-barked wood—will do. If you want to make a double whistle, simply whittle separate ones at both ends of about a 6-inch stick, leaving an inch or so of solid wood between each whistle. In any case, single or double, here's how to do it:

Find a straight smooth piece of young willow, at least ½-inch thick and at least 4 inches long. Make sure the stick has no knots or burls in the area where you are going to cut. First, cut the end of the stick at the angle indicated by A-a.

Clip off the point of the slanted end in a short vertical cut at A. About ¾-inch beyond this cut, make a small V-notch about ¼-inch deep and ¼-inch wide at B. Next, about 2 inches beyond the notch, cut the bark through to the wood in a circular cut all around the stick, at C. The bark will remain on the stick from C to the end, but we will slip the main part off the wood, from C to A.

With the handle of the jackknife, gently tap all around the part of the bark we are going to remove. The tapping will help to loosen the bark from the wood, so that it will slip easily, but be careful not to bruise or break it. Now gently slip the bark as shown.

After the bark has been removed, shave off about ¼ inch of wood back of the notch, as indicated by cut X. Then carve out the wood beyond the notch, indicated by cut Y. This cut controls the tone, and by varying its depth and length you can experiment with different tonal adjustments.

Soak the whistle in water for a few minutes, and then slip the bark back on the wood to its original position. You will see that the bark has now created an air space in front and in back of the notch in the bark, and that's what makes the whistle work. If the whistle dries out, soak it for a while. If you haven't goofed, this hand-wrought gizmo will provide a good rousing blast—shrill enough to satisfy whatever needs satisfying in the ears of a young man.
The Editor’s Uneasy Chair

Dozens of family groups have written us, in response to last Autumn’s issue note, of their desire to locate permanently in Vermont. At this writing, late Fall, no definite help is at hand, but Vermont Life is working on it, with optimism that a counseling-guidance-placement service may develop for would-be Vermonters in the near future.

Price Change: Effective May 23rd, the Summer issue publication date, Vermont Life one-year subscriptions will be $2. Two year subscriptions will remain at $3.50 and three-year at $5, forty-cents per year extra for foreign subscriptions.

Savings in clerical time allow us to retain the multiple year discounts, but on one-year subscriptions the increases in postal rates require this slight advance.

Special Issues: Vermont’s part in the Civil War occupies nineteen pages of this issue, the text and picture features commencing on page 35. A main part of our Summer issue will be devoted to the little-known Vermont-Canadian border country.

Calendar: The 1961 Vermont Life Calendar could not be used to show both picture and date area on a wall. If it had been, it would not have served in tented form for desk use. Some were disappointed we know, so a random 1000 calendar buyers are being polled for their sentiments on the format. This will guide us in the 1962 Calendar planning.

CONTENTS • SPRING 1961

Pomfret—Robert Holland .................. COVER
Green Mountain Post-Boy .................. INSIDE COVER
Mystery Picture—No. 17 .................. INSIDE COVER
Whittle a Willow Whistle—Kenn Greenleaf ........ 1
Sugaring in Pomfret—Aubrey Janion .......... 2
Every Monday, Rain or Shine—Photogr. by Sonja Bullaty & Angelo Lomeo .......... 4
Coolidge Cheese—Vrest Orton .......... 9
Life on a Drawbridge—Robert Hagerman ............ 12
Spring—A Scenic Portrayal ............... 16
Otter Creek Pike—Harold Blaisdell ............... 22
Voice in the Swamp—Ronald Rood .......... 26
Ramsey’s Orchid Odyssey—Wm. F. Gilbert,
Photogr. by Sonja Bullaty & Angelo Lomeo .......... 30

VERMONT IN THE CIVIL WAR .......... 35
For Freedom and Unity—T. D. Seymour Bassett .... 36
Vermont at Gettysburg—A painting by John D.
Whiting ....................... 38
9th Regiment Drum—A Color Painting .......... 39
Raid at St. Albans—Robin W. Winks .......... 40
Oliver’s Cave—Marian Leviasseur .......... 46
The Sleeping Sentinel—Richard S. Allen .......... 51
Reading about the Civil War—Robert Kolvoord .......... 53
Arts in Review—Elizabeth Kent Gay .......... 54
Thorn Apple Blossoms—Robert Holland .......... BACK COVER

CATTLE AUCTIONS look pretty much the same the country over. But a visitor passing Carlton Gray’s place in East Thetford any Monday might think a three-ring circus was in progress. For Gray, who has been in this trade for the past fourteen years, sells cows—and a little bit of everything else besides. For the casual visitor and for photographers, Gray’s, one of several regular commission sales in the state, is a good place to find the unexpected and to study human nature.

On fair days the merchandise auction is staged in the Grays’ yard. He and his sons Herbert and Larry, his wife and daughter-in-law all help out in the work and auctioning of whatever is brought in. There may be maple syrup, distress merchandise from a store that failed, vegetables, autos, household goods—in fact practically anything which somebody has and somebody else might want, may turn up—to be sold on a commission basis.

The sale begins about half-past twelve, with perhaps a third of the consignors and patrons coming from adjac-

A heavy freezer is auctioned right from the truck, handy for delivery to the successful bidder.
Household furnishings will be auctioned from this farm truck, one at a time.

You never know what will appear on the auction block. Sometimes it’s of consuming interest and the bidding is spirited.
The sale price of an item is serious business for both the consignor and the bidder.

But Monday's auction is a pleasant scene for visiting among old friends.
The livestock sale in the afternoon often finds horses up for auction. Teeth are reliable indicators of age.

The cattle sale in the barn runs into evening, finds Auctioneer Gray pointing out a cow's merits. Clerk in background records the sales.
cent New Hampshire. The auctioning of cattle is held in the barn (and this is a Vermont and Federally-approved stockyard), starting about four-thirty in the afternoon.

The sale may run on as late as two in the morning and six hundred head of cattle may change hands, although four hundred calves and one hundred cows is a more typical day.

The rest of the week the Grays try to get some rest, do a little farming, deliver sold items and line up commissions for the next sale.
THE NEW COOLIDGE CHEESE

VREST ORTON  Illustrated by DUVAL BROUN, JR., and HAMILTON GREENE

The last part of the 19th century saw Vermont leading the nation in the production of cheese and butter. Because no refrigeration was available in those days, Vermont farmers had to have creameries near enough to deliver milk by horse and buckboard and not spend all day doing it. As a result, every township had a creamery and many hill towns like Plymouth, supported four or five. It was in this heyday of cheese supremacy that Col. John Coolidge, the father of President Coolidge, and four neighbors started the Plymouth Cheese Company. This rural enterprise, like hundreds of other cheese-making ventures in the state, flourished, and did not, in fact, close its doors until 1934.

By this time, Vermont's leadership had passed to the mid-western states and our several hundred creameries had all but vanished. Technological progress and the ability of another part of the country to produce more efficiently and more cheaply, had once again, as three times before in Vermont's history, reduced the state's principal economy to near extinction. Today there are not half a dozen cheese factories operating in the state.

But John Coolidge, President Coolidge's only living son, was not daunted by this fact. As a summer resident of Plymouth since early childhood, his affection for his father's home place was strong. In 1957, Mr. Coolidge and his wife had presented to the state the historic house where Calvin Coolidge had lived and had been sworn in as President of the United States on August 3, 1923. The Vermont Historic Sites Commission's success in restoring this house and opening it to the public was of deep interest to John Coolidge. He was drawn more and more toward Plymouth and, when he retired from the printing business in Connecticut early in 1960, he determined to revive the cheese factory.

This was quite a job. The building, a few hundred feet from the Coolidge Homestead (now visited by 20,000 annually) was still standing. But in every way it was outmoded. Tremendous changes in cheese making had come about since 1891. No longer was it possible to make good cheese, or safe cheese, by the crude rule-of-thumb methods, as quaint as they seemed to city folk. One of the most perishable products is milk, and one of the most difficult things to make well is high-quality cheese. That may be one reason why, as a matter of fact, the small, unscientific cheese factories of the earlier day had to give way to the larger, more efficient, controlled processes. In short, John Coolidge had to begin with only a frame of a building and even that had to be rebuilt from top to bottom. The old equipment was thrown out and the latest, modern cheese-making machinery installed.

The first question was, of course, what kind of cheese to make. Wasn't there some way, John Coolidge asked himself, to turn out the cheese that his grandfather had made, but to do it in such a modern, scientific and efficient fashion that only a safe, marketable product would result?

After a long study, John Coolidge found there was. There was a choice of three principal kinds of cheese: Cheddar, Colby, and Granular. Cheddar (an English town where cheese had been made since the 17th century) had come to mean, in America, a whole-milk cheese made by
allowing the curd to drain off and mat into slabs at the bottom of the cheese vat. These slabs were then turned, piled up and sliced into chunks by a curd mill. This resulted in a solid, firm-textured cheese that aged well and, as it did, got more mellow and richer.

Colby, named after a town in Wisconsin, was made by throwing pails of cold water over the curd to cool it. As a result, it is more porous and might, by Federal standards, contain 42% water. This type, now nearly extinct, does not ripen like Cheddar and becomes, at a certain relatively young age, crumbly and dry when the water runs out, and sometimes sours.

The third type, Granular, or stirred curd, was the method chosen. The essential difference lay in breaking the curd into very small pieces, or granules, by hand, on the curd table after it had been drained and removed from the vat. This was the type of cheese made in the homes of the early colonists of New England. By eliminating the matting, turning and piling of the curd, as well as the curd milling, this cheese, Mr. Coolidge discovered, could be produced more quickly and more efficiently. And by using only tested, guaranteed, pasteurized milk, half the hazards could be removed.

Harold Stillwell, who had worked for John Coolidge’s grandfather in the original cheese factory, was hired as cheese maker. He had the notion that the stirred-curd process could produce a cheese soft and smooth in texture. Assisted by Charles Gulick in the manufacturing, and by Mrs. Charles Hoskison and Mrs. Eli Ward, the factory began making its first batch of cheese on March 4, 1960.

This new plant is a far cry from the early days when farmers within four or five miles hauled to the factory cans of raw milk produced under all kinds of barn and pasture conditions. Today there is a 3000-gallon refrigerated storage tank filled with milk delivered from the Bellows Falls Cooperative Creamery by tank truck. At the present rate of production, this holds a week’s supply and will make about 2500 pounds of Coolidge cheese.

Set off by a railing on one side of the cheese factory is a corridor through which the public can walk to the sales room and, on the way, see the cheese makers at work. Even a quick glance gives the pleasant impression that every device known to science and sanitation is here. On one wall of the vat room, for example, is an electric control board that looks as formidable as one in a jet plane. The principal piece of equipment in this big room is the large stainless steel cheese vat, with its controlled steam-heated jacket. This holds the 600 gallons of refrigerated milk run from the storage tank, and this is where the cheese-making begins.

In few other food-processing businesses are cleanliness and control so important. Because, basically, cheese making is the rigid elimination of bad bacteria. What is more important, since good bacteria are necessary or you won’t have cheese, the proper utilization of good, useful bacteria also is vital.

To watch Harold Stillwell and young Gulick rush from one station of control to the other, and go through the complete seven-hour cycle from the time they start with fresh milk until the curd is pressed into wheels of cheese, is to appreciate why John Coolidge determined to forgo the quaint old-fashioned look, for the modern clean look. Bad bacteria would have a hard time in this place.

Yet the steps in cheese making are in themselves as simple in principle as they were three hundred years ago. By heating the milk in the vat, and adding a culture to assist this process, the milk coagulates, like sour milk. This “starter” was once a left-over of old milk: today it is a scientific, controlled lactic culture that’s added at the proper time. Later, rennet, with its enzymes of rennin and casein, is added and in time the milk in the vat is turned into a jelly-like curd, from which some of the moisture, or whey, must be drained.

Before the curd is removed from the vat, however, it undergoes another important process. With a wicked looking tool called the curd mill... actually a rake of vertical
and horizontal knives working together... the curd is cut up into strips, then cooked in the vat until these slices become about as solid as foam-rubber. In this process more water is drained off. Now the curd is ready for removal from the vat to the curd table.

On this long table, Stillwell and Gulick salt the curd and then dip their hands in and start breaking it down into small pieces of granules which look not unlike coarse, dry cottage cheese. Now more whey or moisture drains off, and in time the substance is ready for the final stage of hooping. It is the working of these slices of curd into granules that gives the cheese its name of Granular Curd Cheese.

These granules of curd, now with enough moisture worked out, are placed in round metal containers called hoops and at last the stuff begins to look like a wheel of cheese. These containers, small for the five-pound cheese and larger for the big "store cheeses," are laid end to end on a rack and by controlled hydraulic pressure most of the remaining moisture is pressed out. This squeezing will reduce the volume of curd by one-third.

The next morning the metal hoops are removed, the cheeses are carried upstairs by elevator and after a few days' curing are dipped in a bucket of hot wax to give them a protective coating. Their journey ends in the curing rooms on the upper floor of the Coolidge factory under controlled temperature. Up and down these rooms are three-tier shelves and on these the round cheeses rest for proper curing. Each is turned over daily until waxed, and then less frequently until ripe. The important factor here is the regulated temperature which actually controls the aging process: it must not be too fast, or too slow.

All this may sound simple and somewhat easier to accomplish than it actually is.

There are so many bad things that can happen in cheese making that each act and each step, must be precise, with no guesswork.

A good cheese must not crumble in the fingers. It must feel smooth like cold butter and give off a clean, fresh aroma. It must taste fresh and clean too. It must age properly and not fall apart or dry out or turn rancid or sour.

Low fat content, lack of proper development of acid in the making, overheating in the vat, lack of the right proportion of moisture in the curd or too much salt, all can cause cheese to be too hard and tough. Other faults that can appear will make cheese sweat water when too young or too moist, fall into pieces when cut, crumble when older, taste and smell sour like putrefaction, and end by being too soft, too mealy, too sticky and too weak. Gasses can form, the wheels can bloat and holes like a sea sponge can appear.

To keep all or any of these troubles from arising is a constant chore. To watch the cheesemakers at work causes one who does not know John Coolidge to wonder why he took up such an exacting and challenging business when most men of his age are thinking about retirement.

But, like his father, and like all the Coolidges, nine generations of whom are buried next to the President and his son Calvin, Junior, in the Plymouth Notch Cemetery on the hill, John has a deep veneration for tradition. He was very close to his grandfather, Col. John Calvin Coolidge, and spent many hours in the cheese factory as a boy. The cheese business at Plymouth was something his grandfather started and took great pride in, and reviving it was something he wanted to do, but not as a hobby:—he considers it a business that can be made to operate on a sound and profitable road.

He has set a policy of selling some of his cheese by direct mail in five-pound wheels, but most cheese he retails at the factory to the thousands of visitors who every year are intrigued by this clean white building and its shining new equipment, in a village which, in sharp contrast, is of the past and steeped in the aura of history.

The only things historical about the new Plymouth Cheese Corporation are the location of the building and the good repute of the earlier operation. There is definitely something traditional, though. That is the Coolidge determination to make it succeed.
LIFE ON A DRAWBRIDGE

Text and Photographs by ROBERT L. HAGERMAN

When it comes to jobs of isolation one usually thinks of the lighthouse keeper or the forest ranger who tends the mountain-top fire lookout tower. Another such job here in Vermont is that of sitting in the middle of Lake Champlain on a railroad drawbridge, opening it for large boats and closing it when a train is due. There are several such bridges scattered through the northern Lake, connecting island and island or island and mainland.

Running between the northern shoulder of Malletts Bay and the tip of South Hero is a 3½ mile causeway. About a third of the way from South Hero is an opening, spanned by Allen Point drawbridge, manned by drawtender Wallace Pelkey of Alburg and assistant drawtender George Wilford of Winooksi. Living in a little shack which sits on the narrow strip between the lake and the Rutland Railroad tracks, they attend outpost 6 days a week, 24 hours a day, from about May 6 to November 15.

Their bridge activity is actually very little—there are only 10–12 trains a week, 4 at the most in a day. But when required they grunt and groan and crank the bridge open or shut as the case may be. Spring is the busiest, for then, with the lake level way up, there may be less than two feet clearance and they have to open up even for rowboats.
A train is coming and the tenders bring the bridge back from its usual open position. Through a series of huge gears set on a center foundation, the bridge rotates when the men turn the driveshaft.

Trains do not stop, but drop off newspapers and occasional food treats like watermelon. Pelkey and Wilford may reciprocate with a batch of fresh fish.
Keeping track of boats which need the opened bridge is another duty. This information goes to the U.S. Coast Guard.

One regular time-passer is fishing. Here, Wilford hooks a “good-for-nothing” sunfish, but has often come up with a nice bass.

The steel girder bridge itself is a fascinating structure. Built in 1899, its 450 tons is balanced on a center pylon on which the bridge rotates. Two outer supports for the opened bridge have washed away but the main span has withstood the 62 years of wind, water and ice.

While Pelkey and Wilford have other duties, for the

Pelkey helps himself to coffee from the spic and span woodstove. He does all the cooking while Wilford does the dishes and cleaning up.
most part their time is their own—for fishing, reading, playing cards. Occasionally there is company—fishermen walk out from the mainland to try their luck on the bridge; boats which stop to idle a bit; and the passing trains themselves. But by and large it is a job for the man who doesn’t mind being alone.

End
Spring

There is a sumptuous variety about New England weather that compels the stranger’s admiration—and regret. The weather is always doing something there; always attending strictly to business; always getting up new designs and trying them on people to see how they will go. But it gets through more business in Spring than any other season. In the Spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of twenty-four hours. MARK TWAIN
Otter Creek

HAROLD F. BLAISDELL

Photographs by Pete Terwilliger

Otter Creek is the longest stream lying wholly within Vermont. Apart from this distinction, it is one of the very few New England streams inhabited by northern pike. From the village of Wallingford to its outlet in Lake Champlain near Vergennes, Otter Creek plays host to northerns, some of which grow big enough to gobble half-grown muskrats and to snatch unsuspecting ducklings from the surface.

Since pike favor quiet waters, the Otter, as you might suspect, is a peaceful, winding stream whose smooth, unhurried flow is seldom broken by falls or rapids. Its banks are high and steep, and these are in turn crowned by tall silver maples and massive willows. Banks and trees combine to produce a cool shade which the canoeing fisherman finds as agreeable as do the pike.

An abundance of wildlife is attracted to the Creek and its tree-lined banks. The fisherman who drifts quietly will be rewarded by frequent sight of muskrats, ducks and ducklings, beavers, squirrels, herons and, oddly enough, numerous great horned owls. Deer are sometimes glimpsed, and once in a blue moon a sure-enough otter pops up to give credence to the Creek's name.

Due to the high banks, fishing from shore is usually very

Son Mike spin-fishes while Author Blaisdell paddles the slow-moving Otter Creek, ideal water for float fishing.
difficult. The slow current, on the other hand, makes drift fishing extremely easy and pleasant. From Pittsford to Middlebury the water is ideal for float trips.

A canoe is probably best suited to this type of fishing, but almost any small craft will do. It must, however, be light enough to be launched and taken out where banks are high and steep. Numerous bridges and dirt roads which follow the Creek give the fisherman a wide choice in selecting a section. Experience will teach him how long a length he should tackle for a day’s fishing.

Northern pike are not shy fish, but they are, in several ways, rather peculiar critters. Thus, stream fishing for them does require a certain amount of know-how.

Pike are predators, purely and simply. Unlike trout and bass, they scorn such food items as worms, grubs, nymphs and other larvae. They prey almost exclusively on other fish; a six-inch chub or sucker is a mere snack to a mature pike, and he can gobble a fish twice that length with ease.

Best baits, then, are live suckers, chubs or minnows. Best lures are those which imitate bait fish: spoons, wobblers, plugs and spinners. To fish with live bait it becomes necessary to anchor in promising spots and wait for bites. The artificial lures better meet the drifting angler’s needs, for, with either spinning rod or bait casting outfit, he can cast to each likely spot as he moves slowly along.

Because pike tend to lie as close to shore as possible, it is highly important that the fisherman drop his spoon or plug near the shoreline with each cast. He should also pay particular attention to spots which lie downstream from stumps, logs and other objects which break the current. It is in these protected pockets where pike like to lie motionless, instantly ready to pounce on lesser creatures unfortunate enough to stray within reach.

Once hooked, the northern pike puts up his own peculiar type of battle. He refuses to be spurred into long, sizzling runs. Instead, he may allow you to reel him close to the boat with almost no show of resistance. But when you reach for him with the net, watch out. Old man pike is likely to explode with almost the fury of a hand grenade.

My son Mike and I tangled with a yard-long lunker last summer that all but swamped us. He had come in like an old boot; but about the time I had him headed into the net, he came unwound like a broken mainspring. Throwing water like a speedboat, he bulled his way smack through the netting, leaving me with my line running through the hoop. And once he had me at this disadvantage, you may be sure he proceeded to raise a ruckus which would have done credit to a salmon. Thanks more to luck than skill, Mike and I finally wrestled him aboard. Even then, he threatened to upset our little 13-foot canoe before we could subdue him.

Because of this leaning toward close, hand-to-fin com-
The spray flies as a big pike takes to the air. Many try these tactics to get rid of the lure. Below, a lunker on the author's line comes in easily toward the canoe and then decides it's about time to stage a fight. Close-in jumps like these are typical of the northern pike.
Mike strains to hoist his catch of hefty pike.

bat, the northern’s qualities as a game fish are argued by fishermen. I'll admit that I would hold Old Longjaws in a bit higher esteem if he would burn more line off my reel. On the other hand, I can have plenty of sport from fish which fill my lap with water and all but tumble me out of my canoe, even though they seldom do get beyond spitting distance.

Differences of opinion also exist with respect to the pike’s worth as a food fish. The flesh is firm, white, flaky and of good flavor. But it is heavily reinforced with a network of forked bones. These make the consumption of small pike too much of a chore for most people, but in a large fish these forked bones are easily located and removed.

My friends Mr. and Mrs. Fred Wenton, proprietors of the Pittsford Inn, love northern pike without reservation, however. Big, small or in between, they welcome all that I bring them. Mrs. Wenton has a special way of preparing them, and I hereby pass along her recipe to my fellow fishermen. They, in turn, may wish to pass it along to their ever-loving, or, perhaps, not-so-ever-loving, wives—

**EUROPEAN BOILED PIKE**

- 2 quarts of water
- ¼ cup of vinegar
- 2 onions
- 1 large carrot
- 1 bayleaf
- 1 teaspoon of peppercorns
- 2 tablespoons of salt

Mix, bring to a boil and let boil for an hour. Cut pike in serving portions and place in brew. Bring back to a boil and remove from fire. Leave fish in hot stock for another 15 minutes. Remove and serve hot with melted butter, or chilled with mayonnaise.

Sounds good, and it is good. But now I'm going to risk spoiling it all by declaring that my favorite part of a northern pike is the liver. Broiled.

Try it, and I'll guarantee one thing: you'll either like it or despise it. The taste of pike’s liver leaves no fence sitters in its wake.

*The author, a noted freelance sports writer living in Pittsford, is the author of the long-popular *Tricks That Take Fish* (Holt).*

_Spring 1961_ • 25
Most likely you have never seen him. He's too shy and well-camouflaged to attract notice. He quietly disappears the moment you disturb his watery world. Yet he's such a lusty singer that spring in Vermont would not be the same without him.

In fact, all over the eastern half of the United States and southern Canada the Spring Peeper hails the change of the seasons. But even though millions have heard his call, to most he is just a voice in the marsh. Many have not the faintest idea what kind of a creature he may be.

This little frog—for that is what he is—begins to sound his first notes shortly after he comes from his winter hideout in the forest. Sometimes you can hear his high, piping one-note call up on a hillside, many feet from the nearest water. He works downhill as fast as the temperature of the strengthening days will let him, until finally he slips into the edge of an icy pool.

Soon he is joined by other males and the silent, egg-laden females. As their numbers increase, they seem to take courage from each other's company. The clear, upward-sliding notes, pitched nearly as high as a human can whistle, come with greater frequency. Finally, when spring is about a month old, his once-a-second calls begin to blend with those of his neighbors into a constant, swelling sound.

He is incredibly small for such a songster. Not a baby frog as many believe, but fully grown at one inch in length, he and his mate could fit comfortably within the bowl of a teaspoon. The natural size is shown in the Stephen Collins color photograph above. He weighs only a tenth of an ounce, but his voice is so clear that it can be heard nearly half a mile on a still night. If we could shout as loudly for our size, we could be heard in Melbourne, Australia, about 10,000 miles away.

This exuberant little midget is almost impossible to find during the day. He's most active at night. And he is a master ventriloquist. The sound seems to come from nearly anywhere in the tangled vegetation. It's hard to pinpoint its source. Then, as you come closer, he falls silent.

His leaf-brown back matches the color of dead grasses. Even from the point of view of a pickerel or pike, he must be hard to see, as his whitish-yellow underside blends with the light sky overhead.

The first time I saw this little fellow, one of the smallest frogs in America, I spotted him with the aid of a flashlight. Beneath the throat of the male is a thin distensible pouch which inflates with air as he sings. It serves as a resonance chamber, greatly amplifying the sound. The bubble-like, translucent sac caught the light, reflecting it like a single eye of some wild animal at the water's edge. It pulsed with each call, winking at me in the dark.

He seemed not to mind the light, but kept singing while I crept to within a few inches. Then I discovered an astounding thing. That great volume of sound is not a song
at all, but a hum. The spring peeper makes all his noise with his mouth closed.

A glance at his color pattern showed how well he was named: *Hyla crucifer*, the “wood nymph who bears a cross.” Not only is he flecked with brown and tan like the twigs and leaves of the woods and bushes, but on his back is a dark oblique cross. It is like the letter “X”, with the four corners at the shoulders and hips.

His eyes, like those of many toads and frogs, were things of startling beauty. Jet-black in the center, they were slitted like those of a cat, but horizontally. Their edges were flecked with a brilliant liquid gold.

Each of his toes was tipped with a tiny suction disc, enabling him to cling halfway out of the water on a broken reed. So sure is the grip of these discs and the natural clinging power of the wet little body that I have had a peeper walk up the inside of a goldfish bowl, under its shoulder where it hung upside down, and over the rim to freedom.

Yet, when it wants to, it can loosen the suction cups and leap three or four feet.

Soon after they reach the water in the spring, the little creatures begin to pair off. They frog-kick their way across open stretches of water between the hummocks. In their ardor, the males hopefully clamp onto nearly every floating object with their front legs. Sometimes two males, fumbling in the dusk, may meet and spar for a hold, evidently unaware of the mistaken identity. When one finally gets a double arm-lock on the other, the outraged object of his affection kicks and thrashes until he is free.

Finally the trial-and-error brings results. Within a few days after he has announced his availability at the top of his lungs, the tiny swain has found his lady. She is about the same color, though slightly larger than her suitor, who hangs on, piggy-back, with such a grip that it’s a wonder she can breathe.

They swim around thus, in pairs, for several days. The male may continue his serenade right at her ear, to be answered from scores of throats in the water and along the shore. The volume of sound soon becomes so great that no individual voice can be heard.

Once I drove up to the edge of a swamp filled with spring peepers and blew the horn—long and loud. When I stopped, they were going as strong as ever. The little frogs, though gifted with perfectly good eardrums just behind those golden eyes, took no notice at all. They seemed to be totally deafened by their own exultant chorus.

Yet, strangely enough, this riot of sound is their protection. Toss a stone into a swamp. At once, the peepers near the splash fall silent. Then a widening circle of quiet spreads outward, like a swift-moving ripple. On and on it goes, until you are in the center of a shocking stillness. Each little songster, noting that his neighbor has stopped, does the same. Thus a swimming water snake or a hunting mink announces his presence by the change that comes over his intended prey.

Within a few minutes, however, some bold little male tests the state of affairs with a single inquiring call. He is answered by others, and presently the song of spring is back over the swamp.

A few weeks after the first frog braved the chilly water, the eggs are produced. Aided in their release from the female by their own expanding pressure and the bear-hug of the male, they are emitted singly or in tiny clusters of six or eight. Pinhead-size, they look like dark little plant seeds. They are fertilized as they emerge by the milt of the male, which is released into the water at the same time. There is no real physical union of the sexes.

The new parents separate as complete strangers shortly after egg-laying. They pay no attention to the freshly-produced eggs. Yet so strong is their brief attachment that I have captured a mating pair and carried them half a mile in a sloshing bottle, still locked together.

The eggs cling to twigs and other underwater objects by their sticky gelatinous outer layer. They adhere singly, rather than in the familiar big jellylike masses which we know as “frog eggs”. These latter are usually produced by larger species such as the leopard frog. The eight or nine hundred eggs of each peeper may be as numerous, but they are seldom seen.
The babies hatch in about a week. Looking like rippling mites of black ribbon, they have delicate feathery gills. They hang motionless in the water, absorbing the attached yolk sac provided by nature to tide them over their first few hours. In several days, they have turned into tadpoles a quarter-inch long. Then, with their rasping little mouths, they feed on the layer of algae and debris which covers their underwater pasture.

Now begins a dramatic race for life. In contrast to the clamor of the adults who may still play in the water above them, it goes on in a desperate silence. Not only are hundreds of predatory insects and shore birds on the watch for the little morsels, but an even more ominous threat hangs over them. Many of the pools which were alive with peepers in April will be dry land by July. They must hurry through their complete babyhood in less than two months, or perish.

Often they lose by only a few days. Then the drying mud shows hundreds of dark-grey spots to mark the tragedy. But a relenting nature has also given them a weapon against drought. If they are nearly ready to absorb their tails and transform into frogs when the pool begins to shrink, they are able to speed up their own development. The legs appear, the tail shortens and gives its substance back to the body for nourishment, and the undersized dwarfs, scarcely as large as a kernel of corn, make their escape a week or two early.

They must still hope for an early rain, however. Like all frogs, they must keep their skin moist or they shrivel and die. A few minutes in the hot sun will kill them.

This annual migration from the woods to our swamps and back again represents one of the oldest round trips on earth. It is far older than the migration of birds—in fact, older than birds themselves. It began, scientists say, when primitive fish-like amphibious forms first deserted the sheltering waters of the early world and tried a new life on land. As the ages passed, some were able to leave the open waters forever, ultimately giving rise to the reptiles, birds and mammals.

The amphibia, however, could not complete the change. Represented today by our frogs, toads, and salamanders, most of them are fated forever to return to the water for egg-laying and development. And so the little spring peeper still follows the racial trail of some unknown pioneer back to the waters of perhaps 325,000,000 years ago.

By June, most of the peepers will have left the water. Then, from early summer to late fall, they hop through our forests and brushland, searching through the leaves and low bushes for insects. I have found this little frog under stones in the deep woods. It’s also been seen on the twig of a sugar maple forty feet in the air, from which it leapt fearlessly to land unharmed on the leaves below.

It’s often possible to hear the spring peeper’s call in the woods every month of the year, for he may awaken during a winter thaw. Then he bravely pipes a few notes at the waning sun.

Usually, however, he sleeps right through the winter. He buries himself in forest humus or under a decaying log before the freeze of December. Then he remains in a torpor, his small cold-blooded body scarcely warmer than the soil about him.

Finally the sun swings north and the sap commences to flow in the maples. Then the crossbearer comes to life again. Soon his welcome call from a thousand swamps tells us that spring’s work has begun.

END
Save now: Subscribe or renew now at the old, low rate. One-year subscriptions go to $2 on May 23d.

Free Gift: An INDEX of Vermont Life's first ten years ... free with each two or three-year subscription or renewal received before May 23d. Old rates of $3.50 and $5 remain.

Special Issues: Limited supplies of these collectors' items still available

LAKE CHAMPLAIN ANNIVERSARY (Summer 1959)
MACHINE TOOL CENTER (Autumn 1958)

SKIING ISSUE (Winter 1958-59)
CONNECTICUT RIVER VALLEY (Summer 1960)

(Order Form on Reverse Side)
Sirs:

Enter my subscription or renewal to Vermont Life:
- at the old low rate for one year: $1.85
- at the regular rate for two years and send Index free: $3.50
- at the regular rate for three years and send Index free: $5.00

Please add 40¢ per year if foreign.

Enter the following gift subscriptions:

NAME

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

NAME

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

NAME

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

MY NAME

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

Send the checked Special Issues to these friends (50¢ each):

NAME__________________________  Lake Champlain □

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

NAME

STREET

CITY_______ ZONE_______ STATE

Sign gift card

Lake Champlain □
Machine Tool □
Skiing □
Connecticut Valley □

Total enclosed $__________

Please make check payable to: Vermont Life
Union Village
ARTHUR GRIFFIN
Morgan Horse Farm

Spring 1961 • 29
RAMSEY’S

Orchid Odyssey

WILLIAM F. GILBERT

Photographs by Angelo Lomeo and Sonja Bullaty
Carl Ramsey brought his wife and small daughter to Vermont to live twenty-six years ago—on the strength of a promise—a promise of financial assistance for a unique piece of writing and research.

Ever since his boyhood around Allentown, Pennsylvania, Carl had collected and studied wild orchids. Early in the thirties, he picked Vermont as an ideal spot to begin the major work he had been planning many years—a complete history of the orchids of the world, illustrated with habitat plates, anatomical drawings, and photographs.

An Allentown philanthropist promised backing to set up a Wild Orchid Sanctuary and Research Center in Vermont, complete with residence, greenhouse, laboratory, and extensive habitat acreage. Then the death of their would-be benefactor wiped out the plans for large scale work.

But the promise Carl and Edith Ramsey had made to themselves remained—to put together and record in writing, drawings, and pictures, the 100 million year life-story of that amazingly intricate, incredibly beautiful, and highest form of flowering plant life, the wild orchid.

The years of work began. A neighbor gave them eleven acres of swamp. They remodeled a tool shed for their home. Carl borrowed a microscope. They grew vegetables for the local Inn, cut their own firewood, pumped water from a well, and did their evening reading by the light of kerosene lamps.

It was not an easy life. Even for Vermont, it was frugal. I remember my favorite supper at the Ramseys' when I was twelve: corn meal muffins, raspberry jam, and trout. Carl taught me how to make flies, and to catch fish with them.
CARL RAMSEY'S  
Recipe for  
HEALTH,  
HAPPINESS,  
LONGEVITY  

Eat onions, chop wood and swear!
In payment, I sat many hours before clumps of blossoming Lady’s Slippers, a jar in one hand, the cover in the other, waiting to catch a bee. I used to wonder why a man who bent over a microscope for days at a time, painstakingly drawing what he saw there, humming Beethoven, had only a hand-pump to draw water at the kitchen sink. Or why Edith, at her typewriter, from which came vivid pages on the life of pre-historic millenia, had only a wick-lamp to work by.

I guess the answer is that Carl and Edith Ramsey are people whose dedication to their chosen work is total, whose determination to accomplish what they set for themselves is absolute.

Through the thirties, forties, and turbulent fifties, the pages of text and the intricate drawings accumulated and were filed away. Their correspondence became worldwide, specimens arrived from around the globe. Their bog-acres filled up with the rostrum of native orchid genera, laboriously collected, transplanted, and cared for.

Working together, these dedicated, self-trained naturalists amassed and recorded a body of knowledge which will rank, in its pioneering coverage and detail, with Fuertes’ work on birds.

Today, their major work is finished. It is called, “The Odyssey of The Orchids.” There are two volumes and 350 plates, in line and color. With the habitat and dissection drawings, this work traces the homology and morphology of the entire orchid family from the fossil bees of the mid-Cretaceous period to the present.

Two companion volumes fill out the record. “Between Chores” is the story of the Swampacres Sanctuary. A work in progress, “Orchid Models”, is a detailed study of pollen mass structure.

To this they have added a fishing book, as yet untitled, a book of early reminiscences called “Little Lehigh Idyll”, and three volumes of poems: “Orchid Poems”, “Mountain Poems”, and “Portraits.”

And in the tradition of the earlier naturalists and New England literary men, Carl keeps a daily journal, “to record,” he says, “not just the temperature of the air, but the temperature of my mind.”

Carl and Edith Ramsey can be proud of what they have done. Their quarter century odyssey with the orchids enriches the world’s fund of knowledge, and proves, once again, that a way exists for every man’s life work, if he is willing to work hard enough and long enough to build it.
VERMONT IN
The Civil War

For Freedom and Unity
Battle of Cedar Creek
At Gettysburg

9th Regiment Drum
Raid at St. Albans

Oliver's Cave
The Sleeping Sentinel
Reading About the War
FOR
Freedom and Unity

Vermont’s Civil War

T. D. SEYMOUR BASSETT

"IF THE LIGHTENING should announce to the Legislature of Vermont that the Union was dissolved," asked Congressman Meacham of Middlebury, "What would they do? Would they resolve themselves into a military community and expend their money for arms and ammunition? No; not one dollar... They do not talk or think of fighting..."

This was at the peak of the sectional crisis of 1850. Speaking on the floor of the House, Meacham pointed to peaceable Vermont, where agricultural fairs had replaced militia musters. South Carolina drilled for war, but leading Vermonters held a peace convention, and seemed to support the view that the North would not coerce secessionists.

The dominant Congregationalists in 1859 passed a strong anti-war resolution. John Cain, editor of the Rutland Courier, repeated the refrain of Democrats elsewhere, that before a brothers’ war and “massacre of our own race” should come, Democrats would rise and attack abolitionist “disturbers of the peace on our own soil.” There was apparently irrepressible conflict within the North.

James Meacham’s prediction was true about extemporized mobilization. The Civil War was not total war. But the State and local governments spent “not one dollar” but eight or nine million dollars toward winning the war, not to mention uncounted private contributions. The people of Vermont never had been and never would be again so unanimous about anything. “Freedom and Unity” was officially established in 1862 as the slogan on the state coat of arms. As Arthur Peach has said, the Civil War was one of the “great dramas where Vermonters spoke only a few lines,” but spoke them well.

The first sign of the Vermont martial spirit was the militia revival of 1855-60. “June trainin’” had degenerated into a farce, with an alcoholic aroma. Brandon, a banner antislavery town, organized the first new company on March 8, 1855. Until, under radical Governor Ryland Fletcher, the state offered three dollars a year to those who would drill in proper togs. Respectable young men of the best families joined the new companies and received a flood of publicity, but not a word was said about the obvious reason for this revival: suspicion of the South. All attention was turned to the round of soirees, levees, balls, anniversaries, parades, band concerts, target shoots, excursions and presentations of fancy epaulets to the commander, all in dress uniform and topped off with a banquet and speeches. At the governor’s first muster of nine companies, held on September 1-2, 1858, in Brandon, swarms of spectators were satisfied, in spite of the confused behavior of green men and the injury of three from the usual “premature discharge of a cannon.” Vermont’s First Regiment, mustered into federal service May 2, 1861, was drawn from ten of the seventeen companies in active existence at the close of 1860.

The First was assembled at Rutland (after a state-
The Battle of Cedar Creek was painted by Vermont Civil War hero Julian Scott in 1874 by legislative commission. The 2-foot wide canvas now hangs in the State House at Montpelier. The painting shows the famous First Vermont Brigade, which had been beaten back all day, during the closing moments of the final, successful charge ordered by General Phil Sheridan late on that eventful day, Oct. 19, 1864.

The camps had mild epidemics of measles and mumps—also of insubordination, intoxication and AWOL’s. The latter resulted from camp conditions, delays, disappointments over equipment and arms, dislike of officers, and civilian habits. Discipline was better maintained, after experience with the Second and Third Regiments, if officers were promptly commissioned and stayed on the job. Punishment at first consisted, for the repentant or recaptured, of drumming the guilty out of camp or five dollar fines and the guard house. The long delays in preparing the Third resulted in such games as running the guards or raiding the exorbitant sutlers’ shanties, until one ringleader was killed and another wounded while attacking a “refreshment saloon.” Filling the county jail in such a situation did not solve the problem. One answer was to keep each company near home until arrangements were completed at the rendezvous. Brattleboro’s Company C, Second Vermont, while awaiting the call to Burlington, was removed to Newfane “both for the economy of boarding and as a ‘means of grace’ in the avoidance of the temptations of a large village.”

The general atmosphere, however, was one of festivity and adventure. Railroads offered excursion rates to admirers of the heroes. Goodwives proffered sweets; bands blared; chaplains exhorted at compulsory Sabbath worship to “trust God and keep your powder dry.” New buddies, new knowledge and new scenes counteracted the news from home-sweet-home which later damaged morale. War was still a picnic in the early Vermont camps.

(continued on page 47)
VERMONT AT GETTYSBURG

This noted Connecticut artist describes the action in a painting, reproduced here for the first time by special permission.

...was still anyone's battle on the sultry morning of July 3d. Meade's army, on the defensive, held the center on a bare slope, with very little cover available. It had been decided to support the embattled wings. Lee believed it could be broken if first saturated by the fire of his massed artillery, which he had placed on wooded hills.

He didn't know that the Federal center was held by the veteran Second corps, under General Hancock, "Dandy Hancock," who was a Philadelphian of British parentage, was extremely brave, probably the best corps commander in the army—after the death of Stonewall Jackson. It was Hancock and not Meade who had decided to hold this position.

For the final drive, Lee selected the elite divisions of Pickett and Pettigrew, about 16,000 men. The bombardment roared and thundered for nearly two hours, the greatest artillery duel the world had seen. When it stopped, about three o'clock, a fog of smoke lay over the valley, as thick as the feeling of tension. Then the shout, "Here they come!"

And they came, in magnificent order, the long lines of Confederate shock troops. They kept on and on, rolling up the slope of Cemetery Ridge. On their left, Pettigrew's men were driven back—their line had to face stone walls and sheltered guns—but Pickett's division, hitting the weakest spot, made a small break in the Federal line. (See dark smoke at upper left in the picture.)

A brigade under General Kemper was advancing to exploit the breakthrough when it was struck on the right flank by the Vermont brigade, under General Stannard—the action depicted in my painting. This Vermont force, barely two thousand men, comprised the 13th, 14th and 16th regiments. Recalling its strategic position, General Hancock rode there at a gallop to give orders for a flank attack. He was badly wounded, however. Stannard's bugles sounded as he wheeled his brigade to the right and launched it at Kemper's right flank. The 13th Vermont (Colonel Randall) fired about 10 rounds and then charged, the men cheering.

It was a surprise, and the effect was decisive. Kemper's troops, after a brief resistance, broke in disorder and surrendered by hundreds. General Kemper was mortally wounded and the colors of the 8th and 9th Virginia were captured. The exultant cheers of the Vermont brigade were taken up by other Federal forces. The much-beaten Army of the Potomac found itself in that climactic hour. Though tough and bloody battles lay ahead, it would never be on the defensive again.

Thus did little Vermont make a big contribution at a critical moment in American history. General Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade (mustered in Brattleboro in September, 1862) had seen no battle action until Gettysburg. But the raw troops from the Green Mountain State hit hard when hard hitting was needed.

JOHN D. WHITING

9th Regiment, Vermont Volunteers, United States Infantry

The ill-fated 9th, organized the summer of 1862, was captured almost at once later the same year in Gen. A. P. Hill's furious attack on Harper's Ferry. Exchanged in 1863, the regiment suffered most from disease, finished the war in the capture of Richmond.
Raid
AT ST. ALBANS
This northernmost action of the Civil War was really a Confederate defeat

ROBIN W. WINKS

The Illustrations: Line drawings here are from Leslie’s Weekly of the period, filmed by Edmund Royce. Comparable photographs are from 20th Century Fox film, The Raid.

BENNETT YOUNG IN 1864

40 • VERMONT Life
The famous raid which Bennett Young and twenty Southern followers unleashed against the normally sleepy town of St. Albans in the bright October sun of 1864 is celebrated on the 19th of that month each year in Vermont. The raid is remembered as the only action of the Civil War to take place in New England. It is commemorated and memorialized by historical markers and plaques, and the events of the raid have been retold in no less than thirteen books and twenty-four articles and have been spread before us on the small eye of the television tube and across the large eye of the Technicolor screen. Almost none of these have bothered to point out that the raid was a magnificent blunder which did the Confederacy untold harm.

The youthful Bennett Young—he was then but 21, and a Lieutenant in the Confederate army—accomplished his first two purposes clearly and cleanly enough. He died still insisting that he had achieved all four of his goals. His first goal was to rob the banks of St. Albans. Slipping into the market and railway town in groups of threes, under the guise of sportsmen come from Montreal for a bit of fishing, the raiders aroused only passing attention. The Federal authorities in Washington had picked up rumors that Confederate soldiers might attempt to raid Vermont or New York from Montreal and an agent had passed through Swanton on October 16 to inquire about any mysterious travellers. No one thought to mention to him a young man with a Southern drawl, reportedly a student of theology from the University of Toronto, who had hurried through town the day before on his way to St. Albans.

On the stroke of three on the afternoon of October 19 the supposed theologian stepped onto the porch of St. Albans' leading hotel, drew a revolver, and declared loudly, “In the name of the Confederate States, I take possession of St. Albans!” Thereupon Young directed raiding parties into St. Albans' three banks, herded the startled villagers on to the town green, rallied his men, and dashed from the town with over $200,000 in loot. Young's second goal was to escape to Canada, and this he did clearly but not cleanly. An attempt to destroy the town with Greek-fire—a mixture of sulphur, naptha, quick lime, and water—failed when the bottles of the mixture sputtered out against the buildings; in a misdirected flurry of gunfire Young's men succeeded in killing but a single man (ironically, the only pro-Southerner in town) and wounding a little girl; led by a young captain on leave from the Northern army, the townspeople were in such close pursuit that the raiders had no time to rob the bank at Swanton, as planned, but had to fire a barn and attempt to destroy a bridge—also unsuccessfully—to delay the pursuers; and many of the stolen bills were...
Entering the Franklin County Bank the raiders robbed the contents, herded the staff into the vault—including Woodchopper Clark.

Raiders collecting citizens as prisoners in front of the American House.

Raiders seizing horses from farmers’ wagons, at the foot of Fairfield Street.

The killing of E. J. Morrison, the only Southern sympathizer in town, in front of Miss Beattie’s millinery store.
dropped *en route*. But the raiders safely reached the Canadian border and what they presumed to be freedom.

There were two other goals, however. The St. Albans raid was not intended merely as a series of bank robberies. The foray was authorized and financed by Clement Clay, one of three Confederate commissioners stationed in Canada to organize and co-ordinate Southern activities there, and Clay and Young both hoped that this sudden evidence of military strength in the North would cause the Federal government to divert troops to Vermont from the Southern battlefields, removing some of the pressure from the harrassed General Robert E. Lee. Clay also hoped that the raid from Canadian soil would so anger Vermonters as to provoke an attack in retaliation, one which would violate the British territory and bring on a general Anglo-American war, a war which well could have led to a Southern victory.

Viewed as an attempt to deflect troops from the South the raid was an abysmal failure. Between them Governor J. Gregory Smith and General John A. Dix did send a few convalescing soldiers to St. Albans from Montpelier and the cadets of Norwich University were hurried to the border, but not a single soldier was withdrawn from Southern battlefields. In later years Young was to claim that twenty-five thousand men were sent to the border as a result of the raid. Actually the number was closer to thirteen hundred and nearly all were civilians from within Vermont.

Nor did the raid create the Anglo-American war which Clay wanted. In fact, the result was precisely the oppo-
Capt. George P. Conger of St. Albans, commanded pursuit of the fleeing raiders.

Firing the bridge at Sheldon Creek, the fleeing raiders are pursued by the Union cavalry.

Arrest of two of the robbers and recovery of part of the money.

Six of the captured raiders, in the office of the jail at Montreal; left to right: Hutchinson, Rev. Cameron, Sanders, Scott, Teavis, Young.

44 • VERMONT Life
site of Clay’s intention—as the leader of the Confederate commissioners, Jacob Thompson of Mississippi, had feared. Angered by this clear violation of both Britain’s neutrality and Canada’s hospitality (in harboring the Confederates, many of whom had escaped from Northern prisons), the Canadian authorities clapped the raiders into jail. Public opinion in Canada, which had been pro-Southern, veered sharply, so sharply in fact that the Confederate commissioners ultimately were forced to leave. The Governor General of British North America, who had been remaining relatively aloof from the war, made it abundantly clear that he was pro-Northern, and influential newspapers from Halifax to Toronto attacked the brash young Southerners who had been so foolish as to think Canada would harbor them.

Bennett Young virtually handed to the Northern Secretary of State, William H. Seward, the only diplomatic victory in relation to Canada which he achieved throughout the entire war. Seward had been urging the Canadians to adopt a new and more stringent neutrality act and the Canadians had been dragging their feet, partially because they rather liked the many charming Southerners who were taking up residence in Montreal and partially because they didn’t want to appear to be giving in to Seward’s demands. But three months after the raid, and as a direct result of it, the Canadian Parliament passed the new neutrality law which Seward had wanted, a law so stringent that it virtually put an end to Confederate activities in Canada.

But what happened to the stolen money? Young estimated that $208,000 was taken. Some of it was returned almost immediately, for one of the raiders left a trail of
bills as he fled, and while not all of the money which fell from his pocket was recovered, Canadian farmers were bringing small bundles into the sheriff’s office at St. Johns all week long. And nineteen thousand dollars was surrendered to the sheriff by the raiders. Some of the money was recovered only after a lapse of time: eighty-three thousand dollars, taken from Bennett Young after his capture, was mistakenly returned to the raiders after their temporary release by the Chief of Police of Montreal, and the Canadian government eventually promised to make amends for this mistake. In September, 1865, the St. Albans banks received $30,010 in notes and $39,512.75 in gold from the agents of the Canadian government as full equivalent payment. The rest of the money was not recovered. Something like $18,000 was spent by a few of the raiders to buy a vessel, the Canadian Eagle, on which they escaped to the coast. Young insisted that he delivered all of the money taken from the banks to the Confederate government in Richmond, but there is no record of this, and it seems probable that the remainder was absorbed into Clement Clay’s large operating fund.

Eventually the raiders found their way back to the South, although many of them spent a year in Canadian jails, and Young was not released until October of 1865. In the years that followed, the raid grew in magnitude, as rumor, exaggeration, and failing memory took their toll. In 1909 the residents of St. Albans showed they had not forgotten or forgiven when they refused to permit a reunion of Young and some of the others involved to take place in Vermont, and the meeting was postponed to be held two years later in Montreal.

To his death Young remained convinced that he had achieved a notable Confederate victory. Actually, it was a fortunate day for the North when Bennett Young and his Kentuckians raided St. Albans.

Dr. Winks, professor of History and adviser in Canadian Literature at Yale University, an authority on the Civil War, has made detailed studies of the St. Albans Raid. His bibliography on the subject was published in 1958. He is the author of “These New Zealanders!” and the definitive “Canada and the United States: The Civil War Years,” published by The Johns Hopkins Press last autumn.

OLIVER’S CAVE

MARIAN L. LEVASSEUR

FOR A BOY of the 1830s Oliver Plaisted had a good education, and while a youth taught school for a while himself before learning something of the builder’s trade.

In the ’50s he came back to live down on Broad Brook in Royalton with his parents, and he remained there after their deaths, taking on strange and reclusive ways. He was ill and a man to fear imagined dangers.

It was a special house which Oliver built, which keeps his name alive today, not the hermit shack which he first built down by Broad Brook.

There is no evidence the authorities ever thought to come for him, but when the Civil War broke out Oliver struck out for the hills—for the wilderness of ledges and mountain top near the Barnard-Royalton town line.

Here he took refuge, living for some time in a small natural cave whose opening he walled up partially. Here in his fear and misery Oliver chiseled on the rock words to be seen today: “This is Hell.”

Nearby Plaisted soon erected a small stone house which now is known to picnickers and hikers as “Oliver’s Cave.” He built staunchly, his only tool a jackscrew, but with this he somehow moved a huge stone slab across the top to form a complete roof. There was a doorway and inside a rude fireplace. Nearby he built pits and rock piles, which some say were his forts or outposts.

It’s not recorded how long Oliver kept to his mountain retreat, though probably he was there off and on throughout the war. Once, it is told, he backpacked in from Woodstock a barrel of crackers. Nobody ever came after Oliver, it appears, and he died at 58 in Royalton some fifteen years after the war ended. The old house there and his shack by Broad Brook long since have gone, but the stone refuge, “Oliver’s Cave,” stands today firm on the mountain top, a Civil War monument in its way.
Another and more lasting transfer of habits from civilian life was in politics. The elections to be carried were now for company officers and the appointments to be pulled were regimental. As long as bullets, bayonets and bacilli found their marks this game went on. The players used every kind of pressure.

Recruiting officers were usually chosen captains, and some ardent souls even went recruiting on their own hook. This was prohibited, and so was unauthorized competition from out-of-state, but both forms of free enterprise continued until replaced by bounty brokerage... guiding recruits to where they offered the largest lump sums for enlistment.

There was good fishing in 1861, even with very little bait on the bent pin except the private appeal to patriotism. Stephen Thomas could even harangue his Eighth on the news of Grant's capture of Fort Donelson that if they didn't hurry up the war would be over and they would get no glory.

Citizens held war meetings to raise hundreds, then thousands, by private subscription, until forced to resort to taxation and bonds. What business-cycle historians call the secession depression was over, and "times" were good in the counting house, mill and hayfield. Many, wrote one irate patriot to the Montpelier Watchman, have seasonal hands who want to enlist, but these hay-season patriots require "damages for quitting, and weigh an acre of grass against our common country." Industrial employers, such as the Vermont & Canada and Vermont Central railroads, and Charles Clement & Son, marble dealers, promised the same or equal jobs after the war to their enlisting employees. If the recruits died, Clement would let their families have their tenements rent-free until the war was over. "All we ask in return is," that when you get South, "you make a market for all the gravestones possible."

When recruiting was renewed in June 1862 complaints, accumulated from a year in service, began to echo in the hills. There had been comparatively little fighting at first, but now the casualty lists began to mount among the three-year men of the First Vermont Brigade, veterans of the Peninsula campaign. Add to that the usual grievances—more men disappointed than appointed; dishonest quartermasters; grasping sutlers; continued shortages of good (especially repeating) arms, equipment and food; idleness; long sick lists and death by amputation; storms, dust and mud; the strange, annoying ways of a neighboring German regiment; unaccustomed contact with
Negroes; and above all, worry about how things were going with the home folks and bonny Eloise. They knew now that it would be a long war.

Almost from the start the “draft” was conjured up to shame the reluctant and threaten the recalcitrant. Conscription, however, was never an important direct means of raising men: 2,954, or less than ten per cent of the Vermont aggregate, were drafted under the enrollment act of 1863, and served. Another 816 furnished substitutes when drafted and 1,971 paid commutation of $300—supposed to equal a year’s wages—to avoid service.

There were many other ways to beat the draft. Jay Gould, notorious postwar railroadman, then in Rutland managing the Rutland & Washington Railroad, was found to be a nonresident. Newspaper lists of those exempted for physical disabilities included abnormally large numbers with injuries to extremities. One accused of cutting off two fingers of his right hand was found to be left-handed and was sent to the field. Others were said to have pulled their front teeth. Some tried the insurance gamble. In Burlington, for instance, a mutual insurance company of fifteen members, each paying $100, was organized the morning of draft day: five were drafted and used up the fund on commutation pay-offs. Some skedaddled across the border, or were prudently sent to academics in Canada East. Some got married.

Substitute brokers and their wares earned a bad reputation, in Vermont as elsewhere, both for desertion and extortion. In Corinth $1,688 each was paid for thirty substitutes. A St. Albans man was said to have offered a quarter section of Iowa farm land valued at $960 and on the rise, and $200 cash—which was better than $2,000 counting pay and bounties. Vermont dealers competed with “foreigners,” first to supply the big city market to the detriment of local recruiting and then to hold up local buyers. They swarmed around the draft offices until in Burlington a town meeting authorized a committee to dispose of them.

Excitement during the first draft, begun July 10, 1863, practically stopped business for days in Rutland, Northfield, Montpelier, Woodstock and probably other centers, yet the papers said all was quiet. The West Rutland Irish quarriers had organized and armed a “home guard” and a “fracas” ensued, followed by silent departure among those conscripted. Three weeks later, when Provost Marshal Crane served draft notices at the quarries, he took guards from the army camp at the fairgrounds and arrested Hugh Corey, the ringleader. The Irish, perhaps, had read this doggerel in the Woodstock Spirit of the Age:

Fall in, fall in, you common man,
The Provost cries, as Pat he collars;
Don’t you wish you were a gentleman,
That you could spare three hundred dollars.
Oh, never mind, poor Pat replies,
Some other day the wheel may turn;
Mark, if it does, we’ll make mince pies,
And the upper crust is sure to burn.

United States General Hospital at Brattleboro, in 1863.
Draftees and recruits, shipped to the Brattleboro barracks, wandered through the grounds without drill, the idle day punctuated by rations, bed on boards, jokes, swearing and gambling at cards—according to the diaries of more sheltered lads. Since some substitutes escaped, guards paced with loaded muskets.

Adjutant General Peter I. Washburn claimed that the ugly substitute business, more profitable and devious than horse trading, was stopped in the end by withholding all but twenty dollars of the recruit’s cash, strengthening the guard, and stopping enlistments for everything but the infantry. Perhaps these helped, but in the last six months the mercenary motive was supreme; only thirteen conscripts were shipped out. Meanwhile a large proportion of the replacements were of questionable military caliber, and a third of the substitutes deserted before reaching the front.

Civil liberties survived better in Vermont than in the big cities or in rural areas where Democrats were stronger. The temper of the times, however, was intolerant of free speech. The Union press generally reported compulsory flag-raisings, fist fights, rotten-eggings and store-burnings with approval. Lieutenant Governor Paul Dillingham told a Montpelier war rally in 1862, “The first thing was to stop, as far as possible, free speech”—that is, fault-finding. Three in Jericho were held for weeks in Burlington jail “for expressing secessionist sentiments” but a grand jury refused to indict and District Judge Smalley fined the U. S. Marshal $100 for unlawfully suspending habeas corpus. A Norwich “secesh leader” was arrested for cutting down the American flag and threatening soldiers. In Rutland, Provost Marshal Crane stopped such subversive influences as the singing of “Tenting Tonight,” “When this Cruel War is Over” and other depressing songs. Hiram Walker, a substitute broker, of Burlington, roughed up by Crane and Rutland selectmen, later won heavy damages for assault and false imprisonment. John McKeogh of Rutland, suspected of aiding the defense of the St. Albans raiders, spent six weeks in a Washington prison, but his case was dropped after the war ended. Montpelier businessmen boycotted the Democratic Argus and Patriot, and one prominent Republican offered $500 to the men who would sack the office, promising to assume the consequences. Editor Hiram Atkins survived to exhibit the missiles thrown through his windows as relics of his martyrdom in the cause of a free press.

At the other extreme, radicals pushing too hard and early for abolition were curbed. Every important political utterance avoided the slavery issue and concentrated on nationalism and Union—until after the Emancipation Proclamation.

Vermont was fortunate to have in Governor Fairbanks, and later Governor Smith, businessmen of national experience to expedite the supplying of Vermont’s troops. Its farms and mills supplied cavalry mounts, Fairbanks harness hardware, Windsor rifles, Bennington gunpowder, prefabricated barracks from Lawrence Barnes’ Burlington lumberyard, Chester boots, St. Albans Foundry stoves, and woolens for overcoats, blankets and uniforms.

Women’s devotion to soldier welfare was probably the steadiest of popular enthusiasms. Box after box was sent to individuals or units for general distribution: old table linen, cotton sheets and lint for bandages; favorite pills and tonics; clothing; soap; red, white and blue sewing kits;
Laurence Swainey of Starkshoro, Vt., a veteran of the War of 1812, had eight sons serving in the Union Army—top row: John, Lawrence Jr. (wounded), Steven J. (wounded), Truman W. (wounded); bottom row: William W. (wounded), Alphis M., Alford S., James B.

newspapers; maple sugar, pastries and barrels of apples; prayer books, crosses of Vermont marble and Vermont gold, good luck charms—everything a soldier might want, but mainly could not carry.

Now, having followed the Vermont volunteer, draftee, or substitute to his rendezvous a few figures will help give the rough dimensions of Vermont’s total contribution in money and manpower. The state paid some $3,500,000 to almost 35,000 individuals, most of them not much older than college boys, in service for periods ranging from a few hours to the duration, or an equivalent of 10,000 soldiers constantly on the books. From late 1862 until the end of the war the rosters carried the names of between twelve and eighteen thousand men on active duty. Probably an equal number were sick, wounded, prisoners of war, discharged, missing, or had died, deserted or resigned. Towns added bounties totaling $5,181,000.

The First Vermont Regiment reached Fortress Monroe in mid-May 1861, and the last of the Seventh Regiment mustered out on the Mexican border in March 1866. In all seventeen regiments of infantry, one of cavalry, two companies of sharpshooters and three units of light artillery were organized in Vermont. A thousand were killed in action; five thousand died from all causes; almost as many more were wounded. In the Gulf Theater malaria and dysentery took heavy toll of the Seventh and Eighth Regiments and the First Vermont Battery. The First Vermont Brigade, comprising the Second through the Sixth Regiments, went through the bloodiest actions of the Virginia front: McClellan’s Peninsular campaign; Hooker’s Fredericksburg assault; Grant’s hammering in the Wilderness, the “Bloody Angle” at Spotsylvania and at Cold Harbor; and the Petersburg seige. The Second Regiment lost two fifths of its men, killed and wounded.

Not all of the Vermont Volunteers were residents or natives of Vermont. Some were recruited in other states, Canada, and even behind Union lines in the South. Vermonters also enlisted in other states. Long before the end, each state was assigned quotas, according to the number already volunteered. Vermont, by mistaken instructions, ended with a surplus of 697 over all quotas—a source of loud complaint against Washington.

The men were Vermont Volunteers from the start. They owed their pay, commissions, promotions, equipment and supplies, the care of their families, and even their little comforts, to the administration and people of Vermont. Responsibility and costs were gradually transferred to Washington, but the state meanwhile acquired new functions of organizing army hospitals and a Home Guard (after the St. Albans raid), and securing federal reimbursement for emergency expenditures.

To the end, Vermonters were firm in their conviction that national unity must be restored. This unity overshadowed traditions of independent opinion, and of how to win reunion. Their measure of greatness was: they were of one mind, to give every ounce of effort required to make their country whole.

Dr. Bassett, a native of Burlington, is the University of Vermont Wilbur Librarian and Archivist. He is joint author of "Socialism & American Life," has contributed to "Vermont History," and "New England Quarterly."
The Sleeping Sentinel

Most Famous Private of the War

RICHARD SANDERS ALLEN

JUST about anybody who has ever read anything of the life of Abraham Lincoln knows that the Civil War President once pardoned a condemned sentinel found asleep at his post. Over the years, the story has been repeated in many different versions. It has been enlarged, turned into epic poems for elocution, plays for Broadway boards, and lately become grist for the television mills. For a century, writers have embellished the tale, quoting one “authority” or another, until historical debunkers began to cast doubt that the dramatic incident ever occurred.

Despite the murky contradictions that have arisen, there was a Yankee private who was discovered asleep on duty, and he really was pardoned by President Abraham Lincoln. The sentry’s name was William Scott, and he came from Groton, Vermont.

Driving U.S. 302 today, nearly midway between Barre and Wells River, the traveler tops a curving rise and is treated to a sweeping panorama of forest and mountain to the north. This is Groton, whose most famous citizen was Scott, “The Sleeping Sentinel.”

Back in 1825, Thomas Scott arrived in America and found his way to Groton, then (as now) a sparsely settled community of lumbermen and farmers whose tiny fields and gardens were cleared from the boulder-strewn hillsides and deep woods. An emigrant from Scotland, Scott took a Groton bride, Mary Wormwood, and eventually they raised a brood of seven boys and a girl. William, their first son, was born April 9, 1839 in the Scott’s first wilderness cabin. This stood on the far side of the brook, some three-quarters of a mile east of their second home near Westville Cemetery along the present highway.

William Scott grew to be a square-faced, ham-handed, friendly fellow. His schooling was remarkably good, and his life consisted of the day-to-day chores that were part and parcel of any Vermont farmer’s existence. As the oldest child of his family, William developed responsibility early, and like many young men of the period was proud of his strong religious faith.

Scott was twenty-two years old and unmarried when he answered President Lincoln’s call for volunteers. Journeying to Montpelier, in the summer of 1861, he joined up with Company K of the Third Vermont Regiment. Raw and unused to Army ways, the Grotan farm boy was shipped south by train along with 800-odd other members of the Third. Near Washington the regiment encamped on the heights above the strategic Chain Bridge, a long wooden structure which presented a great temptation to Confederate guerillas across the Potomac on the Virginia shore. The Vermonters threw up earthworks, established pickets and mounted some cannon, trained to sweep the bridge in case of trouble. It was while on guard duty at one of the river outposts guarding Chain Bridge that William Scott, barely six weeks in the Army, fell into deep trouble.

Sifting official testimony and stories, * it appears that Scott, weary from a rough day of march and drill, was found asleep at his post between three and four o’clock on the morning of August 31st. It is pretty well established that he had stood double guard duty for a sick soldier-

*This has been most ably accomplished by Waldo F. Glover, whose Abraham Lincoln and the Sleeping Sentinel of Vermont (Vermont Historical Society, 1936) has the full details of Scott’s story.
friend the night before, but Scott himself gave no excuses.

Arrested on Saturday, quickly court-martialed on Wednesday, the bewildered Vermont private was sentenced “to be shot to death” the following Monday, September 9th. Union officers were determined to put discipline and snap into the untrained troops pouring down from the North. They had to show that war wasn’t sport, and perhaps the sacrifice of the luckless sleeper would be the thing to do it.

During his imprisonment Scott never complained nor bewailed his fate. But a good share of his infantry messmates were very much in sympathy with him, thinking that it might very well have been any one of them. Several of the Vermont soldiers asked Lucius E. Chittenden, a Treasury Department official from Burlington, to intercede in Scott’s behalf with his personal friend, Abraham Lincoln. Chittenden took this group directly to see the President, and they awkwardly blurted out their own feelings about their comrade’s good behavior and the mitigating circumstances of his falling asleep, mention of which had been lacking in the court-martial.

Probably as a result of this visit, Abraham Lincoln made a special Sunday morning call on Maj.-Gen. George B. McClellan and asked him to pardon William Scott. Meanwhile, other friends of the condemned man from Vermont were busy. The Third Regiment’s chaplain drew up a petition asking that his life be spared, and nearly 200 officers and men signed it. When this reached the President on Sunday afternoon, Lincoln feared something had gone wrong with the pardon he had already requested. It is almost certain that he personally rode the dusty miles out to Chain Bridge that evening to be sure Scott was not to be executed. And it also is a near certainty that Abraham Lincoln never met the man he pardoned.

To be sure of more and better discipline among the green troops, the commanders of the regiment carried their original plans nearly to conclusion. Early Monday the prisoner was brought out into a hollow square composed of all the companies of the Third Vermont. His death sentence was again read to him and he waited only for the firing squad. Then, after all this spine-chilling build-up, William Scott was given his pardon and returned to his company. The regiment heaved a collective sigh of relief.

Newspapers all over the North made much of the affair, commending Lincoln for his humanity. Though his name was on every tongue, Scott himself remained a simple private soldier.

Vermont infantrymen that winter led a monotonous life of drill and sentry duty. Just another Billy Yank in blue jacket and kepi, William Scott wrote home to friends in Groton that “a soldier’s life is nothing more or less than a dog’s life.” He missed seeing any girls, and wished he were home to get a little maple sugar from the spring run.

On April 16, 1862, not long after his twenty-third birthday, Scott was one of the front line of attackers in a battle of the Peninsular Campaign near Lee’s Mill, Virginia. He was also one of the casualties. With five bullets in his body the Vermonter was helped to the rear, having gallantly proved his courage in battle. He died some twelve hours later and was buried in a grove of flowering fruit trees. He lies there today in an unknown, unmarked grave.

Back in Vermont the news was received with sadness. Scott had well deserved his Presidential pardon.

In the Fairbanks Museum in Saint Johnsbury is the original of William Scott’s grimly-worded death warrant. And in Groton he is not forgotten, for a stretch of U. S. Rte. 302 which he traveled on his way to enlistment has long been called and marked: “The William Scott Memorial Highway.” Beside this road is a granite shaft commemorating “The Sleeping Sentinel”, on it the words: “Pardoned by Abraham Lincoln.” Beyond is a tumbled-in cellar hole, overgrown with a tangle of wild raspberry, currant and rose bushes, marking the last home of William Scott. From here he set out, never to return, to become the best-known private soldier of the Civil War.
READING About the Civil War

ROBERT KOLVOORD

According to a current joke: “There are three kinds of books published now, fiction, non-fiction and Civil War.” This will suggest why I have avoided mention of the more recent ones; a mere listing would require at least a page in Vermont Life.

The literature on the Civil War is nothing short of enormous, and growing all the time. The best single source of information is Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies in 128 large volumes and an atlas. This set is available in most public libraries.

The last volume is a comprehensive Index, which makes the set very easy to use. Among the general works these two are perhaps the best: SANDBURG, Carl. Abraham Lincoln, the War Years, 4 volumes, Harcourt Brace, 1939; and NEVINS, Allan. The Emergence of Lincoln and Ordeal of the Union, 4 volumes, Scribners, 1947-50. These all still in print; they are singled out from among many because of their scholarly accuracy in addition to literary quality.

The best of those relating to Vermont’s participation is BENEDICT, G. G. Vermont in the Civil War, A History of the Part Taken by Vermont Soldiers & Sailors in the War for the Union, 1861-65, 2 volumes, 620 & 808pp, maps & engraved portraits, Burlington, Free Press Assoc., 1886-88. This book was commissioned by the Vermont Legislature and required ten years, as it was a formidable task to organize the “record of service of twenty-four different organizations of infantry, cavalry, artillery & sharpshooters, comprising over thirty thousand men.” For most of these regiments, etc. there is a separate history. Benedict was State Military Historian and had been a lieutenant in the 12th Vermont Volunteers; also important are his Army Life in Virginia; Letters from the 12th Regiment Vt. Volunteers, 166pp, Burlington, 1895, and Vermont at Gettysburg, Sketch of the Part Taken by Vermont Troops, 27pp, 1870. This is an enlarged edition of the same title dated 1867. Another Vermonter contributed from his experience as Register of the Treasury for Lincoln, Lucas E. Chittenden of Williston, great-grandson of Vermont’s first governor. His works include: Recollections of Abraham Lincoln & His Administration, 470pp, N.Y., 1891; Personal Reminiscences, 1840-1860, Some Not Hitherto Published of Lincoln & the War, 434pp, 1893; The Unknown Heroine, An Historical Episode of the War Between the States, 314pp, 1893; and Lincoln and the Sleeping Sentinel, The True Story, 54pp, portraits, N.Y., 1909.

For source material on the St. Albans Raid see:

HISTORY OF ST. ALBANS, reprinted from Hemenway’s Vermont Gazetteer, 94pp, 1872.

ADAMS, H. K. A Centennial History of St. Albans, 149pp, St. Albans, 1889.

—The St. Albans Raid. Investigation by the Police Committee of the City Council of Montreal, into Charges Prepared by Councillor B. Devlin. . .Against the Chief of Police (etc), 78pp, Montreal, 1864.


The above are all primary source materials, among the many secondary sources is:


The account of the Raid in the Official Records is to be found in volumes 43 & 46.

As a word of caution, it is generally better to consult the primary sources rather than the secondary; as an extreme example of the sort of erroneous information that may be found in compilations, note this from GUTHRIE’S Geographical Grammar, 1799, pages 949-50: “The State of Vermont is a vast country, situated eastward of New Hampshire, south of Massachusetts and west of New York, the capital Bennington, the Allens are Chiefs or head men of the country . . .” And this from a reference work!
RECENT BOOKS

BOOKS by and about Vermonters and Vermont are piled high beside my typewriter, an unusually varied collection, with something in it for every age and taste. They seem to group themselves rather naturally into pairs, so here is a kind of literary Noah’s Ark parade, just the thing for a spring freshet.

Two on Calvin Coolidge, forever enigmatic legend of the back hills. In Meet Calvin Coolidge, The Man Behind The Myth, reminiscences of some thirty-five friends, critics and colleagues are gathered by Edward Connery Latham in an attempt to illumine the quiet reaches of Coolidge’s personality. Interesting as many of these are, I did not find their impressions nearly so enlightening as the material gathered by Vrest Orton in his little pamphlet on Coolidge’s lamp-lit inauguration in Plymouth. He skilfully disentangles myth from fact so that the very genesis of the legends surrounding that historic event is laid bare. A virtuoso performance, and a collector’s item.

Two with a musical slant. Family on Wheels, Further Adventures of the Trapp Family Singers. The Trapps have reached many thousands through their concerts and through “The Sound of Music,” the Mary Martin musical based on their early years. This is the story of their last tours as a singing family group like no other, performing with grace and gaiety in many corners of the world. Ancient Ballads Traditionally Sung in New England is compiled and edited by Helen Hartness Flanders from her own collection at Middlebury College. The meticulous scholarship evident in presenting all the variants and their tunes proves no obstacle to the casual reader’s pleasure in the ballads themselves. Many of them have appeared in earlier publications by Mrs. Flanders, such as the New Green Mountain Songster (1939) and Ballads Migrant in New England (1953). The present volume is the first of a series and covers Child Ballads 1-51.

Two more that might be called modern ballads, rhymed and unrhymed. Men and Mountains is by Morris Wilcox, a present-day bard whose theme is Vermont history from the glaciers to World War II. He turns many of our historic legends into verse, using a great variety of form and accent, much vigor, humor and skill. Vermont Neighbors is Walter Hard’s newest collection of honey-and-vinegar (to use the publisher’s apt phrase) character sketches. All those who have the earlier collections will want this one, and if any lover of Vermont has had the misfortune never to encounter Mr. Hard’s terse and pungent fables, let him start right now for the nearest bookshop.

Two for the younger generation, both approved by the acid test of young readers. Hildreth Wriston, author of Susan’s Secret, has a new book for boys with a yen for adventure. Andy and the Red Canoe tells the story of a boy full of determination and all the mixed-up feelings and thoughts that being fourteen often involves. He proves himself to his own and his parents’ satisfaction in a series of believable adventures with a Vermont background. In Speaking of Cows and Other Poems, Kaye Starbird (who also writes as C. S. Jennison) shows that she has penetrated straight to the heart of childhood, its excitements (small as an inch-worm, large as a cow), its long summer thoughts and dreamy reflections on the wonders of the world-as-it-is and as-it-might-be. A book for Christmas, birthday and reading aloud every night, not to mention learning by heart.

VERNEN Z. REED

Cor
Union,
home of
the Trapp
Family
at Stowe.
Two on New England, general and particular, otherwise not easy to classify. *Ghost Towns of New England* will appeal to anyone who has wandered up a grass trail past a row of abandoned cellar holes and wondered who lived there and why they left. Fessenden S. Blanchard discusses nineteen ghost towns around New England (Glastenbury and Somerset in Vermont) and one, Mystic, Conn., now returning to life as a fascinating marine museum. Ralph Nading Hill's *Yankee Kingdom* is peopled with dozens of Vermont and New Hampshire ghosts, whose stories he tells with gusto and perception. A book to visit around in with continuing pleasure.

Two with a medical tinge. *Arthritis and Folk Medicine* is Dr. Jarvis' mixture-as-before. In other words, honey and vinegar is good for what ails you. That there is enormous interest in self-diagnosis and self-dosage is evidenced by the persistent presence on the best-seller list of Dr. Jarvis' earlier book, as well as this latest volume, breaking all sorts of literary records. Stewart Holbrook covers the intriguing subject of patent medicines, their rise, decline and fall, in *The Golden Age of Quackery*, a well-documented and nostalgic melange of old-time nostrums and their proponents.

Two from the pages of Vermont history. *Vermont General*, subtitled *The Unusual War Experiences of Edward Hastings Tibley (1862-1865)*, is based on more than 500 family letters, and forms a story as stirring and revealing of character as any novel. General Ripley, only twenty-five when he led the Union troops into Richmond when it fell in April, 1865, wrote warmly and frankly to his devoted family. Otto Eisenschiml has edited this enlightening footnote to history. Charles G. Muller's subject in *The Proudest Day* is the story of Thomas Macdonough on Lake Champlain. The events leading up to the naval victory of September 11, 1814, which drove the British from the Lake for good and all, are recounted in a fictional framework, based on exhaustive research, in which Macdonough and his contemporaries live again.

The last book in our procession stands alone, both in its skill and its subject. In *Robert Frost, The Trial by Existence*, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, a personal friend for many years, draws on her own recollection, letters, notes of conversations and the help of other friends, to trace the slow development of Frost into the major figure in American letters that he is today. Perhaps more than in any other book on Frost, poet and poem are here seen as one, not so much in the autobiographical sense as in the knowledge that each poem is part of the poet's progress as a human being, inside and out. Frost is sometimes thought of as a New England poet, but he speaks for himself as a man experiencing to the full the joy and pain of the human condition, not from any specific granite boulder or pasture spring. Vermont is many times blessed by his presence among us as teacher, neighbor and friend.