Editor's Uneasy Chair

A magazine probably should not be commenced with admissions of past errors, but for posterity: Our last Autumn's article on Thoreau pictured the wrong house on Brattleboro's Chase St. as the home of the Rev. Brown, Thoreau's host. It really was the Luke Ferriter home.

One of the Winter issue's fine Heilmann photos was titled "Late Afternoon near Glover." We apologize to Mr. & Mrs. E. H. Squire whose pictured home is in Hardwick.

This issue, readers may note, is centered quite largely on the Lake Champlain region. Anticipating mutterings on the eastern frontier we hasten to announce soon a featuring of the Connecticut Valley.

The V.L. Photographic contest, displayed in our Spring issue, naturally has been confused with the photo contests run by the Vt. Development Comm. Vermont Life's affairs is entirely separate, is operated with the Southern Vt. Art Center's Vermont Photographers' Exhibition in Manchester. This year it will be held August 13-21. Vermont photographers should send entries to Manchester before July 30th.

Many new subscribers ask for back copies. We have copies of about half the 40 issues published. All are 35c each. W.H.Jr.

THE COVER—Neighbor Warren White rides the hay rake in this view on Bill Kent's farm in Panton by Violet Chatfield. That's North Island in Lake Champlain.

"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
CONTINUING THE STORY OF THE SAFETY BICYCLE, which the Post Boy started in the previous issue of V.L., it might be well to mention that, like the automobile, the new machine went under several names. Even the simple word “bicycle” had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. 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The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunciations. The more elite one gave equal accent to each syllable, had two pronunci
“From above the clouds I address you” ... began Daniel Webster as he spoke to fifteen thousand people gathered on Stratton Mountain 115 years ago. In July, 1840 Webster, who had lost the Whig nomination for President chose this site as the geographical center of southern Vermont to campaign for his party rival, Ol’ Tippecanoe, General Benjamin Harrison. Whole families came by wagon, on horseback and on foot, from the Taconic Valley to the west and from the Connecticut River Valley to the east to see and hear the great orator. Seeing the crowds, Webster is said to have remarked bitterly to his friend Senator Rufus M. Choate who accompanied him from Townsend to the site of the rally in a black barouche, “The fools, they have come to hear Daniel Webster, but they will vote for Harrison.” Webster was right, Harrison won the election.

To commemorate this event Daniel Webster Day, organized by citizens of the Town of Stratton, is celebrated annually at the Daniel Webster Monument Grounds on the Wardsboro-Arlington Pike. This region has been mostly woods with only an occasional year-round place or summer camp in clearings cut out beside the road. The recent arrival of electric power, however, promises to enliven an area which abounds in fish and game but is still so lacking in people that voters have to double up on town offices.

One recent year about a thousand people came to the wilderness site by car, jeep, truck and once again on foot, to enjoy a few hours in the sun or beneath the huge tamarack trees. The principal speakers were driven to the site in a stagecoach drawn by two handsome palomino horses and a buggy drawn by a white horse. There was a band concert and after the addresses picnic suppers supplemented by barbecued chicken, hot dogs, soda pop and ice cream sold at a stand in the park. At dusk the rally was over and exhausted children and tired old folks were taken home down the mountain. For a few hours Daniel Webster had lived again.
This year on July 10th, and for one day each summer, this 115-year old political arena, still in a mountain wilderness area, lives again.

Vehicles and road to the Stratton site probably looked much the same in 1840.

People who journey this remote road today marvel at Daniel Webster's drawing powers.

Band music is a very necessary ingredient of such outdoor, political festivities.
Modern vehicles and ladies' wear provide odd contrasts to the historic setting.

Before the speeches Mr. & Mrs. C. S. Streeter of West Wardsboro serve the savory chicken barbecue.
All sizes and ages enjoy t

ABOUT THE PHOTOGRAPHER—Mrs. McKenna majored at Vassar in the history of architecture, and that led to photography of famous buildings. Trips to Europe in 1951 and 1952 for this purpose resulted in her national recognition. From architecture she branched into portrait photography and, her pictures of Auden and T. S. Eliot have been shown throughout the world. Only recently has she become interested in doing picture stories.

Mrs. McKenna, a New Yorker who is a frequent Vermont summer visitor, has been published also in Vogue and in U. S. Camera.

David Leea

VERMONT Life
Cutting at Stratton.
Seven years after he suffered a serious heart attack, 67-year-old Frank M. (Grandad) Tilton of North Thetford has not only regained his health but has turned a hobby into a nationwide business. What were to be quiet retirement years have become the busiest and perhaps happiest of his life.

Modest signs along Route 5 announce Grandad's Toy Shop at North Thetford. Rare is the youngster who is not excited at the prospect of stopping at the shop for the first, or the hundred and first, time.

Some children think Grandad is Santa Claus. Others acquainted with the twinkly-eyed, rosy-cheeked man think of him only as Santa's helper. But, whichever view they take, their esteem for Grandad Tilton is undiminished and his respect for children is equally strong.

In 1947, after he had spent 40 years as a paint salesman, the Tiltons came to the house they had bought in North Thetford, which was Mrs. Tilton's home town. Grandad was still so sick from a recent heart attack he had to be carried into the new home. The future looked pretty black.

Another year of convalescence went by before Tilton could do much. That Christmas of 1948 his children gave him a bandsaw. He had never made anything with his hands in his life, but he bravely started experimenting. He remembered seeing a cat blackboard in a hobby magazine. It had chalk sticks for whiskers and an eraser dangling from its tail. He tried one. Then he began making other toys for his three grandchildren who were delighted with the results.

When summer rolled around and with considerable urging Grandad agreed to try selling some of them. The toys were still rather primitive and even Mrs. Tilton thought they wouldn't sell exactly like hot cakes, but she kept her own counsel. That summer in an improvised shop in the barn they made $73. Sundays Grandad and
Grandad’s toys are big, sturdy and especially easy to operate. Here Leroy Lacky Jr., 5, plays with a dump truck and power shovel.

Mrs. Tilton went to church and left a cigar box outside with a note telling customers to put in money for anything they bought and leave a note saying what it was.

Today they can hardly keep up with the business. The shop erected across the road from their house in 1951 had to be enlarged in 1953. Last year they added the “testing field” and this year they plan another wing. In the meantime the mail order business has begun to outstrip the retail business in the shop which is open from May to December. In 1953 mail orders jumped 300 per cent over 1952. In 1953 about 5,000 visitors came to the shop.

in July and August. The number skyrocketed in 1954 to between 15,000 and 20,000 persons. The mailing list now has about 8,000 names as compared with 3,000 in 1953.

The phenomenal expansion of the business has made it impossible for Grandad to manufacture the toys himself as he did at first. Now they are made in the woodworking shop of Charles H. Means in Plainfield. Grandad still designs the toys and supervises their construction. From the original cat blackboard and dump truck, which are still popular, Grandad has increased greatly the variety of his stock to include rocking horses, giraffe coat racks, trailer and lumber trucks, hobby horses, wagons, bulldozers, and power shovels. A big seller now are the giant trains which have an engine and additional cars large enough for children or adults to ride.

Besides many other small items like book ends, pull toys, stilts, stools and games, Tilton has filled the new wing added to the original building with dolls. Mrs. Tilton, who is a very active partner in every phase of the business, is in charge of the dolls which are handmade in Vermont. Grandad also equips the dolls with cradles, cribs and other miniature furniture.
he means is that he likes children with plenty of life and deviltry in them. He knows they'll give his toys a good test and if there's anything wrong he'll hear about it. Thus the testing field. Equipped with a sandbox that has a sand pail and shovel, a dump truck, bulldozer, trailer truck and steam shovel, the yard is just too much of a temptation for any youngster to resist. Grandad will oblige as engineer for a ride on one of his big trains set up in the yard. Swings, a slide and seesaw complete the array of toys.

"As Sturdy as the Hills of Vermont" is Grandad's slogan and his toys really are that sturdy. Made entirely of wood they are simpler than most mass-produced metal toys and they are guaranteed not to break. They are strong enough to hold an adult as Grandad will gladly demonstrate.

One day when the shop was full of customers Mrs. Tilton was describing the indestructible virtues of the toys when a man walked in with a smashed truck. Mrs. Tilton's face dropped visibly, but before she could recover, the man said, "My child didn't break this. I ran over it with a 10-ton truck." Mrs. Tilton's sales talk was still sound.

Made of pine, basswood, maple and oak the toys are big and uncomplicated, but work realistically. Designed for nursery school and kindergarten children, they are made so that children can push them easily or ride on them. "The simpler and stronger the toy is the more enjoyment the child derives from playing with it," says Grandad. He also believes that children like to have their parents play with them and their toys but few modern toys are big enough or sturdy enough to hold adults. Grandad feels his toys answer that need.

Last year over 30 nursery schools and kindergartens were using Grandad's toys. Now the number of schools is increasing and re-orders are coming in fast. Repeat orders from the same schools are always good news from Tilton's point of view. It's added evidence that the toys are living up to their guarantee. Every state in the union and several foreign countries have some of Grandad's toys.

One nursery school instructor praised the "simplicity of line and design, the good construction and the copying of things seen in everyday experiences. All this," she said, "makes for good functional toys." She was saying something that thousands of kids had already found out, but it was good to hear an adult verbally hitting the nail on the head, according to Grandad. Encouraged by the popularity of his toys in nursery schools and kindergartens, Tilton has now branched out into making special equipment for them to order.

Is there any end to this? Probably not as long as there are kids who like to play. Grandad apparently has skillfully combined good salesmanship with the basic elements that fulfill childhood desires. No doubt 40 years of selling paint had something to do with it, but Grandad started his new venture with a big handicap. He was not only sick, but, until he got that bandsaw, "he couldn't even drive a nail," Mrs. Tilton says. Now he's doing better than he ever did as a salesman and he's having more fun. He may not be Santa Claus but Grandad has the same love and understanding of children attributed to Saint Nick. Young visitors continue sending him Christmas lists of things they saw in his shop the summer before.

It's not all one-sided either. Some loyal small fry keep coming back every year with little gifts. One six-year-old boy even brought Tilton a box of fudge he had made himself. On that occasion Grandad's eyes twinkled to beat the cars.
Odd, Unusual and Old

Jason Bushnell's museum, perhaps the odd-est in the country, has been called an evidence "of the packrat instinct at its worst."

Written & Photographed by Ben Brown

The Bushnell Mill at Vernon, Vermont.

"This museum you are about to enter," Jason will begin without prompting, "is the result of about 50 hobbies. The first thing I collected was bruises at the age of 4. Fell down the stairs."

Thus, the next two hours take shape. You gawk, fondle, point and listen. And Jason Bushnell, owner and creator of Bushnell's Mill at Vernon, Vermont, conducts the personally-guided tour which thousands of visitors from all over the world remember with pleasure and awe.

"This mill has historic background. Three-purpose mill. Only one in New England. Basement was grist mill. First floor was saw mill. Second floor for village dances and fairs. Cost $7000 in 1845. Foundation, including pit and dam, was $6500. Building included slate roof. Cost only $500. Stone mason received $1.25 a day. Ox team same. Mortised timbers.

Collecting old tools is one thing. Mr. Bushnell also knows what they were used for.
“Anybody know what this is?” Mr. Bushnell asks. Nobody yet has been able to tell him.

108 years old. No reason it isn’t good for as many more.”

Picking your way up rickety stairs, past stuffed animals, funny branches, roots and ancient swords, you recall the moments before when you swung down scenic and winding Vermont highway 142, drove in past the landscaped mill pond and found this place. The entrance was nearly hidden by odd, unusual and old things too big to put through the doors. Before the door was a totem pole and over the door was a sign, 55 years old, Jason’s first grocery shingle hung out when he entered business in April, 1900.

Through the door you caught a glimpse of the mill and it looked like an awful mess. Jason was sitting out front in a comfortable chair, wearing his summer uniform . . . old pants, an undershirt and a strange red hat.

And now here you are in the midst of it all. It is overwhelming. Everywhere there is stuff, hanging from the ceiling, resting on the floor, in cabinets and on tables. Big stuff, old stuff, tiny things. Old price tags, sale bills, crazy slogans and stage coach schedules grace the walls and posts.

“This museum covers a large portion of the world and contains all sorts of odd and unusual things,” continues Jason. “Those hand-hammered copper measures are the first legal sets of weights to be registered in Vermont. Bought in Boston in 1792, they were sealed by the State by Samuel Mattox of Rutland.”

“Up there’s a still. Found that in a good Baptist attic in Brattleboro. Still in good order. Used to make whiskey.”

By now you realize this is no ordinary museum and Jason is no ordinary man. There’s only one Jason Bushnell and only one Bushnell’s Mill.

Some might describe the mill as “the most unusual private museum in the world” or “America’s most extensive private curio collection” or dignify it in other terms. But, Jason lays claim to no title. The mill is there.

To some the mill is a wonderful storehouse of things, some for sale, and hundreds of enthusiastic collectors have found in his hoard what they have sought for decades.

To others, the mill seems a colossal example of pack-rat instinct in humans at its worst.

Some people probably think Jason very strange.

But, to those who know, here is a magnificent example of a successful American businessman in the best self-made tradition, spending his advanced years in graceful enterprise, always looking forward, and in his enjoyment providing the world with something useful.

“Over here’s a case of sea shells . . . five cases full. Every shell is properly labeled with Latin names.”

Your host continues. You look. He talks.

Jason Edward Bushnell retired recently from the grocery business, in which he had grown from a boy with a handbasket to one of America’s most successful independent food merchants.

He was born in the bay window of the building which eventually became his store. His rise to prominence against great odds gained him renown throughout the grocery world. Courage, vision, resourcefulness, and a sensitivity to the public’s wants, coupled with good business methods which never forgot that people were human, carried him up the ladder, pulled him through depressions, brought his store as one of a very few to success against the growth of the mighty chains, and established his place of business in a world which hasn’t been kind to grocers for the last three decades.

“There’s a picture of Brattleboro before
the flooding of the lowlands when they built the Vernon dam. Hand-painted and carved fungus growths. Birds. All kinds. 150 varieties. All sorts of odd and unusual things."

Back in the days when Brattleboro looked like that picture, a boy of 6 bought a box, contents unknown, for 10c. He found the box to contain 50 packages of silver polish, sold these and opened with those profits his first bank book which he still possesses. That's how Jason got his start.

"There's some stone money from Borneo. Value: 3 women. Women here cost $3.00 apiece. I collect everything but women. Only collected one of them. And I married just one of her family.

"Got six children so far. Three boys and three girls. Came within one of having twins six times."

It's Jason's way of telling you his story. Today, under ownership and management of two of his well-trained sons, the grocery store continues to adapt its policies to changing times.

"Got books downstairs. All kinds of books. Got 500 books on insanity alone."

Coursing through his relics, you learn that Jason always loved to sell and loved to collect. You learn that all through his active life as a grocer, health officer, selectman, police commissioner, tree warden, manager of the town farm, member of the public works board, board of civil authority, civil works board and liquor commission, overseer of the poor, secretary and treasurer of the county code authority, Red Cross disaster relief committee member, chairman of county Scout committee, director of unemployed relief and the milk depot, chamber of commerce president, welfare officer, fence viewer and other full and part-time activities, he talked with people, looked into their attics, and picked up things which were (1) odd (2) unusual and/or (3) old.

These were the only criteria.

He kept things in boxes, then in closets and finally in a back room of his store. He sold a few things but bought more than he sold and by the time he bought the old mill for $700 from the Town of Vernon, he had 187 truckloads of stuff to move into the new quarters.

This stuff has no formal classification. It has been inventoried only loosely. But, the stuff just nicely fills the mill.

"There's a toucan head. Hand carved. Has a teak base. From Chungking, China. That variety has been extinct for 200 years.

"Those gadgets women used to use for curling hair, rubbing off double chins, making spit curls. Collection of matches.

Bushnell's Mill from the south, showing mill pond. The race and wheels were on north side

VERMONT Life 13
Many a visitor has found in the items for sale just what she wanted for her collection. Bushnell will sell whenever he has two of a kind.

Those are bird points for light arrows, collected by A. J. Miller. Got 250 perfume bottles. Those are beaded bags dating back 200 years. That one was made in France and is made of crystal and amythest beads. Original cost was $50.

"There’s snakes over here. If you don’t like snakes, look the other way. Got skulls, both Indian and white."


Collecting stuff, reading about stuff and handling these items has been Jason’s education. Today he is an authority of note. There are 50,000 or more items in the mill and he knows the stories, uses and details of all but a few. Such knowledge carries with it a grasp of history, social customs, geology, anthropology, zoology, military science and human progress in man’s conquest of his environment. True enough, Jason’s store of facts is as miscellaneous as his collection, but when professors falter, he can often supply the missing detail and back it with a story.

The mill itself is odd, unusual and old. It was a “white elephant” . . . a drain on the town’s coffers until Jason took over. Today, the mill contains his stuff and an apartment for him and Mrs. Bushnell during the warmer months.

It also contains an education for visitors.

"Got corals, combs, hair ornaments . . . wood samples covering wide territory . . . almost every country in the world. Overhead is a handmade sled made on Carpenter farm in Guilford by ancestors of Coolidge. There’s a propeller from a plane that crashed in Brattleboro, killing 3 people.

"Here’s a collection of handmade tools and utensils made in the country one to 200 years ago. Some apple-paring ma­chines . . . very unusual. Wooden and hand-hammered nails, bolts, screws, door fasteners. Know what that is? Didn’t think you would. It’s a machine for making ribbon candy. Made in Sweden. There’s some small spoons. Don’t know what that is . . . you got any idea? Lots of people tell me about things. Learn a lot from people. People are more interesting than things.’’

Stories punctuate the tour and relics here and there bring to mind tales only vaguely related to the mill. There are many stories about people. There are also stories about psychology, and animals and travel and fishing. The stories are saved for the moments in the tour when you follow him upstairs to tarry too long at one spot.

"Got more things upstairs. Wait’ll I turn on the light.

"Flatirons, sadirons, charcoal irons . . . turtle shells from India, Tahiti, Samoa. Hawaii . . . tobacco, small pipe there belonged to Scotchman who used it to loan somebody a pipeful . . . big one there he used to borrow.

"Lots of different eggs. Ostrich eggs from Africa, Florida . . . there’s an emu egg from Australia. Cassowary eggs, tern eggs, hundreds of eggs. All sorts of odd and unusual things.

"Photographs of this section . . . got Slightly altered skull of “equus caballus” is typical Bushnell humor. He hugely enjoys explaining what an “equus caballus” is. stories punctuate the tour and relics here and there bring to mind tales only vaguely related to the mill. There are many stories about people. There are also stories about psychology, and animals and travel and fishing. The stories are saved for the moments in the tour when you follow him upstairs to tarry too long at one spot.


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"Photographs of this section . . . got
3,000 of them. Case or two full of miniatures. Programs, newspapers, letters, documents. Sword canes, carved canes from Mexico. Jewel box made by local man. Bought it from his wife for $1. Jeweler in here once offered me $200 for it.

“Collection of India things... anklets, ear plugs, finger rings, toe rings, nose rings... bought in 1863 by missionary named Coleman. There’s a mummified child’s hand from Egypt. Witch doctor’s hand from Africa. Hatchet from Ft. Dummer dates to 1763. All sorts of odd and unusual things.

“Always interested in animals. Read in a magazine where they’d found remains of a mammoth at foot of glacier in Alaska. Wrote to man and bought three pieces, including two sections of vertebrae. These were grown together, showing the mammoth had been injured in battle.

“Pens from Lincoln’s desk given by his widow to friend in Chicago who sent them to Dr. Rockwell of Brattleboro. Two Lincoln campaign buttons. Miniature copper teapot hammered out of a penny. Civil War hardtack.

“Badge of office there for Night Watchman of London. Small jackknife. Two boys had contest to see who made the smallest knife and scissors. There’s the winner.

“That’s a fleam, owned and used by Dr. Gale. Chain-drive watch. Tree climbing outfit. There’s a scorpion. Fetish doll of Nicaraguan Indians, make you get well. Fiber rain coat from South Seas. Nose of saw’ fish killed by Moravian missionary with ax.

“Got bottle openers, scales, cow tail holders, block made in Newfane for pounding corn. There’s a cane Mayor Curley of Boston sent to Ireland to get, to give to constituents. Man became dissatisfied... gave me cane. Didn’t want to hear more of Curley.

“Armadillo baskets, handmade saw from Jamaica (Vt.) Surveyor’s chain made in England used by Washington. Tumbleweed from Texas.

“Wooden leg worn by woman in Brattleboro. Pair of copper-toed boots. Soapstone pipes from Minnesota. All sorts of odd and unusual things.

“That’s a stunner made by Sioux for squaws to knock wounded in head with after battles. Handmade dolls. Moccasins owned by Sitting Bull. Also have his signature. Three pottery gods, Aztecs’, not very handsome but probably served their purpose.


“Various fish. In this dam by the old mill a few years after I bought the property, I caught in my hands two trout, one 14 inches and one 15 3/4 inches long. I have not told you we were drawing water from the pond and these two fish got back of a sandbar.

“Want to go out back? Keep big things out there. Careful where you step.

“Those were ice tools. Early logging tools. Jars. Some of these things out here are for sale. Traps. Bells. Wagon wheels. All sorts of odd and unusual things.”

Back at the entrance to the mill you look over into the pit where the wheels used to turn. Somehow, you hesitate to ask about the totem pole. But you cannot resist. Everybody asks about the pole.

“Totem pole genuine?” you ask.

Everybody asks if it is genuine.

“Yes, it’s a genuine totem pole... my own. And here’s its story.

“The head of every Vermont family is a nosy old guy. He thinks he knows everything. Next is a happy-go-lucky member of the family. What does he care as long as he can spend the old man’s money? The field of yellow and green dots are your friends. Some are yellow and some are green. Below is the grouch of the family. He either did or did not get married but he didn’t like it. At the bottom is a snake. We all have either our wife’s or husband’s relatives.”
On A Fair Green
A personal adventure in Vermont Summer living
OLD CHARLEY HAWKINS CALLED ME BACK after I had said goodbye and started down the hill with my son and his wife. They walked on slowly, laughing together, while I turned to meet the farmer. He stuck his stubby chin almost in my face, gabbling excitedly, "Why don't you buy this place? You like it here. Buy it. I'll sell it to you dam cheap."

I must have looked astonished. He went on, "Like to have you have it, you and your boys. We never had kids of our own—took four to bring up but none of 'em stayed with us. Now if you bought it and let me and May keep on living here, I could get the old age pension, cause it wouldn't belong to me any more, and I wouldn't lose my home. I'd let you have it for $1500, and that's less'n I've asked anybody."

"But what on earth could I do with it?"

"Do with it!" he roared so loudly that my son looked back at us, "Don't do nothing. Set and watch the trees grow. Make you rich. Worth twice what I'm asking you. Silly fool if you don't take it."

That was the beginning. I had a forestry expert look it over, and he approved. So, in 1944 when the old man died and his wife May moved out, I found I owned 160 acres of Vermont woodland and meadow, with a very dilapidated house and
wonderful view of far mountains thrown in. From that place in the past eight years I have sold $2,700 worth of logs and pulpwood, without ruining the forest, where there is plenty of young growth coming in. And for my grandchildren's sake—in Vermont one considers one's grandchildren—I have dutifully set out young spruce which the state supplies at cost. The old man was right about the worth of the land, but not about setting to watch the trees grow. I have never had time for that.

In 1946 the house had stood empty for two years. My eldest son, a serious man, looked at the desolation which possessed it, and said, "What in Sam Hill do you think you're going to do with this?"

So we named it Sam Hill and set to work. The first carpenter I engaged never came back after he tore the oilpan off his car on the humps in the middle of the road. I could hardly blame him. Others were more valiant, or had cars with higher clearance. The first night I slept in my own house, the rain poured through a thousand holes in the roof. I could hear my nephew, who had just come out of five years in a parachute brigade, shifting about in the loft overhead, while downstairs I dragged my cot mattress into a corner, pulled the rubber blanket over my head, and slept the sleep of exhaustion. We got some cheap roofing paper slapped over the accumulation of patches on the roof; when two years later I roofed it properly there were four layers of old paper to tear off. We tore out partitions, shoveled out lathe and plaster, and the heaps of old shoes and corsets that filled the loft. A reluctant mason, who thought anyone must be crazy to want to live in the backwoods, built a fieldstone fireplace. Weathered boards from the tumbledown barn lined the main room, and the rest of the barn returned to earth. I made one terrible mistake: I laid copper pipe from the spring on the hill and found too late there is lead in the spring water, and also something that acts on the copper pipe.
When I add soap to the water now, it turns a lovely copperas blue, and in any case it isn’t fit to drink. But it is soft for washing, and we pump our drinking water from the old well. Slowly, with help from neighbors, the house has taken shape. It even boasts a coat of paint on new clapboards. When I had to put on a woodshed, since the old one had sloughed off, I had some big spruce trees cut, the logs trucked to the sawmill, and the lumber trucked back. Even paying for the labor, the process saved me $23 on a thousand feet of lumber. I like to think my woodshed walls and roof grew on my own land, as undoubtedly also did the big hand-axed beams in the ceiling and the two-foot wide boards in the stairway.

The best things about Sam Hill are the things like those, which have long been there. The view from my window to the east varies under the cloud shadows, but the outline of the mountains stays the same. May’s lilacs and forsythia bloom every spring, as they will do after I am gone, as she is. The white and pink rosebushes change not at all that I can see, year after year. I have added a herb garden and some hollyhocks, but the lilies of the valley were there, and so was the bee balm. Much of my food comes from the soil around me—from the rhubarb and asparagus that grow without care, from the wild strawberries in the meadow below the house and the blueberries on the hillside behind it, from the raspberries that crown every clearing where the spruce has been cut and the blackberries that tear my clothes and my flesh but are sweet and so plentiful I can fill a gallon pail in an hour. My neighbors line beeches, standing patiently with the little box of sugarwater and tracking the bees to their tree, and I share the honey. It has a flavor none bought in stores can equal. There are wild grapes along the stone walls, and in fall more apples than anyone can use. Deer and partridges frequent the old knurly trees, and squirrels too make good eating. Sometimes someone shoots a bear, or trees a coon—coons trouble my plot of sweet corn, and more than once I have seen a bear in a raspberry patch. He moved hastily in one direction, and I in the other. When the first sprinkle of snow comes, the beagle hounds are out chasing rabbits. In spring, smoke and steam rise from the sugarhouses, and the children whistle paddles to dip into the thin syrup. There is still much wild nurture in our mountains.

It is true that marginal land like mine does not pay for farming, that henceforth our cities must be fed from vast mechanized farms, get their vegetables from storage plants and their fruits shipped a thousand miles. But the taste of a tomato picked from the vine and munched on the spot has no relation whatever to the cellophaned kind, and no food freezer on earth can keep a wild strawberry tasting the way it tastes when eaten in sunshine in a meadow.

So, as I watch the old dog fox hunting mice in my meadow, leaping and plunging in the most graceful movement in the world, I am grateful to old Charley that he jockeyed me into buying his rundown farm. I would like him to know that if it has not made me rich, it has made me happy. He would be surprised if he could see the lavatory where his milkroom used to be, and a livingroom in place of the kitchen where he spent so much of his time. But I think he wouldn’t mind, since the mountains are the same, the hillsides where the bottle gentians grow are the same, the cherry tree he planted is loaded with fruit in July. And now I can answer my son’s question. What have I done with it? I’ve made a home.
There are many ways of picturing Vermont. Its mountains can be photographed. So can its hills and valleys, its farms and its towns and its people. Yet it doesn’t have to be a big scene. Vermont can be portrayed in small things, too, details, small parts of the whole that tell a story of life and living and years of the past, perhaps even more vividly than the picture of the whole. It’s told in the hands of the sexton as he opens the door of the century and a quarter old Weathersfield Meeting House, using the huge key that fits the original handmade lock. The story of the years is there in the antiquity of that big sturdy door. How many times it has been opened like that for Sunday worship, weddings and funerals, oyster suppers and strawberry sociables, a door through which generations of a township have passed.

There’s the story of countless springs in the old wooden sap bucket hanging on a big maple, a bucket some farmer uses to make syrup just for himself, confident that sap gathered in wood is going to make better tasting syrup...
Close-ups

Newell Green, FPSA, FRPS

than sap gathered in galvanized iron. Or there is the story
of the whole farm in part of a cornstalk with two big ears,
plump and green in the late summer sunlight, bringing to
fulfillment a season of ploughing, seeding and cultivating
and forecasting the harvest that is shortly to come.

There is the passing of an era in the picture of a once
useful buggy wheel leaning against a barway post, the
kind that men used to fashion out of a butternut log with
an axe and a sharp bit, or it's in the broken door of an
abandoned shed which seems to say that a man once lived
and worked and prospered here but now he has gone
away.

There's the story of winter winds and summer rains
and all the sunshine in between in the weather-beaten
wood of an old barn door with a hand-made hook that has
swung in the winds like a pendulum till it has worn a
deep track for its endless movement.

Yes, the story of Vermont is in the small things,
too.

END

Into the Past

Weather Worn
The Holton's tobacco keeps a southern crop and a family tradition thriving in Vermont

Few travelers in New England know what they're seeing as their New York, New Haven and Hartford train streams by the long slat-sided barns of the Connecticut Valley. Tobacco? That's a Southern crop, one that broke the hearts of Jeeter Lester and his brood down in Georgia.

But Train No. 54 is called the Cigar Valley to compliment those growers, from below Hartford on north, who specialize in raising world-famous leaf for cigar wrappers and binders.

It is even less known that Cigar Valley does not end until Westminster, Vermont, where Charles Holton and his sons William and James plant and harvest their tobacco on the same land—with most of the same methods and many of the same tools—and with the same affection for their crop that other Holtons employed 100 years ago.

Although their planting refutes the romantic notion that tobacco-raising belongs in the South, the Holtons are living up to a Vermont—as well as to a family—tradition. For several years at the start of this century Vermont ranked first among the forty-eight states in tobacco yield per acre, thanks to the native combination of sandy loam, terrain, growing season and courage. At one time this state was estimated to have five hundred acres in tobacco.
Almost all of it has been raised in Windham county. When Vermont Life sought official comments upon tobacco growing in Vermont, it turned automatically to George D. Aiken of Putney, our state's senior senator, chairman of the Senate committee on Agriculture in the eighty-third Congress, and an expert nurseryman.

“As I recall,” Senator Aiken answered, “Vernon and Putney were the largest producing towns until around 1920 when Westminster came into the picture with larger fields, including shade grown.

“Nearly every farm in my community raised tobacco, even the ones high up in the hills. It was a pretty risky crop, however, and the farmer never knew whether his year's work had been profitable or not until he actually got the check in his hand.

“Frost, hail, worms and other perils, including a monopoly of the buyers, had to be contended with. The worms were the easiest of all these hazards to cope with. The going price for picking them was 50 cents a hundred.”

The Holtons agree on the risk and the perils, and even they now plant only four to six acres as against thirty to forty in the old days. Holton & Sons are primarily potato growers—they raise 100 acres of them on the good soils of the river valley—but tobacco is in their blood with its
spcciali/.arion, hard work and its hazards. Basically, Charles Holton says, the demanding work of growing tobacco and curing it is much the same as it always has been. He no longer raises the seedlings himself—from seed so small that three to four hundred thousand of them weigh but an ounce—but buys them down country and plants them the same afternoon. He estimates that he spends $500 for each acre of leaf that he grows and cures.

His fields have been curried and manured and fertilized with two tons per acre of a special-analysis fertilizer, half of which is cotton-seed meal, before he puts in the fragile six-inch plants, 10,000 of them to an acre. Then he cultivates the plants six to eight times, and hand-hoes and hills them twice.

To thwart the myriad pests and diseases the Holtons blanket their tobacco acreage with a variety of poisonous sprays, dusts and baits that brings their plants through to maturity with just the right degree of gloss, texture and burning qualities to command the highest prices on the market.

"You live in that tobacco field," Mr. Holton says. "You look at it one morning, see something that has to be done, and do it. Look at it eight hours later and there's another job to do."

By August, provided the plants have weathered bacterial and insect attacks and escaped frost and hailstorms, harvesting is close at hand. The plants are topped and then sprouted so all the growth will go into the leaves. Then on bright August afternoons they are cut, allowed to wilt for a matter of minutes, then impaled by their

In late August Herbert Wyman begins "slatting" tobacco. Plants that have been cut and left to wilt are deftly impaled on his steel-pointed lath.

Clarence Kingsbury hands slatted tobacco up to Hugh Remis, Jr. on a loading truck. Behind is a row of cut tobacco and beyond unharvested plants.
Truck-load of new-cut green tobacco is eased into a Holton curing shed for two months of controlled aging.

William Holton balances high in five-acre field shed to hang slatted tobacco.

stalks on laths and hung up in tiers, floor to roof, in the tobacco barns to cure.

Here they stay for two months while they go through a succession of bacterial changes—altering in color from green to yellow and then to a deep brown, and achieving just the right degree of brittleness. During this two months period, the tobacco man watches temperature and humidity in his tobacco barn like a mother watches her child, and like a mother he is often up at night—to close or open the doors of his barn.

In November the cured tobacco is taken down, the leaves are stripped from the stalks, boxed and shipped off to the packers.

Holton tobacco brings top prices at the Springfield, Massachusetts sale in December. Once he got a record 78 cents a pound, and last year's crop sold at 58 cents. His investment of $500 per acre may yield a 300 percent profit or it may be a total loss, but no Holton says that tobacco's too risky for him.

"Trouble with me is," Charles Holton says, "tobacco's in my family to stay. We're pleased with that seedling transplanter over there—draw it with a tractor and it digs a hole and squirts in the water and covers the roots—but we still pile it in hakes when we take it down and pack the cured leaf in a box form the same as my father used."

He doesn't know of any other farmers raising tobacco for sale in Vermont these days, but he's not the state's last tobacco farmer. There are William and James, he points out—and don't forget the grandchildren.
LAKE CHAMPLAIN SEASONS

Written & Photographed
By Ralph N. Hill

The Lower Winooski

Near Addison
Rich in scenic beauty and great in history is the inland sea on Vermont's western border. In the words and camera of Ralph Hill Vermont Life is proud to present here seasonal portraits of Lake Champlain.

In winter ice holds Lake Champlain prisoner, but late in March under the warming sun one hears the tinkling of ice crystals near the shore, and far to the West he sees a solitary blue ribbon of water. As the Green Mountains and Adirondacks yield their mantle of snow the Lake melts its icy jacket and rises to flood the marshes of the Missisquoi, Lamoille, Winooski and Otter.

The palest April green steals across the lowlands of the Champlain Valley. In the woods the brave crocus tempts the arbutus and hepatica; songbirds mute the shrill call of the crow. When the apple blossom, the lilac and tulip parade through garden and field the Lake country again knows the pageantry of spring.

A rugged sentinel for a century and three-quarters of
shipping on the Lake, guardian of the harbor at Burlington, Rock Point commands a wonderful panorama of mountains, sky and water. Rising over the Green Mountains the summer sun bathes the Point in yellow, and in the evening, as it sinks beyond the rim of the Adirondacks, it sets a fire ten miles of open water to the West. As on ocean and sound, distance joins water and sky beyond Shelburne Point to the south and Appletree to the north, for the Lake runs a course of 120 miles before conveying its waters to the Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers.

Aeons ago in a strange contortion of the earth, the older layers of rock were folded over the younger. And so the Rock Point Overthrust is a geological landmark. To fishermen, who may find its age—five hundred million years—uncomfortable to dwell upon, Rock Point is more intimately known as the haunt of the smallmouth bass. Early on a July morning it is cool here, and if the wind does not blow, the shadows lie deep in pools under the rocky cliff.
There is this about Vermont scenery: it is such that you can lie down in it. No jagged mountains two miles high to shut one in with a feeling of insignificance, but always a modest tableau, pastoral and comforting. Beyond every turn of the road along the rolling shore is something intimate to please the eye—a beach of fine gravel, a wooded peninsula, a deep inlet hidden by pine and hemlock, a high cliff trimmed with cedar, a cluster of boats around a shallow bay of graceful green reeds, a summer cottage, a mansion, red barn, an open field of clover or of grain.

From the ruins of Fort Ticonderoga John Larrabee boated stone across the Lake in 1823 to build this handsome store on the point that bears his name. Canal boat and sloop from New York, Albany and Montreal delivered at his back door the goods he sold out the front. Will they say in 2087 that the structures we are building today are as sound as John Larrabee's?
The Lake is no less capricious than New England summer weather. One August day it is a glassy mural of clouds, mountains and shoreline and the next it is a dark open sea of breakers and whitecaps. Between these extremes it is a versatile actor with a hundred moods, each as beguiling as the other to those of us who are confirmed Lakedwellers.

No foreign admirer of lakes, whether Swiss or Scottish, can but find this of incredible beauty, almost unreal, like the painted backdrop of a stage setting. Yet this is more than a landscape. Lake Champlain was the baptismal font of American liberty, and tradition, like a morning mist, lies heavily on land and water. First the Iroquois and Algonquin in their own duel for empire, then from the North came the French, and from the South, the British.

"Fathers," said the Iroquois, Tanacharison, "both you and the English are white. We live in a country between. Therefore the land belongs to neither one nor the other, but the Great Being above allowed it to be a place of residence for us." So for a century and a half the winter ice was stained with red; navies bright with color and with hope were borne by the summer waters of Lake and river.
The trampling of ragged feet sounded along the timbered shores, and in the battlements of Crown Point and Ticonderoga echoed the names Schuyler, Johnson, Montcalm, Rogers, Stark, Abercrombie, Howe, Amherst, Burgoyne, Carleton, Arnold, Montgomery, Allen, Macdonough. ... At last, in 1815, four old nations left the Lake in the care of a new one. And yet “their names are on your waters, you cannot wash them out.”

Charlotte from Mount Philo

Lower Otter Creek
It is a curious paradox that the land, which was once so quiet, is so busy, while the water, formerly so busy, is so quiet. As the reports of the last Revolutionary cannon reverberated along the shores, pioneers from southern New England streamed northward to settle on the borders of this broad water-path leading out of the frontier into the older settlements. Travel on the best roads, threading forests of first-growth pine, was then far more difficult than on the open water. The Lake’s heavy floor of winter ice, however drifted with snow, was easier driving for stage and team.

Within a few decades a windy morning’s white clouds were scarcely more numerous across the water than the sails of schooners and sloop-rigged canal boats. By way of many landings on the Vermont and New York shores paddle steamers out of St. Johns to the north and Whitehall to the south, transported ever-growing lists of passengers bound for New York or Montreal, and ever-heavier commerce in freight. Even the iron horse, arriving in the Lake country in the mid-nineteenth century, little disturbed the vessels calling at the wharves of lakeside cities and towns. Vast tows of lumber from Canada, sometimes scaling a million feet, struggled south behind puffing tugs; barges laden with stone, coal and ore labored heavily in the troughs of the waves.

Almost without a trace, like the fragments of a dream, these things have disappeared. Travelers and transport have gone ashore and aloft to highway and airlane.
Once more the Lake is a frontier—not of navies or commercial fleets—but a frontier of the spirit. It is as far as one can get from the clamor of the city. For sail, yacht, and small boat owners, therein lies its charm.

There is no tonic like a cool north wind against the sails or an anchorage in a quiet cove. As one’s boat courses through Alburg Passage down an aisle or green, the honking highway might as well belong to a different world. Off the Islands of the Four Winds, the Four Brothers, the wailing of a thousand sea gulls brings unaccustomed music to ears dulled by jangling television commercials. From billboards and hot dog stands, let one grant his eyes a vacation. Richly rewarding vistas await them in the waters off the Heros and Isle La Motte, St. Albans’ lake within a lake, and Mallett’s Bay. Sail through the Narrows past the shale bluffs of Cedar Beach and lofty Split Rock. Follow the Otter’s winding preserve of the blue heron to quickwater at the falls of Vergennes.

Anchor your boat off Rock Dunder on a late September afternoon. A primeval stillness is broken by the faint calling of geese and a westward-drifting shore breeze carrying warm Vermont air over the water. Far to the West the softly colored Adirondacks drowse in a blue haze. The nearby grasses of Oakledge are amber. Autumn’s wand has touched Red Rocks and Shelburne Point with wine and gold. On the eastern horizon Mansfield and Camel’s Hump reign in violet robes.

The Lake country is in its glory then.
Life-saving is taught in accordance with the American Red Cross methods. In Kingsland Bay girls practice their canoeing and sailing techniques.

Considering the rich texture of history going back 300 years, it is not surprising that a center of French culture flourishes today in the Lake Champlain valley. One part of this center is the Middlebury College French School, founded by Dr. Edward D. Collins, with Professor Williamson de Visme as dean, who originated the idea of using only French as a language there.

From five students, all teachers of French, the Middlebury School grew in a few years to number more than four hundred students, living and breathing French.

Seeing the success of the “direct method” of teaching language, Dr. Collins and Professor de Visme began to consider using the same method for children: by creating a French milieu where they could grow up using the language as we do English, learning by ear from native French people, with perfect pronunciation right from the start.

In the dead of winter in 1921 the opportunity came. A small advertisement of a lake-shore holding in Ferrisburg caught the eye of C. W. Brownell of Burlington. With Dr.
Ecole Champlain

An outstanding Vermont summer camp carries on the tradition of Gallic culture, brought to this shore 300 years ago.

Fine Vermont Morgans naturally are found here. Riding is one of the popular camp activities.

Sunny, open campus provides room for field sports.

Collins he visited the property owned by Father Campeau, an old French priest who wanted “to go back to Quebec to die.”

The 75 acres, increased later by purchase of adjacent land on Hawkins Bay, included historic Macdonough Point and a mile of shore. There also was a large house of beautifully cut native grey stone, built originally as a stagecoach tavern. It stands at the point where a horse-ferry once carried travelers across to Grog Harbor. The little dirt road of today once was the main Boston-Montreal postroad.

Five friends bought this land and formed the Macdonough Point Corporation to conduct a summer camp. So the heritage of France was continued in Vermont.

In 1924 the French camp for girls, known as Ecole Champlain, opened with an enrollment of fourteen, housed in tents, fed at the old stone lodge, living primitively. But this was the nucleus of the camp of today, with its native French and French-speaking American coun-
sclors; its program including swimming, boating, riding, tennis, trips and two French classes a day—one in conversation and the other in dramatics.

The 200 girls now at École Chami-plain come from twenty-four states (a few from California and Texas). The staff is made up mainly of European-born counselors and Americans who have studied abroad or specialized in French. Since they speak French among themselves the girls learn also by hearing it, and unlike school the camp life offers unlimited opportunity to use what they know. Classes are in groups of ten to twelve, and vocabulary is taught for immediate use on practical topics, such as how to make a bed and clean the chalet; how to go to the camp store and buy a bathing cap—words not often learned in text books.

Every École Chamiplain girl acts in a play, coached by a native French teacher. The Little Theatre has an active season, with two plays a week. Unlike the adult Middlebury School, where French only is required, campers at École Chamiplain speak it on a voluntary basis. Many are complete beginners who have to acquire vocabulary before they can try (as do second-year girls) for awards given for French days.

Although not all sports instruction is given in French, much is learned in both languages. One camp alumna in France for the summer went sailing...
Ecole Champlain's location is isolated, with a long shore line and protected bay. Forested Macdonough Point ends in a high bluff. Senior and Middler tents and cabins are hidden among the trees, but the larger camp buildings, Playhouse and some junior cabins are visible bordering the open campus. Also visible are riding rings, tennis courts, beaches, dock & float.

Continued on next page
A new skipper takes her mate out for trial trip around buoy in sheltered Kingsland Bay.

near Dieppe with a captain and crew who spoke no English. Luckily she knew the French for rudder, sheet and tack. Another living in Algeria reported her French proved essential in daily marketing.

Ecole Champlain is in the Morgan horse country, too. Riding has always been a key activity and many of the camp’s forty horses are purebred Morgans. To city people who think of the seacoast as the only place to sail, it is a surprise to see Lake Champlain, where it often takes as much skill as on salt water to manage a sailboat. Canoeing and swimming are essentials. Every girl is taught swimming, under the Red Cross system of tests, and campers are indoctrinated with water safety procedure for rescues and the use of craft. In all phases of Ecole Champlain camp life the primary aim is fine health and well-being of the campers, both physical and spiritual. The younger the child is, the staff feels, the more important it is to give the best instruction—whether in the arts, music, sports or French.

And so Ecole Champlain today is more than an exceptional girls’ camp. It carries on the tradition of Gallic culture and tongue by the same waters that floated the fleur-de-lis three centuries ago.

Ballet and dramatics figure prominently in camp life. Girls take part in several French comedies, fantasies, farces and classics.
MISSISQUOI DELTA

By Don O’Brien

Photography by Geoffrey Orton

A wilderness world of creeks and marshlands, a startling contrast to the rest of Vermont

Pursuing a roundabout, neighborly course through the Vermont north country there is a picturesque and bountiful river which the Indians called Missisquoi.

The very word suggests the whistling sound of beating wings and the whisper of the wind in the tall marsh grass. Perhaps that is why the perceptive and appreciative redmen gave the stream a name which is variously translated to mean "much waterfowl" and "much grass."

Both, as a matter of fact, are singularly appropriate. A combination of the two would be ideal. For the lush, reed-filled marshlands and wooded borders of the twisting river harbor a feathered population of many species—ducks, geese, the stilt-legged blue heron, and countless smaller birds.

The Missisquoi’s surroundings provide a perfect environment for them. Moreover, it is further enhanced by the security of a well-posted, strictly regulated Federal Wildlife Refuge which parallels the stream’s lower banks.

Paddle or row or pilot an outboard craft along the placid waters below Swanton from spring through summer and early fall, and often you will see the air alive with birds. Here or there, around a bend or in some bay or inlet, you will come upon a solicitous hen duck—black or green-head mallard or teal—bossily convoying her young in single file to some favorite feeding grounds. In the early spring I have seen flocks of geese settle down upon the open-water areas between ice floes. They paid little heed to me as I strolled along the banks. The honkers appeared very tired from their long flight north and glad to sit down for a time and just float.

Missisquoi is this friendly river’s present-day name—the one you will find on maps. Zadock Thompson, one of Vermont’s earliest historians, spelled it Mis-sico. It was pronounced that way, he said. Thompson listed 19 different spellings which he said were copied from books and periodicals of the times. The versions ranged from the simpler Masiska to the tongue-twisting Michiscouie.

Although this meandering ribbon of water, with its many spur-of-the-moment deviations, extends some 75 miles or more, the Missisquoi cannot rightfully be designated as Vermont’s longest river. When it first grooved out its vagrant course, some amicable impulse moved it to make a looping visit into Canada. Several miles of its waters, therefore, are within the Dominion. Its source is in Lowell township, Vermont. Then it takes a northerly course and, after a sociable stroll into Canada, recrosses the border at Richford.

Finally, dividing itself into three branches—to effect, perhaps, a more impressive entrance the river flows into Lake Champlain’s great Missisquoi Bay.
Looking upstream from the Main Branch toward Swanton. Metcalf Island lies on the right, and the West Branch channel is just beyond.

There again it fraternizes with Canadian waters, for most of this broad and scenic bay is within the Dominion.

Here and there along its way, this river of much waterfowl and much grass is enlarged by feeder streams. For the most part the Missisquoi’s progress is leisurely. But now and again it leaps over natural or man-made obstacles. Then, having for a time had its fill of excitement, it becomes lazy again.

From the rapids below Swanton Dam and for the remaining several miles to its destination in the great bay, the river’s course is smooth, its aspect peaceful—except, of course, when the winds reach down to heckle it. Then it turns angrily dark and shows its teeth.

Much of the time, though, it is a serpentine mirror, reflecting the patriarchal trees along its path and the birds which wing overhead.

In a dual sense the Missisquoi is a bountiful stream. With genial helpfulness it turns turbines of generating plants. The river’s most widely enjoyed largess, though, springs from its wildlife wealth. Duck hunters in season know its generosity, even though it appears to them that the ducks carry game law books. The waterfowl seem well aware, too, that the Federal sanctuary is taboo to men with guns. While gunners strain their eyes in camouflaged blinds the ducks quack jeeringly from the asylum provided by Uncle Sam.

The upper reaches of the Missisquoi are trout waters, where the rifts and pools harbor flashing rainbows. In its broader, lower section dwell the tigerish muskellunge and his similarly ferocious cousin, the great northern pike. At certain times giant sturgeon disport themselves near the rapids, a thrilling sight when you can catch them at it. And there are many smaller fish—perch, bass, pickerel, bullheads and the flat, colorful “sunnies.”

Spring brings the annual run of the walleyes up the Missisquoi to spawn. When the run is at its peak, you could, on a Sunday, make your way for some distance along a great, undulating raft formed by the closely anchored boats of the anglers. Other fishermen troll the river’s promising depths.

Come late fall, mingling with the hurrying craft of the duck gunners you will see other boats moving more slowly. These belong to the muskrat trappers who customarily place their “sets” in barrels, open at both ends and floating partially submerged. Daily they make the rounds of their trap lines. To them the Missisquoi’s bounty is fur, convertible quickly into cash.

Motorists can see much of the Missisquoi from highways. State Route 104 parallels the stream for long stretches where it is broadest. Here tall trees lean protectingly over the lazily flowing water. Among them white birches stand out, etched sharply against the background of lush green. At one place in particular these white sentinels of the Missisquoi deploy the flotilla of the anglers. Other fishermen troll the river’s promising depths.

To those who know and love the Missisquoi, the river is a live thing—wise in the lore of the ages, mellow in its inherent graciousness. Truly it is a stream with a personality—just capricious enough to show its spirit, and with a gentility and constancy which inspire admiration and trust.

END
Marsh-bordered West Branch leads to the Bay opposite Alburg Springs.

Don O'Brien's boat approaches Shad Island (center).

Middle Branch, near its outlet here, almost touches Canada.

East Branch is seen over his head, Middle Branch running on to the left.
by Arthur W. Peach
Books, Cabbages and Kings, and Other Things

A Theory about Mosquitoes

How long mosquitoes have been annoying man I do not know—not why they were ever created in the first place. Probably, 35,000 years ago, a Neanderthal hunter sneaking through the great ferns with his eye on a mammoth and a ton of meat for the folks, paused to swat 'em and mutter something that we can recognize today when a modern Homo Sapiens claps his hand on the back of his neck and reverts for a moment to his far away ancestor among the ferns.

My main concern, however, is with two-legged mosquitoes of the needling type—and evolution has still not done away with them. To go back a bit, around 330 years ago, William Bradford, governor of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, wrote in his journal some interesting items. Facing as he did the heart-breaking problems of keeping the colony going in the face of a wilderness, starvation, and hostile Indians in an utterly strange and savage land, he found some of his people writing letters to headquarters in which I find this:

"Letters come to me scolding or gently admonishing the Vermonter because he is so slow to accept the bright ideas of citizens from other states. In other words, your native Vermonter is too slow and too stubborn, I am told. Frankly, being one of them, I see nothing startling enough in these other states to impress me as new and magical methods that have brought glory and honor and ready cash to these states. So I come to the point toward which I was heading in my start 35,000 years ago—the Vermonter is "moskeeto-proof." He will listen patiently to truly wise men, but as for the "moskeetoes," the needlers with the whine, he is likely to use a Vermont sentence—"He never knew nothin' an' forgot the nothin' he never knew.""

Summer Miles, Too

I was somewhat startled by the response to my comments in our autumn issue, '54, about autumn miles and about finding one of your own which you would enjoy walking over. Evidently there are more autumn milers than I thought and hundreds looking for their autumn miles. Vermont offers its own people and visitors a wide range of pleasure, of course, and a wide choice also. We have the summer resorts with its dancing and something "doing all day"; we have the quieter inns and earth there are excellent companions for a stroll just for the fun of it, seeing what can be seen—and there will be plenty. A camera in the pocket is a choice friend to wander with, and a small book in the pocket and a green spot are just as good. For those who wish to widen the range of seeing and knowing and friendship with tree, brook, bird, flower, and earth there are excellent companions too. Here are book recommendations sent to me by summer and autumn milers—A Field Guide to the Birds by Peterson (1000 illustrations, 500 in full color), Guide to the Flowers of the Northeast by McKenny and Peterson, Guide to the Rocks and Minerals by F. H. Pough, Guide to the Butterflies by Klotz—Houghton-Mifflin Company. These are mere suggestions. I will send other titles on request, either my own selections or where my knowledge is at fault, titles suggested by those who know.

A Note on Edwin Martin Tabor

I had referred in my autumn Quill to a book pretty close to the ideal for an autumn miler or for anyone who likes to pause in the whirl of days to linger even for a brief vacation where the pace of life slackens. This book was Stowe Notes. A number of inquiries have come to me asking for information about the author, and Mrs. Louise E. Koier of the staff of the Vermont Historical Society has kindly gathered some pertinent notes for us.

Tabor was born in 1863 on Staten Island. Our Stowe appealed to him as an area of peculiar charm for the writer and painter. He was hindered by a chronic
illness from pursuing the career as a painter that he had in mind, but in Stowe he found a refuge for his interests and his health. The family built a home high up on the Worcester slope looking across the valley to Mansfield. In this beautiful country Tabor was at home and contented, finding themes for his work as a painter and writer on walks through the area. He died on Sept. 9, 1896. On Tabor's tomb among the pines in the valley cemetery these words, taken from Milton's *Samson Agonistes*, are carved: Nothing is here for tears—nothing but well and fair, and what may quiet us in death so noble.

**The 251 Club**

In the last summer Quill, in answer to questioners who were trying to set up a vacation plan for visiting the state, I suggested that one way to know Vermont and enjoy it was to visit every town in the state—not merely going on a tear through it, but to linger along, look around, and become acquainted. Without sensing the real interest in such an idea, I mentioned the possibility of forming a 251 Club to include charter members who had by December 31 visited every town and those who planned to go a-visiting. The 251 was chosen as a name because there are 246 organized towns in the state—that is, towns with elected officers, and 5 unorganized towns, towns under a supervisor. I left out the gores because I did not want to assume the obligation of explaining to hundreds of folks from away what a "gore" is. We may add them later, however, to our club requirements.

The response to the scheme has been so wide and generous in number that I do not have the space to discuss the club and its plans and prospects in any detail, but *Vermont Life* readers, and anyone for that matter, interested in the club, its plans, prospects, and requirements, are invited to write me in care of the magazine, and full information will be sent.

The main idea is simple enough—visit—and that means linger awhile—in each town in the state as you find it convenient or on the basis of a schedule. I can promise anyone who does it a revelation, good fun, and new experiences whose memories will not grow old. Also, we will send to anyone interested a copy of a chatty news bulletin, *Between Us*, the organ of the club, which will tell what has been done and what is doing, with news, lists of members, and their impressions of trips taken and systems used in roaming around the state. If you wish to join in the fun, simply write *Vermont Life*, Montpelier, and ask for a town map and a highway map which the Commission will send you.

*He Kept His Chin Up*

The manuscript was that of a complete novel for adults, and the friendly letter on the novel’s possibilities and the writer’s possible talent. Although not posing in any sense as a critic or specialist in the novel form, the letter was so simple and appealing in its phrasing and anxious in its tone, I took the time to read the manuscript carefully, ponder my answer, and write the author that in my opinion he would be wise to attempt the adult novel, but I felt that he might be successful in writing stories for boys. I urged him, however, to consult others and not accept my conclusion. I heard from him briefly with a friendly word in appreciation of my advice.

The years went by. I have in front of me the complete list of books for boys that he wrote, twenty-six in all—and there is not a line in any book of which he need be ashamed. It is an impressive record for any author, and in addition he wrote dozens of one-act plays and two serials for the National Broadcasting Company. I never could get copies of these from him; he said simply that "such things are not sufficiently sophisticated for these days." Two words that arouse my wrath today are "sophisticated" as a critical word of praise and "old-fashioned" as a word of condemnation of art, music, and writing. To be intellectual is not necessarily to be intelligent in any manner of means, and the intellectual in any field who condemns a piece of writing as "unsophisticated," is usually dim-witted, and much creative work damned with the word "old-fashioned" is actually fashioned forever. But I did not argue the matter with the author, knowing that beyond him probably were editors with shell glasses, beards, and fake English accents.

Before me is the notice of the death of Merritt P. Allen of whom I am writing. He died last December 26 in Bristol, Vt. He was stricken with polio when he was seventeen and was crippled to the end of his days, dying at sixty-two. He was entirely self-educated, learning to do what seemed impossible—the research he needed for his books from his farm home. In a day that is full of whines about personal disappointments and problems and constant calls for aid of one kind and another, Allen proved what a young fellow can do and how an older man can carry on if he has in his heart just one quality and knows the meaning of the fine word that expresses it—courage. His background was all Vermont. His forebears came to Bristol from Connecticut in 1829. He lived until recently in the 107-year-old family home.

Here are his books, I list those out of print but still available in libraries and give a hint of their main themes or settings: *In Greenbrook* (Vermont); *Tied in the Ninth* (high school baseball); *Wilderness Diamonds* (Vermont); *Hermits of Honey Hill* (Vermont); *Sir Henry Morgan: Buccaneer*; *Drake's Sourd* (also about Morgan); *Joaquin Miller: Frontier Poet*; *William Walker: Filibuster*; *The Ghost of the Glimmerglass* (Vermont); *Captains Hoard* (Vermont); *Out of a Clear Sky* (Mormons and emigrants in Utah); *Blue Rain* (Pontiac's War). These are in print: *Battle Lanterns* (Francis Marion); *Flicker's Feather* (General Stark and Vermont); *The Green Cockade* (Green Mountain Boys); *Johnny Reb* (Wade Hampton-Civil War); *Make Way for the Brace* (Capt. Bonne, explorations in the West); *The Mudhen and The Mudhen and the Wabrus* (prep school stories); *Red Heritage* (Mohawk Valley and French and Indian War); *The Silver Wolf* (Kit Carson as a boy in the Southwest); *The Spirit of the Eagle* (Capt. Wythe's western explorations); *The Sun Trail* (Jedediah Smith's western explorations); *The Western Star* (Jim Bridger in the West); *The White Feather* (John Morgan—Civil War); *The Wilderness Way* (LaSalle's discovery of the mouth of the Mississippi).

The last book was the September choice of the Junior Literary Guild. There is a sketch of Allen in *Young Wings*, the monthly publication of the Guild. In Allen's last letter to me, dated September 14, '54, he wrote in explanation of the sketch: "The only reason I allowed it to be published was in the hope it might help some polio kid to keep his chin up." Merritt P. Allen kept his "chin up" for 45 years and to the end, and the spirit that was in his heart is in his books.
Composers and performers have much to learn from one another. Cardon Burnham of Tulane University discusses a violin part to one of his works with Nathan Goldstein, staff violinist, concertmaster of the New Orleans Philharmonic.

The writer of this article arrived just too late for supper on the opening day of the 1948 session of the Composers' Conference and Chamber Music Center. His suitcase (from which he extracted a flute) and his appetite, stayed in the hallway just inside the front entrance until two a.m. while he played music with other (better-fed) players. During the two weeks of that particular session and during each of the other seven he attended, the same story held: supper, sleep and sometimes even breakfast were in jeopardy.

The Conference was founded in the summer of 1946 by Alan Carter, conductor of the Vermont State Symphony Orchestra. Although there is a staff at the Conference and “participants” who pay to attend, Mr. Carter did not manufacture a “school.” There are no formal classes and certainly no examinations, nor is there institutional pressure to do anything but sleep, swim, play tennis, or engage in any pastime one favors—after all, Vermont is quite a vacationland. In actual practice, however, the situation works out differently; everyone seems to find himself working harder than ever before.

For its first five summers, the Conference lived in the dormitory of the French Department at Middlebury College, where Mr. Carter is head of the Music Department. In the summer of 1951, it moved to Bennington College. Alan Carter is still director, aided now by an executive board: Robert Bloom, solo oboist for Columbia and Victor recording orchestras and also of the Bach Aria Group; George Finckel, cellist, of Bennington College’s own music department; Otto Luening, one-time head of Bennington College’s music, now chairman of the same department at Barnard College and in charge of composition at Columbia University, also eminent as composer and musical committee member; Roger Goeb, composer, professor at Stanford University; Max Pollikoff, violinist, in various radio shows in New York City who has, in his Carnegie Hall recitals, premiered many new works; and Thomas Brockway, Dean of Bennington College.

The Conference tries to give composers
Players criticize composers at this top-rated musical conference and chamber music center held at Bennington college each year.

In addition to the executive board, every branch of the musical world is represented on the staff by at least one articulate and experienced professional: copyist, performer for each instrument, composer, recording engineer, critic—they're all at the Conference, as well as plenty of practice rooms, a concert-hall, meeting rooms, good food, a library, Vermont landscape, and the Bennington air of freedom which surrounds everything. A casual, unpressured approach—with lots of expert musicians and excellent facilities within easy reach—these are the keys to the Conference's special personality.

People react like mad: composers who haven't written a note in a year suddenly burst out with substantial works; players, to their own surprise, take up composing; composers brush off dusty trumpets and fiddles and play alongside their performing cousins. These cousins, in turn, reciprocate enthusiastically and reel off the scores of composers living among them during the two-week sessions, quite an adventure for a player accustomed only to second
Players, both amateur & professional, have a chance to demonstrate their sides of the problems involved in a new work. Left: Virginia DiBlaisiis, concertmaster of the Vermont State Symphony, staff violinist; Max Pollikoff of radio fame in New York, staff violinist; George Finckel of Bennington Coll., staff cellist; Ellen Loeb of Saranac Lake, N. Y., violinist; anonymous auditor; Amelia Perskin of New York, composer; Robert Goeb, professor of music at Stanford Univ., staff composer; and Jean Scheidenhelm of Dearborn, Michigan, member violist.

Burrill Phillips, composer, staff member of the Conference & professor of music at the University of Illinois, studies a work tape recorded earlier.

ARTICLE CONTINUED ON PAGE 48
The oldest and youngest Conference members last summer discuss a score: Frederic Rzewski, 15, of Westfield, Mass., Sophie Kary of Miami Beach, Fla.

Woodford Garrigus, ex-Middlebury student, staunch supporter of Vermont State Symphony, now a graduate geologist, practices English Horn part.

Conference members enjoy the fresh Vermont air before orchestra rehearsal—one of the few breaths available during the busy Conference day.
Vermont summer setting adds much to the atmosphere of the Composers’ Conference. Members and family groups relax in front of Jennings Hall, main music building.

Wen-Chung Chou of Jamaica, N. Y., also a composer, takes over the dreary but essential task of the music copying.

violin parts in early Beethoven string quartets. At the Conference, barriers between branches of music tend to disappear.

Actually, there was enough live music in the air during last summer's session so that, if one could stand it, one could hear what in round hours would equal the full span of Beethoven's nine symphonies played daily, all of it recorded on tape if anyone so desired. And the following statistic has never been taken, of course, but this correspondent guesses that more works have been played from wet ink copies at the Bennington Conference than anywhere else in the world in the same amount of time. He himself has contributed only too often to this last-minute total. And to round out the statistical department, out of nine annual sessions have come three marriages among the staff alone. Bennington is a lively place during the last two weeks in August.

This musical maelstrom sweeps through Bennington every summer. Officially, the Conference and the College are not connected except for housekeeping matters, which the College handles. The inconspicuousness of the Conference's administration has already been mentioned. Bennington College bears the brunt of the Conference’s planned casualness. Obviously, to run a kitchen, it helps to know how many people have to be fed. Joseph Parry and his College housekeeping staff are often denied this homely comfort; they rarely know the count from meal to meal, nor do Conference officials, but everyone is well-fed all the same. It helps also to have approximately the same number of beds ready, with twice the number of sheets, as there are sleepers. These numbers, too, have a race-track quality about them, with odds against winning
about the same. Nevertheless, even surprise guests who come at three a.m. are sheltered. The College’s representatives act always with good nature and sympathy, though they must be shaken by the time the steeplechase is over. Not too badly shaken, apparently: Mr. Parry joined the Conference staff as treasurer two seasons ago.

Still photographs, of course, do not yet have sound tracks, so the ones surrounding this story can only hint at the echoes shaking the buildings portrayed. But in the outdoor pictures some scenery is visible—Vermont scenery. One can glance out a window or walk from one building to the next and be refreshed by it before plunging into another week’s worth of activity carried out in an afternoon. The Conference is unimaginable without Vermont. And, when late August rolls around each year, the reverse proposition is also true to many of us: we cannot imagine Vermont without the Conference.

Playing members of the Conference are divided into groups and coached daily by staff members. Robert Bloom, world-famous oboist, coaches woodwind session.

Reading sessions go on every afternoon. At them expert staff players go over each composer’s music. The players: George Grossman, violist, and George Finckel, cellist; the composer, Margaret Buechner of Wilmington, Delaware.
Young composers, as at Bennington, have their new works played by fellow students.

On the tree-shaded grounds of the Vail estate in Lyndon, some 125 miles diagonally across the state from the Bennington Composers' conference, a group of junior composers arrives in late June for their third summer in Vermont.

The Junior Conservatory Camp, held at the Lyndon Teachers College campus, was founded and is now run by Grace N. Cushman, teacher of keyboard harmony and musicianship at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore.

Feeling that music and country life complement each other, Mrs. Cushman plans the Conservatory Camp program with a staff of ten and a limit of 30 teen-age students. "Youngsters like to fool around with tones," she finds,
Making music, from composition to concert, can be fun, too, at this new kind of Vermont summer camp.

At the Monday Night Forums the students’ original compositions (several have later won national honors) are played publicly for the first time. Wednesdays are “Town Nights,” the students going into Lyndonville to sing in church choir practices or play with the town band. Friday evenings a concert series is held. All-day mountain trips are popular Saturday features.

The Junior Conservatory Camp is planned to combine the values of Vermont outdoor life with a solid musical training. Some students confess a feeling of guilt that they’ve enjoyed the summer so much, Mrs. Cushman reports. “But they later find that having so worthy a standard for which to strive, is justification for having such a good time.”
Texas and Vermont

A couple years ago The New Yorker magazine published the following item, without comment:

"A San Antonio, Texas, matron recently took a package addressed to her daughter, in Vermont, to the central post office to be weighed for postage and what do you suppose the clerk handed her? A customs declaration!"

Always keeping a warm feeling for the Republic of Texas due to my memory of its beautiful women, I addressed at that time an earnest communication to Governor Sherives of Texas, suggesting that diplomatic relations be established between the Republies of Vermont and Texas. Governor Sherives graciously agreed, and indeed offered his assurance that most of the folks down in Texas did not consider Vermont a foreign land.

Ever since that day I have kept the Governor's letter. On showing it to many Texans visiting us here in Vermont I have been surprised to learn that practically none of them had any idea that Vermont too was once a separate and independent Republic.

Older and Longer

I wish to elaborate on that word "too." Our kinship with the good folks of Texas is clear—not only was Vermont an independent Republic "too," but it was a Republic with an older and even longer history.

Texas was not even named until the year 1727. Vermont was christened by Samuel de Champlain in the year 1609 when he first spied the beautiful verdant montes from his Indian canoe on the waters of the lake that proudly bears his name.

Texas was not settled by Anglo-Americans until Stephen Austin established a budding colony there in 1821. Vermont however was actually settled in the mid-18th century, at least 75 years before.

Texas declared itself independent from Mexico in 1836 and became a Republic. Vermont was a Republic from 1775 to 1791 when, somewhat reluctantly, it entered the Federal Union. Texas however, and I am not sure how reluctantly, entered the Union in 1845. Thus it may be noted that the duration of the Republic of Vermont was sixteen years, whilst the years of independence of Texas were nine.

The other main difference between our sovereign nations was this: Vermont was the first to repudiate slavery in its constitution. Texas refused suffrage to all persons who had participated in duels or even sent challenges!

The Mostest and the Firstest!

At the present time Texas lays claim to the following:—the world's widest open spaces (and the driest); the biggest and fastest rabbits; the largest girl's college,* the biggest watermelons, the plainest plains, and the world's largest ranch.

Texas also claims the world's most beautiful women!

Vermont counters by claiming the smallest (but best) medical college; the littlest but most beautiful open spaces; the smallest crop of watermelons but the biggest of maple sugar; the narrowest but richest plains; the slowest but whitest rabbits; and the smallest ranches.

Thus Texas achieves world supremacy in one direction . . . Vermont in another!

I might add that Vermont, as I have said before, has furnished one outstanding product to the world and this is renowned as our biggest and most famous export and our most lasting success. I refer to the crop of great men and great leaders who were born in the Green Mountain country. In that, happily, we lead all others.

Never Underestimate the Power of . . .

You will notice that I have not commented upon, or even drawn any comparisons, to the hyperbolic claim of our sister Republic to the world's most beautiful women.

It may be that since I have not had the pleasure of visiting Texas for 20 years, or since, possibly I am nostalgic for the days of my youth, or simply because I am in the mood to start a good rousing Texas-Vermont argument, I feel inclined to agree, in spite of my danger of being shot for lèse majesty to Vermont, that Texas does produce the world's most beautiful girls!!!

With all respect to the world, and to the United States, and to Vermont, I can not, with good conscience, deny this one Texas assertion.

This is one of the main reasons why, perhaps, it would be of strategic advantage for Vermont and Texas to combine.

*But We Have in Common

So, you see, Vermont and Texas differ a little. But in one way, and this is of the most vital importance, we do have something in common:

In both Texas and Vermont there is a long, stout tradition of independence of mind and thought. This has flowered today so in both these regions live rugged individuals who have, to some degree, been able to resist certain degrading and leveling forces from the outside world. In short, our citizens have always lived and I believe intend to keep on living their own lives in their own fashion. In past history we can match with real pride Ethan Allen with Sam Houston, and Calvin Coolidge with Stephen Austin. In contemporary affairs Warren Austin, George Aiken and Ralph Flanders with Dwight Eisenhower.

We both produce individuals, not mass men.

This outstanding fact gives us a very warm and very close relationship with Texas.

Ornery and More Stubborn.

Perhaps, in a way, Vermonters are however a little more ornery than Texans in resisting alien influences. If Texas by any chance (and I will not close my mind on this until more accurate reports arrive from the Lone Star State) is knocking down to the principles of the welfare state, I can report that in general Vermont is not.

I can not of course speak for Vermonters as a race. But I do know from some observations that quite a large number of Vermonters are disturbed at the accelerating encroachment of the United States upon us. We feel that this danger is a clear invasion of our traditional liberties and rights.

Now here are some of the comments I picked up in Vermont. I merely report them to show how the wind may be blowing . . .

We Submit Objections!

Many Vermont employers resent the fact that the United States forces them as individuals to participate in Social Security. Anyone who hires anyone else, but who does not want the insurance benefits of Social Security for himself, is still forced by Federal statutes not only to pay for it out of his own pocket but to take its benefits.

The United States also invades the privacy of many Vermonters by loading them down with costly rigmarole and red tape, in the main unnecessary. The regulations, for example, of the wages and hours
act are top-heavy and a real burden to the small businessman, farmer, or industrialist. Most such people have to spend hours a week themselves, or hire someone to do the job, of piling up more and more useless statistics in Washington. In short, most everyone in business of any kind is actually working, many hours a week, for the U. S. Federal Government.

Now of course we all recognize the need for federal income taxes to meet the needs of the federal function and to pay the costs of defending the free world from communism. But we do have strong notions of how this should be done. We don't, some of us, think that we should do all the work of the internal revenue department and collect income taxes for employees. We feel this is a real invasion of the rights of the individual. This requirement deprives the individual of the classic right to pay his own taxes. It is merely another step toward the welfare state under which no man does anything for himself. The fact that someone else is doing something for the individual, weakens the citizen's moral fibre and atrophies his sense of duty and responsibility which he has enjoyed since the dawn of history. Remove from the individual the feeling that he is contributing, by paying his own taxes, to the common good, and you remove his classic feeling of responsibility and of belonging.

The Real Extreme

There are some folks who go so far in their desire to be let alone that they also object to all government subsidies, to free transportation to high school, and even to free hot lunches in the schools. They feel these are the rights, responsibilities and obligations of the individual and the family... not of any government.

This may seem extreme and doubtless is. But it amounts to the U. S. setting up an increasing flow of free things and thus diluting the moral and spiritual character of the individual who should be strong enough to do things for himself. It also destroys, of course, much parental responsibility and at the same time sets aside the role of the family as a social force. Indeed it may be a contributing factor to increasing juvenile delinquency which we all deplore.

Yes, there are some old-fashioned, ornery, rather stubborn Vermonters who still feel, with Jefferson, that the best government is the least government. They feel, with some logic, that the government should do absolutely nothing for any individual who is capable of doing that something for himself or his family.

A Constant Nibbling

These are only a few reports of some of the thinking up here. These invasions constitute a constant nibbling of the welfare state into our lives. Not only, Vermonters feel, are such invasions destroying individual independence but they are really undermining the great historic freedoms and rights on which both Vermont and Texas were founded.

I cite all this only for the benefit of the people of Texas who should know how Vermont stands so that Texas may realize how much, really, we do have in common... and how valuable and important these common ideas are.

The Time for Action

Unless concerted action is taken to stop, or to turn aside this inexorable glacier of encroachment and invasion, the two Republics of Texas and Vermont may lose their best character.

A start, perhaps, can be made. Situated, as we are, at both ends of the United States, it seems fair and logical that we together could set up workable ways and means of asserting a little more strongly the early American virtues of independence.

Perhaps we may even be able to turn aside the present implacable trend in the United States and thus exert a very salutary influence on the thinking citizens of that country. Who knows how far such an inspiring example would carry?

Another Invitation

Perhaps, on reflection, my invitation to Governor Shivers back in 1952 was more than a polite gesture.

Perhaps Texas and Vermont should assemble in a convention to discuss common aims.

With combined claims to the most beautiful women (from Texas), and the most leading men (from Vermont), think of what we might accomplish!

NOTE: Mr. Orton's opinions, of course, are his own, and do not necessarily reflect those of this magazine or Vermonters generally. Ed.
The old St. J. & L. C. totes asbestos and pulpwood across northern Vermont, offers sentimental journeys to the past.

Written & Photographed by Neil Priessman

A railroad can be something more than just a way to get to where you want to go.

The St. Johnsbury & Lamoille County is Vermont's well-loved link with an earlier day. It has meandered over its ninety-six miles of track for almost as many years, but its twelve-car freights are still a vital and necessary part of the valley it has served so long. Travelers seldom use the road today, but a tradition-conscious countryside insists that a passenger schedule be maintained. You won't have to make the full trip from St. Johnsbury at the eastern end to Swanton, the western terminal, to understand why the people of the Lamoille valley are loath to relinquish their status as potential passengers.

It's not that you can't get anywhere along the railroute a good deal faster and more comfortably by automobile, but rather that someday you might want to use it. Some­day, with the simple purchase of a ticket to Morrisville or Hardwick, you can, for a brief while, return to a more leisurely era.

Sitting in the passenger end of the mail-baggage car that has been in service for half a century, you forget for a while the clanking string of freight cars ahead. Yet these freight cars, pulled by a churning diesel, loaded with milk and asbestos, beer and earth-moving equipment, pulpwood and limestone, granite and talc mean the survival of this short but still important route between northern New England and the West.

(Continued on page 58)
The stationhouse schedule board, trainmen lulled by the quiet countryside and the rolling mail car, the telegrapher's old-fashioned desk—these perhaps set the mood of the St. J. & L. C. The same feeling carries forward on the following pages, the camera record of a summer's journey.
Covered bridge on the right-of-way, a stationhouse doorknob reflecting the elegance of another era, two men standing in a freight-car door, for an instant motionless pictures in a setting that to them is timeless.
Brakeman swings onto moving "can"  
Conductor, relaxes at his battered desk.
As you move unhurriedly through the beautiful Lamoille valley the past comes close. This is not just a trip from here to there. It is also a journey in time. The same dirt roads that were always here wander down from the hills, pause at a crossing and stroll off to join the new blacktop highway. Dogs still speed the train along with frenzied barking, and trot back importantly to neat farmhouses that were here when Washington was a living memory. The train traverses great covered wooden bridges, the newest one built just after the turn of the century. Each station is a white board monument to a precision of mind that required a railroad station to look like a railroad station and not a juke box.

Making do with what you have is a Vermont tradition and this is Vermont's own railroad. If nostalgia makes you impatient, remember as you turn the ornate door-handle at the end of the trip, that this is a short line surviving in a fiercely competitive field. If some of the rolling stock is dated, there is new and heavier iron in the roadbed on which to roll more freight. If the landscape is from Whitman, it still produces more than half of the freight carried by the St. J. & L. C.

The old conductor had it about right, "We're getting along well enough so's to be here."

Steam has passed from the St. J. & L. C., and today thudding diesels roll through the quiet Lamoille valley.

Stations were built to a style that is now outmoded but still functional. Interior of telegrapher's window is shown on page 55.
A little over twenty-five years ago, Mrs. Carrie Estey of West Lincoln made her first hooked rug. Inspired by a picture of a deer and the discovery that a cast off bran sack was made of material of the same color as the deer, she undertook the task with the materials at hand. One sack provided the yarn for the deer, another, the backing for the rug. Other odds and ends were used to complete the picture.

This first experiment was a success but as the busy years passed, there was no time to make other rugs. Finally, several years ago, after the death of her husband, Mrs. Estey found time weighing heavily on her hands and she began to think about the old deer rug. Perhaps rug making might help to pass the time.

The local feed stores were used as sources of bran sacks with sugar bags and old clothes also pressed into service as materials for yarn and backing. So far, rug making hadn't raised any serious problems. However, there was one element lacking—what about patterns? This had been no problem with the deer so why should it be now?

Mrs. Estey proceeded to make her rugs free hand. Using only a picture or magazine illustration, or in many cases her own memory, she began without as much as a preliminary sketch or pattern.

The subject for one rug was a team of horses the Esteys had owned many years ago. Here, she worked completely from memory. She says, with a twinkle in her eye, “I am not always sure just what my rugs are going to look like until I get them finished. No two of them ever seem to come out alike.”

Not all of the rugs are pictorial. Some follow the usual patterns for hooked and braided rugs and a few are made from stamped patterns. But, the most striking are Mrs. Estey’s original ideas.
envy of the P.B. who always seemed just too young to garner any of the choice opportunities. These lucky riders often hired by bicycle manufacturers, were given very special wheels, some of shining nickel, and rode to their hearts' content, and GOT PAID FOR HAVING ALL THIS FUN. There were two fellows who drove a tandem, all white, and were known as “THE BARNES WHITE FLYERS” and made the possession of one of their machines the heart's desire. Yes and there were “QUADS” too and on a good track they really did make time.

Something akin to Hot Rod drivers worried the oldsters of those days. Usually when a rider had scared a horse into producing an accident by deserting the highway with the attached vehicle and its contents, the papers next day referred to the unseemly speed of the “SCORCHER.” To protect and likewise educate the drivers of these new road menaces, the LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WHELMEN came into being functioning much as the A.L.A. or A.A.A. does today. Thus it came about that in due time organized effort produced the answer to the demand of wheelmen for hard surfaced highways of their own and “CYCLE PATHS” paralleled the regular roads giving freedom for the wheelmen from slow-moving horse-drawn vehicles, to say nothing of offering safe driving away from these new pests for the horsemen.

As With Sleighing and Coasting romance found the sport of real value. It offered a new and easy way for gaining solitude, and any young lady with foresight mastered the art at the earliest possible moment. Even now that song written by Harry Dacre stirs the cardiac muscles of those of the P.B.'s generation. You know; "Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do; . . . "
**IN VERMONT THIS SUMMER**

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Christopher Morley, 1930