“THAT FREQUENT RECURRENCE TO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND A FIRM ADHERENCE TO JUSTICE, MODERATION, TEMPERANCE, INDUSTRY AND FRUGALITY ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY AND KEEP GOVERNMENT FREE.” Vermont Constitution

Editor’s Uneasy Chair

Perhaps we made a faulty conjecture in the last Spring issue. It was on the question of Bert King Graves’ changing the part in his hair. Now Mrs. Fannie Brown of Orwell clears it up. Tintype portraits were always reversed, she says, the image being photographed directly on the coated plate, thus making a mirrored picture. Mrs. Brown is probably right, as well, that the Gay Blades of Yesteryear were not quite so quixotic with their hairdos.

* * *

CALLING ALL EXPATRIATES From time to time the Development Commission and Vermont Life have information, announcements and available services which would like to pass on to Vermonters away from home. Embarrassingly enough, nowhere in Vermont, apparently, is there a complete or up-to-date list of Vermont societies across the nation. And so we publish this appeal to officers of Vermont associations, to make themselves known to us here at home.

* * *

All stock stories must start from real circumstances, and maybe Sterling Sherman of Norwich, Conn. has the original of this one, which he attributes to the late Philip Hale of Boston: “A Tunbridge man told his friend from Chelsea: ‘I druther be the meanest man in Tunbridge than the richest man in Chelsea, to which his friend replied: Well, you got your druthers.”’

ABOUT THE COVER—Windsor, Vt., born John H. Vondell of the Univ. of Mass, took this picture (Oct. 12, 1951) of the famous Windham County Court House in Newfane, harrassed by several artists bent on the same subject, and tempted by appetizing aromas drifting from the buns nearby. Prof. Vondell, only Vermont-born Fellow of the Photographic Society of America, is a poultry authority, an active officer of the Green Mt. Club. The 138-year old Court House is termed by Herbert Wheaton Congdon “one of the most beautiful buildings of its class in Vermont.”
Once before the P. B. has mentioned in a nostalgic way one of the delights which came in pre-automobile days with the first intimations of Autumn—trips on those today uncommon carriers: one’s own feet. That the whizzing car and unyielding pavement have not put this pleasant pastime of walking entirely out of custom was proven a recent Fall when three friends of the Post Boy (a father in his 70’s and two sons) put in a few happy days using the Green Mt. Horse Ass’n. map as a guide for their feet. So the P. B. may hope that his reminiscences of pedestrian days may offer vacationing Vermonters a suggestion at least. To assure a successful trip always have a congenial companion. Such was Friend Wife.

WHAT BE YOU?

On foot one meets people on a common level which always makes for freedom of communication.

One old fellow we encountered when we stopped to ask directions of a group sitting on the store steps detached himself from the quartette. He picked up his bag of groceries, and with a brief glance at our pack basket, said he was going on the road we had inquired about and would “walk a piece” with us. Conversation began with the weather and then questions from us about the village and what lay along the road, and how far he figured it was to the next town. This companion was quite full of talk and curiosity. From time to time he asked a question as to our place of origin, how long we had been out; and each time he questioned there was obviously more in the back of his mind. Finally we mounted a hill and he stopped by a fence-enclosed yard. At last it came out as he called to us, “Say, what be you, sellin’ somethin’?”

DESCENT INTO POLITE SOCIETY

The next day we had only some 14 miles walking to get to Woodstock. We’ll admit the hot miles in the dust produced two very grimy and dirty looking tramps who stepped up to the desk at the inn. As we followed the rather bewildered bellboy from the lobby we were observed with some uncertainty by several middle-aged females of the dowager type, who in those days always summered in select hotels. Our entrance into the dining room, clean and freshly, if informally, clad, was carefully—and with no light of hospitality—viewed by the same dowagers properly gowned for dinner. The next morning a gentleman was placed at our table. He evidently had proper standing with the ladies in question. The fact that he at once engaged us in close conversation, due to the discovery that we had mutual friends, and the fact that he, himself, had once traveled the road with a pack, obviously gave us position in the eyes of the dowagers. They smiled and leaned forward to ask well-bred questions. Finally they quite un blot white were we waiting for the weather to be more reassuring and by the time we were ready to set out for West Bridgewater they even accompanied us to the edge of the village.

EVENING NEWSCAST

That afternoon’s walk to West Bridgewater was made comfortably, doing 4 miles an hour showing that we were really getting into our stride. The only flaw was the ominous gathering of clouds and the feel of rain in the air. That night’s only lodging place to be offered was what later became a “Tourists Accommodated” home. We were taken into the family bosom and sat down to a sumptuous Vermont meal as the rain began to fall outside. We were ready for an early bed but found we were expected to “sit a spell.” Again we were gently enticed to divulge “how come.” In the big sitting room the local telephone exchange was tended by one of the visiting neighbors. Once the lady at the switch censored her report. She simply mentioned that “he” was calling “her” again. Raised eyebrows and silence. Only the irresistible force of sleep compelled us to leave the scene.

RETURN TO A COMMON CARRIER

After ten days of sunshine even the gathering clouds of the day before had failed to prepare us for the deluge which was still coming down the next morning. However we did know that there was a stage for Rutland and noting no sign of a let-up we were ready when the platform-spring wagon with four seats, and a top but no side curtains, drawn by two able bodied horses drew up at the door. There were only two other passengers so sitting in the middle of one of the wide seats we escaped most of the fast falling rain.

As the top of Mendon mountain was slowly approached the rain increased. On the summit the passenger list did likewise. From under what shelter the trees might offer a well soaked crew of lumberjacks emerged and proceeded to fill to capacity the stage. They were headed for Rutland and were exuberant with the anticipation of a real week-end spree. Seeing one lone female they at once insisted “put the gal in the middle.” But the gal suddenly took on a delight in falling water. She insisted on sitting on the outside with her natural protector next. So down the winding road we went with the gal absorbing considerable moisture, first hand, and the P. B. gathering moisture from the rain soaked lumberjack jammed against him. From time to time solicitude was expressed for the gal who persisted in liking to get wet and who joined in the singing if not in the shouting with whole-hearted pleasure. Concerned with the wetness of one shoulder at Mendon, where the horses were changed, the driver insisted on wrapping the gal in a large and smelly horse blanket. Thus clad she was lifted down to the pavement in front of the Berwick Hotel in Rutland. The man at the desk seemed a bit doubtful for even the pack basket was dripping.

Eventually we were comfortably roomed and bathed, but with the usual perversity of inanimate objects, only our clean clothes were wet. Those ready for a good soaking were dry. By dinner time a quick visit to the shopping center and a hurry job by the tailor, produced two fairly respectable pedestrian guests. And did that dinner taste good! In spite of modern improvements the P. B. is sure adventures even more thrilling await one who now puts not his trust in horses and chariots.
October's blue skies, and rustling showers of red and gold leaves, provide a colorful setting for Vermont's season of "bird hunting." Now, while ducks, geese, woodcock and pheasant may in other localities be classed as "birds" by hunters, here, in Vermont, the one variety of feathered game that is awarded that generic title is the lordly "pa'tridgc." For the Vermont hunter knows that the ruffed grouse, to give him his more scientific designation, is the wildest, most cunning of all the game birds, and as hard to bring down as a puff of smoke in a gale. And, fittingly enough, those who have hunted feathered game of all sorts, near and far, will agree that a man who can bring down his fair share of partridges on the wing, need never play second fiddle in any gathering of wingshots.

The partridge in the Vermont woodlot today is a lineal descendant of some partridge whose only danger was the blunt headed arrow of the Abnaki, or hit or miss flintlock in the hands of the pioneer. Never successfully raised under artificial conditions, the partridge has survived the changing conditions of a settled country only through a wild cunning and a gift for survival that has seemingly increased through the years. As one old timer put it "A pa'tridge packs a lot of brains in that snaky little head of his." But, whether it be brains or instinct, years of being hunted have endowed the "pat" with a knack of taking advantage of every bit of cover and obstruction that is found in no other game bird. He is capable of coping with the best in hunter, gun and dog, and emerging the winner.

When the partridge takes to flight the roar of his wings, like a burst of mimic thunder, will shatter the soundest nerves. And yet, if he wishes he is also capable of flight as silent as the owl. Sometimes he will flush when the hunter is a good hundred yards away, or instead of flying, will sneak with lowered head through the underbush. Again, he may wait until the hunter has passed his hiding place and then, with a nerve shattering roar of wings, fly back on the course that the hunter has already traveled. He has even been known to fly directly from one hunter towards another so that neither man could shoot without danger to the other. Any veteran bird hunter can tell you stories by the hours of the unusual tactics of birds that he has hunted.

The bird hunter will seek his quarry in the same general localities year after year, for the grouse rarely wanders over an area of more than a mile or two. But the birds will be found to vary in their feeding places from season to season, depending upon which particular wild crop is plentiful. Some years they will frequent the roadside thickets where the deep purple of the wild grape shows dully through the yellowed leaves. Again, it may be the high ridges where gray squirrels and partridges compete for the treasures of beech nuts that fall from the smooth-barked trees. And there will be a great day or two in a hunter's life time when he may find a whole covey of the birds picking up frost benumbed grasshoppers in some mountain meadow.

In those years when the gnarled old apple trees, marking some long abandoned farm, are laden with fruit the hunter will hunt in the mixture of pine and apple trees that invariably mark these lost orchards. So great is the affinity of these two trees, that many an old hunter speaks of such places as "pineapple" covers. Here great heaps of yellow and red apples gleam as if polished under the Indian Summer sun, and the hunter cautiously scanning the shadows ahead starts nervously as each vagrant breeze sends more apples dropping through the branches to the ground.

In those years when the spiky branches of the thorn apples are laden with the marble sized red and yellow fruit, the partridges frequent these tangled thickets. The spiked branches of the thorn apples, which clutch and tear at the person, gun and clothes of the hunter seem to offer no obstacle at all to the partridge, who will dip and sideslip through the smallest opening in the maze of twigs and branches with as much speed as if in level flight across an open field. And it is an uncanny thing how a partridge will suddenly take off from an open space between the trees which the hunter will swear he has studied so carefully as to be able to describe each individual thorn apple.

A man who is going to become a real "bird hunter" must possess several attributes. First and foremost, he must possess a pair of legs that can plod along steadily hour after hour, up hill and down, through brush and through swamp, for the partridge takes plenty of "hunt-
ing” and the man that covers the most territory is the one that gets the most shots. And partridges rarely dwell in places where the walking is easy, and the terrain is level.

The bird hunter should have eyes that detect the first flicker of movement, and ears that hear the first rustle of wing, for sight and sound, and a quick reaction to the same play is a mighty important part in this partridge hunting. The hunter, too, should so train himself that his shooting becomes as instinctive and unconscious as his looking or hearing. Peculiarly enough, many veteran partridge hunters will admit that in many of their hits they have no recollection of making the actual shot until they see the bird drop. The gun jumps to the shoulder automatically at the first sight or sound of the flushed bird and sighting and shooting follow with the same lack of conscious volition on the part of the hunter.

And a real bird hunter must develop an entirely new sense, which can best be described as adapting one area of his brain cells so that they think like a partridge. Hunters with this uncanny ability will head for one little group of evergreens in preference to others, or will approach one single apple tree with double the caution that they may have used in the approach to others looking exactly the same. And, nine times out of ten, the partridge will flush from the point so selected by the hunter, instead of from some similar place. Ask the veteran bird hunter just why he approached the one particular bit of cover in confidence that the partridge was there lurking and his answer will be “don’t know, it just looked birdy.” Actually, of course, it’s the distilled experience of a hundred bird hunting expeditions that directs his course, until he has developed a feeling for partridge cover that is almost an instinct.

Actually there isn’t one hunter out of a hundred that becomes an expert bird hunter. Ninety nine per cent of the fraternity are content to dub along, taking the shots as they come, and being duly thankful to the Red Gods if one out of a dozen shots brings a grouse tumbling to the earth. But they are happily content with their lot, and wise in the knowledge that the actual bringing down of a partridge is a small part of the bird hunting.

There is a charm and a thrill to this bird hunting that might be difficult for the average hunter to express, however deeply he may feel it. There is the keen October air, mellowed in the noon day sun, and sharpening in the evening shadows, to fill his lungs with its tang of frost bitten fern. There is the soft sound of rustling leaves beneath his feet, the vistas of frost-painted hill and valley seen through the frames of white birch or dark green spruce. The not unwelcome warmth of face and body from a stiff climb up a steep hillside, and the cool freshness of water from a mountain spring down a parched throat. Although all these are things that can be experienced by anyone on a journey through October woods in Vermont.

But the bird hunter, alone, known the tenseness of the slow walk through the alder toward a waiting bird, or the almost unendurable tension of approaching that old apple tree that always holds a partridge. For him alone is that sudden and explosive uproar of beating wings, the briefly seen glimpses of brown birds, “fans” stiffly spread, hurtling through the tangle. The smell of burned gunpowder is incense in his nostrils, and if his shot leaves a puff of feathers in the air, and a partridge comes to earth in a last wild and futile flurry of wingbeats, the exultation in his hunter’s heart knows no limits.

Watch some bird hunter at the end of a long day’s hunt as he takes the only bird he may have hit from his game pocket. With fingers that are almost affectionate he will smooth the ruffled plumage, spread the great fan of the tail and admire the tan and black markings of his prize. To him the partridge is more than just a bird. It’s the wild essence of the Vermont woods in October, and he will tell you that the taking thereof is a sport for the Gods themselves.
ROUGH unhampered nature lies close beneath the serene beauty of Vermont. Vermonters know this. To them stubborn and defiant life is admirable, not mere curiosity.

So it is they like to see the Waterbury Birch, a spreading, multi-trunked white birch growing from the center of a granite boulder.

Close by U. S. Route 2 at the head of Bolton Gorge this remarkable tree looks out over the fertile Winooski valley and the Couching Lion nearby.

On its unyielding bed the birch has built a full and vigorous life. Its roots reach down to the sustaining soil below, anchored and molded to the complex fissures of the stone, from the unrelenting rock gaining its own strength.
Late summer and fall, here in Vermont, are peaceful times, times of drowsiness and surcease, when the earth pauses in its slow-swinging orbit to catch its breath and rests awhile after its season of giving. The gardens have spent themselves and lie quiescent, holding up the last of their harvests to a placid sky. Under the canopies of umbrella leaves, lie the small green foot balls of the acorn squashes, the last of the crook necks and the big grey-green Hubbards. Everyone is happily gorged with sweet corn, even the skunks and raccoons which raid the patch in the moonlight. Tomatoes shine like scarlet lamps on their vines and the heavy globules of peppers are pendulous as dewlaps.

The grapes, the delicate Concords and the thick-skinned red Banners, are beginning to show color and the last of the early apples, Duchess and Porters, lie in the orchard grass, smothered in singing wasps. The fragrant sweetness of the Early Transparents, white and soft, have slipped into memory. Plums are purple as a bishop’s mantle and pears hang soft and yellow on the trees, thudding into the grass with sudden plops which startle the quiet afternoon.

In the flower beds, phlox is at its hot, bright best, flooding country yards with scarlet and maroon, down through the old lavender and rose to pale pink and cloudy white. On a warm night, the scent of white phlox is overpowering as a sleeping draught and white moths move above it like pale ghosts. They brush your face with fairy wings. The gold finches, still gay in black and gold, swing on the ripe seed heads of the cosmos. Their continuous chirping spells summer’s end and autumn’s wine-clear days to come.

Early mornings are thick with fog, smothering the garden like smoke. It is only by such things as cobwebs on the grass and spider webs hung on the porch, that you know what the day will be. Fairies spread their linen on the grass when the sun will be high and hot! You can catch a cricket, too, and count his chirpings for 15 seconds, add 37 and you will know what the thermometer will read at noon! They play their monotonous violins early and late and many a cricket finds his way in to a warm hearth, the first cool days, to shrill his persistent tune from some inaccessible corner.

Dark comes a little earlier each night and katydids rasp their fiddles louder and more insistently. Soon the reapers descend upon the fields with their clacking machines and the field corn comes down in long rows to be ground up and swallowed by the tall red silos. For no longer do men walk down the long rows with corn cutters in their hands, bending to the slow rhythm of their strokes. The second crop of grass, the short rowen is being mowed and pressed into compact bundles in the fields, redolent with red clover and alfalfa, to fill the long barns, next January, with the odor and feel of summer.

As September draws its golden fingers over the land, the soft maples begin to turn pink, then red and the great sugar maples become a cloud of saffron up and down the roads, even as their blossoms last April, for fall dreams always of spring. Butternuts drop their sticky green fruit into the brittle leaves at their gnarly feet and frost grapes festoon the fences and climb the sumachs like decorations which nature has flung up to celebrate with, like bunting at a street parade. Blue jays squawk across the blue of a sky as polished as a willow-ware bowl.

The world is scrubbed and shining and the quiet hills stand shoulder-high against a sky floating with soft cotton puffs of cloud. Gently, inexorably, the green hills dim their brilliant colors for a faded tapestry until a paisley shawl is flung over their shoulders, over all creation with only the firs, which are forever green, as background. The firs never change, the pines and spruces and hemlocks, bred on ledges, nurtured by the leaf mold of centuries. The firs are something to cling to, like faith itself, winter and summer.

Along the peaceful back roads where the throb of traffic is lost and forgotten, Joe Pye Weed stands tall and purple, holding up its flat flowers for the orange and black Monarch butterflies to float down upon, waving back and forth, a color picture of the woods. Asters fill the fence corners and foam out along the road, a mist of purple,
pale lavender and white. Clumps of wild sunflowers hold their sturdy gold to the sun and pussy-toes, the everlasting flowers with which our ancestors stuffed their pillows, spill out across the warm pasture slopes like snow come too soon. And over it all, drift the slow thistle-down fairies, cart-wheeling on every breath of wind, carrying their seed children on to plant the earth for yet another year. For this is nature's resourceful way wherein she keeps her wild gardens perpetuated, as the tickseed and the burdock reach out and cling to you with barbed fingers, as the birds plant the fence rows with grape vines and berry bushes.

Lonesome houses peer wistfully at you from their glassless eyes, from scarlet thickets of blackberry leaves and tangled lilacs, still bravely green. Goldenrod apes the sun at their broken feet. A homeless house seems still more lonesome, this time of year. It seems to know that soon will snow sift in at its defenseless windows and winter wind sing through its empty rooms.

Nights grow cooler, extra blankets are pulled from old pine chests. The wood fire snaps and crackles as apple wood, birch and maplespark up the chimney. And some morning, squash vines and flowers hang black and wet. Frost has come in the night, the year has turned its face to west again. There is snow on the mountains and in a few short weeks, snow will be in the valleys. The land will sleep again, the hills will dream again beneath their deep white quilts. It is the end of the year. The hills which have known so much of life, which have seen the seasons swing in slow, inexorable cycles above their patient heads, will sleep and remember. Forever they shall have their dreams—the quiet hills.
Though hundreds of miles from salt water, one of the nation’s oldest shipyards was organized and still flourishes in northwestern Vermont.

Despite the fact that Vermont has always been bounded on the northwest by Lake Champlain, it has often surprised visitors unfamiliar with our topography to discover that a large segment of the only New England state without a seacoast is maritime in character. Instead of a mere lake, they find here an inland sea 120 miles long with canals leading both north and south to tidewater. Many outlanders are astonished to learn that they can embark in a yacht at Grand Isle, St. Albans, Burlington or Vergennes and proceed to New York or Montreal or Detroit without ever setting foot on dry land.

That an inland state famed for its mountains and valleys has a shipyard seems to them even more incongruous, especially when they learn that the yard at Shelburne Harbor is one of the oldest in the United States and has turned out thousands of tons of shipping since early in the nineteenth century—sidewheel steamers, canal boats, sloops, barges, launches, yachts, ferries, freighters, tugboats, submarine chasers, torpedo lighters.

The origin of the shipyard on the east side of Shelburne Point a few miles south of Burlington was rooted in a simple tenet of travel in the early 1800’s—it was best to go by water. A wide ribbon of water comprising the Hudson River and Lake Champlain spanned almost the entire distance between two of the largest cities in America, New York and Montreal, and practically every passenger and every parcel of freight between the two cities went by boat. By the mid-1820’s the northern and southern canals capable of accommodating sloops and barges were...
During the War of 1812, were completed in five months. Passenger steamers, large and wide enough to handle the crowds on Lake Champlain, were, however, too large to navigate the canals, so it was necessary that these vessels plying the lake between St. Johns, Lower Canada and Whitehall, New York, be built locally.

That was where the shipyard at Shelburne Harbor came in. In 1825 the Lake Champlain Steam-Boat Company selected the rim of Shelburne Bay (used as early as the War of 1812 by Commodore MacDonough to harbor his fleet of war vessels) for the building of the General Greene, the first of twelve side-wheel steamboats launched there. In 1826 the Champlain Transportation Company bought the property. Thus Shelburne Harbor became for nearly a century and a quarter the base of operations for the now-famed passenger steamers of the oldest steamboat company in the world.

As decades passed new buildings took their place beside the old carpenter and blacksmith shops until the shipyard assumed the proportions of a small village, with boarding houses and dwellings for the workmen, the captains and the engineers. Late in January or February each season when ice forced the steamers off line runs into their winter berths at the Harbor, crews would board them to labor over hull, superstructure and machinery so that they would be ready to steam forth again upon the breakup of ice in early spring.

Separated from the mainland, especially in winter, by the long arm of Shelburne Point, shipyard residents found them-
selves almost as isolated as John Potter, the Point’s first settler in 1768; and it was often necessary to carry supplies across the ice from the mainland. Even in summer, residents of the Point were likely to stay there, relying on the grocery man who arrived with his wagon each week from town.

All of those satisfactions that arise from hard work and modest living in an out-of-door environment seem to have characterized the first century of life at the shipyard. From the many stories associated with the Harbor and the vessels it produced, there seems to have been a certain amount of romance about Point life, quite apart from the fact that its residents were accustomed to intermarry. In the mid-1800’s Lake Champlain was a speedway in which captains and engineers of competing steamboat lines fought for supremacy by adding tar to their boilers for better fires and higher steam pressures. One of the livelier incidents in this rivalry took place in 1856 when crews of the Champlain Transportation Company’s boats crossed the Lake to Plattsburgh at night and hijacked a steamer belonging to a rival company. The boat was recaptured but the first coup was followed by a second in which this same steamer, the Francis Saltus, was again seized by the Transportation Company prize crew and brought to Shelburne Harbor, where it was beached. Part of the machinery was dismantled and hidden in the bushes to put the boat permanently out of action so as to preserve the Vermont Company’s monopoly on Lake Champlain. To make sure that the Saltus would not again return to service, the seacocks of a retired steamer, the Whitehall, were opened and she was sunk directly behind the Saltus.

On a bright June day, not long after, the sloop Hercules from Plattsburg appeared around the Point at the Harbor, her deck crowded with 100 seamen who had come to recapture the Saltus by force. Their eyes met a sight that at once depressed them, for not only did they find their 185-foot vessel beached with the Whitehall sunk behind her, but also the steamers Canada and United States standing by protectively with a full head of steam, their crews ready for action. As the hundred men from Plattsburgh drifted closer their task seemed more hopeless than ever, for the Saltus was chained with heavy links to a tree on shore while “Henry Campbell sat on the chain, a revolver in his hand, and dared anyone to remove the cable.” When it seemed as though there must be an explosion of some kind, Sheriff Flanagan of the invading forces drew a revolver on Judge Smalley of the defenders, but the Judge didn’t scare a bit. At last the frustrated crew of the sloop Hercules turned about and sailed bitterly back to Plattsburgh without their quarry.

The largest vessel ever to slip from the
ways at Shelburne Harbor was the 262-foot Vermont III, launched in 1903. Without square or level (there is nothing square or level on a steamboat) every stick and timber of her superstructure was made and fitted by hand in the finest tradition of New England shipbuilding. Only one other sidewheeler appeared on the stocks at Shelburne Harbor following the Vermont III, the Ticonderoga, launched in 1906. The profession of steamboat building at the Harbor, now eight decades old, was ended.

The shipyard itself, however, continued to expand. With the burning of the picturesque, 83-year-old Stone Shop, built in 1827, plans were drawn for a four-story machine, carpenter and paint shop, containing also a saw mill, oil, lamp and rigging rooms and offices. Completed in 1913 this large building is still the heart of the Shelburne Shipyard. In 1929, only three years before the fleet of Champlain steamboats stopped running (as a result of the onslaught of the automobile), a modern, steam-powered marine railway capable of hauling ashore the 1193-ton Vermont in 30 minutes, was erected, replacing the old, cumbersome horse-powered ways. The former ways consisted merely of greased slides which guided cradle and ship out of the water. Seven sets of block and tackle were attached to the cradle by a network of three-inch lines measuring 1000 feet each —nearly a mile and a half end-to-end. These lines, after paying back and forth through 500-pound blocks, were finally turned around seven capstans, each of which was powered by two horses laboring against sweeps. Two men (in constant danger) were engaged in greasing the skids just ahead of the cradle, while a third patrolled the ropes, striking them with an iron bar in order to determine the tension in each set of falls and accordingly direct the tightening of the capstans. Sometimes all seven sets of lines broke at once and the hauling was delayed for days or weeks.

In 1937 the Champlain Transportation Company with its three large steamers, shipyard and docks was sold by the Delaware and Hudson Railroad (which had been in control since 1870) to Horace W. Corbin, who kept only one of the three sidewheelers, the Ticonderoga in commission. In 1941 he leased the shipyard to the Donovan Contracting Company of St. Paul, Minnesota, which obtained contracts for the building of two subchasers. In April, 1942, work at the Harbor began under the direction of L. J. Aske who had arrived with his family from Minnesota to add a new and revolutionary chapter in the annals of western New England shipbuilding. Soon the yard was teeming with workers—as many as 200 at the height of the World War II program, all of them Vermonters and many of them long-time employees of the shipyard. On the 29th of April Senator George D. Aiken, who

THE AUTHOR
Ralph N. Hill’s sidewheeler saga was published early this summer by Rinehart & Co., N.Y. It contains 32 pages of illustrations, in its 342 pages tells the story of sidewheel steamboating on eastern waters since the days of Fulton. Final section deals with Lake Champlain navigation.
had helped Ashe obtain the first Navy contract for the Vermont yard, drove the last spike into the keel assembly of the first of the subchasers. On August 31, after a ceremony during which Mrs. Ashe broke a bottle of champagne over the bow of the USS SC 1029, the vessel entered the waters of Lake Champlain and on November 13, after completion and outfitting, started on its first journey through the canal and the Hudson to the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

Apparently the integrity of workmanship for which the Lake Champlain side-wheelers are noted soon manifested itself in the subchasers, for in March, 1943, Lt. Arthur Allen USNR in command of the USS SC 1029 wrote his friend, Rev. J. Lynwood Smith of Shelburne:

The 1029 is still going strong and has piled up a pretty nice record. After spending the winter convoying in the Caribbean where I eventually became commander of a task unit of five SC's, we left in March and after getting additional equipment, formed part of the escort for a large convoy to the Mediterranean.

We were in the last part of the Tunisian campaign and then in the Sicilian invasion.

LEFT: Aske family now own historic shipyards, came to Vermont from Minnesota.
LEFT BELOW: Current building program calls for the construction of 73 captain's gigs.
BELOW: A Navy LSI on the company's marine railroad. Road has thousand ton capacity.

Photographs these pages.
when, we were one of the first (as far as I know the first) ships off Sicily. From then on we were based in a large Northern Sicilian port and since the campaign the 1029 has been busy between Italy, Sicily, and Africa. So far she has been very lucky, her closest shave coming one night when we were dive-bombed and two of the men were blown violently down the hatch by the concussion from a near-miss.

The 1029, I'm proud to say, has the finest efficiency record in the Mediterranean and I believe shows the largest number of hours of operation of any ship in our Navy there.

The last word from the 1029, the first naval vessel to be built on Lake Champlain since the War of 1812, reached Shelburne Harbor a few months after VJ day. She had been fighting in Japanese waters and was on her way home.

Meanwhile four additional 110-foot sub-chasers had followed the 1029 from the ways at Shelburne Harbor, as well as four 66-foot tugboats and three 85-foot torpedo lighters. The end of the Harbor's naval program came in 1944, which placed Superintendent L. J. Aske of the Donovan Contracting Company at a crossroads. Should he return to Minnesota or remain

(Continued on page 60)

RIGHT: Foreman Fred Barrett has spent his life at the Harbor as did his father. RIGHTBELOW: Former steamboat engineer Rob Barrett (left) is carpenter and blacksmith. BELOW: Small boat yard stores more than 80 private boats of Lake Champlain sailors.
With His Own Hands

From the shores of Missisquoi Bay, where he developed his craft and makes his home, the fame of Silversmith Joseph Skinger has traveled to the far corners of the world.

By Mary Pearl

Photography by Gelineau Studio & E. H. Royce

Below: Joe Skinger concentrates on the painstaking soldering of delicate silver pieces.

Most men choose the girl and decide on their life work long before they even think of buying a house. Joseph Skinger didn’t do it that way. A long time before he had even met Connie and before he had become an expert silver craftsman, he used to come up to beautiful Missisquoi Bay to fish. On one such trip, he was invited to visit a home in Alburg Springs and became so enamored with the lovely views of lake and mountains that he bought an old house there on a pasture slope above Lake Champlain. Soon the friendly local people were joking, “Now you have the nest but where is the bird?”

Every holiday, every vacation and frequent weekends found Joe leaving his job in a Massachusetts city to come to Vermont. His house became his main interest. He worked on it every chance he could get, ripping off the old ell which hid one of the best views, removing a sagging porch and cleaning out the weeds and vines that surrounded the place. Finally he found time to put on a much-needed new roof. He built a wide dormer upstairs and installed a huge fireplace in the living room. To this “bachelor hall” Joe’s city fishing friends loved to come and they were glad to lend a hand at cleaning up and tearing down.

Then came the war and three years of Army service. During this time Clover Gables, named for its Victorian cut-work trim, was left in solitude. But it wasn’t forgotten, for in the meantime Joe had
met Connie and told her all about their future home in Vermont. Hospitalized for months with a serious ankle injury, Joe lay on his bed and drew sketches, laid out floor plans and figured where to begin. In March, 1946, Joe was out of the Army with a slightly lame leg which made return to his former job impracticable. He and Connie were married and came to Alburg Springs to make their home. That was a bad year to start remodeling a house, for you'll remember there were many shortages. Shortage of material presented many problems to the Skingers but shortage of labor didn't bother them at all. They did almost every bit of the work themselves. Without previous experience or professional advice, they jacked up the house, replaced many sills and built a chimney and fireplace from cellar to roof. They completely repartitioned one wing to include bathroom, kitchen, dining room and hall. They did all the plumbing, put in new doors and windows and plastered some of the walls. They pine-panelled walls in the den and living room, laid hardwood floors and topped the whole feat off with papering and painting seven rooms. In the barn was a beautiful Palladian doorway and window ten feet wide which Joe had salvaged elsewhere years before. They decided to take out part of the living room wall and install this window on the side where the Lake view is superb. From this doorway they built circular steps to the terrace for summer enjoyment of the Lake.

In the midst of all this rebuilding, spring arrived and the Skingers went to work on a vegetable garden. But first they had to repair fences to keep out the stray cows. This involved going to the woods to cut cedar posts, one-hundred-sixty in all. They moved furniture around from room to room and finally stored a good deal of it in the barn. When they got ready to settle, they found there was too much furniture, so they set some of their heirlooms out in the yard and went into the antique business. It turned out to be quite a profitable venture that first summer. Admiring friends and relatives came to visit and often lent a hand on one job or another. The grand climax came on Thanksgiving day when, in the company of neighbors, they gave heartfelt thanks to their new house and enjoyed a big turkey. Connie taught in the local two-room school that fall.

Now they could really appreciate their home in the comfort of warmth and pleasant surroundings. They could enjoy sitting in front of the beautiful fireplace with its fine Italian mosaic facing in soft green, yellow and russet colors. Joe chuckles at the luck he had in acquiring this mosaic facing. He had discovered it in the rubble of a house-wrecking job in Worcester, Massachusetts. The workmen gave it to him, saying it was just a piece of junk they had found and thrown out. It was in perfect condition and, after he had brought it to Vermont and installed it, a visiting porcelain expert congratulated him on possessing a collector's item, identifying it as a fine example of Siene mosaic work. By luck, the Skingers found in a secondhand store some wrought iron dragon andirons which exactly carry out the design in the mosaic. With the house so well along, Joe could at last get to work on his silver craft, which he planned to make his life work. He now began to dream up designs for bracelets, pins and rings instead of devoting his time to sewer pipes. In Massachusetts, he had previously worked in copper, iron and brass as well as silver. Now, since the heavier metals would be difficult to ship, he decided to devote himself entirely to silver craft.

Joe Skinger is his own designer, as is every true craftsman. To turn out hand-wrought silver requires versatility and resourcefulness. He makes many of his own tools, as he needs different ones for new designs. Like the artist with his brushes, a silversmith never has enough hammers and he can't just write and order them from a supply house—he must make them for his own special purposes. The pitchbowl and graver are used for engraving work, an art in itself. It is by engraving that such details as the veins in leaves are added. Wood carving skill is essential, too, as many designs must first be carved in a hardwood block upon which the silver is pounded into relief. Joe Skinger says soldering takes the most patience—infinite pains must be taken to do the fine soldering necessary in working with silver.

Not satisfied with what he already knew about silver craft, Joe spent several months in England in 1951, studying with expert silversmiths there. While he was away, Connie did social welfare work in Burlington. Today they're permanently located in their home in Alburg Springs and the old adage of "the better mousetrap" is borne out by the number of visitors who drive to this remote little village to see and to buy Silver by Skinger. There's a warm welcome waiting from Joe and Connie, no matter how busy they are. In the sum-
ABOVE: Collection of original ring designs, all silver mounted. Other patterns include ivy, violet, tulip, calla lily, philodendron.

BELOW: One of Skinger’s more recent designs combines water-worn slate and silver.

Joe is even busier than usual for, as a rule, he manages to do some teaching of silver craft. He has taught two summers at the University of Vermont and two at Fletcher Farms Craft School.

There are three little Skingers now—Joanna, (Jody to the family), six years old; Erica, four; and Carol, one year old. The two older girls love to show people their home-made trapeze in the yard, where they do “dangerous” stunts.

If you drive up to the Skinger’s place in the summer, you’ll find Joe at work in his shop behind the house. With a great picture window at his side, he often turns to the hills and mountains for inspiration in designing his silver jewelry. He says that he frequently wanders from the original sketch. He believes in a growth within a growth. He likes to watch the transformation from the original sketch to the final production, as he thinks that the design is often improved by not following the original plan too closely.

His catalog of silver lists ivy, violet, tulip, calla lily, philodendron and many contemporary designs. He especially likes
the pine needle and the maple seed patterns because they are so typical of Vermont. After much experimenting, he has developed an unusual design, blending slate and silver. The idea for this came one day when he was skipping water worn slate pieces on the lake for the children's entertainment. The velvety quality of the slate makes a good contrast with the silver.

Joe Skinger is just one of the many people in Vermont who, with their own hands, have perfected a craft, built a home and established a way of life that is satisfying. He says that he feels Vermont craftsmen are the state's best billboards. A piece of silver, made by one of Vermont's craftsmen, and worn in Texas or California, will inevitably cause interest. The same is true of all the crafts that have been developed in Vermont—pottery, woodworking, weaving, rug-making, silver craft and others. Our expert craftsmen create articles, which by their individuality and their durability, carry with them the spirit of Vermont wherever they go.

END
The Vermont Touch

When disaster struck this West Dover family, friends and neighbors again demonstrated Vermont’s tradition of helping each other in time of trouble.

By GUY C. HAWKINS

Photography by NEIL Y. PRIESSMAN & THE AUTHOR

BELLOw: Neighbors with trucks pitch in to clear away the burned ruins while others (background) start foundations for the new house.
The cry of fire in a small Vermont village has an ominous ring, especially at night. It was on the evening of October 27, 1952 that the quiet serenity of West Dover village was shattered by the signal that spelled disaster for the Halbert Bartlett family.

Hal was out in the barn milking when suddenly hay seemed to be afire all over the barn floor. Hal did his best to extinguish the blaze, only to get the back of his head and neck badly burned, and then he gave the alarm.

Neighboring fire departments of Wilmington and East Dover responded in record time but before the apparatus arrived, the barn and house were a mass of flames. Meanwhile nearby neighbors had rushed to the aid of the family and removed most of the downstairs furniture. The few cows were saved but most everything else was lost, including a horse, pigs and chickens—a stunning blow to the family. The buildings burned to the ground.

Vermonters have a reputation for a lack of verbosity. They don't say much, but let one of them get hit with sickness, trouble or tragedy and a whole lot seems to get done with little fuss.

And so that night almost before the fire was under control, folks from Wilmington, Marlboro and Dover had agreed to meet at Upton's store the next morning to see what could be done.

There, around the proverbial country store stove, a little leadership and a lot of willing assistants set up an organization called the "Halbert Bartlett Helpful Neighbors' Association." Jobs were quickly assigned to those best qualified to get results. A canvass for funds was started in close-by villages, plans laid to send letters of appeal to Dover summer people and plans were made for building a new house. Of course, Halbert and his wife, Gertrude, were consulted about all the plans, and every effort was made to keep all activities and workers in harmony with the general program.

Before that short meeting broke up men were on their way to the cellar to clear away debris. Soon logs had been contributed, standing timber donated and men were giving labor to get out the necessary lumber for the new home.

The family was staying with a married daughter a short distance away. Clothes had been provided for all members of the family. Contributions of vegetables, a pig, canned goods, furniture and money were coming in from all directions. The esteem in which the family was held in the community was well demonstrated by the outpouring of spontaneous good will.

During the excitement of the fire, Halbert's artificial leg was broken. It was sent away for repairs but Hal didn't let that stop him. He made a "new leg" from a couple of boards and two calf straps, and he worked like a trooper every day on his new house.

Everything that had to be bought, such as bathroom fixtures and electrical equipment were furnished at cost by building firms and contractors.
One day during the construction, it was discovered that there was a shortage of floor joists. The next day between sunup and sundown trees were cut in the woods, trucked to the sawmill, sawed into lumber, trucked to the house and nailed in place.

Three days after the fire, cement was being poured for new cellar walls. Three weeks after the fire the roof was on; six weeks from the day of the fire the family moved into the new home.

It may amaze some folks to know that the entire cost of building this house of six rooms and bath was given either in material or money, by neighbors, friends or well

ABOVE: Working fast against frost, foundations are poured first.
LEFT: Neighbors go into the woods to cut logs for floor joists.
BELOW: Singed turkey, a fire survivor, inspects building progress.
wishers of the family. More than $3000.00 was contributed in cash. Yankee ingenuity, determination, neighborly resourcefulness—call it what you will—all went into the building.

And so this family, father, mother and five children living at home (two other children away) travelled in six short weeks from homeless tragedy to happiness and hope.

The lack of human kindness may be deplored in many parts of this world but in the hills of Vermont man's humanity to man is still considered normal, a taken-for-granted attribute to the good and simple life. END

ABOVE: As first snow comes hurrying neighbors get siding on.
RIGHT: Halbert Bartlett (left) helps friend cut floor boards.
BELOW: Six weeks after fire, the Bartletts and their new home.
SOME VERMONT WAYS

By Vrest Orton

Something about a BOOK

I don’t want to get over into the sphere of influence operated by my friend, Arthur Peach, whose department is books . . . but I do want to comment on a volume that has just come out because it has so much to do with opportunities in Vermont. This new book by F. S. Blanchard is called Where to Retire and How.* It roams and ranges all over the United States and elsewhere, but it has a great deal to say about New England and Vermont is especially honored by having sections devoted to Weston and Woodstock.

Since I had the pleasure of writing the piece on Weston in this volume, I hope I may be permitted to enlarge upon it here and say that what is told about Weston, can be well said indeed about the whole state.

A Place to Retire

Yes, Vermont is a grand place to retire to . . . if you only understand the kind of retirement I am talking about. This is what I want to enlarge upon, and perhaps lend some different definitions to the word retirement.

But I am getting my prepositions all mixed up. One does not retire, when one comes to Vermont, from life . . . from activity or from doing important things. In Vermont one retires into life, into new worlds of activity, and into new realms of the spirit. Retirement in the sense of doing nothing, of playing all day long, of sitting under the palm trees and watching bathing beauties, of finding all kinds of amusing ways to kill time . . . is not the way of life Vermont has to offer. Of course you can come here, buy an isolated farm and become a recluse from Vermont and Vermonters . . . no law against it. But if you are going to do that, why bother to come to Vermont?

A Way to Retire

The other day a friend telephoned me to ask if I would come and spend the night with him. I laughed rather impolitely I am afraid and said, “Why I’m too busy. I have to work for a living every day, while you are retired . . . you have lots of time so you can come and see me better than I can get away to see you!”

The laughter that came from his end of the line was more raucous than mine. “Time!” he shouted, “Why my dear man, you chaps who work for a living have life comparatively easy! I have never been so busy in my life . . . seven days a week, I am too darned busy to come and see you.” “What are you doing?” I asked. He said: “I am busy being retired in Vermont.”

And he was right. I know many men who have joined the Republic of Vermont by retirement and who are now taking such an active part in Vermont life that they don’t ever have to invent ways of killing time. Many of these people take part in local community affairs and every town in Vermont has, I sometimes believe, at least an average of 25 separate organizations of all kinds. Other people up here find there is also plenty for willing hands to do in the churches as well as in social, fraternal and civic groups, for most Vermonters have so much work to do to make a living, that they don’t have enough time to devote to extra-curricula interests. So retired folk are welcome up here because, in these ways, we have a lot for them to do.

Many of them are amazed to find that no longer do many Vermonters look askance at a newcomer. Of course there are a few very provincial hill towns where they don’t accept you unless you were born within that township (if you were born 6 miles away you are an outlander). But these towns are few and far between. I know several newcomers who have been in the state less than 5 years and who are now taking a prominent part not only in town but in state affairs. The opportunities for rendering genuine public service in Vermont are boundless. There is so much to be done that it is a challenge for people with special skills and talents to come here, retire, and go to work. In Vermont, politics is not something that happens in some remote state capital . . . it is all around you and you can reach out and touch it every day. If you don’t, it may reach out and touch you.

Of course, if you buy a place, you will find that there is plenty for willing hands to do without outside affairs. I am not talking about building on additions to your house . . . nothing so formal as that. I am talking about the simple little chores of house, barn, and garden that are always

*Published by Dodd, Mead & Co., N. Y. C.
waiting. Then you can go a step further and have a garden and a few chickens... but don't carry this too far. You may be retired, but you don't want to be tied down so you can't ever travel and meet folks all over the Republic of Vermont.

A great big Community

This brings me to one of the finest characteristics I know about Vermont. It is this:—Vermont has only the same population as the city of Rochester, New York and Vermont is a small state geographically; about 75 miles wide and about 175 long. And what happens? It doesn't take long for you to know people all over the place and you find before you realize it that the whole state is your community. No longer are you isolated or confined to the township where you have a residence. You can range all over, for distances are so short now with good roads and cars that you will find yourself thinking of the state the way you used to think of a small city or large town... just one big community.

That Classic State

One should however utter a solemn word of warning. I have told you a lot of things Vermont is good for, but I must tell you one thing it is not good for. Vermonters are classically independent folk. They have been raised not to be dependent on others. Their lives have been such that they can never act as body servants or servile retainers for others, no matter what others are willing to pay in money.

You may find this habit of Vermonters as irritating as the itch. But you can't change it. For example, every able-bodied Vermont male is old or young enough to tramp in the woods and fields, will quit any job, no matter what he is making, on at least two days during the year... fall where they may. These are the first day of the trout fishing season and the first day of deer hunting. These days are so important that in the last legislature there was a bill put in to make them state holidays... a fine tribute to our sense of independence.

If you retire to Vermont and need a houseful of servants, you won't get them. Nor can you get, on a moment's notice, electricians, plumbers, carpenters and other artisans to come and do something for you at once... pronto! You can get them but only when they are ready to come.

This is why when you retire to Vermont you have got to be ready either to wait patiently or to do a lot of small jobs yourself.

And the funny thing about it is this: when you teach yourself to do some of these jobs, you will find that you are not only getting things done but you are having a lot of new fun. I am or used to be a fool so far as tools went... never had a knack for doing things around the house. But since I was forced to learn it really hasn't been bad at all. I have gone so far as to build a work shop and stock it completely with tools both hand and power (and don't scorn to use any and all power tools available—no sense in being a slave of hand work) so I am now ready to tackle almost anything. This also gives me a grand sense of independence. I know I can exist if the plumber, carpenter, or what have you decides he can't come today.

Live until You Die

Forgive these discursive rambling thoughts... I thought this time I would try to talk about the subject the way you and I would do, if we could sit down together and as we say in Vermont, "visit a spell."

I end with this thought: I think (and know from experience) that Vermont is the best place in the country to retire to, if you want to live every day until you die. The curse of middle and old age is the feeling of inadequacy and not being wanted... not having anything important to do. In Vermont there is so much to do of importance and interest that the opportunity for retired folks here is really a marvelous one and perhaps unique. END
Vermont, the home state of the famed “Green Mountain” spud, is not a big producer by national standards, but it raises many fine quality potatoes just the same.

Attacked by dieticians and shaky in federal subsidies, the lowly potato has shrunk in public stature these last few years, even as potato raising in Vermont has declined.

But who will gainsay that a choice, Green Mountain is never bested, baked, for instance, as accompaniment to fried salt pork and milk gravy?

Yes, even among its brother potatoes the 80-year old Green Mountain (developed in Charlotte) may be losing out. Katahdins, Homugas and Kennebecs are crowding the Green Mountain, acknowledged though it is as the most tasty, all-purpose potato. The trouble lies in this Vermonter’s weakness to a host of potato maladies. But new disease controls may save the Green Mountain, and anyway Vermont-raised Katahdins are smooth-skinned, fine bakers. The Homugas are especially well adapted to Vermont soils.

Farming was different in 1877, when more than 44,000 acres in Vermont were planted to potatoes. Almost every farmer (and there were a lot more farms then) raised some potatoes to eat and to barter for farm labor and store produce.

Today most of Vermont’s commercial potato crop is raised on big plantings by specialists, where the soil is ideal and where the big operations warrant special, expensive machinery. Today from 4000 to 5000 Vermont acres go into potatoes with the annual production about a million bushels. About ten per cent of the crop is certified for seed by the Vermont Agriculture Department, free from disease and recommended for planting.

Vermont’s production is small potatoes in comparison with some other states, and it’s a small part of Vermont agriculture, too. Contrast 111 field-crop farms in Vermont (mostly in potatoes) with 13,000 dairy farms, 800 odd poultry and 100 orchard operations.

In Vermont and in neighboring states you can buy Vermont potatoes at independent stores where quality is emphasized, and in First National and A & P stores, for instance. Look for the early
LEFT: This is a small part of the acreage the Salls brothers of Morrisville have in potatoes. Fine quality crops have been raised here for the past 30 years. Not far distant is 2608-ft. Elmore Mountain.

RIGHT: In early Fall when the potatoes are ready for harvesting, this big machine rolls over the fields, cutting and carrying away the tops of the plants. This makes the picking easier later on. A variation of this machine burns off the tops instead.

LEFT: The hardest part of potato harvesting used to be the digging, but now a machine does it, also doing away with the usual damage to some, cut by a hand fork.

Irish Cobblers the end of August, later varieties starting in September or October.

Most people go by brand names today even for potatoes, but more and more are becoming choosy about the variety of potatoes they eat. A lot of old Vermonters will hold out for the harder-to-raise Green Mountains, and some even for another Vermont-developed strain (almost unknown today), the Early Rose.

At any rate, a modern potato planting like this one of the Salls brothers' in Elmore, is fun to watch, especially when the fields are a 100-acre sea of blossoms and later when the ungainly, efficient machines move into the fields with the many hand workers for the harvest. END

(Pictures continued on next page)
ABOVE: In some operations the mechanical digger also scoops up the spuds along a conveyor into barrels. Here, though, the Salls find hand picking is better. Some of the Salls Brothers’ 37 pickers bring the whole family, the parents working and children enjoying the outing.

BELOW: The pickers have filled 100-pound sacks from their bushel baskets (on which their pay is based), and here the loading team completes the field harvest. The six loaders consist of truck driver, three carrying sacks to the truck, and two stowing the bags. It’s all heavy work.
In Vermont, A Little Slower

We watched the pair of heavy steers ambling down the village street to the waiting truck.

To him it was the end. All his remembered growing-up, the scattered friends of his youth and middle age were all part of it. The old man was saying good-bye with the simple statement, "Well, there goes the last of 'em."

But there are still a few farm fathers in Vermont who value the lessons of a less mechanized time.

The old man would have been pleased watching Byron Morse and his son, George. It would have meant a lot to him to relive the time when everyone had a pair of working cattle, and the youngsters did most of the breaking of the young calves.

He might have privately thought Georgie just a bit tender—only three and a half—but he would have approved the way he took hold, for the very first time, of the whipstock. He would have remembered how his own father kept a tight hold on the lead rope, for calves can pull mighty hard when they both set off together.

It all would have been so right, so familiar. The dirt road, an autumn day, and, with baby sister watching, the first great thrill of making animals work together for you.

The old man probably wouldn’t have changed his private opinion that the world was going to hell on a gasoline engine, but he would have taken knowing satisfaction that Vermont would be a little slower about it than anywhere else.

End

Written & Photographed by

Neil Y. Priessman
Every year in advance of the Autumn foliage season, people ask about the best parts of Vermont to visit to enjoy the brilliant show at its best.

It's easier to answer the next question: when to come, but for those who want to know "where" the answer is "anywhere," the less-traveled road the best, perhaps.

Everywhere in Vermont are found the sugar maples, and in numbers that set the state apart from any other section of the country in the sheer variety of Autumn colors. The maples' foliage may run from burnt sienna to soft oranges to flaming crimsons. Add to this the yellow kaleidoscope of aspen, elm and birch; the russet of the beech and oak; the purple and maroon hues of ivy against stone walls; the roadside clumps of sumac.

Contrast these gay colors with the deep greens of hemlock, spruce, pine and balsam and the paler greenery of the white cedar.

Like maple sugaring, fall foliage changes depend upon the weather, the coming of frost and, to some extent, on rain. Plan on it, though, from September's third week to mid-October, the change coming first to northern Vermont, in the hill and mountain areas, later in southern Vermont, the Champlain and Connecticut River valleys.

Typical of the Vermont Autumn, also is the Indian Summer weather, the crisp nights, the signs of harvest, the peculiar clarity of air and the definition in the golden afternoon light, even to single tufts of still-green meadow grass.

But Autumn in Vermont does not call for telling. Here we're glad to present in color reproduction a small sample of its warm and recurring beauty.

Near Cambridge, by Mack Derick
RIGHT: The old Alexander place on Tunbridge East Hill is pictured by ARTHUR GRIFFIN. Milo and his father, Henry Alexander, who live here today, recall the family story that David Alexander back in 1856 drew the brick from below Tunbridge Market, his prancing white horse hauling many a load up the steep grade from the valley. About the same time David set out this double row of shining maples. The house, similar to two others in the area, has unusual fans over the door and windows, has four chimneys (hidden by trees). Two fireplaces were built at diagonal corners of the house. The decorative kitchen floor has boards of alternately-laid black cherry and the lighter maple.
Battenkill Valley & the old Botsford Farm, Manchester
By Harold C. Todd

Sugar Maple on the West Road, Manchester
By Harold C. Todd
When you enjoy Vermont Turkey in a hotel or restaurant, little do you realize the frustrated life the bird has lived or the chase he has led his owners. Turkeys are nervous, timid and suspicious, but Vermonters take the time and have the patience to cope with them. That's one reason why Vermont birds have the reputation of being the best on the market.

Drive along the country roads of almost any village in the state early in the fall and you'll pass many turkey farms. You'll see flocks of turkeys, ranging in number from a hundred to twenty-five thousand. For years, Vermont farmers have been turkey growers, raising nearly one hundred thousand turkeys annually.

Every section of the state seems to have some farmer known to raise superior turkeys. Burlingtonians have long relied on the turkeys raised by the Porter family on the Sand Dunes Road at Colchester Point. The Porters raise about fifteen hundred turkeys a year, usually the bronze type but, occasionally, white ones, too. They supply the local markets and ship some outside. Todd Porter understands turkeys and their peculiar ways. He has a dry humor and can tell some odd stories about his birds.

He says, "Turkeys are not very smart, in fact they're just plain dumb." And he goes on to tell about the time he opened the door to let them out in the yard and they stepped on snow for the first time. "Just a little light snow," Mr. Porter says, "but the whole flock took off and flew into the Lake—every one of them. Of course they don't really fly, they soar!" And it took the whole Porter family all day to get them back into the barn. The Porter turkeys gave the neighbors a bad time once, too. They flew against a high tension wire and the power was off for hours.

During the last war when Air Corps planes based at Burlington flew low over the Porter farm they literally scared hundreds of turkeys to death. The birds flew against walls and fences and many were lost from bruises and broken bones. Turkeys are even afraid of their shadows, Moonlight doesn't spell romance and repose to turkeys, it just frightens them.

A gentle person can win the confidence of turkeys, however, and Mrs. Porter has a way with them. She can open the gate to the field where they are feeding, go out and kneel down and call them and they'll gather around her as devoutly as if they were at a prayer meeting. In fact, she can reach out and pick up a big gobbler and he'll let her hold him for a while as if he really enjoys it. They may be dumb but they're too smart to bite that hand that's feeding them.

The Porters say they don't lose nearly as many turkeys as they used to and they attribute this to better turkey feed. It is
ABOVE: The turkey, a timid and exasperatingly stupid bird, is incurably curious.

There are many relatively small turkey farms in the state like Todd Porter's and there are many large ones, too. One of the largest is the Tabor place on Hog Island near Swanton. Mr. Milton Tabor, who lives in a beautiful old white house there, has been raising turkeys for over forty years and his father before him did, too. Today Mr. Tabor is still active with his business partner, Jacob Furman of Boston and New York. On a farm of eight hundred fifty acres, with water on both sides, they raise over twenty-five thousand turkeys each year.

Here there are scores of little turkey houses in rows laid out like streets. Each house has a porch and a large fenced-in yard. Small turkeys begin life inside the house, later are moved to the porches and, as they grow bigger, have the run of the yards.

Turkeys greet the visitor with much noise and running about. At the approach of a car, they rush against the fences and fly up to the roofs to get a better view. There is all the confusion and enthusiasm

nutritionally good, containing protein, minerals, vitamins and other food elements similar to that in any good baby food. This nourishing food, plus clean houses in which to live, fertile fields in which to run, combined with understanding care, probably account for the superior flavor and freshness of Vermont turkeys.
then dip him in boiling water for picking. At the Tabor farm, the whole process of killing and dressing is done very quickly, nearly all by machinery except removing the pin feathers. This is done by fifty or sixty local women. Then the birds are plunged into barrels of ice water to cool.

By six o’clock of the same day, the turkeys are loaded into big trucks and shipped to Boston or New York. Twenty-four hours from the time they are killed, they arrive in the city markets. This is no doubt the reason that Vermont turkeys have the reputation of freshness.

Bronze turkeys far outnumber all other breeds in the state, though many people raise the large white turkeys which look so decorative ranging in the fields or pastures. Bronze and white turkeys are grown to a weight of twelve to thirty pounds. More recently some Vermonters are raising the small, succulent Beltsfield turkeys which are so much in demand by small families.

Many women have become interested in raising Beltsfields, and Mrs. George Turner, of East Avenue in Burlington, is one of these. Mrs. Turner had been reading a good deal on the subject, and so she started in a small way in her back yard. Last year she raised one hundred-seventy Beltsfields weighing, on the average, nine pounds and she found a ready market for them. Mrs. Turner says she thinks many of the large turkey businesses in the state
grew out of a woman's backyard poultry project. Husbands were surprised at the profit and decided turkey growing was better than some of the other farm programs. She says Beltsfields are a little harder to raise than other breeds. They, too, are vicious, excitable birds; she finds caring for them a fascinating occupation.

Have you noticed that most of the turkeys you buy today have a broader, thicker breast and thus provide more white meat? That's because the breeders are planning it that way. If you have an opportunity to select your own bird, choose one that has a broad, rounded breast, broad enough so it will lie flat on its breast. The color of a fresh first class turkey should be pinkish cream, not blue or purple. A slightly blue one may be perfectly good but it will have less fat on it and requires more basting during cooking.

Frozen turkeys may be almost equally as good as fresh ones, providing they are frozen properly. Experts recommend hanging the drawn birds for twelve to twenty-four hours at 34° to chill and then freezing them promptly. Frozen turkeys should be completely thawed at refrigerator or room temperature before cooking. Turkey may be eaten safely after it has been in the freezer up to eight months. If kept frozen longer, the fat may become rancid.

Technically, a “dressed” bird means one from which the blood and feathers have been removed. A “drawn” bird is one that has also been cleaned and eviscerated. Drawn turkey is also known as “ready-to-cook” or “oven-ready.”

To roast a turkey, first rub the cavity thoroughly with salt, allowing about one eighth teaspoon per pound. Just before roasting, stuff the bird with your favorite dressing, placing just enough dressing in the neck to fill it out and the rest in the body cavity. Stuff rather lightly as the dressing swells during cooking. Some people like a moist dressing, others a dry, crumbly one. A good standard recipe is:

In one half cup butter or margarine, sauté 4 tablespoons chopped onion. Add 7 cups white bread crumbs, 3 eggs, 2 tablespoons chopped parsley, ½ cup chopped celery, ½ teaspoons salt, 4 teaspoons poultry seasoning, and milk to make it of the desired consistency. This will stuff an 8-
Most Vermont turkeys are bronze, but popular too are white turkeys and the small Beltsfield. Whites weigh up to 50 pounds. Allow about 1 cup of dressing per pound of dressed poultry. When the turkey is stuffed, fasten down the skin at the openings with skewers. To truss the bird, press wings and legs tightly to the body and secure with firm string. When ready, place the bird on a rack in an open pan. Mrs. Porter and many food experts like to bake the turkey breast down to retain the juices but some disagree with this. Many people cover the top and sides of the turkey with fat moistened cheese cloth while cooking, others lay on two or three strips of bacon for drippings. Roast slowly (300 to 325°), with little or no water in the pan, allowing 4 to 4½ hours for an 8 to 12 pound bird, 4½ to 5 hours for a 12 to 16 pound one, 5 to 5½ hours for a 16 to 20 pound turkey and 5½ to 6 hours for one 20 to 24 pounds.

Don’t plan on finishing the roasting just the minute you want to serve the meal because it might take a little longer than you expect. Anyway, it’s nice to have time to prepare for that number of people, it’s well worth it just to see the faces of the youngsters when she brings the turkey to the table. Whether your turkey is large or small, you can carve it easily if you follow a few simple directions. Place the roast turkey so the breast is at the left of the carver. Place the knife between the thigh and the body and cut through the skin to the joint so you can separate the leg from the body. Separate the thigh and drumstick and slice off the dark meat. Then separate the wing from the body. To slice the breast meat, begin half way up the breast and slice downward with straight, even strokes. The slices will fall free. Continue slicing the breast by beginning a little higher each time until the crest of the bone is reached. Then comes eating—the best fun of all! Turkey with fluffy mashed potatoes, creamed onions, squash, celery, cranberry sauce and steamed pudding. It’s a family feast!

When there’s turkey left, you should remove the meat from the bones and wrap it in aluminum foil or waxed paper to refrigerate. Be sure to remove the dressing from the cavity to a bowl instead of leaving it in the bird. There are many interesting ways in which to use left-over turkey. Slices of white meat make wonderful sandwiches. From the smaller pieces, you can make such delicious dishes as creamed turkey, turkey casserole, cutlets, croquettes, turkey loaf and chow mein. For a special tossed salad, add generous slivers of turkey meat and cheese. Using the bones, you have the makings of fine turkey noodle soup.

Vermont turkey is a good investment, from the viewpoint of both the producer and the consumer. Tasty turkey, well cooked, provides plenty of good eating at a moderate price. And it is well worth the farmer’s time and patience to raise the neurotic bird.
Autumn in Vermont is the time for many pleasant things—places to see and activities to sample—Fall foliage, fairs, hunting, and by no means least, the season of church, harvest and game suppers.

Perhaps no Yankee tradition lives up to its name in Vermont better than that of the groaning country board, the simple but succulent dishes that come from farm and town kitchens.

Somehow no professional culinary artist can quite touch the combined genius of Vermont housewives, each cooking her specialty; the crusted baked beans, the puff-topped shepherd’s pie, scalloped potatoes with a top toasting of cheese, the chicken pie and dumplings or baked Vermont ham, and then the host of cakes and apple, pumpkin and mince pies. Even church supper coffee tastes better.

Sometimes they are variety dish dinners, and at times, turkeys or chicken pie treats. Look for the game suppers where game meats, bear, coon and venison, are served. Keen-eyed as auction seekers are many Vermonters in their ferreting out of remote country suppers. They’ll drive for miles to enjoy the fine food and the friendliness of the crowds and family groups. A stranger immediately is one of the “family.”

Most of the annual Vermont suppers have two or more sittings to accommodate the crowds. A note of advice: If possible find out in advance if seats are reserved, and if not, go early.

Here is a partial listing of some of the more famed annual Vermont suppers, scheduled as we went to press.

- Sept. 24 Middlebury, Festival Supper, St. Mary’s Parish.
- Sept. 29 Lowell, Chicken Pie Supper, St. Ignatius Hall.
- Oct. 4 Fairfield Ctr., St. Patrick’s Parish Hall.
- Oct. 6 Berlin Corner, Chicken Pie Dinner & Supper.
- Oct. 7 Georgia Plains, Turkey Supper, Baptist Church.
- Oct. 15 Tunbridge, Chicken Pie Supper.
- Oct. 30 Reading, Turkey Supper & Old Time Ball.
- Nov. 19 Dummerston Ctr., Grange Game Supper.
- Nov. 19 Londonderry, Game Supper.
- Dec. 3 Danville, 33d An. Game Supper, Methodist Church.

(Continued on next page)
Enjoyment of friends' company and of good food is pictorial.

At the best suppers biscuits still are baked right there and served from the oven. Coffee is brewed here, too, but main dishes come from many home kitchens.

Individually-made salads are brought in at some suppers, but here a fresh vegetable salad is being prepared in the church kitchen and table bowls filled.

Volunteer waitresses and waiters, coffee pitchers at the ready, await the seating of the hungry crowd at Reading's turkey supper. Cafeteria serving is uncommon.
Reading, where a turkey supper and ball are held each October.

RIGHT TOP: Carving turkey for more than a hundred people isn’t easy, but these once-a-year Reading chefs quickly put out generous helpings. Ladies serve the vegetables.

RIGHT CENTER: Ladies at Georgia Plains’ Baptist Church cut a host of pies into equal portions, saving modest diners from having to ask for “just a slice, please.”

RIGHT: Traditionally the Reading turkey supper is followed by the spirited “Old Time Ball” held in Robinson Hall. Square dances are the favorites of all ages.
The phenomenon of arithmetical prodigies has never been satisfactorily explained, although by 1940 about twenty such young calculators had been repeatedly cited in scientific literature. Four of these twenty were Americans, and two of the four were Vermonters. Probably the most celebrated of all was Zerah Colburn of Cabot, Vermont—and so he remains to this day. As the boy said of himself later, he was “first in the list in the order of time and probably first in extent of intellectual power.”

Zerah was born September 1, 1804, on a farm lying on the road from Cabot to Peacham, the son of poor parents of little education. The youngest of six children, he seemed to his mother and father for some time the most backward. The Colburn parents were to revise this opinion in the fall of 1810, when the child was between five and six years of age. His father, Abia, was at work in the shed when he heard his son, who was playing on the floor behind him, run through a multiplication table. This seemed odd to the father because Zerah had been at school for only about six weeks and could not tell one written figure from another. When he examined the boy in multiplication, Zerah answered the questions quickly and correctly. A neighbor dropped in, was told of this development, satisfied his curiosity with a few questions of his own, and went away to tell the townfolk. Within a year the word had spread from Cabot to every town and city on the Atlantic seaboard and, through English and French journals, to the educated world of Europe.

Leaving the rest of the family behind, Abia took his precocious son first to neighboring Danville, then to Montpelier. Here, either because of the legislators’ lack of mathematical sophistication or their desire to test the child’s native shrewdness, he was asked a number of trick questions. Which is the most, twice twenty-five or twice five and twenty? Which is the most, six dozen dozen or half a dozen dozen? How many black beans would make five white ones? Zerah wrote in his autobiographical Memoir of Zerah Colburn that he gave the correct answer to each of these questions. The correct answer to “How many black beans would make five white ones?” is “Five, if you skin them.”

In the course of the next few months Zerah was jolted by stage from one city to another. In Portsmouth, New Hampshire, he was asked what sum multiplied by itself will produce 998,001, and in less than four seconds, the lad answered “999.” In Hanover a professor of mathematics commented that he had “never seen, heard or read anything like it.” A Boston contemporary wrote: “After being told the denominations of weights and measures, he would reduce one to another with the greatest readiness. He answered correctly the question ‘How many gills
are there in three barrels? The question 'How many are $25 \times 25 + 35 \times 35 + 45 \times 45$?' he answered correctly with little hesitation. . . . In less than a minute he answered correctly the question 'How many days are there in 73 years?' What rendered his performance more wonderful was that he did not know a figure when written, and he could not count more than 50. How he knew the names of larger numbers was a mystery, and he was sometimes embarrassed in making his answers understood. After he had stated correctly the number of days in a given number of years, he was asked how many hours there were. He said he did not know the numbers of hours in a day. On being told it was 24, he immediately gave a correct answer."

Behind most prodigies the guiding hand of a relative or older friend is usually apparent. Mozart’s father was a single-minded slave-driver who had Wolfgang composing at four, touring in clavichord recitals at seven and at thirteen watching the production of his first opera. However, with arithmetical prodigies, who can be thrown on their own after learning to count, the faculty seems to flower unassisted in the child by the time he is six. In the case of Zerah the parental influence was anything but helpful. Abia Colburn deserted his home and family with the ostensible aim of giving Zerah the education he obviously deserved. But when President Wheelock of Dartmouth College offered to tutor the youngster at no expense to the family, Abia turned him down. And when a group of leading Bostonians offered to raise $5,000, settle half of it on the father and educate Zerah with the balance, they too were refused. Although Zerahloyally defends his father in the Memoir, a between-the-lines picture of Abia, substantiated in at least one contemporary account, leaves little doubt that he was ignorant, stubborn and confused—a sorry manager for his talented son. When the refusal of the Boston offer was given publicity, Abia, his young meal ticket in tow, embarked for England. It was May 11, 1812, less than six weeks before the outbreak of war.

Zerah’s first success was all that he could have desired. The Colburns set themselves up in handsome quarters in London, and for a shilling anyone was allowed to pepper the lad with questions. Aristocrats flocked to Spring Gardens to witness the performance of the young Vermonter who, out of consideration for the patriots among his British visitors, was sometimes introduced as a Russian. With evident relish Zerah recalls the list of his

RIGHT: Young Truman Safford of Royalton had a more normal boyhood, was better educated, later was a brilliant astronomer.
ABOVE: This trim farm home in Royalton was the birthplace of Truman Safford. He began young, mastering the alphabet at the age of two.

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titled callers: one marquis, three dukes and six earls led it off. Princess Charlotte, heiress apparent to the crown, called with her tutor and, reports the Memoir, "evidenced a mind far superior to the common endowments of her sex." To entertain his visitors Zerah would, for example, raise the number eight to the sixteenth power and give the square root of 106,929 and the cube root of 268,336, before these numbers could be written down.

But to the layman the most surprising aspect of the child's gift was his ability at factoring. A prospectus of the day reports: "One of the party [a group interested in giving Zerah an appropriate education] requested him to name the factors which produced the number 247,483, which he did by mentioning 941 and 263, which indeed are the only two factors that will produce it. Another of them proposed 171,395, and he named the following factors as the only ones, viz: 5x34,179, 7x24,485, 59x2905, 83x2065, 33x4897, 295x581, 413x415. He was then asked to give the factors of 36,083, but he immediately replied that it had none; which in fact was the case, as 36,083 is a prime number."

Pierre de Fermat, two centuries before, had set up a series of numbers which he assumed to be prime: 3 (2 plus 1), 5 (2 to the second power plus 1), 17 (2 to the fourth power plus 1), etc. The Frenchman easily verified the earlier parts of the sequence and supposed that the formula would hold true ad infinitum. By 1813, however, it had been found that the sixth number in this sequence, 4,294,967, was not a prime number. So one visitor put the question to the Vermonter who replied, after some cogitation, that 4,294,967 was indeed no prime number, being divisible by 641. (This was good going, even for Zerah. A robot built for the National Bureau of Standards took a full thirty minutes recently to ascertain that 99,999,999,997 is a prime number.)

Zerah was now at the height of his powers. He had not added to his original accomplishments—multiplying, factoring, extracting square and cube roots—but he could now do these at greater speed; as with other lightning calculators, his powers increased with practice and fell off without it. The extra finger on each hand (a family deformity) had been removed in London; he was now an at-
tractive lad, with red hair, blue eyes and freckles. After a tour of the chief cities of England, Scotland and Ireland, Zerah and his father crossed the Channel to Paris. Here at a dinner given by the American colony to William H. Crawford, United States Minister to France, Zerah proposed the toast to the guest of honor "with the assurance of a man full grown but without offensive boldness," according to John Quincy Adams, who had interrupted his account of Napoleon's return from Elba to write about his fellow American. Napoleon himself, during the Hundred Days, expressed a desire to meet the human comptometer but, as Zerah remarked, "the sudden reverse produced in his fortunes by the defeat at Waterloo prevented this." The career of the emperor made an impression on the youngster and shortly after Waterloo he composed a poem which began:

On yonder hill, with lofty oaks bedecked,
Whose spreading boughs throw o'er the barren soil
A sombre shade, on that ill-fated morn,
Napoleon stood.

Between exhibitions and command performances Zerah managed to get an education. He had learned to write numbers while on a trip up the Hudson and could read, after a fashion, by the time he arrived in England. In London he learned to write. Now, belatedly, he attended a series of schools in England and France, shifted from one to another by his fickle parent. He enjoyed the study of languages; geometry he found easy but dull. He was not, he said, "peculiarly fortunate in arriving at a result which did not readily present itself"; nor was he remarkable "either for quickness of mind or closeness of application." Nevertheless he did five years' work in three and and always stood near the head of his class.

Zerah was to put his talent to gainful use only once. When attempts to bolster the family fortunes by acting, writing plays and teaching school had proved unsuccessful, he met, in 1823, Thomas Young, Egyptologist and secretary to the British Board of Longitude. Young gave him some intermittent instruction, then hired him to compute the positions and variations of certain stars. Zerah found the task easy and he might have gone on to become a creditable astronomer had it not been for his father.

Abia's health had been failing for some months. Before his death he gave his son a final word of bad advice: Zerah, he said, should return to the family that Abia had abandoned twelve years before. So, a good son to the last, Zerah threw up his job with Young and set sail for New York.

Although his facility with figures never entirely left him, Zerah was not to exhibit himself again. He returned to Vermont and served as an itinerant Methodist preacher for nine years, married a Vermont girl and sired six children. Toward the end of his life he became a teacher of languages and English literature at what is now Norwich University. He died of tuberculosis on March 2, 1839, and lies buried with his wife in the Center Meeting House cemetery in Norwich.

Three years after Zerah's death and only forty miles from his birthplace, was born the second of Vermont's arithmetical wizards—Truman Henry Safford, of Royalton. Safford's mother had been a teacher, his father a farmer who took an interest in public affairs and represented Royalton in the legislature. The boy had learned his alphabet at the age of two, and
at four was comparing the best available
geographies and noting their points of
difference. When he was six he told his
mother that, if she would tell him how
many rods it was around the family farm,
he would give its circumference in barley-
corns. (A barleycorn is an obsolete
unit of measure, one-third inch or about
the length of a grain of barley. It is still
used as a measure for children's shoes,
which start at four inches and increase
one barleycorn for each additional size.)
The mother said the distance was 1040
rods. Young Safford thought a few
moments, then said "617,760 barley-
corns," which was correct. Before he was
ten he had calculated an almanac for
Bradford, Vermont, and subsequently
compiled almanacs for Cincinnati,
Philadelphia and Boston. In the Cincinnati
edition, he introduced a new method for
finding the moon's rising and setting,
and so cut the time required for this chore by
one-quarter. He was by then a celebrity.
The Boston Courier referred to him as
"the most wonderfully gifted human
being that ever lived" and a bank offered
the child a regular salary to enact the
part of a machine for calculating interest.

At about this time the Rev. Henry W.
Adams, an agent of the American Bible
Society and an amateur mathematician,
paid a visit to the Safford household well
primed with tricky problems—and their
answers. Adams' questioning lasted three
hours. Following is a sampling from his
report of the inquisition:

"'A man and his wife usually drank
out a cask of beer in twelve days; but
when the man was from home, it lasted
the woman thirty days. How many days
would the man alone be drinking it?' He
whirled about, rolled up his eyes, and re­
plied at once, 'Twenty days.' . . . Then,
said I, 'Two persons, A and B, departed
from different places at the same time,
and travelled towards each other. On
meeting, it appeared that A had travelled
18 miles more than B, and that A could
have gone B's journey in 15 days, but
B would have been 28 days in performing
A's journey. How far did each travel?' He
flew round the room, round the chairs,
writhing his little body as if in agony, and
in about a minute sprung up to me and
said 'A travelled 72 miles, and B 54 miles
—didn't they? Yes.' . . . 'Multiply in
your head 365,365; 365,365,365,365,365
by 365,365,365,365,365,365.' It took the
boy no more than one minute to give the
answer, in periods of three figures, from
left to right, as fast as it was possible for
Adams and the older Safford to write
them down. (The answer is 133,491,850,208,
566,925,016,658,299,941,583,225
—a sum which the skeptical reader, if
endowed with an average turn for figures,
can check with pencil and paper in a little
more than an hour.) 'The boy looked
pale and said he was tired,'" the Rev. Mr.
Adams added. "He said it was the largest
sum he had ever done."

Safford graduated from Harvard with
high honors at eighteen, was acting
director of the Harvard Observatory and
later director of the Dearborn Ob­
servatory in Chicago. He became Field
Memorial Professor of Astronomy at
Williams College in 1876 and held that
position until his death a quarter-century
later.

* * *

Safford's history is an outstanding ex­
ception to the rule that infant prodigies in
mathematics invariably blow up in later
years. A more typical case is that of
William James Sidis who, eleven years
old and dressed in black velvet knickers,
lectured in 1909 before one hundred pro­
fessors and advanced students of math­
ematics from Harvard on "Four-Dimen­sional Bodies." When last heard from,
Sidis was a clerk in a business house
with a knack for running the adding
machine.

If calculators have one thing in com­
mon, it is their absorbing passion for
reckoning. Practice is essential to per­
forming the more complicated problems
and "a taste for figures," as Zerah called
it, must prompt all such arduous mental
exercise. The most useful tool for a
young calculator, however, is an un fail­
ing memory. Arthur F. Griffith of Mil­
ford, Indiana, who was good enough in
the field to hold a steady job on the
vaudeville stage, had a memory store
which included fifty-seven different persons and
twenty-one hundred and thirty pints.

Almost alone among calculators, Buxton
got his results principally by the use of
his memory, using conventional methods
of computation. But Griffith, by contrast,
had devised eighty short-cuts of the kind
he would find in manuals of ready reckoning.
To multiply large numbers together,
Zerah Colburn would set them up in his
mind—in the case of 687 and 42, for
example—like this:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
600 \\
80 \\
40 \\
7 \\
2 \\
\end{array}
\]

and would first multiply 600 by 40, then add the result to the product of 80 and 40, and this total he
would add in turn to the product of 7 and 40. Then he would go through the same
procedure with 2, adding as he went along
until he had completed the problem. This
is a cumbersome method when written
out but, as the Memoir says, "pen, ink
and paper cost Zerah very little when
employed in a sum." The efficacy of his
system was such that "in a few seconds"
he could square 888,888, to give 790,
121,876,544 and multiply this by 49,
yielding 38,715,971,650,676. As to square
roots, "suppose," Zerah wrote, "it
be required to extract the square root
92,416. First inquire what sum squared
ends in 16. Ans. 04; here we have the
last two figures of the root. Next, as the
sum contains five figures, inquire what
class to 10,000, and this total he
could never explain. For no matter how
huge the memory store, or how in­
genious the short-cuts of the lightning
calculators may be, there are still ques­
tions to which neither they nor the psy­
chologists can give a definite reply.
Probably no more satisfactory answer can
be given today than Zerah's own to a
Bostonian who was urging him to tell her
how he reckoned. "God put it into my
head," he said, "and I cannot put it into
yours."
HOMO VERMONTICUS

By Stoyan Christowe

At the opposite end of a crosscut saw Writer Christowe finds the essence of Vermont, distilled in the character of his partner, Elmer Houghton.

For years Elmer Houghton has been helping me saw my winter wood. I say help but it really is the other way around. Though I pay Elmer and board him, he is the boss, the officiating high priest of these autumnal rites. Out of the maple, beech, yellow-birch, black-cherry logs snaked in the yard in front of the woodshed Elmer and I make music, with a crosscut saw as our only instrument, aided by a few saw-wedges, a couple of axes, a light sledge, and two or three flat files.

Shuttling rhythmically between us, the saw hums a drowsy, rocking lullaby. The clearers rake away the sawdust and winnow it out into neat little piles. The whole of nature murmurs with our saw. All about us the air teems with myriad insects, mesmerized by the warm, yellow sunlight. And the foliage is at its height, with the stands of dark-green spruces amidst the riotous maple colors suggesting the presence within of dream-like palaces.

"Best time o' year to saw your wood." Elmer's nasal twang blends with the thrumming of the saw. "Fell your trees and limb 'em while the sap's still up in the leaves. Then the logs saw better and your wood dries faster." Little capsules of folk knowledge transmitted by Green Mountain generations survive in Elmer.

Elmer is on the shady side of seventy, in terms of years that is. Otherwise he is ageless. Somewhere between fifty and sixty he got cast into a mould that still retains its form and hardness. He lives alone, raising potatoes, beans, pumpkins, sugaring a little, berrying in season, water-witching for summer folk, linin' bees in the fall, sawing wood—an independent cuss.

The easy rhythm of the saw is suddenly lost to us. The saw's teeth grate, the blade itself trembles. The sawdust no longer seeps out but spits out in separate motes. Elmer inserts a wedge in the crack. Still the saw drags on the arm, whines like a pup.

It's not the labor we mind, it's the knot's insinuation into the rhythm of the muscles, into the saw's respiration. But we keep at it, and in a minute or two we cut through the knot; and the saw again breezes hungrily, its teeth grinding out the hardness of the wood and spilling it in foamy cataracts. We, too, breathe easily again, and listen, in our subconscious, to the saw's restored droning, to its soporific hum.

"You still pestered by hedgehogs?" The sly allusion to my erstwhile city naivness comes riding on the tip of the saw. I had thought then that the hedgehogs nested under the sills of the old fallen barn, and that they came...
out at night to keep us awake with their noisy carpentering. I had killed at least a score of them, and still there were more. Then Elmer enlightened me. They didn't live under the barn, they came from the woods.

"Then what's the sense in killing them? No matter how many I kill there'll still be more to come."

"Certin, certin," Elmer agreed, "but them as you kill won't come back."

That was when Elmer began to take on dimension. I knew him slightly then. He was nothing, just a piece of the Vermont scenery, a poke weed on the landscape. But as we sawed wood season after season, Elmer took on stature. Grain by grain his character sifted out, until there it was, a meaningful little pile, like the sawdust from a knot in the wood.

Elmer can save you no end of trouble by his country-wise counsel, but you must ask for it. Unless you ask, he will watch you make a fool of yourself and say nothing. He will let you dig a springline up a rocky hillside to a spring he knows will run out in the first dry spell. And when you complain why he didn't tell you, he'd say, "You didn't ask me."

Even when you ask, Elmer presumes not to instruct you. "If it were mine, I should do thus and so." Or he will direct your attention to the ways of nature; or to providence; or to the Lord himself, as when I asked him whether I should seed my lawn in the Fall or in the Spring. Elmer thought a moment and then replied, "When does the Lord do His seedin'?"

"In the Fall, isn't it?"

"Well, He ain't no fool!"

Elmer is the living link of life as it was lived up here a hundred years ago. Tractors roar up and down the countryside; bulldozers uproot trees and level off mounds, changing the contour of the old familiar landscape; monstrous balers clatter over mowings and scoop up windrows with incredible speed, flicking the hay out in concentrated packages. Chain saws drone in the woods with the noise of airplane propellers; red oil trucks pull up into backyards and in a few minutes pump a month's heat into a drum buried in the earth.

In the midst of it all, with calm imperviousness, and enviable serenity, Elmer lives the old life, a life of absolute self-reliance and self-dependence. His chores, his heating and cooking arrangements, his water supply, the entire pattern of his life, or any part of it, cannot be disrupted by a dead sparkplug, a dead battery, by blown out fuses or transformers or condensers, by frozen pipes, by the tyranny of dripping faucets or the eccentricism of flush toilets, or the whims of plumbers, mechanics, electricians. Elmer has never surrendered even partially reliance on his own ingenuity and ability to handle matters in his own individualistic way. He has never given up the humanly possible for the mechanically and electrodynamically uncertain.

Frugality is ingrained in Elmer. He wastes nothing, least of all the movements of his body. He is sparing with his gestures, sparing with the twitching of his muscles. When he laughs only his throat laughs. His face and eyes never smile. The strokes of his axe are clean and precise, the bit striking where it's meant to. He draws the saw in his direction just so much and no more, and then lets it breeze your way. When he walks there's no swaying or wobbling, only the feet and legs move, the trunk of the body seems to be wheeled along, with the arms outspread and the elbows angled out, as if he were forever ready to tackle someone in a wrestling bout.

* * *

The yellow-birch log we are now bucking shivers and causes the saw to shiver with it. For some reason the two smaller logs resting against it do not seem to hold it in place. We cannot maintain the needed coordination between muscle and metal which is the essence of enjoyable sawing.

"Restless, she is," Elmer mutters churlishly, without straightening his body he reaches for the axe and slivers off a small wedge from a nearby maple log. This he "shims" in between the log and the skid nearest the thick end.

"That'll make her stay to home," says Elmer vindictively, as if the log were an ornery, testy woman who must be held steady for her own and everybody else's good.

The saw takes up its happy song again. Yellow-birch saws easier than maple and the unimpeded saw takes greedy bites out of the less resisting wood. There's an easy, effortless swing to the arm, but the sawing lacks
the finer-grained, cleaner cut of maple. Still the sawyer’s enjoyment is undiminished, for yellow-birch is not gushy like balsam, which stifies the saw with pulpy, excelsior-like sawdust and waxes it with its gummy bark.

When you saw wood year after year, the way Elmer and I do, and burn it to cook with and to warm your house, you become familiar with the temperaments, characteristics, and qualities of different woods. You come to know them by grain and bark, by their degree of hardness, by the way they burn and saw and split, and the scents they give forth as they burn. You come to feel about woods as you do about people, and you treat them accordingly. You do not have the respect for the hard-splitting, quick-burning yellow-birch that you have for the clean-splitting, longer-lasting maple. Still you are indulgent with yellow-birch because it is a generous, friendly wood, it will burn for you green when you are all out of dry wood. As for beech, it is good, clean wood, saws well, splits neatly and burns brightly when dry. But there’s something prosaic, plebian about beech. It lacks the high nobility of maple, or the impulsiveness of yellow-birch.

Elmer and I roll another log onto the skids. This one’s a giant. I feel as though we’ve laid the ghosts of six generations of Green Mountaineers who knew this great tree, knew whether it was “thrifty” with its sap, knew the color its leaves turned in the fall. It has fallen to my lot to cremate this giant of the sugar lot. Its ashes will go into the garden, back into the soil.

Elmer squats down to examine the trunk. The age of the tree can be read in the concentric rings, but what interests Elmer is a dark configuration resembling a cog-wheel ingrained in the heart of the tree.

“Been tapped too hard,” says Elmer.

“You mean too deep?”

“No, too close, too often.”

The flesh of the trunk is gnarled and twisted, and the saw complains. It’s teeth grind slowly; the sawdust comes out sparingly, mere snow spittings in the air. Elmer inserts three wedges as soon as the cut is deep enough to fake them. They are like a crown on the log. He taps them gently with the sledge, alternating the strokes because the wedges have a tendency to bounce up. Only by skillful strokes does he manage to sink them deeper into the crack. And then the saw begins to wheeze more freely.

“The wood’s too nervey,” says Elmer to describe the seams, sinews and tendons through which we are sawing. His speech breathes of the days when these forested hillsides were mowings and pastures and dotted with farm dwellings which are now mere cellar holes overgrown with birches.

Every minute or so Elmer drives the wedges a wee bit deeper. They are not the regulation saw-wedges loggers use. They are home-made, smithed out of old worn out saw-blades. All of Elmer’s tools—saw-wedges, saw-sets, saw-gauges, axe helves, snaths, the wooden clamp on which he mounts the saw to file it—are of ancient vintage, heired from his grandfather. “Do just as well,” says Elmer, “no use spendin’ money for boughten ones.”

Each succeeding morning, as we near the end of our wood sawing, the air gets chillier. The frosty grass crackles underfoot, and the insect world is benumbed. But as the sun swims out from behind the spruce-crested ridge and throws its diaphanous mantle about us, we can hear the rustle of the earth as it stirs from its shallow lethargy.

Let it come. The huge pile of bucked up hard wood drying in the sun is a comforting sight. There’s reassurance in every block. I can feel the hardness and substance of the wood, the concentration of heat in it, the warmth against Stratton’s chilly exhalations.

“Well,” says Elmer, “you’ve got wood enough to burn.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR—Stefan Christowe, (below) of West Dover, was born in Macedonia, came to this country when 14, attended Valparaiso Univ., and was news correspondent in the Balkans 1927-29, in the War Dept. Military Intelligence 1942-44. He has been writing since 1929, is author of HEROES & ASSASSINS, MARA, THIS IS MY COUNTRY, THE LION OF YANINA and AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE. Lately he returned from eight months traveling and lecturing in Yugoslavia. He and Mrs. Christowe have made their home here since 1939. “I have lived in New York, in Chicago, in Washington, Los Angeles, Montana, Wyoming, Indiana and a few other places,” he writes, “but nowhere have I felt as much at home as in Vermont.”

By A. TASSEV
Walter Colby—
Harness Maker

A picture profile of a vanishing Vermont trade.

Photographed and written by
Donald & Kemna Wiedenmayer

Newspaper headlines and contemporary literature (including comic books) may lead you to believe we are living in an age which substitutes the motor for the muscle. But recently we took a side road into what most people consider a bygone era—to visit Walter Colby of East Wallingford in his harness-making shop.

Not being a horse, our first thought was: "What would a harness-maker be doing in 1953?" Mr. Colby supplied the answer. His small shop, cluttered with bits of leather and unfamiliar tools, is in constant use repairing the existing horse rig around and about this area.

There are still farms where the terrain almost prohibits the use of motorized equipment. And one of the state's famous industries, maple sugaring, uses the team to a large extent to drag sap-collection sleds to remote sugar houses. All over the East, besides, trotting races are coming back in popularity. Yes, the old gray mare is still around, and she still needs a harness.

LEFT: At home Walter Colby studies his well-worn Bible, knows much of it by heart.
RIGHT ABOVE: At the work bench in his small shop he trims a broken harness tug.
RIGHT: Dozens of old harness pieces hang from ceiling above the stitching machine.
Walter Colby was born 88 years ago in Stewartstown, N. H. and migrated to East Wallingford via Averill and Lemington, spending some ten years on the way cooking for lumberjacks, repairing sleds and blacksmithing.

Finally he began to specialize in making and repairing harnesses for driving and trotting horses, making riding saddles and fancy bridles. People come to him today with "queer" requests on saddlery, Colby says. He's apt to tell them: "Guess you don't know what you want. I'll have to tell you."

Colby in his time has even made pitchforks, repaired salesmen's satchels, bicycles, guns, watches and clocks. The Vermont Marble Company has been a steady harness customer for years.

At one time Mr. Colby dealt in farm machinery and was a grand juror, though he told us: "he wasn't much for holding public office. The more positions a man holds the more trouble he gets into."

Walter Colby has always been happiest working in his shop and now he likes to stop and play with his eight grandchildren.
He's quite a visitor and claims he'd get more work done if he didn't enjoy talking so much.

Mr. Colby's fame as a clock repairman and harness man is widespread in the area, but almost as great is his reputation as a student of the Holy Scriptures. A Seventh-Day Adventist, he is a close student of the Bible and in his lifetime has worn out three or four of them. He has always turned to the Bible as a reference work, and through the years of looking up things has learned it through and through.

At the mere mention of the Good Book a gleam comes into Walter Colby's eye, and he's apt to launch into a recitation that will cover whole chapters of the Old Testament, or he may give you in some detail his interpretation of the Gospel according to Saint John.

Mr. Colby likes to stump his visitors on Biblical questions. But from the twinkle in his eye you sense he rather enjoys answering for himself. That is an old Vermont trait which Walter Colby, harness-maker, has acquired in his four-score and eight years.
Square Peg

The story built the Powers Chair

By Raeia Hattie

LEFT: The framework of a B.F. Powers chair shows its strong lines.

BELOW: Wallace Houghton, 89, of Lyndon and great-granddaughter, B.

A n embankment of weathered rocks covered with brambles and witch grass is all that now remains where once stood the old Powers Chair factory, on the bank of remote Hawkins Brook in East Lyndon, Vermont. Here beside the tumbling stream in a shingled, one room work shop three generations of skilled chairmakers created the famous basket bottomed Powers Chairs. For more than eighty years from this tiny shop came chairs that helped make Yankee craftsmanship world famous, chairs that have been in use for nearly a century and that were made to last another hundred years.

The first chairmaker, Benjamin W. Powers married Lydia Willer, the first white woman born in Lyndon, and in 1814 they built a small plank house. Down across the road on the edge of the brook Benjamin erected a shop where, with a foot lathe and hand tools he began to manufacture chairs.

In those days customers did not visit Benjamin's shop to look at samples. All chairs were made on “specific order.” People could order one chair or a set that matched—straight without arms, office chairs, rockers with three, four or five slats or a miniature child's chair. Single chairs cost about 7 ½c and a set about four dollars.

Prospering at his trade Benjamin W. died in 1866 at the age of seventy-eight, leaving his son, Benjamin Franklin to
in Round Holes

the sturdy chairs
ree generations of
amily in Lyndon, Vt.

Elizabeth Harris Brown

RIGHT: Only rocks where the factory stood.

carry on the factory and the family farm. Benjamin F. learned the chairmaker's art from his father. For years he kept on at the little East Lyndon shop making strong and simple chairs until his death in 1897. In East Lyndon today there are people who remember "Uncle Frank," his long white beard and his stout but active figure.

The third generation Henry G. Powers was not only a chairmaker but a carpenter, a good butcher and a mechanic. In the tradition of the Vermont inventor people said he "could make anything he put his mind to."

Following his varied trades and continuing to make Powers chairs, Henry later worked in nearby-Concord and here he was killed in 1901 in a barn raising accident.

* * * *

Why are Powers chairs sound and sturdy today when their contemporary antiques have lost arms, legs and seats and slats? Therein lies the secret and value of Powers chairs. It's because "Uncle Ben" the first chairmaker employed a method of using green and dried woods in a way that made an inseparable joint.

Back in the days the little shop bustled with activity, black cherry, maple, and brown and white ash were brought in from neighboring farms, only trees with few limbs being used.

Then the wood to be used for "rounds" and slats was dried thoroughly overhead in the shop. But the woods to be made into posts, usually cherry, was kept sopping wet until needed in a tiny cedar house, "the Tomb," across the road.

Characteristic of the Powers chairs are the bowed ash arm rests of the office chairs, the pinched feet and the way the back posts are straight as far as the seat but above that bend back slightly.

A special wooden mold filled with boiling water was used to do this bending. Enough posts to make three or four chairs were placed in this rectangular tank and a centered wooden screw did the bending. Slats were formed in a similar fashion.

Finally, in the end of a dry rung a groove was cut to make a "shoulder" and the rung was driven into the wet post, making a joint impossible to separate without breaking the post. The drying of the wet post made it permanent. By the same method the dry slats were driven into the wet posts and here was the crowning touch, perhaps the real hallmark of Powers chairs. In defiance of the old saw, round holes were bored through slat end and post and into the round holes were driven for all time square pegs.

The Powers made their own chair seats—a basket bottom weave with brown and white ash. The logs were bought from neighbors, were quartered and left soaking in "reeking water." Later the logs were cut into one-inch strips and were hammered on a piece of railroad iron until the strips split. Loose ends were
ABOVE: A fine Benjamin W. Powers rocking chair owned by John B. Chase of Lyndon.

LEFT: Note curly cherry posts of chair by H. G. Powers, last of the chairmakers.

BELOW LEFT: Another view of the same H. G. Powers chair shows slender posts.

shaved off and the 12-foot lengths were ready to be woven. The brown and white ash often were interwoven in an ingenious diamond pattern.

Finally the chair was ready for a coat of stain or varnish and the maker’s name generally stenciled on the back of the middle slat. The stencils on Powers chairs that one finds read: “B. F. Powers, Lyndon, Vt.” or “Henry G. Powers, Maker, Lyndon, Vt.” Not yet, after examining more than 150 Powers chairs, have the writers found the stencil of Benjamin W., the first chairmaker.

The chairs made by the three generations of Powers differ in details. “Uncle Ben’s” for the most part were the heaviest, the back posts round and tapered toward the tops, which are crowned by pointed, oval finials. The front posts are broader and thicker than those made later by B. F. and Henry G., and often they resemble baseball bats, but some are bell-like below the knobs. Another distinguishing feature of Uncle Ben’s chairs are these high, thick knobs, found even in his children’s chairs.

Benjamin Franklin (“Uncle Frank”) made chairs with the back posts round from their pinched feet up to the middle slat. From that point the posts taper gradually upward, ending in what is known in other chairs as “rabbit ears.” His front posts have flat knobs about three-quarters of an inch thick.

The Powers chairs bearing Henry G’s stencil are mostly of the office type and are very similar to those made by his father. The major difference was that Henry turned a more slender post than his father and sometimes used maple for posts instead of cherry.

After Henry’s death more than 50 years ago the shop was sold. Then one night some forty years back it left its foundation, old residents say, “slickern clean.” The “factory” of the Powers chairmakers, then, is gone, but the chairs themselves and their example of design and ingenious craftsmanship have traveled far beyond in time and miles the remote stream valley of Hawkins Brook, East Lyndon.

RIGHT: Close-up view of B. F. Powers chair shows a trademark and secret of durability, square pegs of dry wood forced into round holes in the posts when still wet.
Blackberry Song

In Dorset and Jericho
And Horn O’ the Moon
The blackberries dangle
As big as a spoon.
The hill-folded thickets
Hide many a girl and boy;
A purple stain upon their lips
A pail full of joy.

In Cornwall and Eden
And Londonderry,
You can hear the laughter
Of pickers making merry.

Just follow gypsy rivers
Where road signs show the way
To Dummerston and Dorset
To Jericho and Jay.

—Bettie Cassie Liddel

Should You Follow Your Nose?

The inquisitive nose is an asset to any person—that is, up to the point where it is not projected into somebody else’s business—a procedure that does not go well in Vermont; but, generally speaking, I think the advice I give to many inquirers, as to where to go in Vermont to see the state, is sound—“Just follow your nose!” It will lead you, if you have the right kind of a nose, into our larger places and at the next turn up some shy byway into unexpected beauty and lasting friendships.

However, now that the autumn is about us in its glory, I recognize that a certain type of visitor and Vermonter—and there are thousands of us who really do not know our own state—finds no pleasure in what he calls aimless wandering without point or seeming purpose; so for the methodical and no less sincere mind, here are three suggestions, based largely on questions which have come to me about “where to go.”

One of the most rewarding schemes is simple enough. Take any state listing of our towns such as you will find in the Vermont Yearbook (National Survey, Chester, Vt., publishers) and start with the first town listed, Albany, and plan to visit every town down to, and including, Worcester. You may linger only a few hours in some, for days in others, and for a lifetime in one, but it is an adventure worth trying. Take a camera along, and at the end you will have an album of pictures with a lasting interest; and in your creaky ninety years and more, you can wander again the pleasant ways and days you once knew. Aside from the book I have mentioned, and Vermont—A Guide to the Green Mountain State (Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston), there are few other books to assist you; you are on your own.

Two friends of Vermont, coming from far off Chicago, have put in fascinating summers taking colored pictures of our covered bridges, and they have visited every one in the state. There is a map which shows all the existing ones, and a volume, The Covered Bridges of New England by Clara E. Wagemann (Charles E. Tuttle Co., Rutland, 48 illus., 150 pp., $5.) will furnish useful leads.

Another suggestion has to do with our mountains—and autumn is the perfect month for such wayfaring—even winter, too, when panoramas of unbelievable beauty open before the observing eyes of those willing to snowshoe to the top of selected peaks. Where the skiers collect and lifts are in operation, even a skilless soul can have high moments. But in the summer and autumn, too, such a hobby mountain visiting has ample rewards. There is no book or guide that will help with Vermont mountains specifically and in detail, but this one is worth gathering in if you can locate a copy—Trails and Summit of the Green Mountains by W. C. O’Kane, Houghton-Mifflin, 1926; The Long Trail, Green Mountain Club, Rutland, Vt., $1, (gives data on mountains along the “Long Trail”).

Some day, we will have our own Vermont guide to our own mountains—those with walking trails to the top, those with auto roads, those with combinations of both. Mountains have been associated with vision since the beginning of recorded history and literature, and their impact on the mind and the imagination, also the memory, has not waned through the centuries. He who descends a mountain in the sunset’s afterglow—even among friends to whom a sunset is merely a “yaller” affair—walks with the initiated and the anointed—

The sunset has a lovely way
Of saying farewell to the day
With golden words the hills along.
Turning silence into song—
A song that fades in darkness far,
But leaves an echo in a star;
And then the great hills, grave and slow.
Bless the villages below!—

and he will have a part in the requiem of the evening and feel the quiet of calm hands that bless and heal.
Sinclair Lewis and Vermont

The array of writers and authors who have found in Vermont a congenial homeland, even if only for a few years, would make a long and impressive list; and certainly here in Vermont, down Barnard way, Lewis' restless spirit claimed a refuge and an anchorage for a while. I met him, for the first time, through my friend Vrest Orton; and one of my treasured pictures is that of Lewis and Vrest singing hymn after hymn at the top of their voices while Vrest played the organ—or what he calls playing it—at the top of the cottage organ’s power. I vow that I merely listened—somewhat dazed but also amazed at the dual achievement before me.

Later on, when the Norwich University debating team had wound up with a deficit (and had lost to three girls’ colleges) and the university authorities said they had no funds to meet it, I asked Lewis if he would come to Norwich. He gave a lecture that opened for all of us a new vista in contemporary literature; and when I offered the promised fee he simply said, “Keep it!” And we paid off the deficit.

Inherently restless in body and mind, always under the urgency of a vivid creative mind, he did not stay long in Vermont, but we know that in his wanderings in later years he often turned in mind and memory back to our serene hills. I might as well quote a bit from the recent book, The Man From Main Street—A Sinclair Lewis Reader (Random House, N. Y., 1952)—in which he speaks of us frankly:

They are a complicated, reticent, slyly humorous lot, and I doubt if any place in the world will you find a citizenry which so strictly minds its own business—if you come to know them but slowly or not at all. On the other hand they do not snoop; they do not pry; they have the reserve and self-respect of an ancient race that feels too secure to be more than just vaguely amused by the eccentricities of outlanders. Of a millionaire New Yorker, a Rodin, or a George Bernard Shaw, a Vermont farmer would sturdily say, “He ain’t my kind of folks, but guess he’s just as good as anybody else, long’s he don’t interfere with me.”

It is a cool land, with ever-changing skies, this Vermont. For me it is peace and work and home.

And it was for him “peace and work and home” for a few happy years, as it is for thousands of Vermonters and the wise visitor who have learned to know the state truly and not as motorists with eyes pinned to the road in front, seeing nothing, thinking nothing, doing nothing, but driving to get somewhere where they will not know what to do with themselves when they get there.

A Reminder from Germany

Womankind has always been a mystery to mankind—and the mystery began in

(Continued next page)
SHEL BURNE SHIPYARDS
(Continued from page 15)

at the Harbor and pit his future as well as that of the shipyard against the changes that the coming years of peace would bring? Having become genuinely fond of his associations and of Vermont—of the quiet Point with its vividly changing seasons and with its unparalleled outlook upon Mount Mansfield and Camel's Hump across the placid Bay, he chose the latter. On January 1, 1946, after 120 years of control by the Champlain Transportation Company, the shipyard passed into his ownership and that of his brother, Wendell, who at this time arrived from Minnesota.

Forming a new organization, the Shelburne Harbor Ship and Marine Construction Company, the Askes embarked on the construction of pleasure craft up to 65 feet in length, the rebuilding of the old sidewheeler Vermont III for service on the South Atlantic seacoast as a propeller-driven freighter; the conversion of the old Riker's Island ferry Matt Haven into a modern Lake Champlain car ferry and, in 1947, construction of the 190-foot welded steel motor vessel Valour for ferry service between Burlington and Port Kent. At the same time facilities for the winter storage of pleasure craft and Coast Guard, Air Force and Navy craft were enlarged and improved so that today the boat sheds and storage areas are filled with vessels of every description.

Due largely to the record achieved by the Shelburne Harbor yard during World War II, the Askes were awarded contracts by the Navy in 1942 for the building of 73 35-foot motor boats—known to sailors as "Admiral's Barges"—a program that will keep some 50 skilled workmen busy until late in 1954.

Today the Shelburne Shipyard is a curious mixture of the old and the new. Each fall the veteran sidewheeler Ticonderoga returns to her winter berth at the Harbor as she has done for 47 years, and Foreman Fred Barrett of the Shipyard, whose father was foreman before him, returns to his Harbor home each night from a busy day at the yard—as he has done for 40-odd years. The Harbor dwellings, too, carry the unmistakable marks of tradition with doors and sunporches that were made from the hand-carved joinerwork of long-dismantled steamers whose hulls rest in the waters of the Bay.

At the same time the sound of busy machines in the shops, and the gradually changing faces of the buildings, testify to the new life that has been injected into the old shipyard. It is, indeed, an unusual story of enterprise, even of pioneering, by a family who chose Vermont as a home and shaped their own way of life. The Green Mountain Shipyard now seems at the threshold of a future as secure as its past.

BELOW: Launching-day ceremonies at the Shelburne Shipyard Aug. 31, 1942 for the 110-ft. Vermont-built subchasers 1029 and 1030. They made fine service records later.
What better gift, especially at Christmastime, could you find for those who love Vermont, too? Send us your gift list early with $1.25 for each one ($1.65 foreign). Your gift card and the winter issue will reach each friend in time for Christmas.

Put up your feet this winter, too, and relish the flavor of the Green Mountains in the colorful pages of your own Vermont Life. Just $1.25 brings it to your mailbox each season all the year.
They hewed this state out of the wilderness, they held it against a foreign foe, they laid deep and stable the foundation of our state life, because they sought not the life of ease, but a life of effort for a worthy end.

Theodore Roosevelt at Windsor, 1902