The Editor's Uneasy Chair

Are sheep psychic, too? Miriam Chapin, author of our feature article on the subject, spends summers and falls in a remote section of East Wallingford. On the October morning after she mailed off to us the article which begins on page 4, Mrs. Chapin looked from her window to find half a dozen sheep grazing peacefully. Yet nobody for miles, to her knowledge, kept sheep. Somehow they sensed Mrs. Chapin’s remote but friendly fields.

The color section of our Winter issue was in spots weak on geography. For West Topsham, read “East” and for Craftsbury, read “Greensboro.”

Abject apologies are due for the omission from our Winter issue of an author credit line. Editorial Associate Sergeant P. Wild of Rutland was writer of the engrossing article on the Tuttle Law Print company.

Our Summer issue, exclusively concerned with the Lake Champlain region, may not have space to list all of the summer’s events all over Vermont. A postcard request to the Vt. Development Comm. in Montpelier, however, will bring you in late April a complete list.

The good old days return! Herbert Ogden (see our Autumn story on his cider-making), has converted his mill from electric power to a century-old water wheel. In Reading Mrs. Marjorie Hammond has done the same with her grist mill, now run by a 16-foot wheel. Another user of nature’s bounty is treated with on page 18.

Writing this, as we are, just after the November elections, we find it impossible to list here with any certainty the name of our new governor—so close was the race. To avoid offense to either party we omit the governor's name this issue, still feeling fairly confident we will have one come spring.

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Sometimes forgotten in the melee and catharsis of March Meeting are the 238 Vermonters who have taken on for a three-year term some of the most onerous, unappreciated yet vital work that can be wished upon any citizen. This is the new crop of Vermont Selectmen, who are elected the first Tuesday of March with some fifteen other citizens in each of Vermont's towns, to keep this most basic of governments functioning.

If he's unlucky enough or too willing a worker, a man may end up holding several town offices at once. The law, though, does prevent the Town Treasurer, for instance, from auditing his own books.

Moderation

When the Moderator gets town meeting started in the late morning, his reading of the "Warning" (the official agenda), is followed at once by election of these officers. And often it's a ducking match, especially for Lister (the man who assesses property for taxation). Things liven up at times, when an unexpected contest develops for Road Commissioner.

The Selectmen's ranks are swelled to three again. So are the Auditors', the Listers', the Trustees' of Public Funds and the Cemetery Commissioners. Then a Constable or two are elected, the Overseer of the Poor and the Road Commissioner (unless the Selectmen take on these duties.) Elected are the Tax Collector (if he's not the Constable), a town Grand Juror or two, a Town Agent (to defend or prosecute suits for the town), and perhaps also a Health Officer and Fire Warden. Justices of the Peace are elected by ballot.

Not for everyone's taste or talents are the jobs of Tax Collector, Overseer of the Poor, or even of Lister. But these people know in advance what to expect. Listers must know values and cattle. They must be diplomats, and yet expect to win no new friends.

The Auditors know they'll have a hectic week or so, but then have it over with. The Town Clerk and Treasurer, often the same person, is really the unifying, managing force of the town. He and the Road Commissioner are usually the only full-time town officials.

Select

In keeping with other town remuneration, the Selectmen may be paid as little as $60 a year each for their thankless task performance. They have general supervision and responsibility for all town affairs, make up tax bills, pay town bills, oversee the Overseer of the Poor and the Road Commissioner, have a hundred-and-one stipulated and extraordinary chores.

The Selectmen, for instance, if petitioned, must build parks, erect monuments, lay aqueducts. They are even required to examine and destroy glaudering horses. It's their duty to fill such exotic offices as that of Tree Warden, Weigher of Coal, Measurer of Lumber, Shingles & Wood, the Pound Keeper and the Fence Viewer.

Who's Boss?

The county in Vermont is mainly a judicial unit. The state government is severely limited in its duties and discretion by law (by the town representatives in the state legislature). By contrast, a town government can do just about what it wants to. State "interference" is limited mainly to pleading for better record-keeping and for more information.

Nothing so horrendous could occur here as in New Hampshire where property assessments in a town can be altered by the state. Here the towns are boss. The towns, through town meeting, are the personal voices of their own affairs. It is their own money (mainly) that they're spending.

A Vermont town, for instance, may build or support a hospital, even in another state. It can spend money to advertise itself. It can even provide free musical concerts, if "so voted."

But the town meeting can't do one thing: It can't dominate its own school board. And herein lies much of the fun and fighting in today's Vermont town meetings. The town (school district, officially) can vote in or vote out its school directors, one at a time. It can limit the amount of money it gives the directors to work with. But it can't tell them how the school money shall be spent.

The Vermont Supreme Court not long ago had to reaffirm that. And even if the voters in a fit of pique cut the school tax, the Selectmen sadly know they'll have to find the cash if school funds (kept separate by law) are exhausted.

Thing of the Past?

Much has been said in Vermont about the archaic inefficiency of Vermont town government. These municipalities, often with minute populations (and often even subdivided into villages, school and fire districts), are obsolete, it is argued. They should be merged with other towns.

But in them lie the sources of independence for Vermont's citizen today. And he'll sacrifice quite a lot of efficiency, we'll wager, to stay his own boss.
IN Vermont, where hardiness is an essential for perennials, even as it is for human inhabitants, various Daylilies bloom from early May until frost, with the peak during July and August. There is no flowering plant with comparable vigor, and none handsomer, and no perennial in the world is better acclimated to a short growing season.

A single division of the Daylily (Hemerocallis: from the Greek for “beautiful for a day”), set with the union of roots and stalk one inch beneath any good garden soil, soon becomes a handsome clump. Though it is the easiest of flowers to hybridize no one bred the species until recent years, and the great range of colors and forms developed in yellow, gold, red, purple, rose, salmon and pink, among the named hybrids, has quickly made it the most popular midsummer perennial.

All the most popular standard varieties, including Black Prince (Russell), Dauntless (Stout), Hyperion (Mead) and Mission Bells (Hall) from other sections of the country, are as rock-hardy as those bred here in Vermont, such as Flaming Maple (Johnson), Lady Ilse (Wiswell), Moonlove (Vargas) and Saturn’s Ring (Gabrielson.)

Where may the modern Daylily be seen in bloom and purchased in Vermont? “Gardenside” at Shelburne and “Horsford” at Charlotte grow and sell the popular standards. Gladys Wiswell’s “Roadside Gardens,” East Arlington, offers many newer varieties and she has introduced a number of her own. “Shrewsbury Gardens” in Cuttingsville has both the standard and newer varieties, and has distributed many Vermont Daylilies widely by mail. Two hybridizers who do not sell, but whose gardens are always open to the public, are Frank Vargas, Rutland and Lawrence Ward, Castleton; and their fine hybrids will be offered for sale elsewhere before long. Anyone, gardener or not, is always welcome at each of these places and in July and August will enjoy seeing a flowering—truly part of the loveliness of Vermont.

Editorial Note: The writer of this article, Richard Johnson, for the past ten years has been raising standard Daylilies and developing, with his partner, Russell Gabrielson, new varieties at his Shrewsbury Gardens in Cuttingsville.

Cross-pollinating daylilies, below; tagging them, left.
Sheep
IN VERMONT
MIRIAM CHAPIN

SHEEP RAISING in Vermont is coming back these days, and the sight of a flock slowly making its way across a hillside is no longer a rarity. But the industry is still far from what it was a hundred and twenty years ago, when the state must have looked like one enormous sheep pasture. More than a million sheep then fed on the green Vermont hills, and Vermont Merinos were famous everywhere. Flocks of four or five hundred were common, and the spring lambing and later the shearing were the main events of the farm year. Now growers note with pride that in the past six years numbers have risen from nine thousand to fourteen thousand, only about a hundredth of the one-time record. Methods have changed too, since wool is no longer the principal object of the industry. Plump lambs for the city markets are what the farmer aims for now.

The story goes back two hundred years. The earliest settlers, even those who came before the War of the Revolution, and those who followed them up the river valleys to build the towns like Newfane and Weston, brought with them a few sheep as a matter of course. They needed them on the farms they cleared, for both wool and meat. The breeds they were familiar with were the ones their forefathers had raised in England, the rangy, coarse-wool sheep from the Sussex downs. The men did the shearing, the women carded the wool, spun the yarn and dyed it, wove their dark blue and white coverlets in geometric patterns, or made butternut-dyed greenish brown cloth for their menfolk’s shirts. They knitted the rough wool socks from the undyed wool. Undoubtedly the men who fought at Ticonderoga and Bennington wore socks of such home manufacture, all the way from sheep’s back to carefully turned heel. They probably itched the heroes’ feet, but they were long-wearing. They needed to be, for even though the knitting needles clicked in every spare moment of great-grandmother’s time, it still is a long job to make a pair of heavy wool socks.

Commercial sheep raising in Vermont did not really start as a full scale enterprise until after the Napoleonic wars. The Emperor of the French probably did not have it in mind that his conquests would transform life in a little mountain land across the sea, but they did. When he invaded Spain, he seized the big estates of some of the noble hidalgos, estates where fine-wool Merinos had been bred for centuries and where never a one had ever been permitted to leave Spain. In the resulting confusion, some of the best stock was shipped back to France, and elsewhere in Europe. A Yankee named William Jarvis was the American consul in Lisbon in neighboring Portugal. Taking advantage of this wartime dispersion, and having a shrewd eye for good livestock, he picked up some of the finest Merino ewes and rams. When he came home to Boston, with him arrived on shipboard four hundred sheep, some of the Peninsula’s best. Jarvis thereupon looked about him, and bought land in Weathersfield, Vermont, where the Connecticut makes a sharp bend about twenty miles above Bellows Falls. There he lived for forty-eight years, breeding and caring for his sheep. Sheep husbandry encourages the contemplative temperament, or perhaps only those with a contemplative temperament take to it; at any rate those who practice it seem to live long and calmly.

Other Vermonters imported these Spanish Merinos, or bought from the Jarvis stock. The dark, heavily wrinkled, rather small sheep, with fine, oily wool, were tough
animals, able to travel a long way for food and water, and keeping well together in the flock. They suited Vermont conditions then. By 1820 raising them had become the main occupation in the state, and the most profitable. In 1830, the spring clip brought over a million dollars into Vermont, equivalent in buying power to many times that now. People sold their cows. Some sold their farms to prosperous neighbors and moved out west, for it paid the

brought fertility to the meadows, kept the fence rows neat and tidy. Some of the stone walls that one encounters nowadays in deep woods probably go back to those days. Buyers from mills in southern New England came through on horseback at shearing time, eager for the heavy fleeces. Small local mills sprang up where rivers afforded waterpower. All the Northeast, but especially Vermont, was flourishing on the manufacture of wool yarn and

well-to-do to buy up the small places, use the barns for sheep-folds and let the houses tumble into the cellars. This drive to use every bit of available land for sheep pasture was a factor that helped propel New Englanders to settle the West. On every hillside the flocks were grazing, while the owners hunted the bears and wildcats that might endanger them. The sheep cleaned up a lot of rough land.

It was too good to last. The tariff that protected American wool was lowered, as the factories wanted cheaper wool and the growing cities demanded cheaper, less long-wearing clothing. In the early 1840's prices began to drop. Ohio and the other western states, with wider pastures and less costly grain, began to compete. The Erie Canal could carry this western wool to the New York and Massachusetts mills at prices lower than New England was willing to accept. In 1846 the tariff protection was taken off even the highest grades, and Vermont wool production was done for. By 1870 only about half a million sheep were left in the state. The War between the States and the consequent demand for wool for uniforms had given it a brief stimulus, when for a year or two wool sold for a dollar a pound. But by this time Australia's vast flocks on the great dry ranges were increasing fast, and wool from there, from South America, from many places, was selling for lower prices than American growers could meet, even those who were crowding the cattle-men in the foothills of the Rockies.

Vermonters sensibly turned to raising breeding stock, to stressing quality and selling pure-bred rams. After a few years on the western ranges, especially in the Southwest, flocks would begin to deteriorate in the mild winters. Breeders betook themselves to Vermont for grown ewes and rams to maintain their standards, for Merinos from the Green Mountains were still held to be unsurpassed on the continent. In 1863 they took prizes at the Hamburg
A HILLTOP FLOCK OF LONG AGO
Fair in competition with Europe’s best, Addison County stock was famous; rams sometimes brought as much as five thousand dollars. The wool was judged by its “yolk,” the dark greasiness that made it thick and heavy. Indeed it was reported that a few dealers were not above adding a finishing touch to a sheep that was to be sold on the basis of its yolk, by rubbing into the fleece a little harmless mixture of lampblack and linseed oil. This was known as “the Cornwall finish.” The remarks made by the rancher in New Mexico when his expensive purchase showed up streaked and strangely light-colored after the first hard rain storm are not recorded in the histories of the period.

After 1880 the market in the West slowly slackened, as the ranchers shifted to dual purpose animals, returning to the English breeds that make mutton as well as wool, and coarser wool at that, easier to comb than what the Merinos produce. Vermonters made the shift too. They had to. A lot of them simply gave up keeping sheep at all, and turned to dairying. The low prices and the heartbreaking experiences with dogs and bears, discouraged all but the most stubborn. Towns were required by law to pay for damage done by dogs, but often they had not adequate funds, and in any case they paid only the value of a grade animal, not a pure-bred.

The problem is still with us. A flock can be ruined in an hour by a dog which is not even savage, by a mere puppy that wants to play and chases the ewes until they die of exhaustion and heart failure. Vermonters have never adopted the methods of European shepherds, who follow

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**SHEEP POPULATION in Vermont**

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<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*VERMONT Life* 7
their flocks day and night with their trained dogs. Wages are too high in this country for an occupation so time-consuming to attract many. Some Basque shepherds have been imported to the West, but they are apt after a year or two to give up herding for a factory job. Yet Commissioner of Agriculture Towne believes that pasturing a large flock in some of Vermont's well-watered mountain valleys where the hills are growing up to brush, would pay for care by a herdsman and his dog.

In Vermont the practice is usually to keep the flock where it can be brought in close to the barn at night, or to turn cattle in with the sheep, in the fond hope that if they cannot drive off marauders they will make enough commotion to bring the farmer out with his rifle. A shepherd dog is useful for driving the flock, but he cannot be left wholly to his own devices. He must be trained, directed and guided.

The woven wire fence is the modern grower's answer to the dog problem, but it is so expensive that it sets a barrier before the young farmer. Thirty-five per cent of Vermont sheep-raisers have lost animals by dogs and bears in the past ten years, and that does not count a few who have quit entirely after almost total losses. Sheep like to graze early in the morning, rest in the shade during the heat of the day, and go out again late in the afternoon. The ram does not lead the flock. Leading is a female job,
if it is done at all. The grower must suit his hours to the ones the sheep prefer, and if he is to be sure they are safe, he must fence them in during the night, and be up to let them out at dawn.

From 1900 to 1930 Vermont’s sheep population fell from about three hundred thousand to a sixth of that. My own experience with sheep raising came at the beginning of that period, when I was a little girl on my grandfather’s farm in Pittsford. It perhaps illustrates how sheep farming was carried on in those days.

Every spring, early in March, I would acquire a cosset lamb. They call them bummies now, but cosset was the name then. Mine was always christened Bunty, for very obvious reasons. He almost always arrived on a stormy night. My father would come up from the sheep barn, carrying a lantern and a wiggling, unhappy armful that seemed to consist of tangled legs and a smutty nose, with a weak but penetrating voice. I would welcome the object lovingly, carefully arrange a box wherein it might nest down behind the kitchen stove, and find a bottle and rubber nipple for the warm milk I would hastily prepare. I worked hard at my fostermother’s job.

Soon Bunty would be out in the back yard on the new green grass, jumping about stiff-legged and pretending to be terrified of the collie puppies sitting in a yapping row on the barn floor. The moment I opened the kitchen door, Bunty would dash for me, wagging his long tail—for I stoutly resisted having him docked like the others in the

THE CHARLES LERICHE FARM NEAR STOWE

VERMONT Life 9
LEADING SHEEP BREEDS in Vermont

CHEVIOT—Hardy, alert; clear, white face.

COLUMBIA—Large, heavy shearing; white, open face below eyes.

CORRIE DALE—Same as Columbia.

DORSET—Early lambing, excellent mothers & milkers.

HAMPShIRE—Noted for size; fast-growing lambs.

MERINO—Wool animal, meat secondary; strong flocking instinct (valuable in open range). “A” type formerly bred in Vermont with wrinkles, more surface.

ROMNEY—Long fleece; naturally resistant to parasites.

SHROPSHIRE—Dual purpose (wool & meat); has woolled face.

SOUTHDOWN—Ideal meat animal.

SUFFOLK—Large, fast-growing lambs; black face & legs.

flock—and almost knocking me over as he pushed frantically at the bottle I struggled to hold. He grew faster than the lambs in the flock, and he was all too tame. His tiny feet clicked like castanets on the floors as he ran through the house, where he knew quite well he did not belong, and where I had to pursue and capture him. By July my mother would be complaining about “that dratted lamb,” about its tripping her up if she stepped outdoors, and its dodging into the kitchen at every opportunity.

So one day Bunty would not be there any more. I would know he had gone with the flock, but if I looked for him in the pasture I could not find him. His tail was short like the others’, and while I thought the biggest one was my Bunty, I could not be sure. He paid me no mind.

In the fall my father would hand me two or three dollars, to put in my Christmas bank, saying with some embarrassment (I almost wrote sheepishly) that this was my “lamb money.” I’m not sure now that I fully comprehended that this meant that Bunty, whom I had loved and cherished, was now a roast on somebody’s table. If I did, apparently
it did not grieve me unduly. Next spring there would be another Bunty.

But soon there were no more. Though my grandfather and his father before him had prospered from their flocks of sheep, now the wool piled up unsold in the cedar-lined storeroom off the woodshed. So my father sold the flock. No more could we children watch the shearing, helping drive the protesting flock across the fields to the West Brook, where a dam of rocks and earth made a pool for washing the mournful beasts. Each ewe when dry would be flung on a low platform and snipped bare by the rapid shears. Nothing ever looks so naked, so awkward and ungainly and ashamed of itself as a newly shorn sheep. Shearers in those days travelled from farm to farm, staying a day or two in each place, earning good pay with board and lodging thrown in. Their arrival was part of the farm routine. The Holstein cows my father bought never took the place of the sheep in my affections. Nor did they make any use of the dry rocky pasture which to this day, after half a century, is still known as "the sheep pasture." It was not good enough for cows, so it was left to the raspberry bushes and the sumach. The shed that served for summer shelter at noon and night rotted and fell in long ago, but the slate-roofed barn still stands, used only for storing hay.

My childhood experience, though of course I did not know it, was part of the history of agriculture in the state. Some farmers, more persistent than my father, did keep their sheep, mostly Southdowns and Shropshires, as ours were. A few even stuck by the Dorsets, whose ewes as well as rams have horns. One of the men who could not bear to quit was Orson Clement of Corinth. His story is a true legend of Yankee Land. Orson inherited a fine flock from his father, who told him to hang onto them. "Some day wool'll be a dollar a pound again." But in 1900 nobody was going to pay Orson half that price for wool, good though it might be. So he kept it. He piled it in the barns and cellars and attics of his farm, he built storerooms, he cut hemlock branches to spread between the layers of fleeces, and after a while he just crammed
it wherever it would go. It overflowed into the haymows, the moths flourished in it, the later clips were full of burrs and dried leaves. But every spring Orson sheared his sheep and stuffed the new clip in with the old. And every year Orson grew more miserly, refusing to pay his taxes until the sheriff threatened him with jail, buying less and less food for himself and the old housekeeper who stuck by him. Psychologists say the miser is a man who is afraid, who cannot deal with life and compete with other men, and so clings to his money as to a crutch. Orson clung to his wool, believing desperately that some day the world must come to him and pay his price. He lacked the contemplative disposition of the true sheep farmer.

In 1917, sure enough, the world did want wool. The Federal Government wanted it for uniforms. Sheep, the most peaceful of animals, are most valuable in wartime. So the Government, a Democratic Government too, sent wagons and took Orson’s wool which he would not sell, while he raged and cursed helplessly. He was paid some $30,000 for it, which his neighbors thought was a fair price. Orson did not agree. He felt sadly abused, and he lived only five years longer. He left all he owned to Dartmouth College, which makes good use of the bequest for botanical research. Orson’s housekeeper died only a few weeks after him, and only then did his executors find that he had successfully hidden several hundred pounds of his best wool, behind a false partition. Thus he had his final small victory.

World War II brought no such boom in wool as previous conflicts did, for synthetics have cut into the market more each year, and Australia’s flocks have grown. Vermont in any case had little to sell. Though prices rose somewhat, the effect in the state was slight. For now that sheep raising is again rousing interest in Vermont, its basis is very different from what it was in the old days.

Small flocks are the usual practice, as sidelines in connection with orcharding or dairy farming or some other professional work. The hard work in raising sheep comes at lambing time, before the rush of other jobs in the spring, so that it fits well into most farm calendars. The average farm flock has about thirty ewes and a ram, seldom purebred, in spite of the arguments of the farm agent for buying a purebred ram to grade up the flock. If the wool clip pays for the feed the sheep eats, the farmer can depend on making a profit from the meat. So he wants lambs that will grow fast, on home-grown fodder as much as possible, and will make chunky carcasses. The purpose of raising sheep has changed, and therefore so have the breeds and the methods. Wool has become a side issue.

About four hundred and seventy-five Vermont farmers now raise sheep. Nearly a hundred of them have recently joined together to form the Vermont Sheep Breeders’ Association, of which George Fearing of Stowe is president. They want to improve their stock, but most of all they hope by uniting to gain better market facilities. More than half the wool in the state is sold to buyers who come through the countryside at shearing time, and who naturally drive as good a bargain as they can for the mills that employ them. A wool pool, organized for the Boston market, includes about a fifth of the growers, and a smaller one operates in the New York market. The farmer gets a fair deal through them; he can either take cash for his fleeces or he can have them made up into blankets for his own use or for sale. The lanolin which is so widely advertised as a component of soaps and cosmetics is a by-product of the wool in the mill. A few of the big growers sell direct to the mills, if they have a large enough clip of good quality so that they can ask for an appraisal and bargain over the price. For the small man the pool is the best marketing device. Since the 1938 Congress continued
the Wool Act, which gives a small subsidy for wool-growing and also offers some aid in developing new markets, it seems likely that the industry will be stable for some years to come.

As for the lambs, about sixty per cent are sold alive, usually near home. A few farmers do their own slaughtering, doing well out of the sale of dressed lambs to local markets. Vermont had twenty-four slaughter-houses in 1956, three of them under federal inspection. Most of the others are small, often merely the facilities of local butchers who provide for their own customers. The new Association wants to organize a system of shipping by truck to city slaughter-houses, pooling the shipments from several farms to get better grading and prices. Under present methods, prices vary greatly. During the last election campaign, and among sheep farmers, there has been much discussion of a state-financed slaughter-house, which would of course come under the Humane Slaughter bill passed by Congress. More will probably be heard of this, if the flocks continue to increase and more truck-loads have to be shipped to Boston.

The marketing of the old ewes, who are no longer profitable after they reach the age of seven or eight, is a problem not yet solved. Americans have never learned to like mutton, as the British do, though it is good and wholesome meat. It brings only a few cents a pound on the hoof; the market for it is almost wholly in the foreign sections of the big cities. Anybody who invents a way to cook a leg of mutton so it won’t taste “strong,” deserves a gold medal from the Sheep Breeders’ Association. Perhaps each sheep farmer should also cultivate a herb garden, with thyme, fennel, dill and marjoram, which doused in red wine make a savory stew of mutton.

The demand for quick returns from lambs accounts for the popularity of the Hampshires, the breed most com-

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What to Look For in

SELECTING FOUNDATION EWES

Look at the mouth first. A ewe’s productive life is 5 to 7 years. Age can be told accurately by the teeth for the first 4 years. After 7 or 8 years, teeth loosen or are missing. Examine udders, which are easily damaged. Look for general health, good color of eye membranes and skin (indicates freedom from parasites). Conformation: look for good size for the breed, though best lamb-producing ewes thus may be thin. Check records of sheep for lambing, weaning weights of lambs, and fleece weights.
mon in Vermont nowadays. They are medium wool sheep from the downs of southern England; their wool is not heavy or of high quality, but they lamb early and the lambs grow fast. Next to them in numbers come the Shropshires, chunky beasts on short legs, with heavy wool of high quality and fairly early maturing lambs. They often produce twins, which pleases the farmer. Southdowns too are blocky, closely knit animals, lively and well adapted to hilly land. Suffolks come third in popularity in Vermont. They are harder than the Shropshires, and will do well on rough mountain pasture, but they are likely to be wild and hard to handle. Still, they are more amenable than the Cheviots; these came, not from the rolling uplands of southern England, but from the rocky hills of the Scottish border country. At first thought, they would seem to be ideally suited to Vermont back farms. They will dig through snow to find feed in winter, they need a minimum of shelter, and they take care of themselves in emergencies. If a Cheviot lamb falls into a brook he will jump out, where the more placid Shropshire will flounder weakly and drown. But they have the defects that go with their original environment—they are wild things, liking to wander far, unwilling to stay with the flock, hard to catch and to drive. The life that suits them does not tend to make fat spring lamb, and their wool is rather light in weight, though of good quality. Some farmers with high, rocky pastures swear by their Cheviots, but those with good lowland meadows prefer the tamer breeds.

Merinos are seldom seen in Vermont nowadays, for they produce skinny little lambs, and though their wool is fine, the fibers are shorter than the mills usually like. Only a few are left of this breed which was once the pride of Vermont. Half a dozen other kinds of sheep are cherished by individual owners in Vermont. Indeed the best kind for a man to keep is the kind he likes the best. The Dorothy Persons flock of Romneys, on a big farm in the hills above Brattleboro, are large, handsome sheep that came originally from Romney Marsh in Kent. Specimens have been sent to the Kingdom of Nepal, in the Himalayas, as part of governmental goodwill gifts. At another place near Brattleboro, Dr. Smile, retired from Cornell’s Health Department, is trying for a result suited to Vermont’s needs by crossing Romneys with Suffolks.

The most extensive and scientifically conducted experiment in breeding a sheep especially for Vermont conditions and requirements has been going on since 1944 at the 900-acre Morgan Horse Farm near Middlebury. The spot is perfect for any livestock, including people, since it lies in the rich meadows of the Otter Creek Valley with a view of the Green Mountains. The Vermont Experiment Station’s Animal Husbandry Section works with the co-operation of the Federal Bureau of Animal Industry, in the effort to develop a breed of sheep that will give

### WHY RAISE SHEEP?

Sheep raising in Vermont today is a wholly supplementary enterprise, but it may be a very profitable one. Successful Green Pasture efforts on many farms have produced more roughage than can be eaten by the dairy herd which can be housed. That’s where a flock of sheep, which can use a high proportion of roughage in their diet, may be considered. The part-time farmer, the orchardist and the poultry man, also, often can fit sheep into his farm picture.

A supplementary sheep flock can be added as a low-labor, low-cost operation. The labor in sheep comes mainly at lambing and shearing times. The low cost lies in the housing, which need only be a three-sided open shed, and the fact that sheep and lambs spend about six months of the year grazing on pasture alone.

The lambs can be finished for market on good pasture alone.

The average Vermont flock today consists of a ram and thirty ewes, which are bred in the Fall and produce their lambs ideally in late February to April. Usually the sheep are sheared a few weeks before lambing (if properly housed the cold doesn’t bother them). The wool (often cut by custom shearers) comes to 5 to 15 pounds per sheep, and probably will average around 55 cents per pound. In Vermont the main emphasis is on sheep for meat, but the wool provides a nice supplement.

Good feed and flock management produce a high proportion of twin lambs, which are money-makers. The youngsters, with their mothers, are given some grain until the pastures open up in May. Some have been sold earlier, the January lambs for Easter. The others usually go to market, now weighing perhaps 80 pounds, in July. The best lambs are kept to build up the flock, to replace the older ewes which are culled out in the Fall. These lambs which are kept are usually wintered over and are not bred until the following Fall.

The main problems in raising sheep are these: initial fencing costs (woven wire fences are needed at the perimeters); losses to dogs and bears (towns reimburse, but may not always pay full values—but such losses average less than 1%); weather (new lambs are delicate, must nurse within a half-hour of birth, must stay dry); care (is largely during lambing and shearing period, but flock should be looked over every day for evidence of parasites and other troubles).
THE NEW VERMONT SHEEP

A new breed of sheep, particularly adapted to modern Vermont needs, is being developed by the University of Vermont Agricultural College, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. It is expected the selective breeding will be completed in another six or eight years, but already a fine stock has been developed and surplus lambs are being sold from it for continuing experimentation. The characteristics of this new sheep are: rapid fattening of market lambs entirely on pasture and their dam's milk; an average wool clip of superior quality and quantity. Shown below are Columbia-Southdown yearling ewes typical of the new strain being developed. Donald J. Balch, at the right, is supervisor of this experimental project. It is being carried on at Burlington and the former U. S. Morgan Horse Farm in Weybridge.

early lambs on good pasture alone, without the use of much imported grain. As if that were not enough to ask of Providence, they also want a heavy fleece of good grade. They started out with eighty Southdale ewes, and brought in some fine Columbia rams from Idaho. The descendants are carefully selected and bred within the flock, to fix a strain to breed true in the desired characters. Every lamb is tagged, its weight recorded at various stages, and the weight and quality of its wool are watched. Different kinds of hay are tried out, and a flock of pure-bred Columbias is kept for comparison. No one is yet sure that a new breed will emerge, but the type that begins to appear looks promising.

New techniques in medical care would astonish the 1840 sheep farmer. The anti-biotics and sulfas and the rest make a great difference. A chemical with the fearsome name of Phenothiazone is fed along with salt in the pasture and dumped down the sheep's throat four times a year to ward off and discourage the round worms and other horrid creatures that attach themselves to the animal's insides. DDT and other dips for lice and ticks, copper sulfate for foot-rot, penicillin for other infections, extra vitamins in the feed, are all at the breeder's command. While it is true that sheep will clean up a pasture, since even poison ivy retreats before them, they won't get fat on that kind of eating. The usual custom is for the farmer to turn his flock into the high pastures when the grass is green in spring, then bring them down to the meadows after one crop of hay has been taken off. Vermont soil is not deficient in minerals; it builds good bones. But mere grass hay will not keep the ewes in shape to produce strong lambs in spring; an alfalfa mixture is better. Many
farmers use corn silage, and some like grass silage. Dwight Miller of Dummerston, who combines sheep raising with orcharding, feeds the pomace from cider to his flock for most of the year. They thrive on it.

The rocky and mountainous parts of Vermont are not, as one might expect, the ones where the reviving sheep industry is most flourishing. More promising are the counties with good valley land, near hilly but not mountain pasture. Windham around Brattleboro, Addison along Lake Champlain, Orange over toward the Connecticut, and Rutland Counties are the localities where most sheep are kept. The northern counties have good land, but the lambs come late there. A lamb born after April 1st will not bring a high price in the market next winter.

A flock of sheep on a green hillside is a decorative addition to the Vermont landscape. The check from a truck load of lambs is an even more decorative addition to the farmer’s pocketbook. As the western lands are being enclosed, as fewer of the great flocks climb the Rocky Mountain passes, New England and particularly Vermont have a new chance to capitalize on nearness to markets and variety of pasture and meadow land. END
One-man Utility

Archie Baker's Water Mill

FIFTY-THREE years ago when Archie Baker of Sherburne Center found himself suddenly out of work, he decided to go into business for himself, to be sure of a job and not have to depend upon an employer for his security.

On his property there is a fall of water known locally as Baker's Falls, but on his deed called Thundering Falls. They can be seen from the road, but to reach the dam one must make a half-mile detour over the Wheeler Road. The brook flows from Pico Pond, through Hewitt Meadows, below Gifford Woods State Park. Why not harness the power pouring 140 feet down over the rocks?

So, at the top of the falls Archie Baker built a dam, 60 feet long, 3 feet deep, and with a 40-foot spillway. This was the second time Thundering Brook had been harnessed and the power used for commercial purposes. In
The early days of Sherburne saw a dam near the present site furnished water power for a grist mill. There still remain traces of that old dam. From his dam Baker has run a 500-foot penstock down to the mill. A wooden, box-shaped covering filled with straw keeps the pipe from freezing during the coldest winters.

Instead of a water wheel a water turbine is used to run the mill machinery and to furnish electricity.

The nine-inch penstock as it arrives at the mill is reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches to furnish power for the machinery. Another one-inch stream furnishes power to generate electricity for his house lights and appliances.

The mill machinery is mostly hand-made or reconditioned; all is belt-driven. Baker keeps an engine lathe, also, to machine new parts when needed.

A carpenter and millwright by trade, Archie Baker naturally went into the wood-working business. He had made chair dowels for a Rutland firm, and this gave him the idea of making stakes to support flowers.

The beech and ash logs are sawed first into boards, then are ripsawed into strips. Another machine rounds them, and then they are pointed. Next the stakes are painted, with Baker’s ingenious method. They are dipped in a trough filled with green paint. In a bunch they are taken out and set on wire trays to dry, the surplus paint dripping back into the trough for another time. Baker ties the finished stakes in bundles of 100 to 500, sells them mostly by mail all over the country, in the main to florists and variety stores.

Thundering Falls runs the mill winter and summer, but Baker does most of his work in the winter, still finds time to be a good neighbor, serve as a town Lister and for a time as a Selectman, even in the legislature for two sessions. He does some sugaring in the Spring, and being one who employs the laws of nature, runs pipe lines from tree to tree direct to his sugar house.
Built on the site of the first Court House this, the most imposing of the town's residences, was raised in 1823 by General Lyman Mower.

WOODSTOCK'S HOUSES: A GRACIOUS HERITAGE

DAPHNE P. GRATIOT

WHERE the valley of the Ottaquechee widens out and the rushing Kedron Brook flows in from the south a vigorous and enterprising breed of men built, in a little over sixty years, the town of Woodstock. In the year 1768 what is now the Green was a jungle of spruce and alder, the foot of Elm Street was a swamp, and the better part of the valley was a tangle of forest so thick that at noon the sunlight rarely touched the ground. Yet by 1828 there was a town which the casual visitor of today would have little difficulty in recognizing as Woodstock. For the lovely houses which line both sides of Elm Street, surround the Green and can be seen on the streets leading into town, were nearly all built before 1830. And, despite their stately and imposing appearance, they were not built by men of great wealth.

The wealth accumulated in Woodstock was never very large but money was worth more then and to build was not expensive. Lumber was cheap and available, a lovely rose brick could be made near at hand from the abundant clay banks, labor was reasonable and construction was not complicated by the need for electricians and plumbers as well as carpenters. As money was made in the town it was generally invested in land and buildings. The town was growing and to the residents of Woodstock their town was the best available security for their future well-being. In point of time Woodstock was born late upon the New England scene, yet in sixty years it built itself up to where it appeared almost as well established as many communities in southern New England. The town, its buildings and real estate, represented the only easily available investment outlet for those who were making money in the town and at that time the future for Woodstock was bright: increasing numbers of farmers and merchants were arriving every year, the land was incredibly fertile and crops were produced that southern New England had not harvested for a generation or more.

The houses which were to make Woodstock the beautiful village it is today began to be built when the town was
Henry B. Dana, a merchant, built this lovely brick Greek Revival on Elm Street for the Misses Aylwin in 1829. He built the one beyond, as well as two other houses on the street. The slim columns are solid trunks of white pine drawn over the snow from Canada.

College still new, and yet no longer a frontier; it was well-to-do, and yet no great fortunes had been made. And so were built these attractive houses, each man designing his own, either for his own use or as an investment.

The town could boast only one architect, Nathaniel Smith, who had studied in Windsor under Asher Benjamin, the author of The Country Builder's Assistant, one of the most widely-used builder's handbooks of the day. There are three buildings still in existence which can be traced to Nathaniel Smith, The Dana House, the Charles Marsh house (now part of the Billings mansion), and The Congregational Church, but only one of them has remained unchanged on the outside. This is the Dana house on Elm Street, which until 1943, when it was bought by the Woodstock Historical Society, had been lived in by successive generations of the Dana family since it was built in 1807. The most ambitious of Nathaniel Smith's buildings, The Congregational Church, was, unfortunately, completely remodeled at a later date and the lovely simple lines of the original meetinghouse were erased by the addition of columns and porticoes. It is patently obvious, however, from the early pictures of this church that Nathaniel Smith was using Asher Benjamin's Country Builder's Assistant as his guide, for the drawing in Benjamin's book of a meetinghouse is identical in almost every respect to the original church building.

While Nathaniel Smith was at times commissioned as an architect in the modern sense, he was primarily in trade as a carpenter and the majority of houses were built by each man in his own fashion, either with his own hands or with the help of a carpenter. The builder's handbooks available gave proportions for doors, windows, columns and other architectural features but the builder's own sense of line and beauty was the underlying guide to what was built.

Perhaps today's visitor finds it hard to understand, as he looks at these large gracious houses, how those men dared undertake such ambitious construction, for it is more than any man would attempt today. But it is most important to remember that these first settlers were not all unlettered tillers of the soil. A large number of them were, for that day, well-educated and widely-read men. But above and beyond all else they were imaginative, undaunted but practical visionaries who were prepared to meet the challenge of a frontier with an expenditure of time, effort and money to create a town.

The building of Woodstock was not a hit or miss affair but an intelligent effort to build a pleasing sort of place to live. The prosperity of the town would eventually depend on the number and quality of settlers it attracted and it was in the interest of those first men of the town to waste no time in making Woodstock appear to new settlers as a good place to stop and put down roots.

They knew that before fine houses could be built town organization was of primary importance and just five years after the first settlers entered the valley a Town Meeting...
This gracious house with its four-sided roof was built by Job Lyman, a lawyer and banker, in 1809. The hand carving represents the beautiful workmanship of early Woodstock craftsmen.

John Carlton, famous for his decorated saddlery, started the house below in 1801. Benjamin Swan traded another house for it in 1825; his descendants still occupy it.
was held in the house of Joab Hoisington, innkeeper, to elect town officials. At that time there were about twenty-five “heads of families” living in the township, but Hoisington’s house of logs was the only one situated in what is today the village of Woodstock. His farm embraced the land on the south side of the Ottauquechee River where the village is now located, and his cabin was at the eastern end of the present day Green.

Once the town was organized it began to grow very fast. From the first each man had tilled the soil to support his family and while the town continued to attract for the most part men who settled on the land, it also started to need those who could provide services and goods previously done without or devised by each man as best he could. Saddlers and harness makers, blacksmiths and millers began to arrive and, most important, storekeepers who would trade manufactured goods from Boston and other cities for agricultural products such as potash, hides, tallow, and linseed oil.

On the flat land around Joab Hoisington’s cabin the village started to grow. Here the roads to Hartland, Pomfret, Bridgewater and South Woodstock crossed, here also a saw and grist mill had been built and the men of the township would meet in the course of their business with the mills. Ten families were living in the village in 1786 when Woodstock was made the Shire town of

The soft rose brick of the house below is the most beautiful in town. Erected by Judge David Pierce in 1821, it was bought in 1836 by future governor Julius Converse.
The house above, with one of the few Palladian windows in town, was built by Tille Parker, an innkeeper, in 1807 to accommodate the legislature meeting here that year.

The Hon. Jacob Collamer bought this house, below left, in 1836, three years after it was built by John Dunbar. Joel Eaton's, below right, was built in 1831.
Windsor County, and it was directed by the Legislature that the courts meet there as soon as the town had built a suitable court house.

This first Court House burned in 1791 and was replaced by a larger and more substantial building. The year 1793, when the new Court House was built, was to see a tremendous increase in building in the town. The Court House itself was, for that day, an awe-inspiring structure. It boasted not only a belfry but a bell, the first in the state and probably the first ever hung in a court house. This year saw the first store established on the Green: Abraham Hedge advertised that he would sell drugs in exchange for “potash, beef cattle, good saddle horses or even money”.

Two inns were built in this year of 1793, one on the site of the present day Woodstock Inn and another on the site of the Vermont National and Savings Bank. The lovely corner house, which was to become the White Cupboard Inn in 1925, was started in 1794 and completed four years later as a residence for the Hutchinson family.

By 1800 the town was supporting many non-farming families. There were school teachers, lawyers and merchants as well as artisans and workers who made items which could be sold in Boston, Hartford and other southern New England cities. Money began to come into the town through the sale of a few products of specialized manufacture like carding machinery, pottery, hay rakes and musical instruments. And the Woodstock courts were a major factor in the growth and prosperity of the town. The courts drew to Woodstock many fine lawyers and were to enjoy, by the middle of the nineteenth century the reputation of having the strongest bar in the State.

A frontier always brings forth the boldest, most enterprising and vigorous of men, and Woodstock attracted, for many years, a large share of these individuals from all walks of life. Moreover these men brought with them the seeds of a gracious and well-developed culture which is clearly reflected in the town they made and the houses they built. More than one house in Woodstock bears a striking similarity to one or more houses in an older settlement in Connecticut or eastern Massachusetts. Each man, as he built, was almost certain to recall a house remembered for beauty or design in his former home town, and incorporate some part in his own construction.

As a result there is a variety and individuality about these houses which is refreshing to the passer-by and, though solidly built, a delicacy which springs from the mellow brick and hand-worked wood of which they are fashioned. The elms and maples which line the streets of Woodstock throw longer and thicker shadows across their doorways, but the generations which have passed since these houses were built have erased none of the character invested in them by their builders.

END
The Year's at the Spring...

If Robert Browning had ever experienced a New England Spring, especially Vermont's, no doubt he would have written of it in more active terms. The Vermont Spring does not burst, but perennially exciting are the changes between the deep snow and the bloom of lilacs. Here, as in Browning's England, it is a season of awakening life and beauty.
Bluets in Spring Pasture, by Stephen Warner
Montpelier, by Geoffrey Orton

Waterbury Center, by Geoffrey Orton
Morning Mist, by Frederick Krug
Island Pond,
by Jack Breed

Newell Green
In my youthful recollection the thirtieth of May was always Decoration Day. I do not recall it being spoken of as Memorial Day until some years later. Perhaps the former designation was natural because the chief thing I remember is the preparation for decorating the graves of soldiers. Undoubtedly if our family had been more actively connected with all of these preparations—my father and my mother—it would have been different. Or had I been told more about the young member of our family who had died of disease in the Civil War. My father's oldest brother had lied about his age to enlist, and that with the tragic and fruitless search for his body by my grandfather, must have been kept from my knowledge for they form no part of my early remembrances. Somehow I feel I was over-protected from the knowledge of tragedy connected with war.

Yet, oddly enough, I seem to have been burdened with a feeling of frustration over my position among the other boys who were my friends, when Decoration Day came around. I am certain my parents never suspected that I suffered because my father could not belong to the Grand Army of the Republic and wear a hat with a braided cord and tassels, and a certain bronze button in his buttonhole. In short he had little part compared to the fathers of my pals and I felt left out too. Worst of all I could never wear the special insignia and hat of the Sons of Veterans.

I had suffered the ignominy for several years before I came to realize that if Uncle Cyrus was too young to be legally eligible at the time of the Civil War, his younger brothers were, of course, even more so. By then it was too late to help my frame of mind.

I was personally a part of a civil war over Decoration Day, however, which might be called a battle of the flowers. And that sticks out in my memory accentuating the Decoration Day idea. The wife of one of the more vocal of the local veterans had been designated by the Women's Relief Corps to receive flowers a day or so before Decoration Day. At her house the Corps members would meet to make bouquets and wreaths. (Parenthetically, the fact that my mother could not be a member of the W.R.C. was another cause for my feeling of being left out.)

On our street lived a Mrs. Stevenson whose house was surrounded by flowers. The flowers were undoubtedly watered by her tears, for they flowered freely as she recited poetry which recalled her husband-hero who had never returned from the war. (Later in life I learned that he had informed friends, on the eve of his departure, that he never would. Nothing more was heard of his fate.) After a time Mrs. Stevenson acquired a hard-working, rather meek, new husband. He often assisted at memorializing his predecessor.

Then Mrs. Stevenson announced that she, having been for some reason kept out of the Women’s Relief Corps, was the proper one to receive flowers destined for use on Decoration Day. I might naturally have followed the official appointee, but my parents felt it was best to divide my offerings. I did this, as some of my pals also did, with little reluctance having learned of Mrs. Stevenson's generosity with her full cookie jar. I do recall one or two fist fights over the whole thing.

Mrs. Stevenson also bound my pal, Clark Simonds, to her side when, due to my possession of a “solder suit” a cousin had outgrown, and Clark’s acquisition of a soldierly bit of millinery, Mrs. Stevenson posted us on either side of a framed set of Ground Rules at the cemetery entrance. There we stood and met the incoming parade, band and all, pointing to the guide for proper cemetery conduct.

To go back to the flower gathering before the day of Decoration: We were let out of school for some hours to gather the wanted flowers. I recall with great joy those moments of unexpected freedom. Of course some years offered a greater variety of flowers than others. One flower I especially recall. Columbine was apt to be out and, somehow, we children always called those blossoms “honeysuckles.” I liked to listen to a girl who lisped, tell Mrs. Stevenson that here were “thum honeythuckles”. Her name was Esther.

I’d like to digress a moment to show that today's
children seem to have more understanding of Decoration Day than I ever did. At least one of my grandsons, when he was nine, visited the burying ground of my family and was told the story of his several-times-great Uncle Cyrus. The next year he could not come up from his home in Massachusetts and when his brother and sisters with their parents went somewhere somewhere in the afternoon of the thirtieth, Philip elected to stay home. He had been strangely thoughtful much of the day and had spoken of being in Manchester the previous year. His mother later in the afternoon returned. As she drew near their home she saw Philip doing something on the lawn. There was a rectangular strip where a flower bed had been cut out in the lawn. Now it looked like a grave. Then she discovered it was meant to look so. At one end there was a white marker made of a board, and back of it a flag. Flowers were placed at the foot. She read the crude printing on the board: “Cyrus Hard. Died in the Civil War. 1863.” Philip had been too young to see his own uncle, who had been for five years in the Second World War, in uniform. Certainly he never heard a word of it ever from him. However, something had made the day seem more than Decoration Day to Philip. Perhaps for his generation it is truly Memorial Day.

I remember seeing some of the old soldiers gathering on the Court House steps. Now and then one would be so changed in appearance I’d hardly know him. He’d have on his blue suit with brass buttons, or at least the coat and his G.A.R. hat. He’d be all shaved and his hair cut and brushed. On that day he seemed younger. He was smoking a cigar instead of the old clay I was used to. Why! he’d been spading our garden only yesterday, a bent old man. I was proud when he beckoned for me to stop and show him my new bike—the first boy’s bicycle in town, and it took most of the village to teach me to ride. I recall a flag tied to the handle bars. I hope it was because I felt too showy-off on my bicycle that I walked with the others to the cemetery that first bicycle year.

The drum corps was lined up in the street and the veterans were falling into line. Some of them limped and one or two had empty sleeves. How I wished I could hear how it happened. The ones who seemed hale and hearty were the ones most willing to talk about battles. There was one man who had been in the—was it Calvary or Cavalry?—and fought right next to some famous general in a big battle. In school the teacher asked one of the older classes, who had led some charge and one of the boys had waved his hand. “Elmer Hadman” he’d said. When the teacher had corrected him the boy had told her she was wrong. Mr. Hadman had told him all about it himself.

They started: the Womens Relief Corps, the Sons of Veterans, and the Auxiliary. Then the carriage with Dr. Miller who was too crippled to walk, and two other carriages, then the children with flags—all led by the drum corps. At the cemetery there were some pieces read out of black books, and a rather long prayer. It seemed long because I knew that after it would come the firing of the salute. It was then that suddenly I had a vague, momentary idea of war. From off on the hill someone played “taps” on a cornet. All at once there was a lump in my throat. I had to rub my eyes against my sleeve because, as usual, I had no handkerchief. (“Why, Mother? I haven’t got a cold.”)

Not being a Son of a Veteran I missed the dinner served by the ladies and again I felt left out. Also I missed the afternoon exercises in Music Hall. I do recall seeing the speaker of the afternoon walking up the street just before, and I really wanted to hear him. But, somehow, Mother, after she went to the cemetery in the morning, never liked to go to anything that was part of the regular celebration. My father, of course, was in his drug store.

The reason I wanted to go this time was because the speaker was a native son. He was a well known member of the police force of the city of Boston. Imposing he was, in full evening dress clothes with a high hat set at a jaunty angle, and carrying a gold-headed cane. He was already wiping his brow as, accompanied by proud members of his family, he strode through the mid-afternoon heat toward the waiting crowd in the Music Hall. I could just see that heroically built guardian of the law capturing robbers and bashing in the heads of would-be murderers, protecting the lives and property of citizens of Boston.

Skipping several years, there stands out the day when with my Mother I went very early in the morning to the cemetery. She always wanted to be there before others were about. For her it was always a day apart. Since she was English born, and left there in early childhood, I never knew the reason for her deep feeling for the day. This morning the sun was just clearing the mist from the mountains. We went together and placed flowers on the family graves, and on those of one or two others who had no families to remember them.

Away off a white throat sang its five-note song. I looked around, at the rows of stones that offered memories of the citizens of that peaceful dwelling place. It was Memorial Day.

VERMONT Life 33
Vermont Life presents again with pleasure some of the fine photography entered in the Manchester Exhibition last summer. Shown on page 30, also, is Frederick Krug's Medal Award, "Morning Mist." Other awards, not shown, went to Louis F. Hechenberger of Manchester, Phyllis Putnam of Springfield. Honorable mentions in color went to G. B. Biggs of So. Pomfret, Mrs. Clarence Haskins of Montpelier, Adrian Leiby of Dorset and F. B. Shaw of New York. Black & white honors also went to Lawrence Eberhard of West Caldwell, N. J. and Robert Hagerman of Stowe. The Southern Vermont Art Center show this year will be held August 1 through 9.

Left, Medal Award "Maples & Fence" by Adrian Leiby of Dorset. Below, Medal Award "Vermont Landscape" by Henry D. Foss of Woodstock.
Ben Whitcomb was worth 1000 crowns dead or 2000 crowns alive . . . and that was a lot of money in the days of the American Revolution

The Dreaded Scout

By ROBERT E. PIKE

The Circular issued in 1776 which offered the reward described the man as “a thin, wide-shouldered fellow, red-headed, ruddy-faced, skin rough as though pitted with smallpox . . . Withal he is a most hard and cunning fellow.” Benjamin Whitcomb was worth “1,000 crowns dead or 2,000 alive”—the greatest sum of blood money offered on either side during the entire war, and spurred the English and Canadians to extraordinary efforts to win it. He was worth this sum to the British because he had single-handedly bagged one of their generals.

Though there are no portraits of Whitcomb, we can get a pretty good picture of him from contemporaries and other sources. Judge Morris of Lancaster, New Hampshire, his great-grandson, says he was a man of average height, muscular, with very broad shoulders, light complexion, kindly countenance, and, in his old age, inclined to corpulence.

Col. Frye Bayley, the indefatigable diarist of the period, who knew Whitcomb well, describes him as “…a presumptuous fellow entirely devoid of fear, of more than common strength, equal to an Indian for enduring hardship or privation: drank to excess even when in the greatest peril. . . .”

The third of sixteen children, Ben Whitcomb was born on July 2, 1737, in Leominster, Massachusetts, where his father was a deacon and a first selectman. He grew to young manhood learning and loving the ways of the woods. In early pre-Revolutionary days he lived in both Westmoreland, New Hampshire and Maidstone, Vermont and was, indeed, appointed a Justice of the Peace for what was then called Gloucester County, a responsible position, which tends to prove that he was, at that time, a pre-Vermont citizen, though we surmise he laid down the law to more bears than he did to fellow humans. On December 14, 1769, he married Lydia Howe of Westmoreland.

That he had fallen in love with woods life and that he was “entirely devoid of fear” may be deduced from the fact that when the French and Indian war was over, he struck out alone to hunt, trap and explore in a wild part of the world that was then unknown, namely Guildhall and Maidstone, Vermont. Even today, 200 years later, it is a part of Vermont where a man can most easily get lost and not come out alive.

Whitcomb’s military career began at the age of 18 when he joined Captain Samuel Hunt’s Massachusetts company on August 15, 1755, and took part in the memorable Battle of Lake George on September 8. He saw more military service in 1757, 1759 and 1760, serving under General Amherst until the reduction of Canada, rising to the rank of Sergeant. In 1761, he became one of the charter proprietors of Cavendish, Vermont.

Col. Matthew Ogden, writing to Aaron Burr, thought it proper to relate a daring exploit of Whitcomb’s, speaking of him as if he were a man whose reputation was known to Burr, and noted that the exploit “was brave, and a peculiar kind of bravery that I believe Whitcomb alone is possessed of.”

That he was resourceful and diplomatic when the occasion called for it, is illustrated upon the occasion of his being captured by Indians and carried to Canada, earlier in his career. He subsequently escaped, but during his captivity he was not badly treated and often competed with the red men in feats of strength and skill. But he was always careful, he relates, to let them win because “it made them feel better.”

“If the Tories in Tryon County don’t behave themselves,” General Horatio Gates once wrote to New York’s Governor Clinton, “I shall send Whitcomb and a hundred men to whip them into obedience.” General Gates thought highly of his red-headed
henchman, referred to him as “the dreaded scout” and was wont to sign himself in official correspondence with Whitcomb, as “your affectionate Horatio Gates,” promoted him rapidly from Lieutenant to Captain and finally to Major. Benedict Arnold, a capable judge of men if not of causes, frequently and publicly praised him in high terms.

Legends have a way of building up around a man like this. One of the most persistent and colorful ones concerns Whitcomb and the Indian, Metallak. Once, so the story goes, while out on some solitary expedition Whitcomb came upon an erratic trail in the snow made by a man with one broken snowshoe. Whitcomb followed the trail and overtook its maker standing stiffly between the little spruces through which he had been unable to force his way. He was a Coo-ash-aoke Indian from the Canadian village of St. Francis, and his name was Metallak.

He had broken the lock of his gun and was so far gone from starvation and exposure that he would have died there but for Whitcomb. The scout heaved him across his shoulders and headed for his snow-covered wigwam. There he wrapped him in furs, fed him moose marrowbone soup and cared for his frostbites. The red man stayed with him for three weeks, and departed fully restored to health.

Fifteen years later, with a price on his head, Whitcomb was captured by a band of Indians whose leader was the same Metallak. The Indian gave no indication of recognizing him and he was forthwith dragged off toward Canada. Up the Connecticut his red captors sped him, then across the ancient portages to Island Pond and so down the Clyde River to Lake Memphremagog. All this time Metallak spoke not a word to him, but one night, about two in the morning, he cut the bonds which bound his prisoner and set Ben Whitcomb free, thus, in the classical tradition, discharging his debt to the man who had saved his life.

Being a first-class woodsman, hard to scare, and liking, above all things, to be out of doors doing something, Whitcomb was frequently sent to Canada as a spy during the American Revolution. If his superiors neglected to send him, he would ask for a mission. Apparently he took great pleasure in paddling a solitary canoe over the white waves of Lake Champlain, or running through miles of swamp or gliding on snowshoes through the trackless forest—finding it twice as pleasant if a pack of wolves or a band of Indians were howling at his heels.

On one occasion, again as a result of his having shot their General, when the British hue and cry for his scalp was at its height, he coolly went back into their lines, a hundred miles from any help, and abstracted two officers, one of whom had sworn to his comrades that “Whitcomb
will never catch me!” So great was the red-headed scout’s reputation that when he went to sleep that night, with his unguarded prisoners lying beside him at the campfire, they did not dare to try to kill him and escape.

The most famous of Whitcomb’s exploits was the shooting, referred to above, of a British general near Montreal. There are various versions of this “daring and horrid” deed, agreeing in the main but differing as to details.) It all came about because on July 13, 1776, Major General Gates posted the following notice:

TO all OFFICERS IN the NORTHERN DEPARTMENT:
Make it known to your men that, in order to retaliate upon the British officers for the wanton butchering and massacres of women and children by the British Indians, with the permission and often at the instigation of said officers, it is hereby offered and promised to any American soldier who will go to Canada and shoot a British General, a Major’s commission and pay in the American Army, for shooting a Colonel, the soldier will receive a Captain’s commission and pay; for a Captain, a Lieutenancy.

Signed: GEORGE WASHINGTON,
Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Army

Whitcomb, then a Lieutenant, promptly volunteered. Along with him went Lieutenant Webster, a “very stout young man” named Sturges, and two Frenchmen. Setting out from Crown Point at midnight on July 14th, they paddled by night and hid in the woods by day to avoid the constant roving patrols of British and Indians. Lt. Webster, stricken with “Lake fever,” i.e., ague, had to go back when they reached the mouth of the Onion River. The others did not reach the head of Missisquoi Bay until the twentieth, when the two Frenchmen got cold feet and deserted, taking with them the canoe and most of the provisions and ammunition.

For two days Whitcomb and Sturges waded north through uninhabited swamps, sleeping on matted rushes, and came at last to the Sorel River opposite St. Johns. They stole a canoe and crossed to the west side of the river.

Running through the forested swamps from St. Johns to La Prairie was a corduroy road, eight feet wide, built on a causeway. The two scouts hid beside this road for several days, counting hundreds of British regulars, many armed Indians, and long supply trains jolting up to St. Johns, but they didn’t see anything that looked like a General. What was worse, their footgear was almost worn out, and their scanty provisions were almost exhausted. Whitcomb bore up stoically, but Sturges was not happy.

So by night they marched down the lonesome road until they came to a house. Whitcomb, leaving Sturges in the woods, boldly walked up to it, hoping to get some information. In his greasy buckskins he figured he could as easily pass for a friend as an enemy, and so it turned out.

An hour later he was telling Sturges the news. A brigade of 3000 Redcoats, accompanied by 200 Indians, was to set out for Montreal the day after next, traveling by this very road.

They forthwith retraced their steps, going several miles before Whitcomb called a halt. The next day they went over the ground. Whitcomb explained what they should do and how they should make their retreat.

“There’ll be Injuns after us,” we can imagine him pointing out, “and bloodhounds, too. The dogs we can get rid of but not the Injuns. They’ll follow us all the way to Fort Ti and try to get ahead of us. But we won’t go that way directly. Now look, in case we should get separated . . .” and with a pointed stick he drew a map of their route on the ground.

The next morning Whitcomb awoke amid the thick dawn mist to find himself alone.

Suspecting that Sturges would reveal his plans to the British and that, if he did, they would be expecting him at this spot on his route, he trotted back down the road for an hour or two until he came to a place where, he judged, the column would pass early in the afternoon.

At the edge of the ravine, north of the road, a large pine tree had blown down, its roots sticking up into the air, its prostrate trunk extending almost to the bottom of the gorge. The roots afforded cover and portholes to fire through, and there Whitcomb took up his position.

At last a distant rattling down the road announced the approach of the column. It was two o’clock. First came Indians, then several hundred Canadian axmen and three
hundred Highlanders. At last there came into sight an officer mounted upon a splendid white steed. It was Brigadier General Patrick Gordon. He was richly dressed with a broad crimson sash around his waist and a long white plume in his hat. Half a dozen Indians strode beside and behind him.

The scout leveled his musket and pressed the trigger. The officer threw out his hands and slumped sidewise from the saddle. Whitcomb did not wait to see more but crawled quickly under the roots. Scarcely had he stopped crawling when the Indians arrived, slipping swiftly through the bushes but apparently never dreaming that the sniper would hide at the very spot where they had glimpsed the puff of smoke from his gun. They passed not twenty feet from him—and disappeared.

Whitcomb backed out of the hole and crawled rapidly along the log to the foot of the ravine, then down the brook, concealed from view by some elders. He had gone about half a mile when he heard the bloodhounds begin to “booo”, but his arrangements baffled them as he had intended and he continued to elude his pursuers until nightfall.

For four days, Whitcomb tells us, he maintained that incredible pace, sleeping hardly at all. On the fifth day he found himself somewhere in the Hampshire Grants. Fearing the Indians had got ahead of him and spread the word, and knowing that Tories were not infrequent among the scattered settlers, he did not dare to approach a house; but he had to eat, or he would perish, and so, coming upon two oxen feeding in a pasture, he shot one through the head and quickly cut off as much meat as he needed, besides skin enough for a pair of moccasins, for his own were entirely worn out. He ran into a deep swamp, kindled a small fire, half-roasted some steak, and ate it on the run, fearing the smoke would betray him.

The British, properly indignant, put out posters as we have seen, offering a thousand crowns for him dead, or two thousand for him alive. This immense sum, the largest heard of since the French had put a price of 500 livres on the scalp of that jolly ranger, Robert Rogers, aroused the Abenaki Indians to unusual efforts. These bloodthirsty allies of the British set out with zeal and diligence to waylay the doughty Whitcomb. They sought him wherever he went on his scouting duties, hunting him along the lake to the very walls of Ticonderoga, until even his adventurous soul began to long for rest and quiet.

So he applied for leave and went over to Barnard, Vermont, to visit his cousin, Amos Whitcomb (whose gravestone in the village cemetery today states that “He was a Pillow of the Settlement”). A couple of months later the rumor got around that Ben was visiting friends in Royalton, and the respectable force of 300 British regulars, Tories and redskins penetrated to the very heart of the Grants and burned the village. He was also the direct cause of raids on Barnard and Newbury, Vermont.

But the raiders did not find the wide-wandering Whitcomb. He had decamped and left no forwarding address. He reached home safely and served honorably until the end of the war, but never again was he in such dire peril as on this occasion. He was the only man in the Revolution, on either side, known to have fatally shot a general.

His petitions to Vermont for a grant of land having been denied, he moved to Lisbon, New Hampshire, being one of the charter members of that township, where he lived to the patriarchal age of 92, and died in bed.

The Author: Mr. Pike, who descends from a long line of Vermont Democrats, has been a farmer, lumberjack, miner, soldier, and schoolteacher, has degrees from Dartmouth and Harvard, is now chairman of foreign languages at Monmouth College. His published writings include Granite Laughter & Marble Tears and Fighting Yankee. His Lost Treasure of St. Francis was published in the Autumn 1952 issue of Vermont Life.
Cows ... cows ... cows ... are seen throughout the fertile Missisquoi and Lamoille valley areas, in the northwest corner of the state. Driving along any road around milking time one is stopped frequently by farmers driving their herds across the road. Their slow pace and casual disobedience tempts one to wonder if they believe they outnumber the people ('tain't true: dairy cows—277,000; people—377,000).

Cows and the farms where they make their homes add a bucolic charm to the Vermont scenery. It must be the cows themselves. The little pigs along roadways don't do the same thing at all for Iowa.

Most of Vermont is cow country, but Photographer Carroll, recording the bovine part of Vermont's rural charm, found here his most impressive camera subjects.
Three Holsteins and a friend pose for portraits. Summer work for winter food...below, on the Charles Leriche farm near Stowe; upper right, the Cedric Longly family of Jeffersonville—Mr. and Mrs. on baler and rake, Cedric, Jr. and Dean on "road equipment." Lower right—Curtis Mayo tries to head for home near Stowe.
Willis Smith of Jeffersonville with 20 years of farming still prefers horses. The white one is 28 years old.

Wendell Ovitt, father of seven, has the whole tribe pitch in during haying season.
Alton Brown unloads at the bulk plant of United Farmers of New England, Inc., in Enosburg Falls. Vermont produces 200,000,000 gallons annually.
One never can miss an auction in Vermont. No road sign is needed. As you approach, there is always the cluster of cars, the officer directing traffic, the good natured slowings-down, the maneuverings for parking spaces not too far from the sale. Might have to tote some things home. Might as well be close.

We pulled up behind a green pick-up, saw that things weren’t yet started, wandered over, joined the crowd. It was a good crowd, about a hundred more or less, a Vermont crowd. The New York people, the city visitors, nor weren’t yet starred, wandered over, joined the crowd. It was constant, and quick, and merry. It was dum, dum, dum, de dum, three, three, three. I wanted it. But at him and said, “Is three the bid you have?” One dollar, he answered, I laughed; “No,” he admitted, “that’s the bid I want.”

The benevolence of the crowd was immediately apparent. We smiled with them, found a dry place to stand, the sun beating on our faces, and waited for the auctioneer. Soon he appeared, a sandy-haired man in dungarees; heavy gloves for the lifting and handling of rusty tools; a pink and black plaid shirt, faded, soft. An old felt hat. Graceful he was, like a ballet dancer, jumping up onto the old creaky hay wagon that was his platform, carted wherever he went, his own.

He pushed his battered felt hat back on his head, looked around at the crowd. There was a man he knew, sitting up near the front, wearing a new, khaki, poplin hat. “Swap hats!” called out the auctioneer, removing his own and handing it over. His friend laughed, waved him away. The auctioneer laughed. Everyone else did, too.

“Where’s a table?” called the auctioneer to somebody back of him in the barn, from the depths of which would come the first articles to be sold. “Need a table to set stuff on.”

A table was produced, quite a nice one. “Don’t use that!” called a young woman down in front. “Might want to buy that! Won’t be good for much, once you’re done with it.”

“Need nother table!” he called. “Come on, time’s a wastin’.”

Another table was produced, and a faded old patchwork quilt to protect it, and the auction was under way.

The rules were stated. Everyone knew them, but we all listened carefully, anyway. All bids were to start at not less than a quarter. All raises to be 25c or more. When you bought an article, it would be brought over to you, you would give your name to the boy who gave you your merchandise, he would give you a slip with your name on it and what you owed, and, when you wanted to go home, you brought your slips to the cashier inside the house, in the kitchen, and paid for what you’d bought. Terms cash. Everybody understand? O.K. Let’s go.

He was a good auctioneer. He was polite. He favored no particular friends. He tried to hear all the bids. He laughed. A lot.

He was a show to watch. His sense of rhythm was uncanny. The original, surely, of rock’n roll. Punching the air with his fists, jiggling. His audience, farmers mostly, since this auction was basically for farm equipment, enjoying him, ragging him.

He had a partner and they were a team. The minute the first auctioneer called out “Sold!” the next one took over. It was constant, and quick, and merry. It was dum, dum, dum, de dum; dum, dum, dum, de dum. Bubbles of sounds, but somehow the one word, the bid given and the bid asked for emerging, so one knew what was going on.

First always were the chairs. So people would have something to sit on. Lively bidding in the fifty-cent-seventy-five cent bracket. A fine, old, peeling kitchen chair, the kind John and I dearly love, antique, sweet, strong, reminiscent of Vermont farm wives sitting in their kitchens, peeling green apples for pie. The auctioneer babbling along, saying something about three dollars, dum, dum, dum, de dum, three, three, three. I wanted it. He knew I did. He looked at me and kept saying three, three, three. But I had been to auctions before. I laughed at him and said, “Is three the bid you have?” Somehow, in the din, he heard me.

“No,” he admitted, “that’s the bid I want.”

“One dollar,” I said.
He grimaced, but his eyes laughed. “Wish I was out there bidin’,” he said.

Someone bid one-fifty, I bid two. Someone said two and a quarter, I said two fifty. It was mine.

“Mark that ticket very cheap!” he called and watched it for a minute as it was carried over to me. I sat on it, loved it right away, smooth and old, that chair.

The barn spewed out its contents. Pitchforks one after the other. Fly spray cans, four of them for a quarter, one of them still full of fly spray. Endless belts (meaning without ends, not without end.) Bumpy tin milk stools, one with a round hole cut in the middle.

“Air conditioned!” called out the auctioneer, his pink and black shirt fluttering in the breeze. The crowd roared.

A whiffletree.

“What’s that?” I asked.

A nice man in a peaked cap turned toward me and said, “A whiffletree. That’s to go back of y’r horse.” He looked at me benevolently and I decided against further questioning. “Got one jest like it ’home,” he added.

Articles were put up which had no takers. So the auctioneer simply added others, sometimes as many as ten items for one. Rusty, cobwebby watering cans. Shovels. A quarter bid was accepted for the lot.

He looked up once at a woman in the distance. “Wavin’ time, lady?” he wanted to know. No, no, she quaked, she was wavin’ to her husband. “Y’ don’t wanna be wavin’ to anybody around here, lady. You’ll wind up ownin’ sumpin.” He laughed with the crowd, but not unkindly.

It was apparent that there was a specific colloquialism which the crowd and the auctioneer understood absolutely. “Like new, look at that!” meant the article was in usable condition. “Slightly used” meant completely decrepit, absolutely useless, and brought forth sums of small value. There were, too, ethics among the bidders, particularly the men. If the object on the block really was worth a tidy sum, it was never started at less than a smaller amount. A smaller amount was tantamount to an insult to the auctioneer and to the owner.

There was also an accepted method of getting the people to bid when they really didn’t want to or intend to, and this, too was regarded benignly. The auctioneer could literally pull a bid out of many of the audience. He could nod vigorously at a possible bidder, someone he felt ought to bid at this point and suddenly the man would, to his own immense surprise, be bidding. The auctioneer then would call out, wildly exabrant, “Yeah! I got it!” and look for an opponent. As soon as he would find one, his partner would get to work on the hapless one. The first auctioneer would confine his attention to the first bidder and there would be a contest, often between two people who knew better, but couldn’t withstand the hypnotism exerted against them. One auctioneer carried the tune. The other was the chorus. As the bids rose, the auction-
for driving fence-posts into the ground. Went for a quarter. All sorts of hay-loaders, hooks and gadgets and pulleys. One would need to be a mathematician to figure some of them out.

There were jokes, so many jokes. They tried to sell an icebox, one which required ice, not an electric one. No bidders. The auctioneer called out, “If y’ don’t like your mother-in-law, put her in it and shut the door.” It was sold for 75 cents.

A chicken brooder. Hundreds of parts, it seemed, stacked one on the other, every which way. “Put ’er in the livin’ room and see what you get.” 7 dollars got it.

The crowd evidently loved chamber pot jokes. These were not dirty jokes in the sense bathroom jokes are. There was obviously something of cherished memory about the chamber pots. The auctioneer produced one at frequent intervals, just to get the crowd into some sort of unison. “Cecil” he called to someone in the front, “I got just what you want,” and he pulled a chamber pot from behind his back. Men slapped their knees in mirth, women held their stomachs and rocked. Cecil didn’t buy it. Then came along a kerosene lantern. “Cecil,” called the auctioneer, when it was sold (not to Cecil), “you shoulda bought the lantern to go with that other.” The fact that this made no sense, since Cecil hadn’t bought “th’ other” didn’t matter. The crowd howled in glee, nonetheless.

It seemed that jokes on customers were proper and fitting so long as the auctioneer knew to whom he was speaking. A man bid five dollars on a four piece parlor set, a love seat and three chairs, fairly nondescript but not really bad, “Boy,” said the auctioneer, “if he says five dollars, it’s prob’ly worth a hunnerd. Let’s have a bid.” But the man got it for five.

A dreadful, beat-up table appeared. No bids. “Who’ll give a quarter?” A man yelled, “Yeah.” “You got it,” the auctioneer screamed, and the table was moving over the heads of the crowd, toward the purchaser.

Oh, it was fun! I looked around. There was a little boy, standing in some mud, wearing his rubbers, squishing the mud carefully, one foot after the other. Suddenly a chair being moved pushed him off balance. Down into the mud he went. Up again, squinting.

“You all right, Sonny,” called the auctioneer? “Yup.”


A little yellow, rolltop oak desk was next. Many compartments. Not a good desk. But for some reason, two people in the crowd wanted it. And two is enough to make it cost too much. Both auctioneers moved in. Egging the two bidders on. Bidding up to $25.00. The lady next to me shook her head, “Shameful. That desk ain’t worth ten.” Up and up the bids went. The crowd oddly silent at the
rhythmic, practiced wheedling. Finally the desk went for fifty dollars. A low, unhappy murmur passed through the throng. "Wan't wuth it."

Electric articles were guaranteed. "Try it 'fore y' go! Plug it in! Don't work, you ain't bought it."

One of the auctioneers, between bids, stood there in front of everyone and yawned, a great lazy yawn. Didn't know he did it. Nobody cared. A moment later he pulled to, offering a broken stepladder. "Here's a stepladder," he called, looking at it dubiously, "long ways 'tween steps." It was sold for fifty cents.

He held up, then, a strange article. I couldn't make out what it was, and he didn't say. A sort of box. Nobody bid. He eyed a man in the front row, holding the hand of a little girl. "Didn't you bid a quarter?" The man grinned, "O.K. I'll take it." It was a doll house.

There was a box or two of miscellany. Empty jars. Odd bits of silverware. Jigsaw puzzles. The auctioneer picked out a pointed article. Nobody knew what that was, either. "Rocker, ready t' go!" he sang. Went for 50 cents.

There were four "Surge" milking machines, full of chrome tubes and rubber hose. Weird. The first one went for $95.00. The second for $60.00. The third for $45.00. The last for $37.50. They all looked the same to me, but John said they weren't. And I guess the farmers who bought them knew.

Occasionally the auctioneers grew a little impatient. No bid forthcoming on an item. One auctioneer: "Take your time!" The other, playing it straight, "'Eah, we got all day."

Fifteen minutes for lunch. Coffee and doughnuts and cheese sandwiches. Ladies Aid, Congregational Church, in charge. Gentle jostling, no rudeness. John and I, contentedly settled away from the wind, ate ravenously.

The sun, now, was directly overhead. A robin pulled at a worm resistant on the lawn. The farmers, their lunch consumed, wandered over to the meadow, examined tractors, hay loaders, manure spreaders, corn harvesters, consulted with each other, weighed values, came back. The auctioneer's hay-wagon was backed away from the first barn and settled in front of the second, a tractor providing the push, the spectators moving slowly from its path.

"Time's a wastin'!" called the auctioneer, ringing his bell (it was one he himself had purchased for 75c just ten minutes before). Lunchtime was over. The crowd came to attention, refreshed.

Another desk, much like the earlier one. The bids were low this time. It went for $14.50. "Sold one not s' good as this, this morning, for $50," was the scolding. A man in the rear called back, "That's the truth fer shore!" and the crowd howled in gleeful agreement, getting this out of their systems, finally.

It was time for John and me to go. "One more thing," I begged, and John didn't mind. We were both glowing from the freshness of the air, our cheeks were burning with the first sunburn of this Spring. It was a box of quilt pieces in a large cardboard evaporated-milk carton. No bidders. We started away, looked back to see the auctioneer, up on his toes, poised as for flight, calling, "Look at that! Look at that!" picking up the fragments of cloth and letting them fall through his fingers like ribbons of gold.

We moved reluctantly away, laden with our own purchases: our chair, an iron pot; a tent for the children; an antique butter churner for myself; a modern butter churner for my neighbor down the road who had been forlorn at breaking hers just the night before (how fortuitous to find one the next day!); a popcorn popper; six little hand-painted bone dishes (not made of bone china, just called bone dishes because the old Vermonters, on genteel dinner occasions, piled the denuded chicken bones on them); a lovely old pitcher thrown in with the corn-popper for the same quarter; a kitchen stepladder chair; in all, a haul. We heard the quilt pieces go for a quarter, stopped to pay the cashier the $13.75 we owed for our purchases, squeezed into the car as well as we could with our booty, and started back to Blueberry Hill.

We looked back once, and, somehow, caught the auctioneer's eye. He raised his battered felt hat and pointed to John's natty cap. "W' anr to swap?" he called.

Mystery Picture

This alien porker in bronze, in summer months spouting water, has been surveying the street scene of a Vermont town for a good many years. The earliest dated (after March 2nd) postmarked and correct location of this beast will be awarded one of Vermont Life's special prizes. Residents of the town in question are disqualified. Winner of the Winter issue Mystery Picture contest, a now defunct ski jump near Troy, Vt., was M. E. Farnham of Rutland, Vermont.

VERMONT Life 49
The “Wan’gan” Mary Ann dispenses four meals a day and salt pork for blistered feet.
There is no such thing as a history of river driving and rivermen. All the chapters for such a history have been locked in the minds of men now graying into middle life and more. One brief chapter has haunted the mind of one who was a small boy when one of the last great drives of long logs went down the Connecticut.

The coming of the drive... was heralded by various signs, all of them sure and invariable. First were the drums of the logs themselves, upriver, the booming that made your heart beat faster. Then the advance guard—slim, easy-riding logs that somehow had managed to break away and get miles ahead. These were graceful sticks, moving swiftly in the broad river, seemingly anxious to meet their fate at some sawmill town downriver—fastidious logs, running away from the jams their more laggard fellows would surely encounter.

Another sign was when the boss of the drive, a most important man in the spring, rode down Main Street with a team of the Company’s fastest horses. The horses were black as midnight, black as the bushy eyebrows of the boss, but they were no blacker than the long cigar the boss chewed. The boss was important enough to have a man drive for him and wherever they went they drove very fast.

Soon the logs began coming thicker until you scarcely could see the water between them. The water became a mass of sluggish bodies, rolling this way and that, grumbling all day and all night. No door could shut out this noise. And who wanted to shut out such pleasant thunder?

Down at the bend of the river a few men were stationed, “tending out,” they called it, poling the logs from the “off” bank lest they be halted in the eddy and make a jam... And on and on came the miles of logs.

Rumors traveled fast among young boys, and we never failed to know when the wangan train was due. These were huge wagons hauled by six, eight, and ten horses each. The Mary Anne was the name of this circus caravan. The wagons had long blue bodies with the Company’s initials painted on their sides. The harnesses were trimmed with bright brass and bedecked with tassels more gaudy than rivermen’s shirts. When they rolled down Main Street they made a mighty clanking, and the sun on the brass sent bright spots racing across the buildings on the
Horses being taken down the river on rafts to free stranded logs from the shore.

Formerly crews of 200 men handled the logs. By 1909 the same amount of work was done by 60 men and 30 horses.
This drive hit the Windsor bridge, cutting out one section shortly after a train had crossed over.

shady side of the street. All in all it was a bigger time by far than when Sig Sautelle’s Great Renowned Two-Ring Circus & Menagerie came to town.

We were on hand at the wangan grounds, on the edge of town, when the tents came out of the wagons and were set up. We lugged water and wood and were allowed by the teamsters to unbuckle the harness on the gallant big horses. Soon there was the aroma of cooking in the air.

The cooks on the drive were generous with the Company’s food. It might be Pat Ryan, or Watson Blodgett or Old Dan Kelliher; but whoever he was, he fed us on beans and he loaded us down with gigantic cookies that were marvels of size and goodness. The like of these cookies had never been seen elsewhere but on the drive; they were as large around as small plates and thick as three ordinary cookies.

On the night when the drive hit town there was a great to-do after supper. The quiet village suddenly surged with life as two hundred or more rivermen milled up and down Main Street. Many of them wore brightly colored shirts and carried canary-yellow greasers with red flannel collars. They wore their calked boots, too, and played havoc with the floors of the three saloons.

The “nice” people stayed at home this night; or, at least the women did, although they were as safe on the street when the drive hit town as at any other time. Rivermen were rough fellows but they minded their own business and had rather a decent code.

We couldn’t go into the barrooms, but there was plenty for a boy to see on the street. We watched big Arthur O’Leary as he carefully and methodically threw four or five brawny rivermen, one after the other, into the street, telling them they might come back when they had decided to be gents.

By the bridge that crossed the river into Vermont we would see half a dozen fights, a sort of battles royal with eight or ten men engaged. There was no particular reason for it; they were fighting because of the joy of being alive and going down with the drive.

It was the one night of the year when our town throbbed
with noise—alcoholic shouts of laughter, the stomping of hard boots, the plunking of slot machines, and the new Edison phonograph in O'Leary's bleating high-pitched about "A Bird in a Gilded Cage." Underneath all was the steady bass of the muttering, grumbling logs, going by in the night.

Next morning as we went to school we saw that the logs were moving more slowly. We fidgeted at our desks because we couldn't see the river from the schoolhouse. Yet we knew what was happening, for the grumble of logs had almost died away.

At noon we couldn't stop for dinner. We rushed down to the bridge. There we saw it with our own eyes—the river piled high with logs. Yes sir, a jam! Stretching for
half a mile down river was the huge bulk of logs, crossed like so many jackstraws; long spruces upended, their dripping bodies standing straight out of the mass. We could hear creaking and a mild groaning as the water ground the logs more firmly together.

The river was backing up fast, and 'way down below we could see small figures on the logs and the banks, working feverishly. Now and again, it seemed to us watching, the great mass of logs would give a long, deep groan.

There was no keeping us in school; all on the river bank knew that, even the teacher. We ran as fast as we could down to the bend.

Below the jam the Connecticut was a mere trickle. They'd have to work fast, we knew, or soon the water would be backing up into the village. And they were working. We watched breathlessly as they danced like puppets to and fro across the barrier, looking for the key log, the king log, the single log that must be moved before the jam could be broken. There was a clanking of peaveys, a cursing to high heaven, and many shouted orders, as the men tore first at this log, then at that. Over all was the ominous feeling of impending danger. You couldn't shake it off, so you talked in whispers.

Then came the cry of warning. Slim Pete Hurd, one of our rivermen heroes, had "got holt on" the king log. We could see him twist it from its grudging fellows and roll it down. Then there came a quaking and a shifting of the huge mass as the drivers ran for shore, balancing themselves with their peaveys on the struggling logs. Not all of them made the shore, for the water and the pent-up logs would not wait, even for rivermen. The jam "hauled" with a rush of tossing logs, and some of the men had to ride her out, Death riding everywhere among them.

Through the thunder of the mad logs we heard a cry: "Pete's gone!" And, looking downstream where the crest of the floor was rolling, we saw a slim body thrown high in the air, to fall again—into the white water and among those grinding logs.

On the way back to the village we did not talk much, for there was a lump in every boy's throat. When we got to the bridge the logs were moving fast and freely, but we didn't stop to watch them.

Over on the wangan lot that night there were no cheery campfires, no brave white tents. Near the bend of the river, where the jam had been, a few logs floated idly. The river grumbled no more. The village was still as death. The drive had gone down.


Many of these illustrations were made available through the courtesy of Miss Genevieve Harrington and Miss Mary Jarvis of Windsor.
GUIDEBOOKS, like anthologies and fingerprints, are highly individual, unless, of course, they are written by a committee or the W.P.A. Since the Guide to the Green Mountain State, produced by the Writers Project a good twenty years ago, there has been no adequate handbook for motorists on our less-traveled roads, or even on our main ones.

Walter Hard, Jr., Editor of this publication, is also the author of THE VERMONT GUIDE, a glove-compartment size gazetteer-directory to every town in the state. This also contains an admirable index and a listing of further sources of information on a variety of subjects, from art to wildflowers. In between succinct and lively paragraphs on each town—varying perhaps in length with the interest the communities have for the author—are brief essays on such matters as the much-talked-of but seldom-seen Vermont panther, local humor, legends and curious customs, notable sons and daughters of Vermont, places to stay and to eat, museums and annual events.

Appealing drawings by George Daly ornament the text, and the result is the perfect gift for a member of the 251 Club and necessary equipment for every back-road amateur. I could have wished for more detail in the regional maps, ten of them, that head each section. Certainly the serious traveler will arm himself with the excellent state and county maps put out by the Highway Department, and perhaps also with the U.S. Geodetic Survey quadrangles for areas in which he is particularly interested.

The 251 Club, readers of these pages will probably remember, was initiated by Arthur W. Peach, who conceived the notion that many Vermont residents and visitors would find it stimulating to make the grand tour of the state, entering each of the 246 organized and 5 unorganized towns or townships—either term is acceptable. The organization thrives and forms a green memorial to its founder. 'Have you done your towns?' is a likely question at meetings of the Vermont Historical Society or the Greater Vermont Association, past and present parents of the 251 Club.

If there exist hardy adventurers who need new spurs to enterprise, let me suggest a visit to each of the 80 historic markers, tall metal signs with gold letters on a green ground, describing some event of state or national importance, the birthplace of some notable figure or some building or natural attraction of significance. These are put up by the Vermont Historic Sites Commission, and are listed in the OFFICIAL GUIDE to these markers, written by Vrest Orton.

On route to the historic markers the methodical traveler should be sure to inspect the birthplaces of Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Chester A. Arthur, Bennington Monument, Hubbardton Battlefield, the Hyde Log Cabin and the Scott Covered Bridge, all maintained by the Commission. The same Guide lists all the museums and the historic houses open to the public. These could be added to the obstacle course, as could Vermont's covered bridges, disappearing yet still numerous.

Some kind of decoration should certainly be awarded to the rugged explorer who completes this marathon—perhaps a granite pendant or lapel pin with a covered bridge couched and a panther rampant. However, the intimate knowledge of Vermont's scenery and history that he or she would have gained in the process might be reward enough.

A useful guide in a more limited field, also of the correct size to carry along in the car, is A GUIDE TO THE ART MUSEUMS OF NEW ENGLAND, by S. Lane Faison, Jr. of Williams College. He lists, in Vermont, Bennington College Museum and Bennington Museum, Shelburne Museum, Fleming Museum in Burlington, and Sheldon Museum in Middlebury. As his main interest is in painting, I do not know why he omits the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum Gallery with its excellent collection of 19th century Hudson River School and its fine Bierstadt of Yosemite Valley, and the Thomas Waterman Wood Art Gallery in Montpelier with genre scenes and Turner copies by its founder.

There is no mention of the Southern Vermont Art Center in Manchester with its variety of contemporary exhibitions as well as concerts and lectures, or of the Miller Art Center in Springfield which performs a similar function for the east central area. He might also have listed the Book Cellar in Brattleboro and Gallery Two in Woodstock, where a number of contemporary artists have exhibited. Mr. Faison's book is richly illustrated and his notes on individual paintings and other works of art are thoroughly considered and enlightening. Each museum is accurately located on a small map of appropriate scale.
Still another publication which might interest the traveler preparing for the coming season is the DIRECTORY OF VERMONT CRAFTSMEN, published biennially by the Arts and Crafts Advisory Commission of the Department of Education. Besides the wholesale display room at the Arts and Crafts Service building in Montpelier, where a constantly changing array of products may be seen and orders given, there are many outlets in gift shops and local craft fairs where the work of our craftsmen is available.

It might be still more interesting, however, to call upon some of the craftsmen at their studios, or to order directly from them. The directory is divided into categories: ceramics, decoration, food, metals, silk screening, textiles, toys, woods and miscellaneous—often the most fascinating. Where else indeed could you find the makers of pomander balls, marble paper weights, trout flies, custom lamp shades and balsam pillows? There is also a listing by counties. Even those who know Vermont well may be surprised at the wealth of products included and at the steadily advancing standards of skill and taste that our artist-craftsmen display, for the state has become the home of many who found urban life hostile to the rewarding exercise of their talents.

THE VERMONT GUIDE—Walter Hard, Jr. The Book Cellar, Brattleboro, Vermont, 1958, $1.25.


JOURNEY TO VERMONT'S HISTORIC SITES • NUMBER 7

WILLIAM JARVIS
Consul to Lisbon was first to import Merino sheep to U.S.

In 1811 Consul Jarvis brought from Spain to his farm in Weathersfield Bow the prized Merino sheep whose longer fiber revolutionized the woolen industry and stimulated sheep raising throughout the East. In the 1830's Merinos were the state's principal livestock.

The man who started the great American sheep boom almost 150 years ago had Napoleon to thank for his chance. It was the French invasion of the Iberian Peninsula which relaxed strict export limits on the prized Merino.

Jarvis was born in Boston in 1770; at 21 was a successful merchant; became his own ship's captain and by the turn of the century was a wealthy trader.

Thomas Jefferson appointed him Consul to Lisbon. For nine years there he did much to ease trade restrictions against the new United States. The U. S. Consul at Madrid in 1802 managed to export 100 fine Merinos to Connecticut, and in 1809 Jarvis secured 200 from the Royal Escorial flock. The first 11 sheep shipped to Boston brought him $15,000. As he returned home to retirement in 1810, Jarvis secured 3630 Merinos, to sell as prime breeding stock all over the United States.

That year Jarvis bought farms in Weathersfield Bow and brought there 300 select Merinos. He mixed his flocks and selected his rams with care. Soon his fine stock was multiplying all over Vermont.

Country gentleman Jarvis watched and aided the Merino boom; raised a large family; died finally in 1859 on the eve of the sheep migration westward.

END
WHEN late Spring comes to Wolcott, Hardwick and ten or a dozen other north-state communities, tell-tale columns of smoke in the neighboring hills signal the presence of a craft almost as ancient in these areas as sugaring itself—the production of softwood oils for the wholesale drug business.

The process today is much as it was 100 years ago. (The poster reproduced on the page opposite is highly fanciful; it is doubtful that the trees were ever tapped in this fashion.) It actually works like this:

Softwood brush—the tips of balsam, spruce or cedar boughs—is cut and drawn to the still where a crane packs about two tons of it into a vat made of vertical two-by-four planks held together by steel bands. The vat is buried in the earth and a metal cover is put on and sealed with dirt or clay. Steam is introduced into the bottom of the vat, works its way up through the brush and when it leaves, some hours later, through a pipe at the top, takes with it the oil from the brush.

The pipe inclines downward from the top of the vat and passes through cold water, which condenses the steam into oil and water. These are drawn off into cans, where the floating oil—from 30 to 40 pounds of it per vat-load of brush—is scooped off the top. The brown and desiccated brush is removed from the vat for later use as fuel to fire the boiler, and the process is ready to be repeated the next day.

The three types of softwood brush used in the process are kept separate—the operators may distill spruce oil one day, cedar the next—for the oils are used for different purposes. Balsam oil goes into cough syrups and shaving creams; spruce oil is used in making cellophane and glass; cedar oil is used in fly sprays, disinfectants, etc.

The softwood oil business is typically a family operation, based on a good deal of know-how handed down from father to son. It is cyclical, and booms when oil prices go up, such as during the last war. Conversely, prices can stay low a discouraging length of time.

Want to set up in business? Pure spruce oil, right now, sells for about $1.20 a pound.
Universal, acknowledged to be the best Plaster ever known. Compounded from the choicest gums of the Green Mountain State, consisting of Balm of Gilead, Cedar, Hemlock, Spruce, Fir, &c., combined as to produce a healthy counter-current by dissipating soreness and extracting the congelated poisonous impurities of the system.

It is unequalled in removing pain, internal inflammation curing lameness, cramp pains in the side, rheumatism, weak and lame backs, old sores, boils, corns, freezes, fresh wounds, burns and scalds, cracked hands, and occasional sores of most kinds. Its medicinal properties and remedial action are immeasurably greater than those of any other plaster in use. — No family should be without it. The price has been placed within the reach of all.

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BABY BOAT
by MACK DERICK

Like the little boy who found that "nothing is what's left inside a balloon when it breaks," Stan Marsh of Orleans has turned the same rueful observation into a thriving business.

It happened when Marsh lugged a rubber boat three miles to a beaver pond, only to find it was punctured. And while he tried vainly to fish without a boat, he began planning a light, very portable, puncture-proof craft that could be used in such places, small enough to carry in a car trunk. Big fish are always in hard-to-get-to places.

Marsh teamed up with Neil Tarbox. They worked out plans and are building such boats of aluminum and wood, made buoyant with styrofoam. Complete with paddles they weigh less than 18 pounds. And so a puncture was the start of the "Wonder Boat" business in Orleans, Vermont.

END
Vermont Life announces with pleasure
the forthcoming CHAMPLAIN FESTIVAL ISSUE

A richly-designed Summer issue, with 28 of its 64 pages in full color—a handsome souvenir book of the Champlain Anniversary year:

- Dramatic air views of the Lake in color.
- First definitive article on the Indians.
- Striking scenic views from both shores.
- Champlain Vacationing: in text and pictures.
- Colorful History of Champlain. Color pictures never before reproduced.
- Wildlife of Champlain. With special photography and text.
- Ancient and modern maps.
- Economic history of the Lake area.
- Self-contained Guide to the Champlain Valley.
- Program of the 350th Anniversary Festival.

This unique edition of Vermont Life will also comprise the regular Summer issue—will go to all subscribers at no added cost. Extra copies of the Champlain Issue, published Memorial Day, will be available on newsstands, or by mail from Vermont Life, Montpelier, at 50c per copy, postpaid. Reserve your extra copies now for friends who are planning to visit Vermont this Festival Year.

Champlain Plans Afoot

All through this year the 350th anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's exploration will be celebrated on both sides of his beautiful and historic lake.

But the major events will be held from May to the end of October. The Festival culminates with special Christmas homecoming programs. Write to the Champlain Festival office, 192 College St., Burlington, for a full program.

One highlight out of the hundreds of big and small events will come in July: the Canoeade. Paddling in 24 birchbark canoes (specially constructed by Cree Indians), 60 Indian warriors with "Champlain and two white companions" will land at Isle La Motte, then at Burlington, Vergennes, and on the 25th will re-enact, at Ticonderoga, Champlain's historic battle with the Iroquois.

Plans under way at this writing call for the staging of a continuing historical extravaganza; re-enactment of the famed Confederate St. Albans Raid. And among the distinguished visitors now expected are the President, the British Queen and Royal Family, as well as high officials from France, Canada and the Netherlands.
Fledgling Vermont Life put forth its first issue (now a collector's item) in the Fall of 1946. Founding editor was Earle W. Newton, who a bit later also established the successful American Heritage. Vermont Life's growth since then has been slow but steady. Its purposes and format have remained the same to this day—when each issue is read by an estimated 350,000 people (five per copy), in this and 36 foreign countries.

The purpose of the magazine, now as then, is to acquaint people (Vermonters too) with the interest, beauty and unique aspects of this state and its people. To do this it employs factual, unpromotional articles, a high content of fine photography and art work—much of it in color.

The magazine is supported in part by state funds, but today these comprise only about ten per cent of the annual budget. Someday it may be self-supporting, still without carrying advertising.

The magazine's color photographs come from professional freelancers, most of whom live outside Vermont. Most picture stories are done on assignment. Articles often are initiated by writers, to whom they are then assigned. Since its inception the magazine has been printed by The Lane Press, Burlington. The engraving is done in Massachusetts.

Newsstand sales of Vermont Life are confined to the Northeast. About 15 per cent of some 41,000 subscribers live in Vermont. Next is New York with about 11 per cent, followed closely by Massachusetts, and then Connecticut with half as many.

New Jersey is just below and in next place is California. Pennsylvania and New Hampshire are about the same as are just below them, Illinois and Florida. The smallest number of subscribers, about a dozen, is found in Wyoming. Canada leads in foreign subscriptions, followed by England. Two subscriptions go to the U.S.S.R.

The aims of Vermont Life are simple: to so interest people with Vermont's charms that they may wish to visit and more—perhaps eventually to live here. It is not a magazine of controversy nor yet of rosy superlatives. It is intended to reflect the frank yet friendly character of Vermont and Vermonters themselves.