

Vermont *Life*

Winter

1951-52

35 cents



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THE COVER . . .

Not a common sight today even in Vermont are such sleighing scenes. And this one was staged a bit at that by Winston Pote, well-known color photographer who lives in Lancaster, N. H. The scene is Danville, Vt. and the horse is a prize Morgan owned by Albert Danforth of Danville. The decorative sleigh is the property of Dr. Howard Farmer of St. Johnsbury. Mr. Danforth is handling the reins and along for the ride are Mrs. Pote and Miss Mary Lund, also of Lancaster, N. H. Mr. Pote would probably agree that the best photographs are made and not just snapped, but must not show their planning. (Engravings courtesy FARM QUARTERLY.)

Editor's Uneasy Chair

One of the best parts of living in Vermont is having such nice neighbors. We are proud to present in this issue three of them—from Canada, New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Winston Pote, whose fine work appears on our front cover and on page 51, for years has been taking outstanding New England pictures. He lives just across the river in Lancaster, N. H.

To the south in Malden, Mass. lives Dr. Richard C. Harriott. Dentist, stamp collector and visitor to Plymouth, he brings us the entertaining feature on pages 48 and 49. A supplementary list of stamps with Vermont connotations, compiled by Lhoys Hayward of Montpelier, will be furnished by us upon request.

Our northern visitor this issue is a talented writer, Miriam Chapin of Montreal. Mrs. Chapin's deep Vermont roots are in Pittsford though she now summers in East Wallingford. Her charming recollections of a Vermont Butt'ry start on page 42.

Two other features in this issue are recommended to the reader's special attention. One is the first work we have published by a talented young photographer and writer, Verner Z. Reed, III of Stowe. The other is the finely documented tale of the Plymouth goldmining. This almost forgotten story has been unearthed by Beth Smith of Rutland. *Vermont Life* disclaims responsibility for any new goldrush that may be precipitated. Neither has the VL staff bought up mining rights in the Plymouth hills.

A most remarkable photograph is the large centerspread of Mt. Mansfield, taken by Samuel Hatfield of Burlington, who specializes in telephoto camera work. The telephoto lens magnifies distant points and foreshortens the middle distances.

The remainder of this issue's contents is listed at the left. We hope you will find the other articles of equal interest.

Since its early days, much of *Vermont Life's* appearance and its success have been due to the hard and talented work performed by Martha Corker, now gone from our staff. Of the irreplaceable assistance she provided we valued most a rare combination of initiative tempered with native good judgment, and a capacity to perform without fuss the work of at least two ordinary mortals. WH

HAVEN OF SAFETY

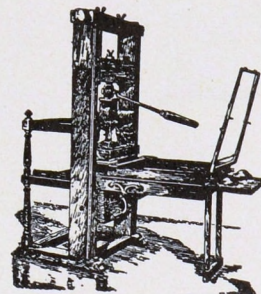
One of the greatest boons of winter, especially to those of the Post Boy's disposition—which we are sure has nothing to do with his age—is found in the coziness of indoors especially if there is enough "tumultuousness of storm" without to remind one, ever and anon, of his comfortable situation. Of course the ingredients, along with a fire, preferably of some hard wood still green enough to ooze sap at the ends of the logs, and hot enough to insure their burning slowly and steadily, are one or more comfortable fireside companions. So while the wind goes its busy way without, let's put on a fresh log—that yellow birch there might send out a sweet incense along with its heat—and see how the spirit moves.

The Post Boy was just reading about more displaced persons who were finding a haven of safety and security somewhere

among the hills and valleys of Vermont. He tried to sense something of the feeling of a family set down on some hill farm, after months and years of overhanging tragedy when no tomorrow was sure and past days were agony to recall. No matter how meager the physical comforts they may have for the moment, just the safety of the unmolested hills must bring something to their souls to slowly but surely heal until only the scars remain.

Years ago the Post Boy knew briefly General and Madam Nicholas Krabroff of the old Russia who found refuge on Thetford Hill and who lived there for thirty years, a part of that hilltop village. They are both dead now, the General and his intrepid wife, and their granddaughter as their daughter did, has become a part of America. When the General died the Post Boy tried to tell his story and while we sit here in the warmth and safety of this room, he'd like to read it to you. It's called:

Green Mountain POSTBOY



By WALTER HARD

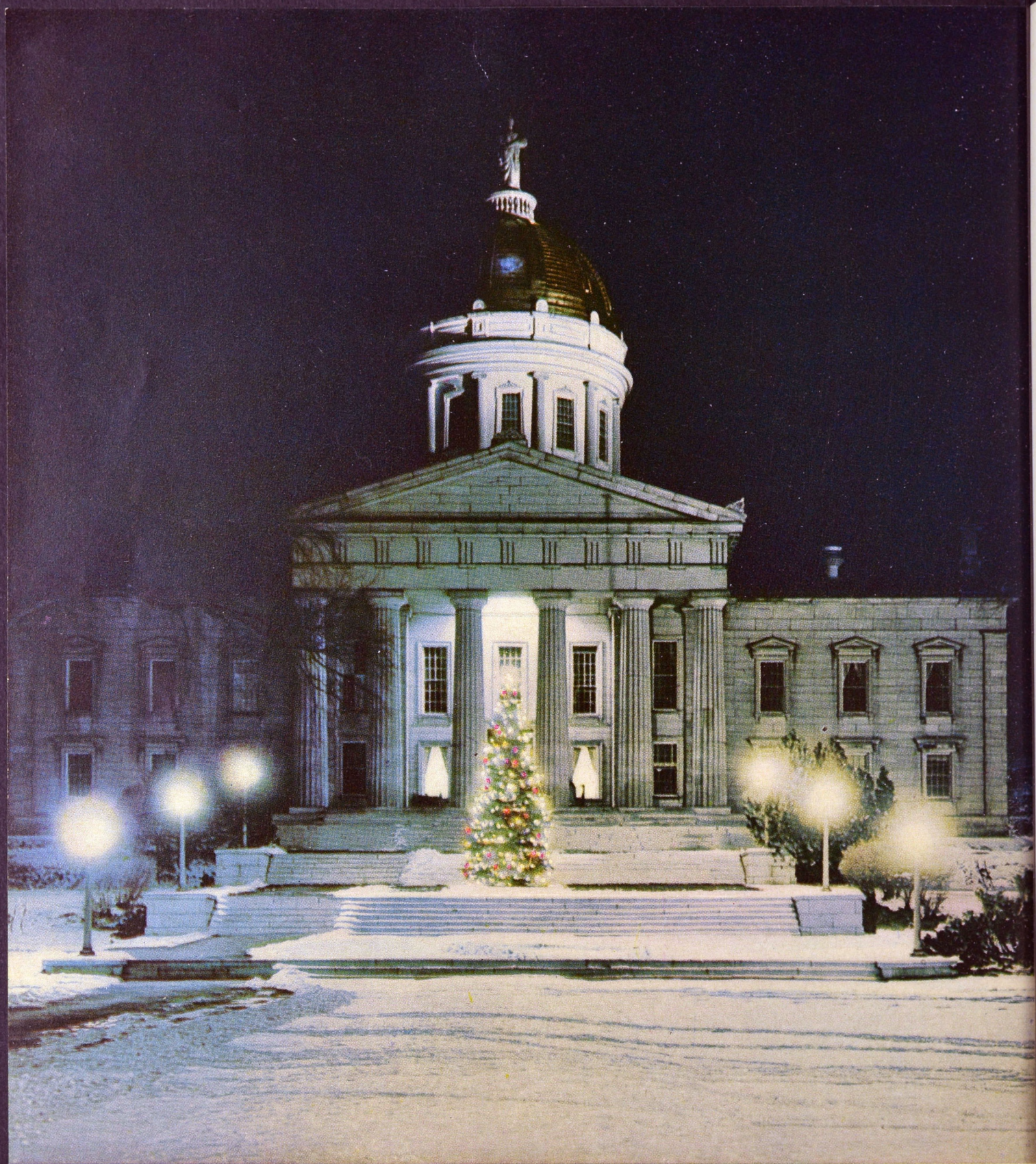
THE GENERAL WEARS HIS MEDALS

On the Vermont hills,
covered by the first snow,
Today for the last time
the General wore his medals.
He was covered
with the flag he had served,
Now a symbol of something forever past.
He had been the trusted friend
of the old Russia.
As the Czar's agent
he had headed the commission
Sent to America to buy supplies
for the great Trans-Siberian Railway.
He had returned again
when his country was fighting,
Side by side with England and France,
To buy arms and ammunition
for the Czar's armies.
Then came the revolution,
the days of faint hope,
And then the rising of the Bolsheviks.
The General knew that for rule
people must be trained
And that time was too cumbersome a
weapon for revolutionists.
He and his intrepid wife went back,
He to take up arms with the White Army,
to him the only hope.
Then came defeat, the fall of Omsk,
and the shattering retreat.
Together again, the General and his wife
joined their escaping comrades.
By dog team, on foot
and by crawling train,
They fled across the wintry wastes
of Siberia.
One by one they saw their comrades
slain by the new rulers.
Their train would be halted
and new victims dragged out.

There would be the sharp crack
of rifle shots
And the train would move on,
its shrieking whistle
Filling the darkening waste
with frightful echoes.
Miraculously they were saved,
the General and his wife.
They sailed from Tokyo and in due time
landed at San Francisco,
Penniless, broken in body,
outcasts from the land of their birth.
Then to the peace and safety
of the Vermont hills,
Where a waiting daughter had prepared
a place for them.
There they have lived these many years.
There the flowers the General has tended
Crowd closely around their small cottage
on Thetford Hill.
Up the street, near the church,
he had his vegetable garden.
"Yes" he said, chuckling as he spoke,
"I who spent millions for my government
in other days
Now sell my cabbages
for five cents a head."
"Lonely?" Madam Khrabroff answered,
"Ah no. For all these years we are safe,
safe.
At first I could not accustom to it.
The whistle of the train at night
far down the valley
Would awaken me to terror.
Then would come
that most blessed feeling; we are safe.
What else could matter?"
She smiled seeing the General
opening an ancient victrola.
"When I had carried for weeks

in the top of my boot
A loaded revolver so that I might
quickly hand it to the General,
So we might cheat our captors—
Then to find these peaceful hills,
what else could matter?"
The General had found the record
he was looking for.
He told how the boatmen
of Russia's great river
Sang this song as they walked the banks
pulling the boats.
He gave us the rhythm
of their toiling feet.
Then as a maestro holds his baton aloft,
While the waiting silence
holds its breath,
He raised his hand and the song began.
He sat with closed eyes, listening.
He was no longer there—
He had returned to his river
and his native land.

* * *
Today on the hills,
covered with the first snow,
The General for the last time
wore his medals.
There were no helmeted soldiers
standing at rigid attention;
Only the straight bare maples.
There were no bugles
to blow the final call;
Only the wind in the fringing pines.
To the common tasks of his new life
The General had brought
the dignity of a noble heart.
Today no trappings of old pageantries
could have honored him
As did the simple grandeur
of those white surrounding hills.



CHRISTMAS TREES

Another Vermont Woodland Crop

by RAYMOND T. FOULDS, JR.

This growing Vermont industry gives promise of cash crops from idle lands, at the same time improving forest areas.

THROUGHOUT the year Americans are familiar with Vermont's more famous crops, its milk, maple, and turkeys. But only during a few short months of colder weather do they become aware of another important crop—her Christmas trees. As the colorful harvest month of October wanes into the brown drabness of November and the bleakness of December, woodsmen are busy cutting and tying hundreds of bunches of spruce and balsam fir trees. From half of Vermont's fourteen counties almost a million trees finally are sent on their journey to the consumers who will eventually trim them for the festive season.

About the middle of October each year the Christmas tree harvest begins. Buyers from the city arrive and usually deposit certified checks in local banks guaranteeing to local dealers their pay when the trees are cut. The dealers hire their cutting crews, usually four or five men. The five-man crew is made up of two cutters, a tyer, a hauler, and the boss. In a four-man crew, the boss may either cut, tie, or haul.

Once the cutting crews are organized, the work begins. The woodland owner is paid from thirty to seventy-five cents per bundle or bunch of three to five trees. The dealer's crew cuts and ties the trees, and the owner is usually required to "twitch" or "bob" the bundled trees out to the roadside on a dray or sled. The cutters in the crew are paid 30 cents to 40 cents per bundle, and the tyer is paid ten cents per bundle. The tyer is the most important man in the crew, and often earns ten dollars per day. If the trees are brought to him he can sometimes tie 400 bunches in a short winter day.

Cut, tied, and twitched to the roadside, the trees are ready to be hauled away. If they are in the restricted zone for Gypsy Moth control, a good part of the state, they must be inspected, before loading or later fumigated to destroy the moth egg clusters. Inspectors for such work are located at Barre, Norwich, Rutland, and Bellows Falls.

Once certified, the trees are loaded on the trucks that carry 150 to 250 bunches. The largest trailer types hold 350 to 400 bunches. Some haulers just make the trip to the nearest railhead, where they load

the trees on flat cars for such markets as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Providence, Hartford, or New Haven. The larger trucks often make the trip all the way to the retail market. Some travel west to Syracuse, Buffalo or Cleveland.

The most popular tree in Boston and New York, seems to be the balsam fir, cousin to the original German "Tannenbaum." This tree is prized for its fragrant odor, its sturdy branches, and its ability to hold its needles in a warm room. Less favored are the native red spruce, the introduced Norway spruce (produced only in plantations), and the white, or "cat" spruce. Small white spruce "table trees" are sometimes bought late in the season too by New York buyers. Red spruce is as popular as balsam fir in Vermont but the white spruce, which has a somewhat objectionable odor, is not wanted. The spruce is usually bushier and sturdier than the balsam fir, but does not have its fragrance and sheds its needles sooner.

Some of Vermont's conservationists, an active and sincere group, are fearful lest the harvest of such large numbers of Christmas trees will damage woodlands and reduce the future supply of pulpwood



Lucia Haskins

Left: Larry Willard pictures the Vermont State House in her Christmas finery.

Picture



Cutting crews consist of four or five men, usually two cutters, tyer, hauler and boss. Trees must be butted square.

TIPS FOR PRODUCING CHRISTMAS TREES

1. Know the "going" price before selling.
2. Shear or clip trees for better quality.
3. Where possible, do your own cutting.
4. Cut stumps low.
5. Have a written agreement with your dealer to avoid disagreements and memory failures.
6. Have trees inspected before loading.
7. See your County Forester for advice on management and marketing.

Near Jeffersonville two men tie as a third "twiches" the trees to the roadside. A fast tyer can bundle as many as 1500 trees in a day.

Scofield



and sawlogs. Actually inspection of Christmas tree harvest areas shows that in most cases the number of trees taken from each acre is very small compared to the total number present. Probably only 50 to 100 trees are taken from among the 500 or 1000 often found on each acre. The remaining trees are left to grow into future crops of Christmas trees or into pulpwood and lumber.

From the standpoint of the farmer, too, who wants to clear the trees from his pasture so that grass will grow better, the removal of the trees is an improving measure rather than destructive.

Several of Vermont's Christmas tree dealers own tracts of woodland of their own which tend to produce spruce and fir trees naturally. These men plan their land use for Christmas tree production, cutting the trees carefully so that others nearby can expand and grow bushy. They weed out hardwood trees that tend to compete with the spruce or fir. Others plant open areas to spruce or fir, being careful to keep out cows so the trees will grow well and have good form.

Vermont Christmas tree growers found at an early date that the business was risky and the competition ruthless. One year consistent cold weather after cutting time, and until the holiday season arrived, meant large quantities of trees reached the market in good condition and prices tended to be low. Another year a warm spell or two meant falling needles and changing of color, which resulted in fewer good trees at the market but better prices. Some years hijackers seemed to be plentiful, and loss of trees from roadside piles or even from parked trucks was heavy. Then in the war years labor was scarce and harvesting costs high. At times unexpected restrictions of retail sales by cities meant losses rather than the expected profits.

Some Christmas trees go directly by rail to Eastern markets, but many now travel all the way to the middle-West, New York and Philadelphia by truck. From 150 to 250 bundles of three to five trees each are carried on each truck. Truckloads are inspected for Gypsy moth eggs at Norwich, Barre, Rutland or Bellows Falls and are fumigated if necessary.



The land owner generally is expected to "bob" the bundled trees to the roadside, but here, near Morrisville, the tying was done handy to a truck route. Bundled trees left by the road for dealers have been known to disappear in hijackers' trucks.

Scofield

Today Vermont dealers read weather and economic signs with care and plan their yearly harvest accordingly. Each Fall they harvest and market a crop worth approximately \$150,000 to the landowners and \$1,000,000 to the retail city dealers.

Of all counties producing Christmas trees Essex County, in the northeast corner of the state, boasts the greatest activity. Fourteen listed growers and dealers, and probably as many more unlisted, cut close to 100,000 trees each year in this 385,000 acre woodland area. The men who harvest Christmas trees normally combine the work with pulpwood cutting and farming. Other important Christmas tree counties are Orleans, Caledonia, Lamoille, Washington, Orange, and Rutland.

Vermont Christmas tree dealers find that they are facing more and more competition from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New York. In these other states, where balsam fir does not grow naturally (except for northern New York), woodland owners are planting for Christmas tree production such species as Norway spruce, Douglas fir, white spruce, and even Scotch and other pines.

The trees are not only planted, but are

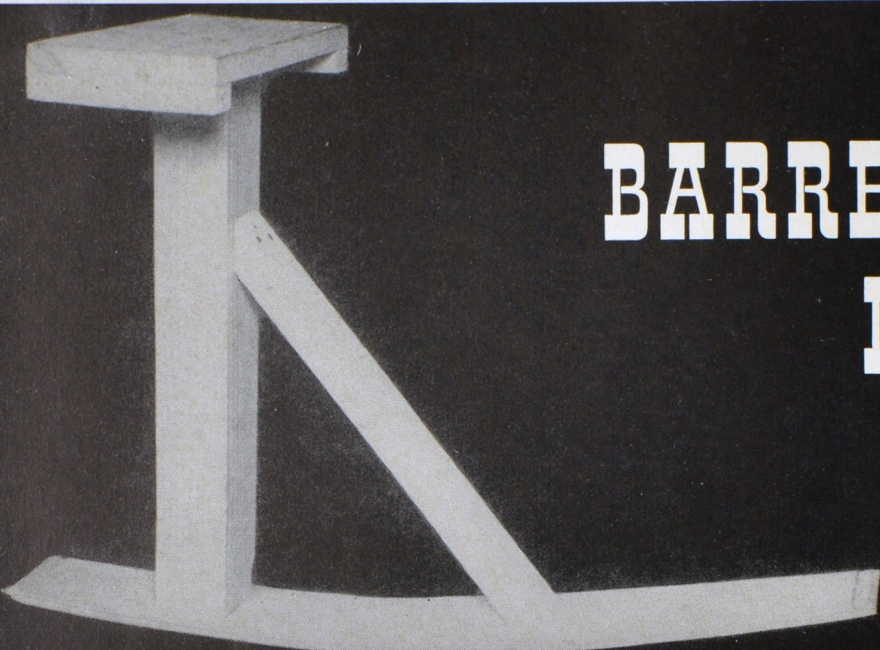
sheared or clipped while growing so as to have a perfect form. The emphasis on quality seems to be paying off, since the average person seems willing to pay a better price for a top grade tree. However, the growers near the big cities have costs for fire prevention, weeding, and patrolling to prevent theft that don't hit the Vermonter.

Some foresters in Vermont and neighboring New Hampshire are enthusiastic about Christmas trees as a woodland crop feeling that there is more money in Christmas trees than in any other forest product. One successful grower states that, beginning with 1000 trees per acre, the trees are ready for harvest in 12 to 15 years, and total costs are only five cents per tree. With good management of the trees they should be high in quality, worth 15 cents on the stump, and sell for at least 30 cents to 40 cents per bundle. At ten cents profit per tree, 1000 trees

would bring in \$100. This is a return per acre per year of six to eight dollars. It is assumed that all 1000 trees will be marketable as the result of good management and cultural practices such as clipping or shearing. The cost of planting will be nothing, since nearby seed trees can be relied upon to stock the area naturally.

Christmas tree growers in Vermont feel that their woodland acres have other values too—as cover for wildlife, in flood control, and for recreation.

Vermonters interested in the Christmas tree business can get helpful information from the extension forester at the College of Agriculture, University of Vermont, Burlington. For on-the-ground assistance in land management and marketing of Christmas trees and other forest products they can consult their County Forester, who is usually found at the extension service office at each county seat. END



BARREL-STAVE BRONCO

Story and pictures
by Don O'Brien

The author calls for a revival by adventure minded youngsters of this old and honored winter sport, jumper riding, thought to have originated in Vermont but fast on its way to oblivion.

Last winter Col. W. M. Tenney, then Post Commander at Fort Ethan Allen and now retired, revived his earlier interest in jumper riding. He made a basic model in his shop in twenty minutes. Here he shows Robert L. Wilson of Burlington how to ride.

SOMEWHERE in Vermont a lot of years ago a farm boy peeked over the edge of the comforter at the white square of his window. What he saw made him bound from the snug depths of his feather mattress to gaze with glee at the ermine cape with which the night had draped his favorite hillside haunt.

The lad tarried but briefly, then hastily put on his clothes and rushed out to make the first tracks in the fluffy white snow.

In the yard, his reconnoitering eye took in the sprawling skeleton of a collapsed barrel. He looked at one of the loosened staves, he glanced again at the slope, changed into a thrilling new world by the first magic touch of winter.

Stave . . . Hill . . . youth's genius put the two together. And thus was born that leaping, bucking, coasting device which the young 'uns of my day knew as the jumper.

This history, of course, is imaginative. It's doubtful if anyone can say just when and how the saga of the stave began. But it must have been something like that.

I like to picture the youngster snatching up the barrel stave and rushing to the shed for hammer, nails and supplementary pieces of wood with which to materialize his idea.

And I like to think that he bore, as I once did, the black and blue mementos of his first bewildering ride.

The jumper, or jack-jump or scooter or schooner, as I've learned it was variously called in different communities, was a live thing, a critter of moods and contrariness. It had a yen for picking its own route and destination, at least until the rider was able to prove himself the boss. And that took time . . . and bruises.

I remember the first one I made. Not enough nails . . . or nails not long enough, hasty bracing, a wobbly seat. My masterpiece became but a little pile of wood under me at the foot of the gully slope where I first tried it out. But I was an unusually fortunate lad. Our house was strategically located next door to the blacksmith shop in Burlington, run by the late and beloved John Collins, before



he retired to his farm and Assistant Judgeship.

I gathered up what was left of my handiwork and took it into Mr. Collins' shop. That, neighbors, was a place of magic. And the brawny magician, himself, whose cloak was a leather apron, looked at it and chuckled.

He picked up a metal strip and went to his anvil. I came out with a rugged stave-steed that could take the bumps—even if it often lost me on the first one.

From now on, to save words, I'll call the contrivance a jumper. You, who knew it by another name, can do your own translating.

By any name, there was something about those rampant, unruly and head-strong contraptions that left shiny new sleds and slick, squatty toboggans propped against outbuildings and trees in impatient idleness.

Maybe it was the challenge of that self-willed wooden individualist, which jeered, "come on, sonny, I'm tough—let's see how tough *you* are." For what Vermont boy would have it said that he'd been licked by a mere barrel stave with a seat? "You just wait," he'd vow, "I'll make you behave."

When you finally got the knack of the thing, there came a feeling of mastery. You had to learn just how to sway your body, to manipulate your legs and feet, and the lessons came the hard way.

But the bumps and bruises paid off gloriously, for, to scoot down a steep slope with the frosty wind whipping your face, to come to rest right side up and wave back in triumph to the admiring lads and lasses at the crest—there was a thrill of thrills!

The jumper belonged to the days of jingling sleigh bells and the frosted breath and bobbing heads of horses with snow flying from their hoofs. It was a part of the era of laden traverses flying down the police-protected hill streets of cities and towns; of winter sport carnivals on Lake Champlain, with fancy skating and lofty toboggan slides; the years before elaborately mechanized ski resorts, when folks made their own fun in the snow right close to home.

After the stave-runner jumper came into being, alert manufacturers saw the light and began to turn out what we knew as the store kind. They were colorful, machine-turned things, with iron braces, steel runners and a wide variety of painted design. The runners were narrow and had more of the gripping power of those on a sled.

But they lacked the element of wildness which the barrel stave inherited from its

parents of the timberlands. Store jumpers had little of the deviltry and cussedness which gave the home-made product its personality. The difference was somewhat like that between a patient nag and a spirited colt.

Maybe the jumper will come back. Any red-blooded youngster would need only to try it to become intrigued with the adventure of the thing.

I can think of no more hilarious event than a jumper derby to liven up a winter holiday carnival. None of those store sissies in this. No, homemade by the lads themselves, the racing vehicles should be, for the building is a lesson in craftsmanship.

Yes, neighbors, I'd like to watch a lot of kids compete in a jumper race down a steep, natural slope. Watch it, I said. END

Above: Col. Tenney, not to be outdone by his young friend, shows that he can still master the tricky steed. Below: Robert, 13-years old, finds the difficult technique of riding the animated barrel stave combines the knack of skiing with unicycle balancing—not learned in one ride alone. Factory style jumpers were made in Worcester and Readsboro.





Francis A. Rugg

THE PLYMOUTH GOLD RUSH

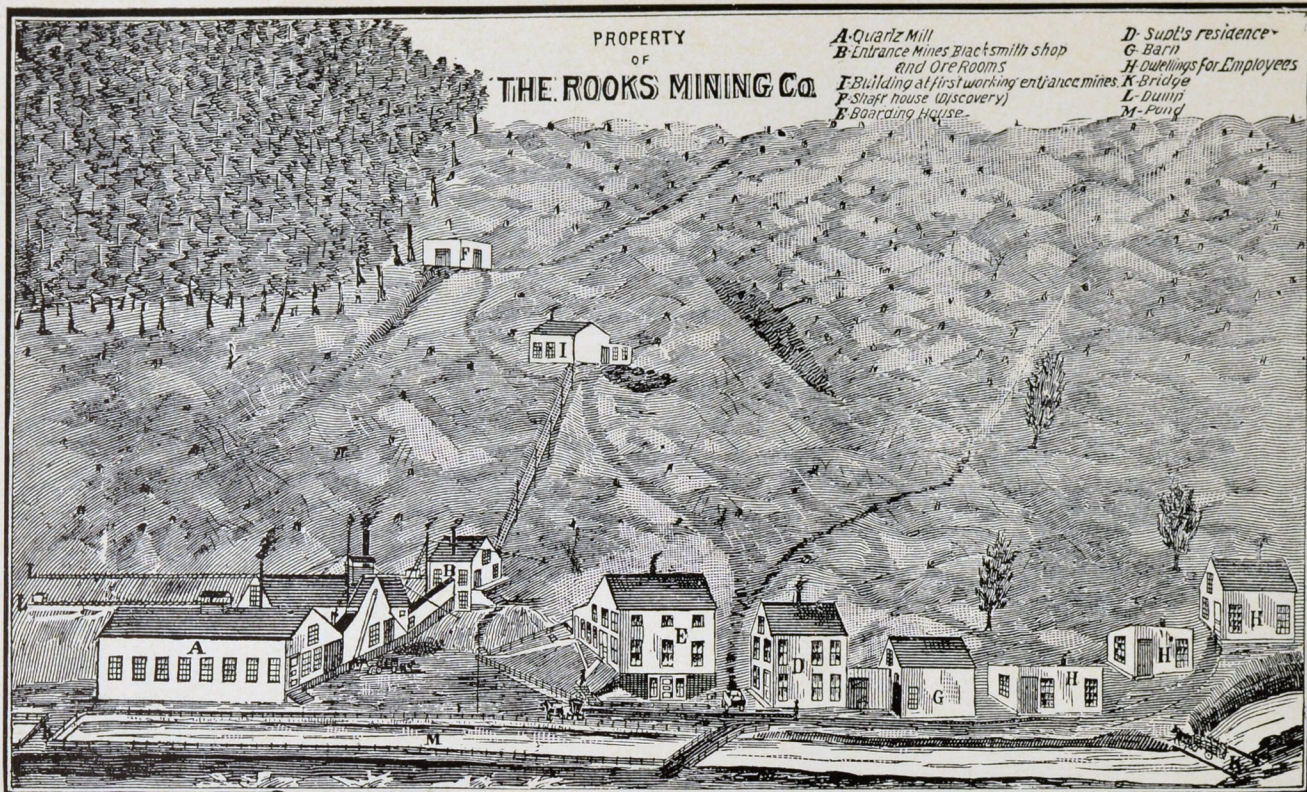
by BETH R. SMITH

GOLD!" A word that has always sent the pulse of man racing; that cold relentless stuff of which vain dreams are made; the last thing you would expect to find in the still cool solitude of the Plymouth hills. And yet it is there. It has caused the same wild excitement there, the same reckless hopes and heartbreak, that it has been causing man since long before Vergil lamented "the accursed greed for gold."

Its presence was first discovered, so one story goes, just a hundred years ago by a young man back from the

gold fields of California. When the cry of "Gold" went up from Sutter's Fort in '49, three young men from Plymouth had left their hillside farms for the West. One was known to have been killed by Indians; the fate of the second was never known, and though his wife waited and hoped for many years, no word ever came. The third returned with what was in those days considered quite a fortune. He was fishing one day in Buffalo Brook, one of the crystal-clear streams which flows into Echo Lake just beyond Tyson. Gold was far from his mind, but his trained eye caught its flash in the rushing water. It was but a small nugget, but there were more. He worked alone and tried to keep his find a secret. But soon the whisper rose above the ring of whetstones, above the whine of the water-driven saw mill, above the political discussions in the village store. GOLD! Not three thousand miles away but right in Plymouth.

← *Beneath these peaceful hills may still lie the gold to send men's blood racing and to line their pockets.*



This optimistic view of the Rooks property appeared in the company's gilt-edged annual report of 1884. The picture was reproduced from a rare copy in the Wilbur Library of the University of Vermont.

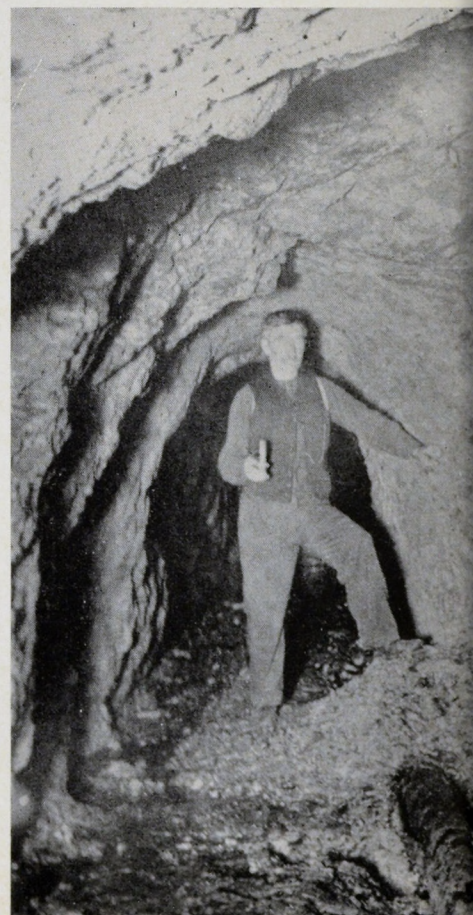
Hitchcock's *Geology* says it was Matthew Kennedy who made the discovery, and that it was just over the town line in Bridgewater where the brook which drains the Five Corners area enters that township. This writer also gives William Hankerson credit with "the discovery of gold in Plymouth in 1855." They probably refer to the area around the Five Corners however, for they also mention that Ira Payson, Charles Kane and Simeon Johnson formed a company and erected a "mill and crusher in 1853." They do state emphatically, however, that the purity of the gold found in Plymouth exceeded that generally found in California.

At any rate, by 1855 the brook which ran through Amos Pollard's Farm began to be known as Gold Brook, and a canny old "Forty-Niner," Virgil Woodcock, was among those washing there. After the others had become discouraged and quit, he entered into an agreement with Pollard and put in a log dam. With a sluice a half mile long he achieved a twenty foot drop, and increased greatly the amount of gravel he could wash. After Pollard's death a few years later, it was found that he had been paying one sixteenth of the gold he took for the rights. In less than a year this had amounted to \$100, so a conservative estimate would place the total at least \$2000. Woodcock died soon after

this and it was several years before anyone with experience worked the claim.

In the meantime over the ridge in the Five Corners area things were happening fast. Matthew Kennedy still held the mortgage on the land he had sold to the Plymouth Mining Co. which had suspended operation. In the Fall of 1858 William Hankerson returned and took a claim. He took out \$400 by digging over two square rods. The next year he put a water wheel in to run machinery with which to drain the old mine and caused this water to pass through a sluice into which was thrown the gold-bearing earth. These sluices were made of boards and varied in width up to 20 inches and were 6 to 10 inches deep. Fine dirt was washed away leaving only pebbles and the gold in the bottom. "Riffles" were frequently used in the bottom. These were removable parallel slats with cleats or strips of sheet iron nailed about one fourth inch apart. Because of specific gravity, the gold would supplant lighter material and at the end of the day the Riffle could be removed and the gold laden sand placed in a "Rocker." This was just what it sounds like, a cradle, and was sloshed back and forth to further purify the ore. Hand panning, the process which required the most skill of all was eventually necessary, for the "Black Sand" or fine iron particles are nearly as heavy as the

Henry Fox, heir to the Rooks Mine property, is shown here in the shaft entrance. This unusual photograph was taken in 1895 by Walter Clafin of New York City.



gold. Experience and a knowledge of the behavior of gold under various conditions, which the native farmers did not have probably accounts for the fact that it was almost always the "outsiders" who found the gold. A man who has failed usually minimizes the importance of a venture, and that may account for the dearth of material on an "industry" which kept the town in agitation for over thirty years. By this time the matter had come to the attention of "the press." Ludlow now had a weekly newspaper, *The Voice Among the Mountains*, and on May 31, 1860 it took notice of "Plymouth Gold Digging." After explaining that conflicting reports and some pretty tall tales had been reaching his desk, the editor tells how he hired a horse and buggy and went to see for himself what was going on. "It is getting to be quite a busy time among the Miners. New discoveries of gold have been made on the brook running from the west point of Reading into Plymouth near the residence of Uriah Allard and Jonathan Merrill. Two men, Messers. Hayward and Sweetland of Springfield, Mass. are now at work on this stream doing tolerably well. They have bought the whole brook. Hankerson is now clearing out the old millpond at the Five Corners where we shall hear from him again. There are now seven companies at work on Buffalo Brook where they are said to be making fair wages. At any rate it is nonsense to suppose they work there for nothing."

Again in *The Voice* of August 9, but ten weeks later, Beals and Graves, two more ex-Forty-Niners, from Mass. are declared to be "doing handsomely." We can do no better than to quote from an eye witness how things were going on Gold Brook in 1860.

"The miners take a lease on a certain no. of lineal rods, from 10 to 40, along the stream with the right to dig in the "dry" on either side as far as they choose, for a seven year period from Pollard for \$100 or more. Mr. Newton bought the lowest claim, 70 rods, and resold to 3 or 4 others. There are now sixteen dams. A Mr. Allen of Zachry Snell & Co., who was standing in the water shoveling out a tail race, said he hadn't had a dry foot for ten days." False reports in the *Springfield Republican* are given by the reporter as the reason why this Allen had become wary of newspapermen and was "slow in warming up, but finally became communicative and showed much scientific knowledge. He admitted that he was averaging but \$1.25 a day, but had high hopes when he reached the Bed Rock. He is finding silver in small quantities



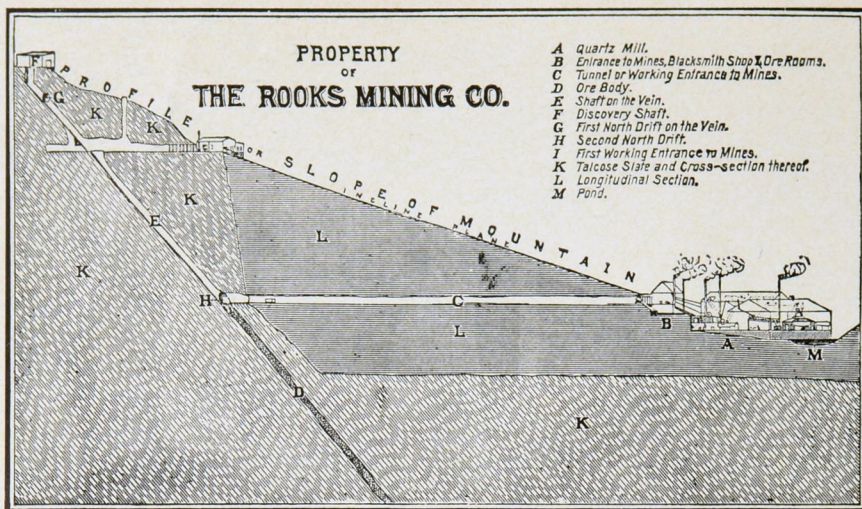
This old map, a rare copy in the Vermont Historical Society, predates the heyday of the Plymouth gold mining. The dark lines, though, show where placer gold was panned. The Rooks mine later was located on the stream north of Weavers Hill.

and some sulphurate of zinc, but no quick silver. A native of Bridgewater, Mass., Allen is a returned Californian, and told us he had worked there in the warm water till his feet were raw. Some of the claims were not being worked, and as we progressed upstream we came to that of F. W. Coolidge, a promising claim, but he was out having." (There are wedding rings still in existence made from the gold from that claim.) "There are two Hotels, Central, and Buffalo House, which furnish board and 'Refreshment' of the best quality, and there is a butcher cart twice a week." The initials M. B. were signed to this editorial.

William Hankerson, who *The Voice* promised would be heard from again, had now finished sluicing the mill pond at Five Corners. He had taken a terrific risk in paying \$1000 for the privilege, but it had made him over 600% for he took out more than \$7000 in gold. This area may

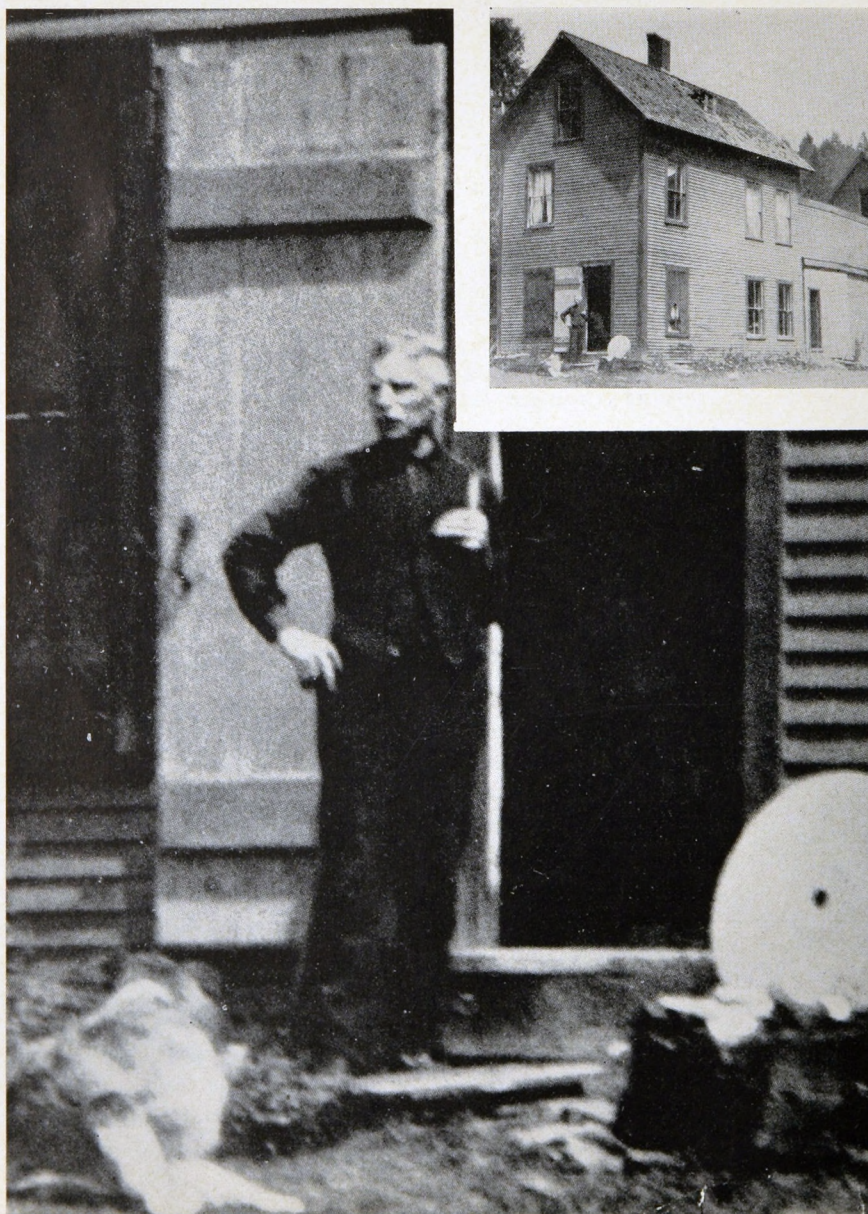
not have produced as reliably but there were some spectacular finds. The natives kept on panning a few flakes from the brooks, but experienced miners found pockets. Lombard is said to have taken his dinnerpail full of ore from a shaft in the rock, and found it worth \$190. A minister by the name of Raymond is reported to have found rich ore by digging in a hillside above the old road from Five Corners to the Kingdom. Marcell Earl came back from the West and spent one summer on the farm of his brother, Edward Earl and took by panning in an eddy by a ledge in the tiny brook on the farm, several "pill bottles" of pure flakes. There were so many local people panning and sluicing the many brooks in that area that they were washing out the roads and the town officials had to put a stop to it.

William Ames now owned the old Woodcock claim on the Pollard Farm



This cross-section view, taken from the Rooks report of 1884, seems to indicate a bottomless vein of ore.

Henry Fox lived the last 30 years of his life in this superintendent's house, the sole owner of the mine property once valued at a million and a half dollars. This photograph, part of it enlarged, was taken in 1908.



by the lake. He had no mining experience, but a St. Louis lawyer by the name of Harris became interested, and they decided to form a company. It was a motley assortment, not one of whom had any mining background, who finally comprised the Rooks Mining Company. Among them were Charles Rooks (or Rook) a government agent from the Indian Territory; Anthony Blum, a shoe store proprietor from New York State; and Col. Babcock, a promoter from New York City, who probably furnished them with ideas. The one indomitable member of this odd assortment was the assayer, Henry Fox. Like the rest, he was without experience but he differed in that his faith in the site he helped select endured. They came to the rather obvious conclusion that the gold which had been washing into all these streams was coming from richer deposits in the surrounding hills. Perhaps a vein of pure gold quartz! Excitement ran high. The younger generation in particular found the search for it more alluring than farming and were eager to join in.

A device made of metal rods, something on the order of a divining rod, was brought from New York by a man who surrounded the whole affair with an air of mystery. A gold bearing rock was finally located. High on a hillside north of the Pollard farm they began to dig a shaft and what was probably the largest of Plymouth's gold producing enterprises. A boarding house was quickly built. The ring of hammers and axes mingled with the voices of many men as trees fell and several small houses took shape. The assayers were so favorably impressed with the quality of the ore that the building of a mill was begun. After the main shaft had gone down some fifty feet, it began to fill with water and a horizontal shaft had to be dug. This extended nearly three hundred feet into the mountainside and much speculation went on among the townspeople as to whether the two would meet. Quite a group gathered to see the finish and tense moments preceded the gush of mud and water which proved that the engineers had figured correctly.

A little forty horse power engine turned the rollers which crushed the roasted ore, and quicksilver and sulphuric acid were used to extract the gold. Where today there is only a rusty little turntable and some warped iron rails on which the tiny cars brought out the ore, seventy years ago there was a hustling mining town in operation. The superintendent and all employees lived at the mine. The first month's "cleanup" was exhibited on Oct. 27, 1883 and the



Good sized trees now grow where the crushing mill once stood. Only the ore car tracks remain. All pictures on this page are by the author.

Ludlow paper, now known as the *Tribune*, printed the following on Nov. 30:

"We had the pleasure of handling the first ingot of gold produced at Plymouth Tuesday. It measured 6 x 1 x $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and weighed fifty-one ounces and one pennyweight. It was 97/100 fine and valued at \$1021. This was the result of the first clean-up and the second was under way the present week, and much better results are anticipated from it. The Plymouth Hills have at last fallen into the hands of men who can make them disgorge their long-concealed treasure in paying quantities, and we are glad to note this success; certainly they have by their energy and faithfulness deserved it."

The first month's clean-up was reported by local sources as \$700. It is hard to tell at this late date whether this was a figure arrived at after expenses had been deducted, or if it was Vermont conservatism in contrast to the approved publicity practices of the day.

"A bar of gold dug from the soil of New England is a novelty," comments the *Boston Evening Journal* of April 4, 1884, "but a bar worth \$2891 was exhibited in the *Journal* office today by Mr. H. L. White, treasurer of the Rooks Mining Co. of Plymouth, Vt. In less than six months they have taken out \$13,000 worth of gold at a cost of \$5,000, the first dividend on 50,000 shares is 17 cents per share." The *San Francisco Journal* lifts an eyebrow as it comments that they had never heard of mining in the Green Mountain State, and adds that, "the famed Kentuck mine in Nevada will pay but ten cents, or a total of \$3,000 in the same month."

An impressive alligator-grained leather bound report of the Rooks Mining Co. was printed and circulated. It contained pictures and a month by month report of a most convincing sort. Nuggets worth as much as \$31 are noted. The net value of the mine was estimated at \$1,535,274; daily earning at \$2,104.16 or \$13.12 per share. This was over 131% on capital investment. Stock changed hands, Boston interests bought heavily, and H. L. White of that city became President of the company. Plans were made at a meeting of the board of directors to quadruple the capacity of the mill. In preparation for this program of expansion, the machinery was taken down and carefully packed. Henry Fox, the assayer who had helped to determine the location of the mine, was now Superintendent. He had been buying stock and now owned a few thousand dollars worth. Three years went by and he waited more or less patiently for the directors to go on with the plans. Without machinery or help he could only pan the brooks and wait. Finally he was forced to sue the company for his back salary. The court's decision was in his favor and the mine and all property were put up at Sheriff's sale at Ludlow. The representative of a company dealing in abandoned mining property placed a bid of \$12,000, Fox raised it \$500 and it was struck off to him. The height of Plymouth's goldrush was past and late in 1887 Henry Fox began his thirty years as a hermit mine owner.

The story of Fox's life is a colorful one. Born in Switzerland of Austrian descent, he became a British subject, joined the Foreign Legion and saw fighting in India. Later he was a Steward with a steamship company operating a line to South America, and finally went into the assaying business in New York. He never liked to talk about himself and the local people felt that some parts of his life had been tragic. He was neat and courteous but always reserved. During the thirty years he lived alone in the one remaining house, selling off the property and always searching. He never lost faith in his mine but finally became ill and had to be taken forcibly to a doctor in Ludlow. Insane and suffering from Brights disease, he was taken to the Retreat at Brattleboro where he died a few weeks later, May 2, 1919, at the age of seventy.

"The Gold Mine" was one of the attractions the town had to show to the "City Boarders," the nineties version of the tourist of today, and many a party of beruffled young women well protected

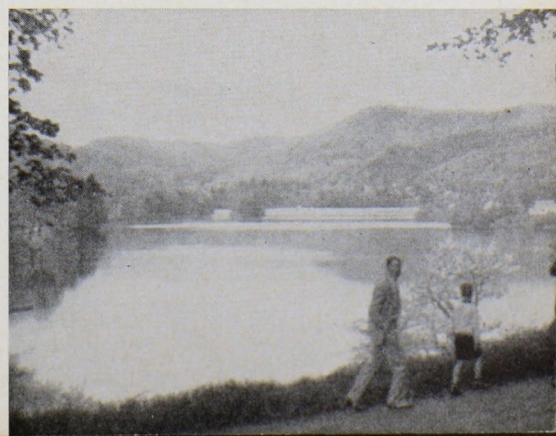


A modern prospector inspects the horizontal shaft entrance to the Rooks Mine, for many years now blocked by fallen rocks.

by large leghorn hats, has dipped gold-flecked gravel from the brook at the side of Mr. Fox's house. He was always a quiet but interesting host and frequently gave his guests pieces of gold-flecked quartz.

Was there as much gold taken from the mine as reports would indicate or were the ingots faked? Who can say? It was certainly over-promoted. Is there enough gold in that talcose slate vein in the eastern part of Plymouth to make mining profitable at some future time? That too may have to await the development of some device like the Geiger Counter for its answer. There is no question but that there is still gold in the hills, or even more likely, in the lake beds, and on a Sunday afternoon you often see people panning for fun. But the excitement has died down and melting snows have brought down gravel and partly buried the old millsite. Moss-grown timbers still project from the piles of dirt at the mouth of the shaft, and rusty tracks lead to the spot where gold was once milled. Trees a foot in thickness have grown where the house stood in which a man lived alone for thirty years on a \$12,500 piece of faith only to die a pauper. END

Gold Brook, giving little hint of its tumultuous past, enters Echo Lake quietly in this scenic cove on Route 100.



NORWICH

Keeps the Faith

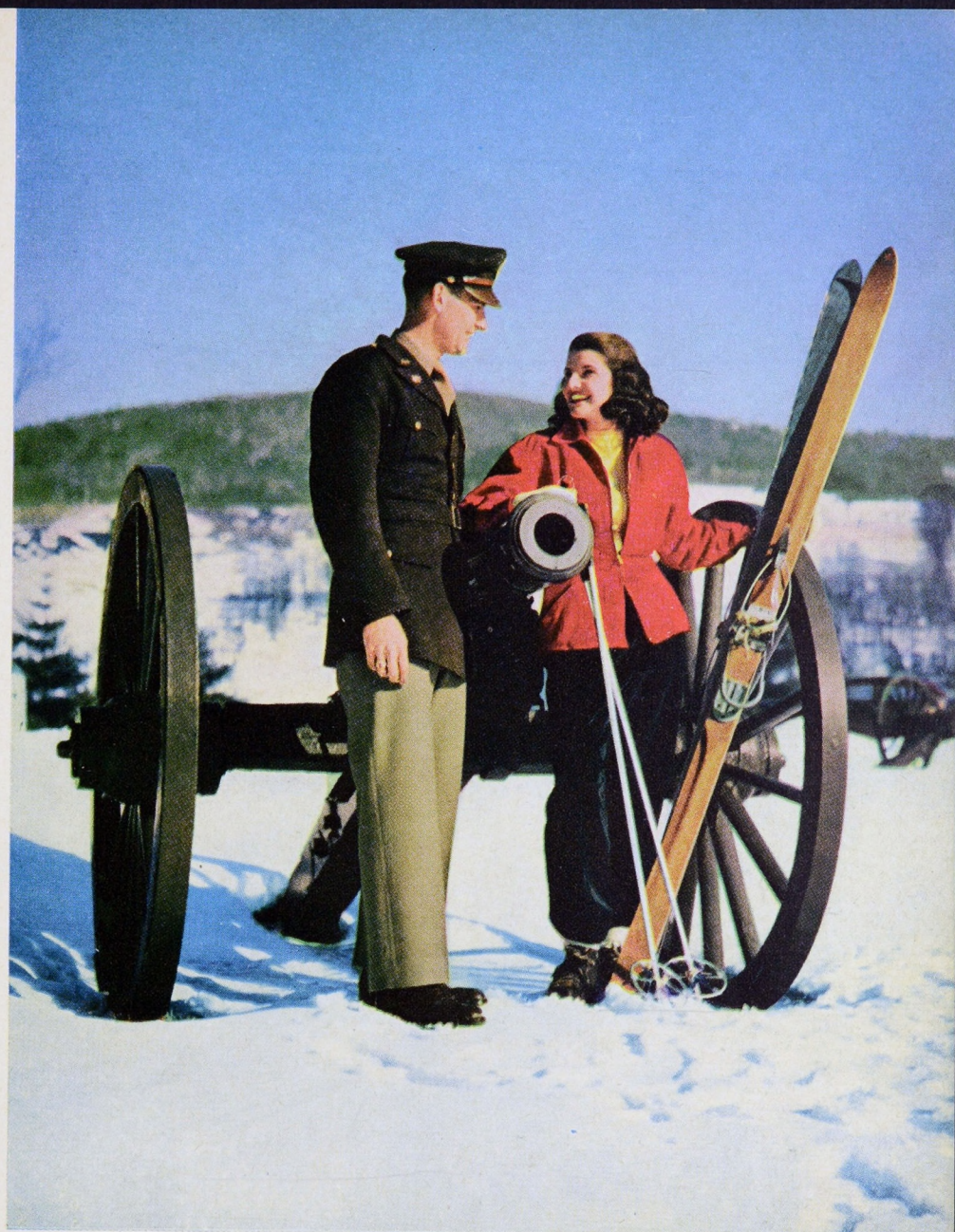


The Story of Norwich University

The Military College of Vermont

by

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH



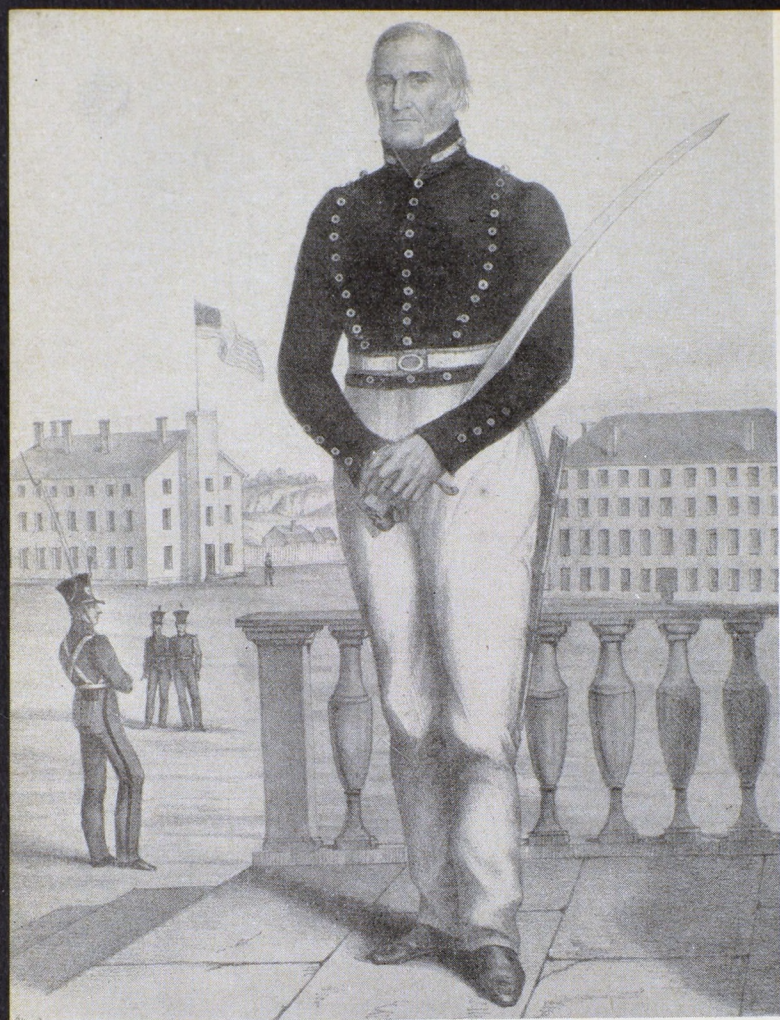
Derick

ANY collegiate institution which has stood "four-square to all the winds that blow" for over a century, surviving wars and depressions, and the ever shifting doctrines of educational theories, and winning through the century the warm praise of men on the "firing-lines" of great issues in times of war and peace, must have at its heart a basic philosophy of training for specific purposes, and back of that philosophy must be vision.

Norwich University, in its superb setting of mountains in the village of Northfield, is the symbol of a philosophy of education and vision dating back to its founder, Captain Alden Partridge. A graduate of West Point, a professor there, and later superintendent, an engineer of

standing, he developed a theory of education from which the University has never departed. He warned the Country one hundred and thirty-two years ago that the development of a great standing army would in the end mean the loss of individual liberty and the freedom that Americans knew. In its place, he urged the establishment of a "citizen-soldiery," stating "Scarcely ever has a nation lost her liberties when her armies were composed of her own citizens who fought for the preservation of their liberties and property." He drew on his own wide knowledge of history to prove his thesis.

Norwich was born of his belief that college men of America could as a phase of their training be prepared as officers at the same time that they were being educated



Captain Alden Partridge, U.S.A., A.M., 1785-1854, founder in 1819 and first president of Norwich University at Norwich, Vt. After a brief period at Middletown, Conn., the University was removed in 1866 to its location in Northfield.

for civil pursuits. The record of Norwich graduates in all the Country's wars since the University was founded in 1819 is a distinguished one, so much so that high-ranking officers of the American armies in all wars have spoken in memorable terms of the achievements of Norwich men in varied branches of the armed services. The record begins with the Black Hawk War, the Seminole War, and continues through the Mexican War, Civil War, Spanish-American War, the First and Second World Wars. The commendation for service rendered to the Country in wars past is summed up in the statement of General Leonard Wood in 1918—"The splendid thing about Norwich is that she has always kept the faith," and in the statement of General Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1946—"In every sense he [Captain Partridge] gave to the country in an hour of greatest need, thousands of young men, trained in both military and civil fields, thoroughly grounded in the fundamental essentials of citizenship and sound leadership."

The high praise given Norwich men, and through them their University, seems to create in the public mind





Left: Even with the liberal art studies, the sciences, arms training and sports, Norwich turns out smartly drilled cadets.



Norwich is the only private university providing the rugged Mountain & Winter Warfare training. Specially equipped cadets learn to ski, to fight and survive in extreme cold and deep snow.

something of a distorted picture. The entire University of today does reflect the vision and faith of its founder in the sense that all students live under a military system and take courses in military science and tactics in the Army Reserve Officers Training program. Also, selected students are members of Mountain and Winter Warfare, Armor, Engineering, and Signal Corps units. Moreover, the students and faculty, when on duty, wear uniforms, and the Cadet Corps itself functions largely through its own officers. In brief, the vision of the University's founder does find realization in college men, living under and being a responsible part of a military system which prepares them for some threatening hour of their Country's need.

It is not true, however, that the entire emphasis falls upon military training. As a matter of fact, only a small percentage of the graduates go immediately into the armed services, although each one, if physically sound, is eligible for a reserve officer's commission; but all who do not seek commissions, wherever they may be in civil life, are ready for the summons.



The varied Norwich University campus, merging with the Northfield residential area, stretches out below East Hill. Now underway is an extensive building program.

Actually, the University is primarily like any other civilian college—a fully functioning educational institution set in a military framework. It was the first collegiate institution in America to begin the teaching of engineering primarily to and for civilians—in 1820 to be exact. Its engineering courses are famous and its engineers find country-wide employment. Other departments of instruction, in addition to Civil Engineering, in the technical and scientific division of the University include Aviation, Business Administration, Economics, Biology, Chemistry, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, and Engineering Management, each department giving a wide range of courses in its special field. In the liberal arts division it has the usual departments of the liberal

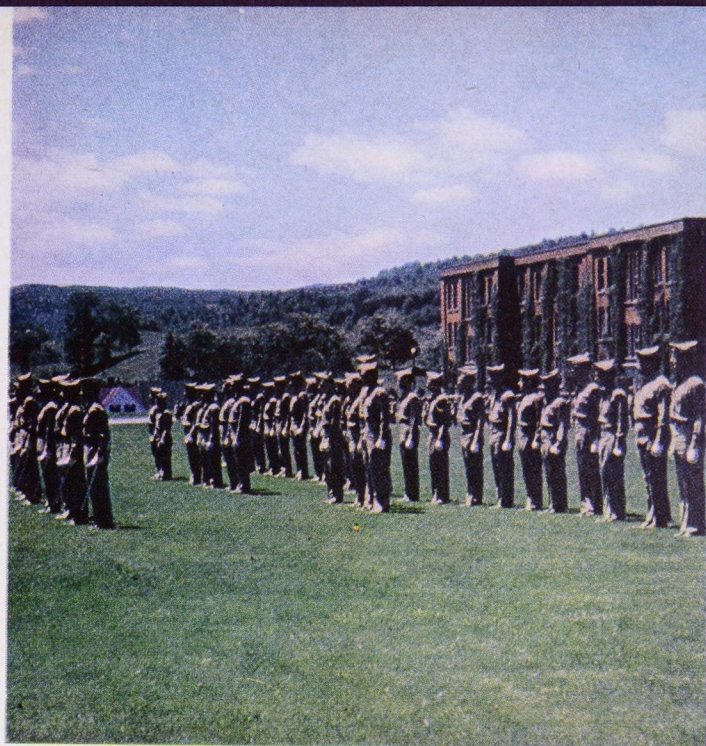
arts college—English, Mathematics, Modern Languages, Physics, Psychology and Education, and Social Sciences within which are Government, History, and Sociology. In even such a brief summary, it becomes obvious that the cadet at Norwich can study, in addition to his military subjects, courses that prepare him for a generous range of positions in business and professional fields.

Another vital aspect of the unique Norwich system is found in the fact that its faculty concentrates on teaching. While many of the members carry on research to their own benefit and that of the University, no graduate courses are given, and the full weight of the teaching falls in the actual instruction in person, in the classroom, and in the laboratory, rather than in hours of individual



Above: Right by the campus is Norwich's own ski development. Here cadets wait to ride the tow, which lies next to the ski jump.

Below: Practical field exercises, testing tactics and weapons learned in class work, are basic to the Norwich military training.



Above: The Parade is the scene of many impressive Norwich ceremonies. Retreat formations held here close the military day.

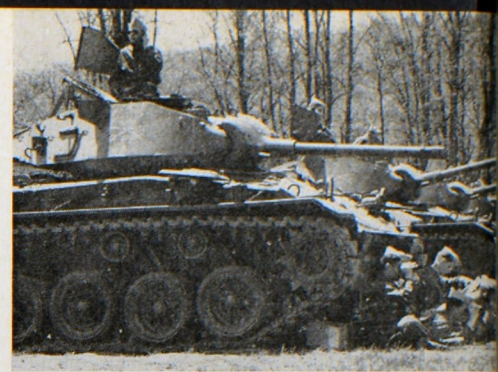
Below: The Norwich Horsemen now ride tanks, training even in the winter. Pres. Harmon was a famous tank commander in World War II.





Above: Nancy Cuthbert of Hempstead, L. I., is crowned Queen of the Norwich Winter Carnival by President Harmon. Her attendants are Mary Given and Sidney Baldwin.

Below: In the social whirl. Below: Dramatics are among many Norwich extras.



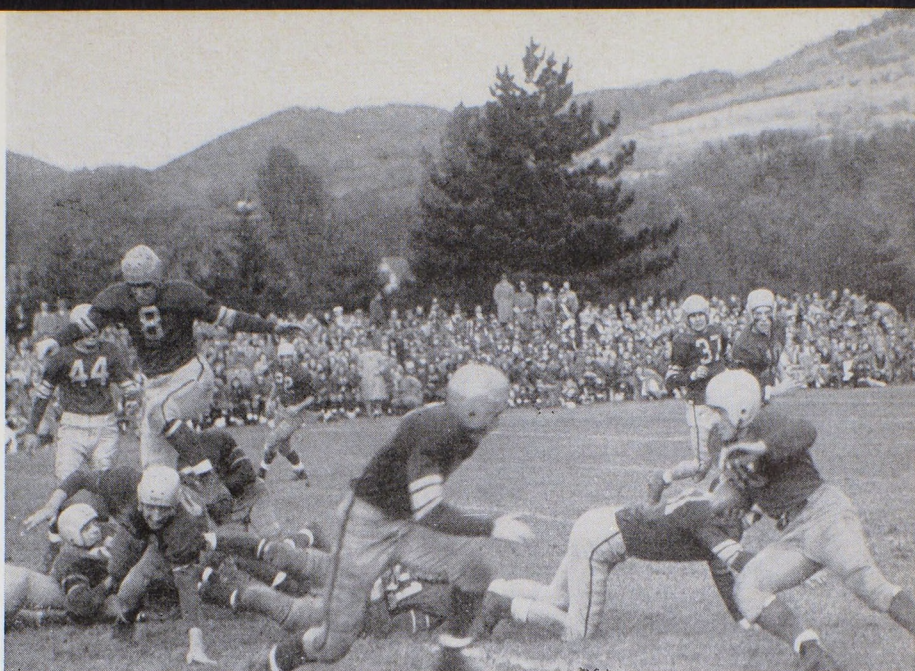
Above: Important training is tank firing on the Range.

Below: Part of the Mountain training, Sgt. 1/c. L.



AT NORWICH

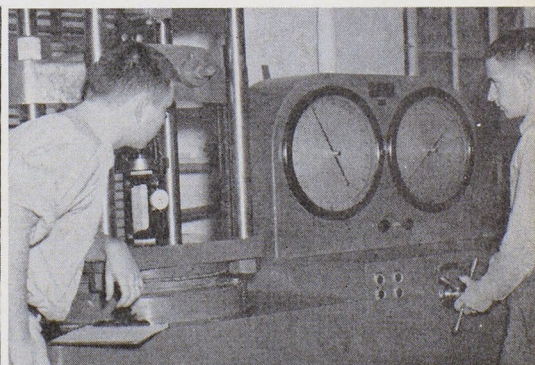
the academic and the military merge smoothly. University life here is not without its sports and social pleasures.



Norwich games are colorful. Never building teams above the capacity a rounded military training allows, neither has the University "de-emphasized" major sports.

Below: Norwich trains civil engineers.

Below: Engineering Dept. Testing machine.



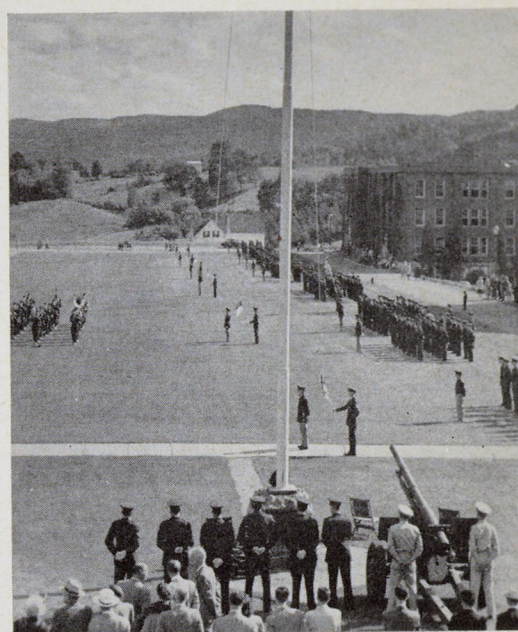
Below: The Signal Corps training includes setting up a message center in the field.





Left: Norwich men never forget their Color Guards. They have the honored place in all military formations and are a dramatic symbol of the University to every Norwich alumnus.

Below: The Parade, a broad, green lawn above the level of the town, is lined by barracks, class and administrative buildings. Here the formal Retreats are held toward evening.



laboratory research. One factor in the selection of faculty members is their scholarly and practical background, but just as important is the requirement that they be effective teachers. The fact that there are fifty active teachers giving instruction to 574 cadets (1950) indicates the personal impact of the instruction.

The strands growing out of one hundred and thirty-two years, first a philosophy, then a vision, and finally a military system dedicated to the Country's service when the need arises, then that combined with concentrated teaching in fields that lead to successful and useful business and professional careers, culminate in two broad objectives—democracy and leadership.

All students wear a uniform that is basically the uniform of the U. S. Army; all students begin as freshmen or "rooks" by taking orders; if they advance in assumption of responsibilities and recognition of obligations they become officers and give orders. Matters of discipline in the Cadet Corps are under their own officers with mere supervision by a Regular Army officer of the Military Department. Wearing a common uniform, functioning as a unit, the cadets learn the first great lesson of democracy—teamwork made possible by men working together for the common good, the good name of their unit, their University, and in the end their Country.

Then, there is the objective of leadership; and the moving-picture, prepared by the University and entitled "Destination—Leadership," which any organization may

borrow on application, sums up the final aim. Not only has this aim been achieved in the Country's wars, particularly in the last two, but in business and civic life where graduates have fulfilled their University's hope and faith in them. It is worth noting that any major successful business today is essentially a military establishment: the orders come down through a chain of command, and any failure along the way means some measure of disaster. The "rook" at Norwich learns this fact of lifelong significance his first year—often the hard way.

The life at Norwich is in essence Spartanlike in the sense that students must assume responsibilities that cannot be evaded comfortably—duties must be performed, no matter which way the wind blows; obligations must be faced and challenges to courage and mind must be accepted. Nowhere at Norwich do the loafer, the mollycoddle, the gold-coaster find a happy hunting-ground; and no Communistically inclined student or teacher has ever been known to invade the college gates; he would not be at home on the Parade where the Stars and Stripes flies, for around that flag the daily life of the University revolves until the bugle which guides the Norwich hours closes its day with the beautiful "Goodnight to all!" of "Taps."

Though the Norwich day looks far to years to be, and asks preparation for them of each student, there is plenty of fun. The range of interests for each student is ample—Outing Club, Flying Horsemen, Camera Club, Pegasus

Players, and others. Then there are the bands, military and dance, the college newspaper and junior book, the glee club, and six national fraternities with opportunities for enjoyable social and individual pleasure. Much of the social fun centers in the majestic Armory. Intra-mural sports are a feature, and a competent coaching staff offers sound coaching in basketball, track, football, hockey, skiing, rifle, baseball, and golf. In other details, the University program follows the well-established pattern of other colleges with special emphasis, as in the classroom, on personal contacts and instruction.

These objectives which have been simply stated as democracy and leadership did not come into being in a day; back of them is a vanished leader, generations of loyal alumni, faculty members who served long and wisely, presidents who gave to the future out of their gifts and abilities; and there are those, too many to be named, who aided financially or in other ways. Building on a substantial past in which sacrifice and loyalty to an ideal played no mean part, the University is clearly entering now into promising years that lead to a greater future of usefulness to students, to Vermont, and to the Country. Major General Ernest N. Harmon (Ret.), famed tank commander of the Second World War, once a Norwich student himself before he entered West Point, took over the presidency in June 1950. Academically, supported by an enlarged faculty of veteran and younger teachers, he

has added new courses and opened new departments; athletic problems long harassing in character have been solved as have administrative ones; the Living Endowment fund, contributed to by alumni and friends, is the largest in the University's history; and, visible evidence of alert and aggressive leadership, the building of badly needed structures goes on apace while plans for a new barracks, to house 138 students, approach reality with a Federal loan of \$340,000 now approved. Finally, across the century the vision of a far off founder links with a president who understands and can envision himself the future that the founder saw long ago. Toward that goal Norwich moves.


Whatever may be the destiny of America in these fateful years, it may be safely assumed that Norwich will continue to seek to fulfill the faith of Captain Partridge—that American college men under a special system of education and training can be prepared for the "arts of war and the arts of peace"; for war if need be, in the Country's defense; if not the need, then for constructive service in peaceful pursuits; and, either way, we can be sure that Norwich men will keep in mind the carved words on the entrance to their University—" . . . let all who enter through this gate be faithful to the past." END

[Dr. Peach was for thirty-six years Head of the Norwich University English Department.]

Centennial Stairway steps are dedicated to famed sons of Norwich.



WINTER WALTONS



Ice Fishing in Vermont

by ED KEENAN

The shanty was located about a quarter mile offshore from Hog Island so it didn't take long to get to the fishing grounds. While Sam, who is an old-timer at the game, unlocked the shanty and got things shipshape, Ed got busy with a chisel and started cutting holes so that we could get down to the business of the day.

It was Art's first time on the ice and after driving 200 miles to get in some weekend walleye fishing he was curious to learn just what this northern Vermont winter sport was like.

Art watched the cutting process for a few minutes and then made his first mistake. He asked how thick the ice was. Within a few seconds he was receiving instructions on how to cut a good hole with Sam's chisel.

Art learned there is a knack to cutting holes in ice, that is, good round holes with straight sides. He started to just hack away but soon discovered that by keeping the flat edge of the chisel against the outside of the hole and the beveled edge to the center he could get the job done faster, too.

Alternately cutting and cleaning the chipped ice from the hole, Art finally found how thick the ice was. As the twelve pound chisel struck pay liquid and water gushed up through his first hole, he straightened up and said, "Gentlemen, you certainly grow your ice thick in Vermont."

Art had done some trout fishing on Vermont streams, having fished the Otter where the New Haven joins it near Middlebury, downstream from the Dog Team Tavern. Trout fishing was something he liked but the conversation turned to ice fishing during a quiet spell on the river one day. Art's ears opened wide and he demanded more information. Now he was here to see for himself.

For the next two hours we were all busy cutting holes, setting out whips and baiting up, keeping our eyes moving along the row of whips already baited as we worked. The weather was not too cold but there was enough wind coming out of the west to make us appreciate how handy the shanty was. The twenty-three whips, set out in a line, extended over a distance of approximately one hundred feet. A person sitting in the shanty at one end of the line could spot any movement of the tips when a fish took interest in the minnows cruising near the bottom.

The whips interested Art for they were different from the "jacks," with their red flags bent over and hooked along a wooden upright, fixed to pop up when a fish bit. He had seen pictures of this type of ice fishing in other localities. These whips were nothing more than some willow branches about five feet long cut from a swamp on the way to the fishing grounds. Some line was wound on the whips and the butt ends set in the holes bored in pieces of slab wood about a foot long. The slabs, picked up at any sawmill, were then set back from the hole and covered with ice chips so that the tip of the whip would be over the center of the hole. From there on it was only a matter of putting a sociable minnow on the hook and letting it do its stuff about six inches from the bottom, which was in the neighborhood of twenty feet straight down.

Whips are preferred to jacks which release the line and sinker when a fish takes the bait, letting the sinker rest on the bottom to act as a drag; if the fish moves away, not being too interested in the menu as often happens, the flag

stays up and has to be reset. If a fish gets nose-y around the whip the tip gets nervous. Any tip moving along the line attracts attention and then it is a case of 'let 'em eat', until. . . . By holding the line the fisherman can feel what is going on down below and from experience can tell if the intruder is still interested, in which case he will time the snub.

During the time we had been working and talking Art noticed a slight movement of the fourth whip set-up as he was going back to the minnow bucket for a bait. Without saying anything he went over to it, held the line long enough to let the fish get the minnow well into its mouth—and pulled up his first walleye through one of the holes he had cut. The first we knew about it was when we heard his blast, 'Hey, you guys, look what I got.' It was a three pounder and made the big boy the happiest man on the ice. From then on during the rest of the day anyone who beat him to a whip that bent towards the ice had to move fast.

During the middle of the day when things had quieted down for a while, Sam headed for the shanty and left the patrolling of the line up to us. In about twenty minutes we heard the call and followed in his footsteps. The two burner oilstove was loaded with hot soup, hamburger and onions, fried potatoes, and a pot of steaming coffee ready to be put away. The big boy passed his plate and said, 'Fill it up, Sam, I'm glad I came.'

Later as he stretched his legs to relax Art noticed the cover to one of the four holes in the floor of the shanty so then Sam had to tell him about smelt fishing, which in turn led into ling—or cusk—fishing at night. Sam explained how, as soon as the ice forms with the first freezing weather and moves across the lake, the shanties begin to appear over the smelt grounds and shanty fishing comes

into its own. Thousands of fishing shanties are put to use on Lake Champlain during the winter smelt run with some 'Shanty Towns' numbering from sixty to eighty dwellings. He went on to explain that the type, size and color of a shanty depends upon the needs and fancies of the owners. Classified by the number of holes, they can be two holers, four holers or six holers, and furnished as desired. Some, with a small box as a seat, are large enough for only one or two persons, while others have linoleum floor covering, upper and lower bunks, and occasionally a radio, and will accommodate up to six fishermen.

The fishing is done with handlines in water ranging in depth from a few feet up to eighty and sometimes one hundred feet using a slab cut from the side of a smelt as bait. Some fishermen add an eye of a smelt at the head of the slab. Smelt are generally considered a salt water fish but they have been taken from Lake Champlain as far back as records are available. There appear to be two species in the lake, one of which grows to not over seven or eight inches, preferred by many for their delicate taste. The other type reaches a length of from twelve to fourteen inches.

Ling, sometimes called cusk or fresh water cod, are generally fished for at night, using a long smelt slab for bait. They look and are shaped like their older sea faring relatives but are a lighter color and weigh usually up to three pounds. While not rated highly as a food fish many fishermen like them for chowder. In some localities they are sold to mink ranches for animal food.

That was as far as Sam got on smelt and ling. Art happened to look along the line of whips just as the tip of one was disappearing down the hole. He reached the hole in time to get another walleye which was a good mate for his first one. Sam, as chief cook and dishwasher, went about the job of cleaning things up again while the rest of us went back to fishing.

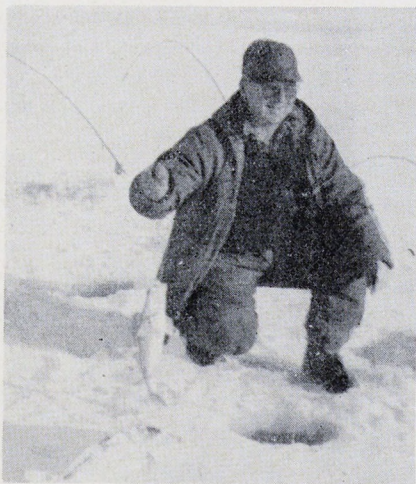
While we were standing on the ice waiting for another whip to start nodding, Art evidently got to thinking about why we, along with hundreds of other fishermen, happened to pick the shore line along which we were fishing, for after a long silence he inquired about it. Ed then told the story of the annual walleye pilgrimage to the spawning beds.

Walleyes like cool water and during the summer head for the spots in the lake where there is plenty of depth. Here they play lazy during the warm part of the day and can be taken by fishing deep. In the evening after the sun has set and the

top waters have had a chance to cool off, the accepted method is trolling plugs just under the surface.

Along about the early part of February the fish in the northern part of Champlain start to move towards the spawning grounds, some spawning in the shallow waters of Mississquoi Bay, some up the Pike River in Canadian waters and others up the Mississquoi River to the dam at Swanton where they deposit their eggs in the rapids just below the dam.

The walleyes evidently know their way around for in traveling from the main lake to the Swanton spawning grounds, those entering the shallower waters at Pelot Point and following the shores of North Hero Island and the Alburg Tongue to the mouth of the Mississquoi River have poked along fourteen miles and by the time they reach Swanton have boosted the mileage to



Holes cut, whips set and baited, and a walleye may take the hint any minute.

twenty-one. Those farther away from the waters of their youth and starting from the north end of South Hero Island, through The Gut, add six more miles to the swim. They seem to prefer to move along the east side of the channel and in doing so pass the west side of Hog Island, where we were located, about two miles south of the Alburg Bridge.

The best fishing generally comes as the spring sun and highwater runoff of the river wears away the ice in late March and early April. As the ice gets thinner the fishing gets better. Fishing shanties

start to appear on the ice in that area as soon after freeze-up as the ice will hold a shanty. The number gradually increases and reaches its peak about three weeks before the ice breaks up. All of the shanties put on the ice in the spring do not come off, for the elements and man's slowness to act take their toll.

After the fish have spawned they start the long journey back to their summer camp grounds and it is on that trip that the boat fishermen get some good fishing.

We were getting some perch along with the walleyes as we talked, which added variety to the sport. The two fish, members of the same family, are often taken in the same waters. After taking one off the line on the last whip set out, Art got inquisitive about a remark Sam had made earlier in the day when he got to talking about 'running perch,' and before we knew it we were off on another tack.

Running perch is an out-in-the-open proposition. The first problem is locating the fish, which is done by cutting holes in the ice over known feeding grounds and fishing close to the bottom with a handline baited with a small minnow or strip of pork as a starter, shifting to a perch eye when the first fish is taken.

Perch travel in schools and are on the move much of the time so it is necessary, as a rule, for the fishermen to cut many holes during a day's fishing. The ice over perch grounds is apt to vary in thickness, depending on the locality being fished, and much of the fishing is done where the ice is a little thinner than over the pike grounds. Some fishermen cut a number of holes arranged in a large circle and move from one to the other during the day while others cut a few in a line, pick up what fish they can, and move off to another location to repeat the process.

If it is a case of 'try and find them' the chisel can become a wee bit on the heavy side as the day wears along. The count of perch taken from Lake Champlain is generally made by the dozen and it is not unusual for a fisherman to take home a gunny sack load of them adding up to twenty or thirty dozen fish.

Ice fishing on the ponds and lakes of Vermont provides good sport during the winter months. Each year finds more fishermen bringing their families into the state to enjoy it. Fishing is everybody's fun. There are no age limits.

When Art came off the ice that night he was sunburned, windburned, tired, and happy. He had taken his share of the fish, for the first time with whips, liked what he had seen, and wanted to come back for more.

END



APPOINTMENT *with* CHAMPIONS

by A. W. COLEMAN

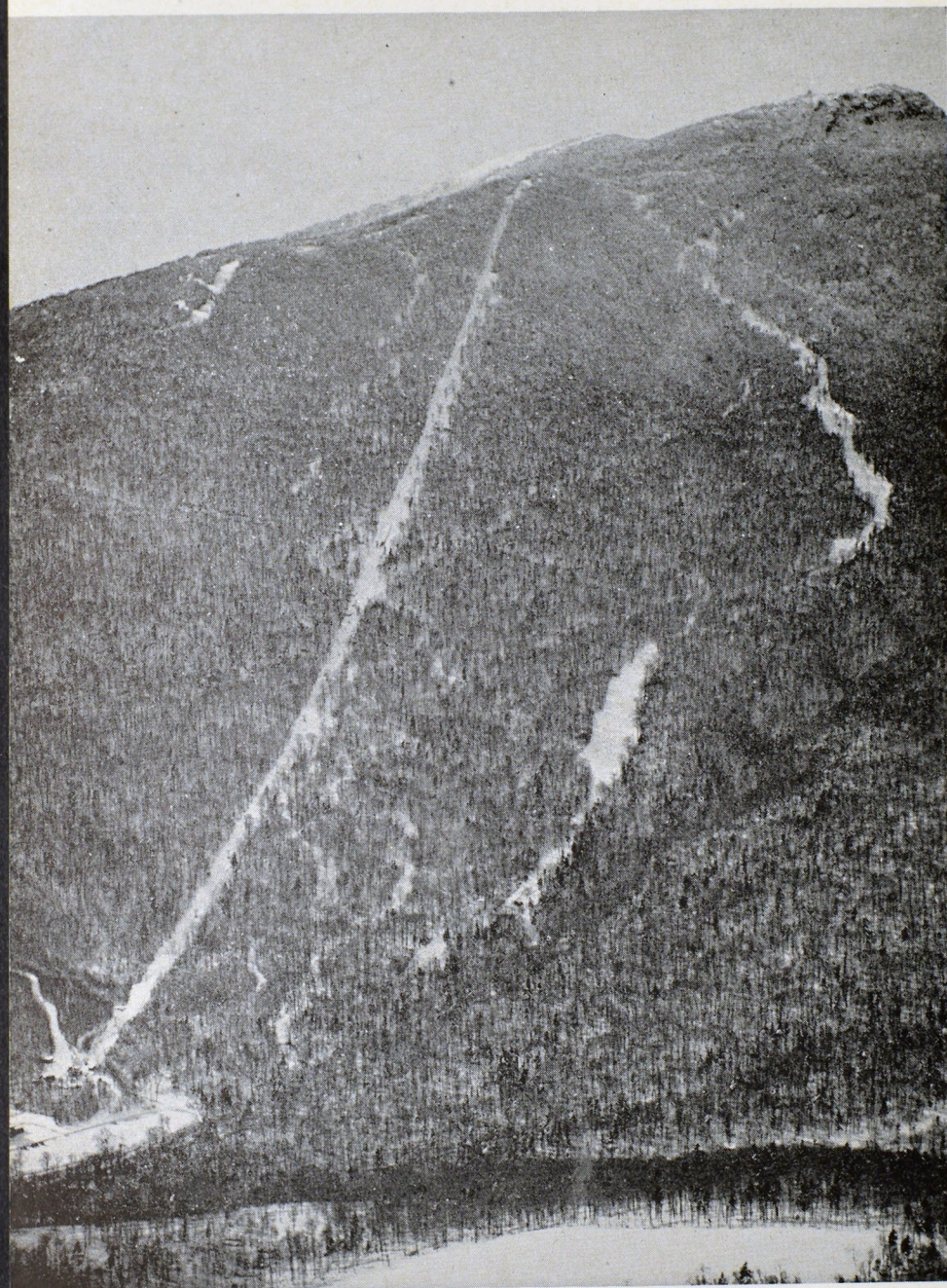
EVEN though you may not be a skier yourself, you undoubtedly know about Stowe and the extensive skiing developments on Mt. Mansfield. This winter, in March, the United States national men's downhill ski championships will be held there, bringing to Vermont one of the blue ribbon wintersports competitions of North America.

The events will consist of a downhill race on the famous Nose Dive trail and a slalom race to be set between flags on the steep S-53 trail. The S-53, incidentally, which sounds like the designation for some supersonic rocket, was named after the official number of the C. C. C. camp at Waterbury which built most of the early ski trails in the area. A third championship title, termed the alpine combined, will be computed from the best individual performance in both the races.

If you ever have been to Mt. Mansfield, you will be familiar with the southerly peak called the Nose, which is the rocky pile rising up beside the mountain hotel. It is from the top of this, at an elevation of 4060 feet above sea level, that the Nose Dive starts, and from which the trail's name is derived. The vertical descent into the valley is 2500 feet in a distance of about a mile and three-quarters. As you can imagine, that provides a fairly fast slide, which can be done, if you're very, very good, in around two minutes.

For the best downhill racers, however, speed alone is no longer much of a problem. In fact, the big-time courses have been getting so steep and fast that some

This telephoto view of Mt. Mansfield by Sam Hatfield pictures the dramatic setting for the winter's national ski races.



Sepp Ruschp

The straight line is the chair lift. At right is the 1¼-mile Nose Dive.

people predict a delayed parachute jump with skis on as the only possible test of the future. Nowadays, to separate the men from the boys—and, indeed, the big girls from the little girls—downhill racing trails are being built with great bumps, rolls and drops in them, which serve the same general purpose as the traps of your favorite golf course.

The Nose Dive was designed by

Charles D. Lord, now manager of the Mt. Mansfield chair lift, and the writer in 1933. Although the original alignment has more or less been maintained, tremendous improvements in width and surface have been made since the war to meet modern racing standards and to handle the increasing numbers of recreational skiers. These improvements were planned and carried out under the direc-

tion of Sepp Ruschp, Stowe's famous ski maestro since 1936 and now also general manager of the many facilities owned by the Mt. Mansfield Hotel Company.

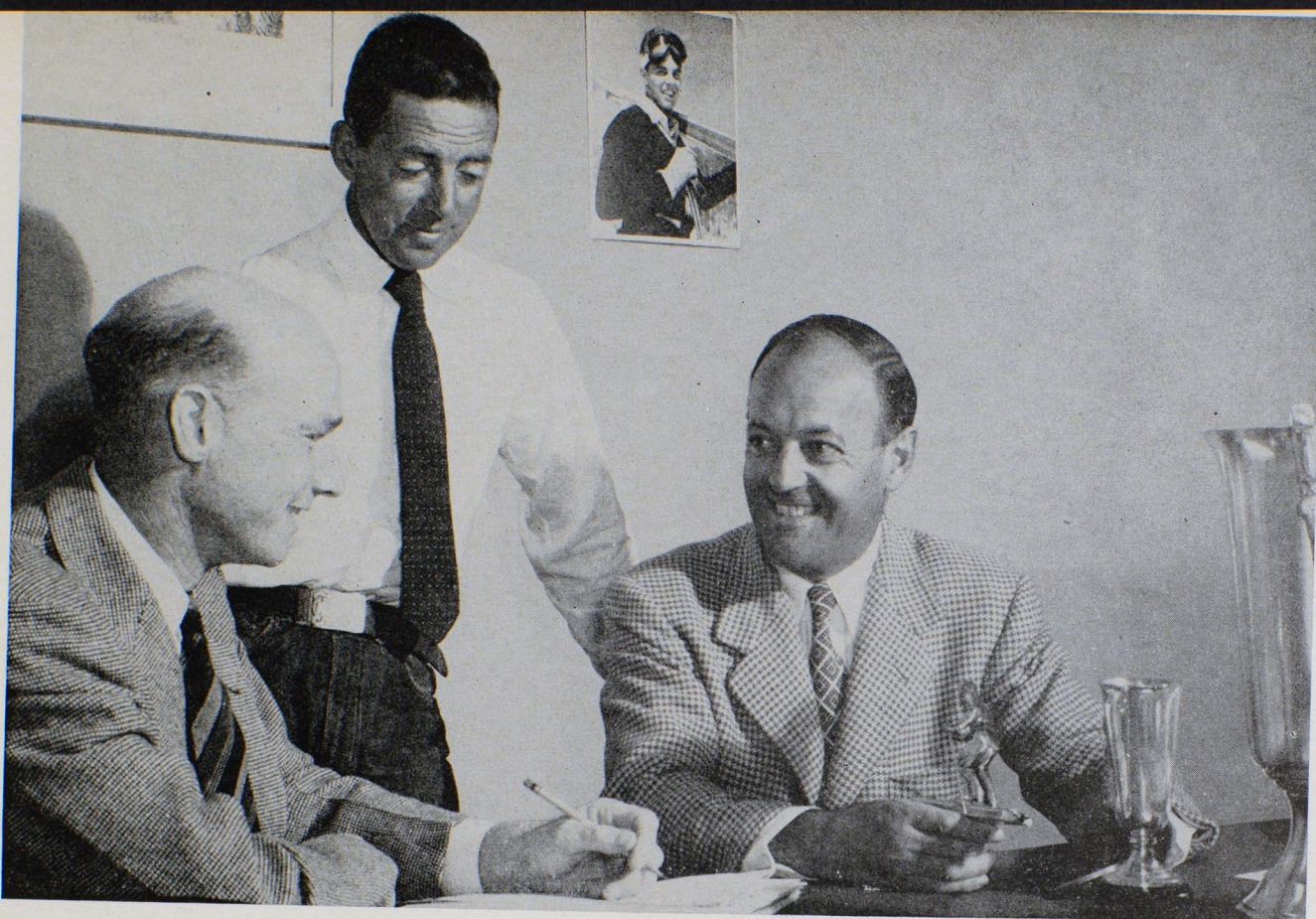
In order to fit the trail for this winter's national meet, Sepp extended the racing section about 500 feet vertically to the top of the Nose. The race course formerly had a descent of 2080 feet, but 2500 feet now is the minimum required by national and international rules. This extension, as well as all the other improvements on state forest land, were made possible through the close cooperation of State Forester Perry Merrill who has been a patron of Vermont skiing ever since the first developments were planned on Mt. Mansfield twenty years ago.

Although mountain skiing ordinarily is not a spectator sport so far as non-skiers are concerned, Mt. Mansfield's mile-long chair lift can make things quite accessible for any curious slummer who wants to see how the other half lives. From the top of the chair lift a relatively easy walk of about a hundred yards on firmly packed snow will bring one to where the upper Nose Dive comes down across the snow-bound toll road and plunges into Smugglers Notch. That would be a good place to watch the race, but, if you're not an outdoor winter addict, be sure to dress properly even though there is a heated building nearby.

Since the first national downhill race was run on New Hampshire's Mt. Moosilauke in 1933, it has been held in the East only twice—on Mt. Mansfield in 1938 and on Cannon Mountain at Franconia, N. H., in 1946. Under present requirements, however, Mt. Mansfield is the only eastern mountain with the necessary racing trail qualifications to compete with the big western areas—the eastern giant, Mt. Washington, being climatically unreliable and hazardous.

The local importance of the 1952 championships, aside from their great interest to skiers, is the fact that Vermont has been recognized by the National Ski Association of America as having the necessary terrain, facilities and organization for an undertaking of such scope. The meet will be run by the Mt. Mansfield Ski Club of Stowe, which not only is one of the older and larger of the eastern clubs but also has had considerable experience in sponsoring major downhill ski races. By having the meet in March, it is expected that the returning U. S. and Canadian Olympic ski teams will be able to participate, as well as a number of visiting European stars. March, too, is Vermont's best snow month in the mountains.

END



▲ Bob Bourdon ▼

MANSFIELD MEN

Above: Planning the 1952 National downhill ski championships are Charles Blauvelt, president of the Mt. Mansfield Ski Club; Henry Simoneau, chairman of the club's race committee; and Sepp Ruschp, manager of the Mt. Mansfield Hotel Co. and club technical advisor.

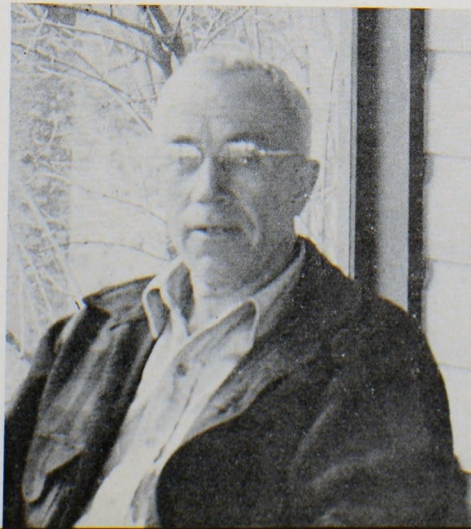
Right: The Nose Dive was extended this year to provide skiers with a vertical descent of 2500 feet. Here Charles Lord (center) manager of the chair lift, superintends clearing operations.



Left below: Perry H. Merrill, Vermont's State Forester since 1929, was responsible for the many skiing developments made in the Mt. Mansfield State Forest by the C. C. C. He first became interested in skiing while studying at the Royal College of Forestry, Stockholm. Right below: Charles Lord and Abner Coleman, writer of this article, designed the Nose Dive ski trail during climbs in 1932 and 1933.

Houston Studio

Huntley Palmer

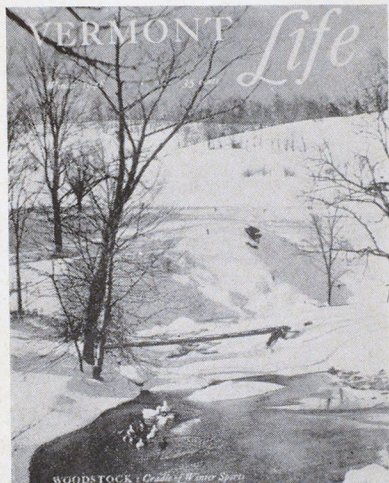




MAN WITH A CAMERA

by BAIRD HALL

Every Vermont Life reader is familiar with the work of this talented Vermont photographer, who proves his slogan: "There's a difference in taking a picture and making a picture."



SOMETIMES life seems very complicated.

If this is one of the times, consider for a moment the story of Mack Derick.

Because it is a very simple story.

He was a farm boy. A kind lady gave him a secondhand box camera. He discovered that he liked to take pictures.

So, when he was twenty-one, he borrowed three hundred dollars to make the down payment on a photographic studio in Orleans, Vermont. The studio was not a bargain. And Orleans is a village of 1300 population, in the extreme north of Vermont. It would not be considered the crossroads of the world nor a Mecca of the Arts.

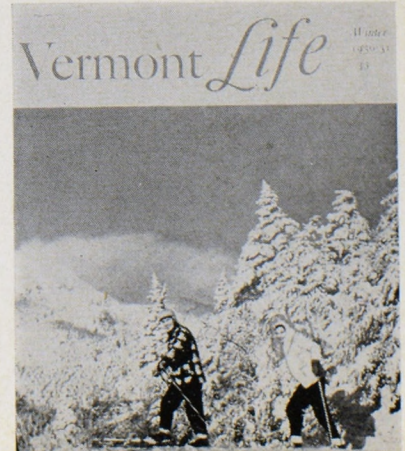
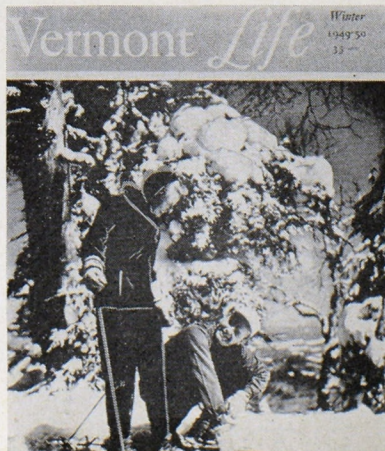
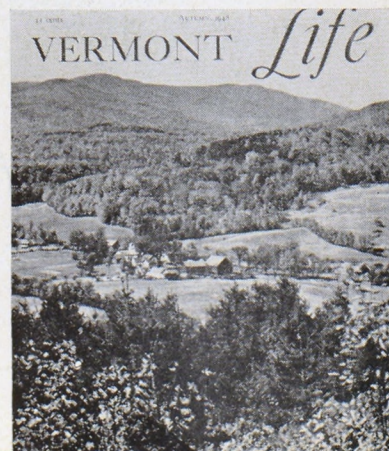
However, Mack liked taking pictures and there were pictures to be taken . . . members of the high school graduating class, and brides and grooms, and a picture of the baby for grandmother's Christmas. The studio was quite busy and had to buy sizable supplies of film and paper for graduation and Christmas season. Expensive materials. By dint of what might be called simple living, Mack paid off his mortgage on the studio the first year. The local bank was willing to loan money on short term note to buy

stock. In fact they would have been glad to keep renewing the loans.

But Mack had an idea.

Early in his box camera days, he had made himself a rule. "When you see a picture, take it . . . because it won't be there tomorrow." It is light, shadow, season, mood that make a picture, and such conditions must be caught at the moment. Mack had seen and caught a lot of pictures, here and there. One, for instance, of Willoughby Lake. He made a huge sepia print of this lake picture, titled it "Vermont's Pride," framed it in the weighty manner of the period, and took it over and sold it to the bank where he owed the loan.

It was an important sale. The print, 22 by 30 inches, was unusually large for that time. It was a lovely serene picture. *And it was a picture of Vermont.* Quite a few persons decided they wanted one. The garage did. The barber shop did. So did the then president of the National Life Insurance Company, who had a summer home on Willoughby. In fact President Howland bought not one but two of these prints. "Vermont's Pride" and presently other big Derick pictures began to appear on the walls of homes and





This tranquil scene by Derick appeared on an earlier Vermont Life cover. It pictures one of Woodstock's high, open ski hills.

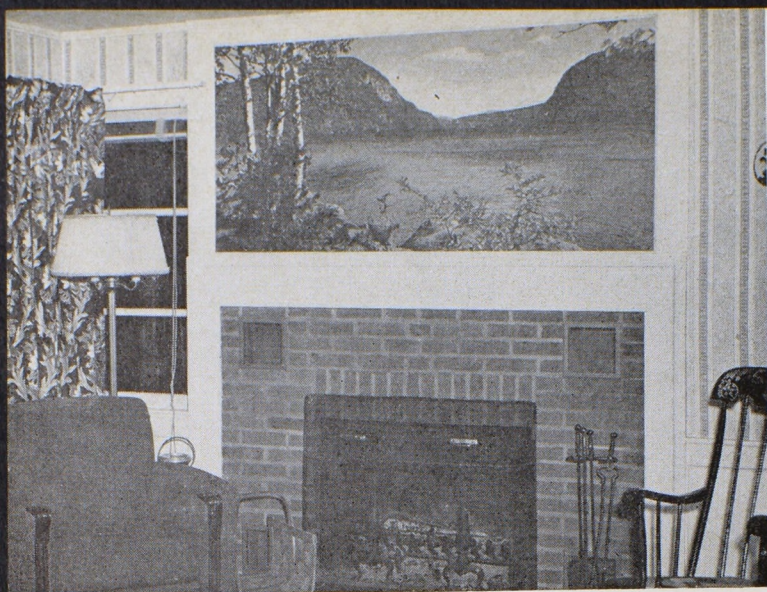
An artist's eye helps Derick create these handsome, colored pictures from enlargements of his black and white prints.

Warren Case

Derick now specializes in color photography. This trim, new studio-workshop he built behind his home in Orleans.

Derick





These Lake Willoughby enlargements gave Derick his real start.



His seasonal Vermont scenes line Burlington's bus terminal.

offices, some far removed from the little village of Orleans. People saw them, and wanted to know where to get a picture like that.

It would be a mistake to *over-simplify* the story. Good pictures seldom "just happen." There were several trips to Willoughby Lake before the "Vermont's Pride" negative was caught. Maybe Mack does have a special touch. In thirty years as a portrait photographer in Orleans, Vermont, he served as President of the New England Photographers Association. His name is listed in *Who's Who in American Portraiture*. The obscure portrait studio in Orleans village apparently did a noticeably good job while preserving the class valedictorian for posterity.

But two years ago, Mack sold out his portrait studio . . . to devote *full* time to pictorial and color photography. And in essence, the story of his real success and widespread reputation is very simple.

He likes to take pictures. When he

sees a picture he takes it. Starting with that 22 by 30 inch print on the wall of the local bank, Derick pictures have gone up where lots of people see them. The size now may be anything up to 8 feet by 12 feet. Visitors to Vermont now study the big Derick murals in the Hotel Vermont or the Howard Johnson Restaurant or the Terminal Restaurant, in Burlington. There are Derick murals and framed color pictures in Colorado, Kansas, Australia, and at least three in Italy. On catalogs, calendars, commercial displays and in magazines, Derick pictures reach a wide audience.

They are pictures of Vermont . . . autumn foliage, quiet country roads, a sugar house, a covered bridge, a white church on the common, the streams and lakes and mountains. Vermont is beautiful and, perhaps more than that, Vermont is for many people a visible symbol of the American heritage. Mack is still a portrait photographer. It is Vermont's portrait

he likes to take . . . Vermont in all her moods and variety.

And the world has beaten a path to his door. Or, anyway, enough of the world to keep the man good and busy in the new studio-workshop he has built beside his home on the hill above Orleans. He doesn't do any "selling" . . . in the sense of looking around for customers. When someone has seen a Derick mural or framed color picture in the home of a friend, and writes an inquiring letter, Mack sends out the big book which is a sort of loan exhibit from which the inquirer may make selection. As for the commercial or industrial jobs which are, of course, an important part of his work, Derick's position was made clear the other morning when a particularly nice order came in the mail. Unsolicited.

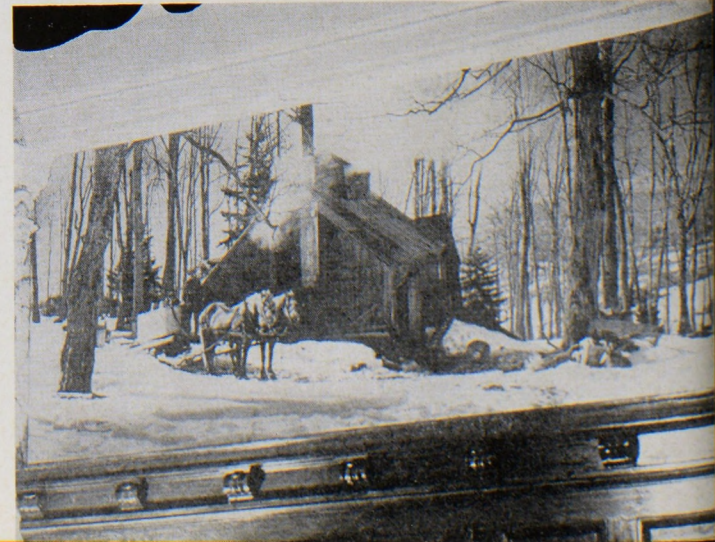
"Yes," Mack nodded. "Yes, I figured that if they wanted my work they'd let me know."

You see, it is really very simple. END

Artist at work—making final touches on his color murals that decorate the lobby of the Hotel Vermont in Burlington.



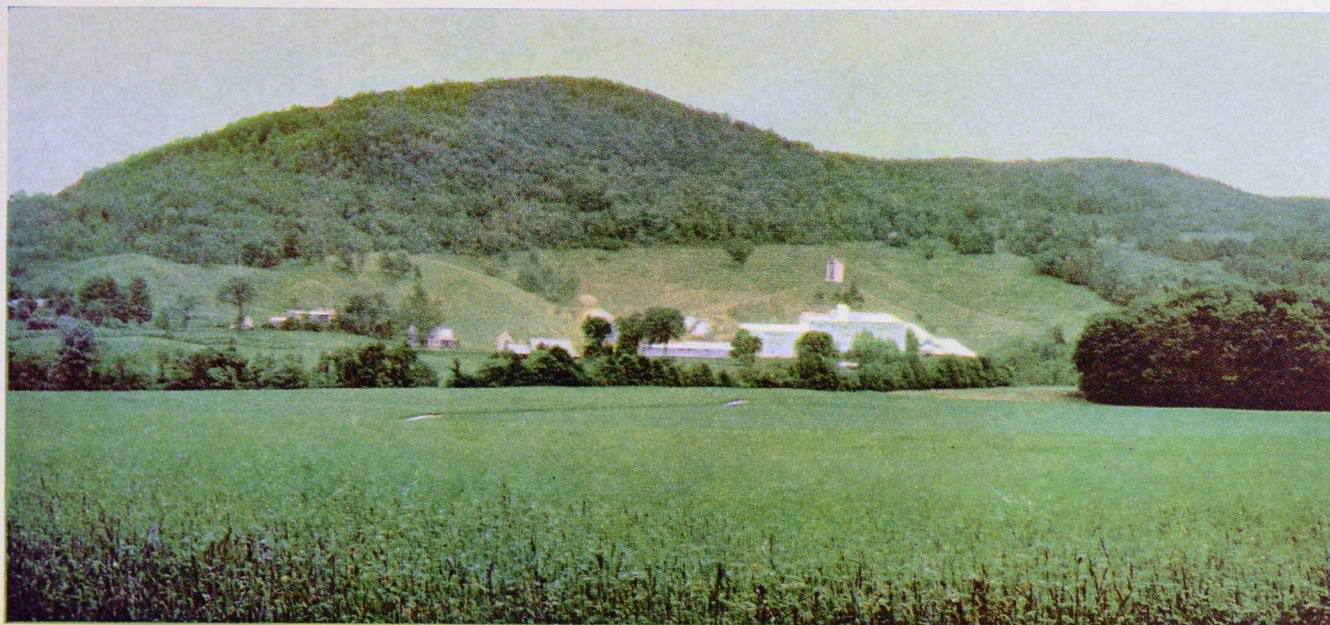
Right: Derick's own montage shows his varied camera activities. Below: This is a detail of the Hotel Vermont murals.





DANGER
SOFT SHOULDERS





TALCUM POWDER UNDER OUR MOUNTAINS

*The Story of Vermont's Eastern Magnesia Talc Co.
One of The Largest Talc Operations in the World*

by VREST ORTON

Photography by Wing Woon.

Most of us, I feel sure, when we hear the word "Talc," evoke pleasant pictures of lovely ladies powdering their lovely noses, or of bouncing babies being dusted by talcum powder. That is what I thought before I visited the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company of Vermont. It was a revelation to discover that these pleasant uses of talc are minor compared to the many ways talc is vital to industry. For commercial and industrial talc is the main business of this Vermont company. And it is truly an amazing business of not only mining and milling, but of ingenuity and development so that raw talc ore, dug out of the bottom of Vermont mountains, can be translated into a living for over a hundred men of the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company in the state.

Genial Eugene Magnus, newly elected president of the company was seated at his desk in the Burlington office. I had said something about talc and cosmetics, and so Gene proceeded to

enlighten me. "For example," he said, "there's hardly a thing on this desk between us that doesn't utilize talc."

He picked up a piece of paper. "Our talc is used as filler for the best grades of bond paper because it has a good color, and does not wear the paper machinery. We sell more to the paper companies than for any other commercial use. Talc is also used as an agent in the manufacture of leather products from which this desk set is made. And since one of the principal uses of talc is in paint and varnish, the very top of this desk has talc in it. As an extender and filler for paint it is, of course, essential. The paint on the very walls of this office has talc, and talc is on the ceiling and the floor and the furniture. The roof on this building is made of talc and asphalt, one of the widest uses of our product. The tires on your car parked outside, and the rubber in your suspenders have talc."

I asked him about the latest use for talc. He said: "probably

Above: Talc Plant at Johnson

VERMONT *Life* 35

—Left: The Top House at Johnson



Underground Foreman Cliff Allen and Visitor Eleanor Stewart watch Scraperman Claire Nelson operate electric hoist which collects broken-up ore for removal above ground.

the insecticide business. We sell more talc to manufacturers of bug killing powder than to any other group except the paper manufacturers. If you ever see a helicopter going over a field spreading dust, it is very likely Vermont talc mixed with insecticide. The newest use, I guess, is on the coating of that big oil pipe line laid across Vermont a year or so ago.

* * * *

I learned, after talking to the men of the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company that this widespread use of Vermont talc was not a lackadaisical happenstance. Thirty years ago or so, many of the present uses had never been thought of. It was due to the ingenuity and genius of three leaders of this Vermont enterprise that Vermont has now assumed a dominant position in the talc industry. For the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company is now one of the biggest in the world.

Nearly 40 years ago Joseph T. Smith, a young Dartmouth graduate from Massachusetts, came to Vermont to operate the Eastern Talc Company at Rochester. He was later joined by Eugene Magnus from Connecticut and a graduate of Norwich University, in building up this company. From about the year 1900 there had also been developing at Johnson, another talc mine styled the American Minerals Company. And at Burlington during the same period were Roy L. Patrick, his father John, and two other Burlington men, George Holden and Elias Lyman, who were the principal owners of Magnesia Talc Company of Waterbury.

Roy L. Patrick, President of the Rock of Ages Corporation,

whose distinguished reputation as Vermont's pre-eminent and progressive business man and financier was celebrated last year on his 75th birthday, was the organizing genius of the talc business in this state. For in 1924 it was Roy Patrick who decided to amalgamate these three above named talc companies. It was he, with Joseph T. Smith, who raised the money so that the mines at Rochester, Waterbury and Johnson were put together under a single corporation "The Eastern Magnesia Talc Company." Since that time until March of 1951, Joseph T. Smith was president and "boss man" of the company, Gene Magnus vice-president and general manager, and Roy Patrick treasurer. Upon Mr. Smith's death this year, Magnus assumed the presidency.

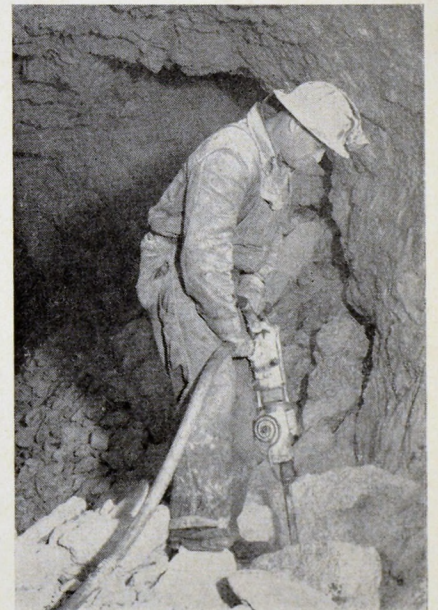
After learning the background history of the corporation at Burlington, the next morning Wing Woon, the photographer, and I drove up to Johnson with Victor Backels, the general superintendent of the company's operations in the state. Arriving at Johnson early on a June morning, we took a precipitous mountain road to the mine from which, even at 8:30 o'clock, big trucks were coming down loaded with ore. Reaching the mine entrance, I saw that the vast wooden building rearing its roof high above the pine trees on the mountain side, looked very much like the high structures I had often seen in the Pennsylvania mine fields.

Here was the same elevated structure and the slanting gravity tramway so that the ore could be brought up from the mine, carried to the top by cable cars, and dumped into waiting trucks below. This tramway at ground level entered a small hole and plunged, on a 45° angle, several hundred feet into the depths of the mountain.

We decided at once that we must go down there and see how the talc ore was actually mined.

That day, as a happy chance, we met three Johnson High School girls on our trip of exploration. They had never seen the mines and were glad to find out something of the business in which their fathers were employed. We were also glad to bring a little vivacious color into our pictures. Vic Backels, and Jim Reilly of the company's sales department, (who was our guide) fitted all of us to the regulation mine electric head lights and helmets and we were ready. However, when it came to

Using a pneumatic drill or paving breaker, Ralph Du-bray shatters the bed ore into chunks small enough for easy removal.



descending into the stygian depths of the mine, only one girl, Eleanor Stewart, whose father is a foreman of the Flotation Mill, decided to go down. We packed her into the bottom of the rough damp, talc-encrusted steel car, the rest of us sat on a ladder inside the car, and we started down.

In a few exciting minutes we reached the dark damp bottom of the mine shaft. There, single file, we began a rather thrilling walk half a mile through a low tunnel carved out of the solid talc rock, up a series of ladders to the next level (there are several levels) and finally to the "head" where men were cutting in the talc vein with pneumatic drills. Water was running along the sides of the track on the tunnel floor and there was the constant reverberating sound of the powerful water pumps and drills.

It was here, several hundred feet under a Vermont mountain that some of the things about talc that Vic Backels had so patiently explained to us on the trip up, became graphically apparent. As we walked along, our feet would sink several

Homer Burnor, mill operator, oils a bearing on the Hardinge Pebble Mill. Sifting talc dust requires constant machine maintenance.

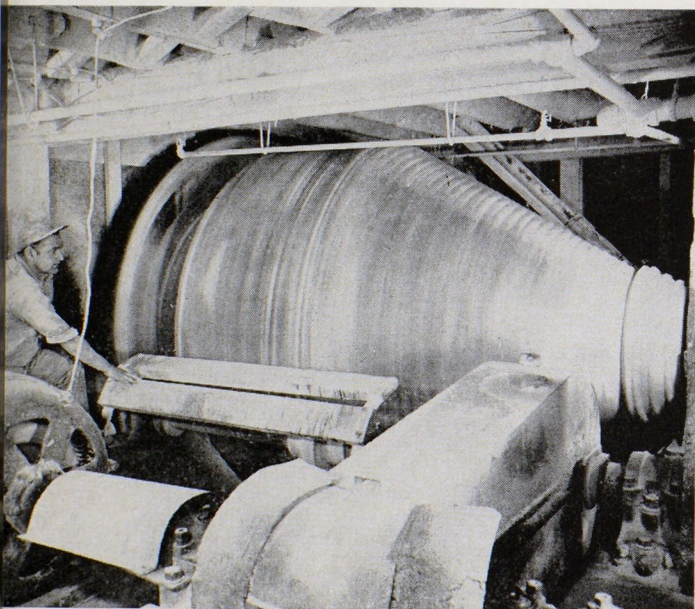
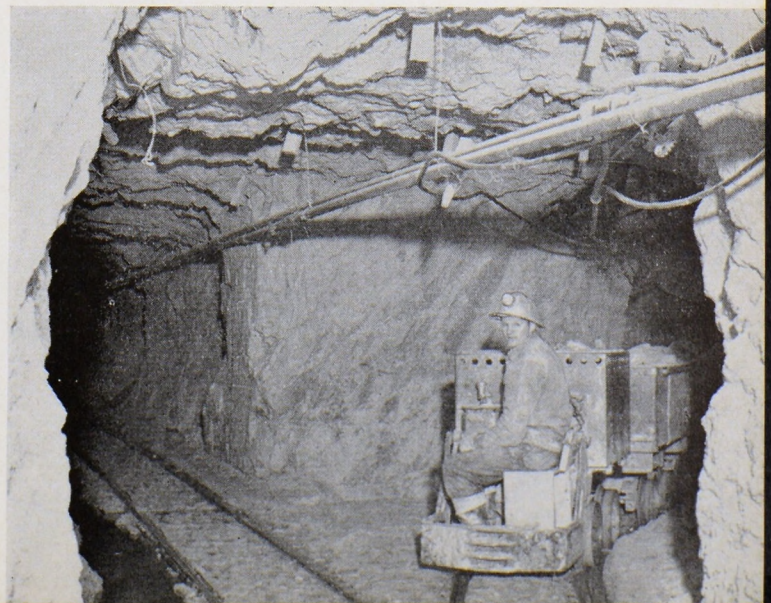


give it a high potential value as an essential industrial material.

It is easily sawed or carved into any shape, and as a matter of fact, one of its most curious uses is talc crayons. These long pencil shape slices of pure talc are used in the steel industry to mark hot steel sheets and ingots. They provide the only mark that will stay in the steel after it cools.

Vermont, Victor Backels told us, stands very high in the production of talc, and even as early as 1900 was the third state in the Union in total tons taken out of the ground. Today the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company has developed and introduced more uses of talc through the ingenuity of its engineers and management than any other talc company in the world. If anyone is interested in the geology of the subject it is pertinent to know that a line drawn from eastern Canada down through the central part of Vermont would take in all the producing mines of the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company and at least two dozen other scattered deposits within the state. Soapstone is a near relative of talc. Geologists tell us also that talc lies in the form

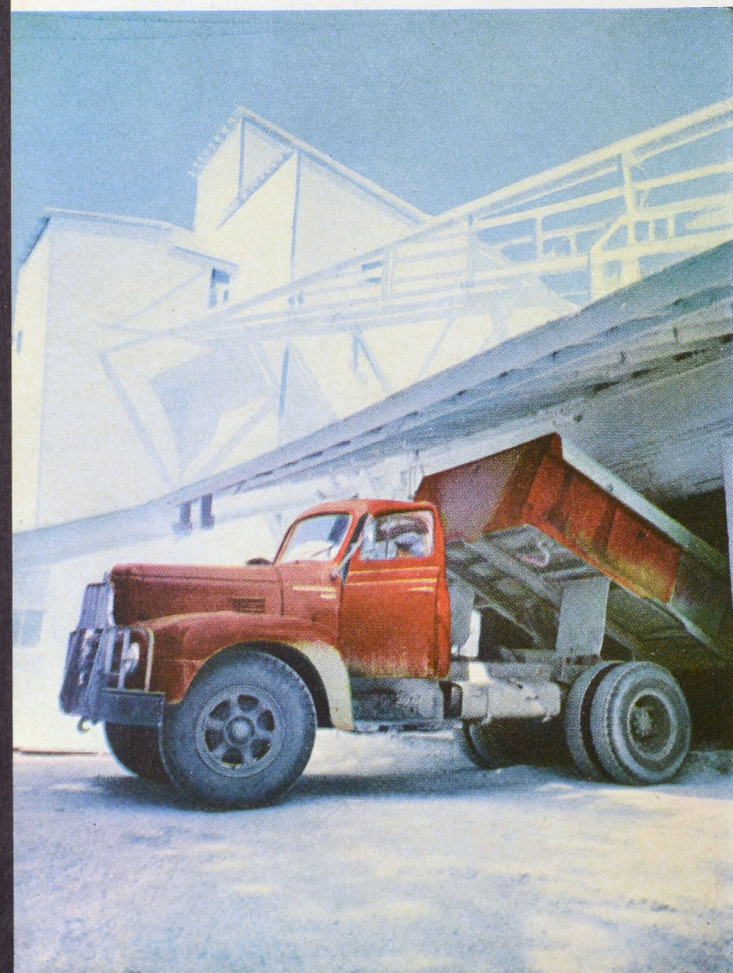
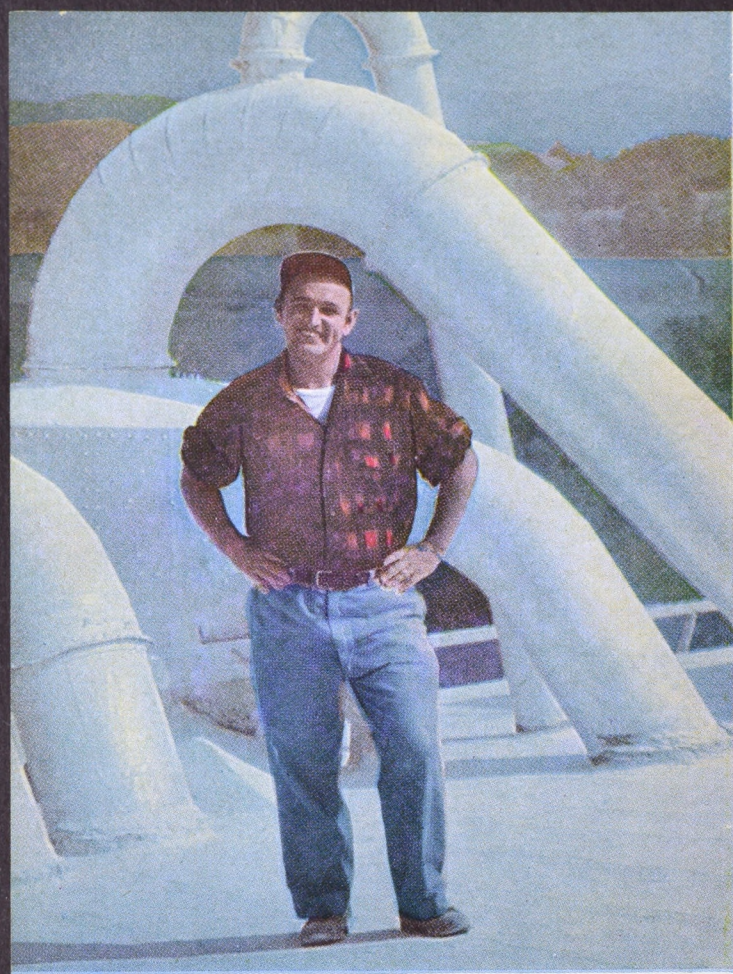
R. W. Maxfield pilots electric locomotive drawing cars of talc ore toward the main "drift" from "cross-cut," side tunnel that cuts across vein.



Mill Sup't. Roger Perkins adjusts a Hardinge Pebble Mill. This machine tumbles the talc and flint balls to crush the ore.

inches into the dough of talc and water on the floor of the tunnel. Several times, little Eleanor would slip and become so securely stuck in the talc mud that we had to pull her out by her boots. We could not fail to be impressed with the constantly demonstrated characteristics of talc as a soapy, slippery material, non-abrasive and greasy but clean. I thought how my two boys, seven and nine, would enjoy a mud fight with this kind of super sticky and very clean mud.

However, talc is not mud but a mineral . . . to be exact, hydrous silicate of magnesia. It is practically infusible and is an excellent non-conductor of heat and electricity, suggesting many industrial uses. Under high heat it loses water, hardens and becomes susceptible to polish. Talc in Vermont varies in color from green to white and some, especially in the Waterbury mine, looks like our *Verde Antique* marble in color. It is this characteristic of softness, flexibility and smoothness that



of a vein but that it is not necessarily continuous. It is made up underground of a series of deposits in the same plane, these deposits varying in thickness from a few inches to 300 feet, and in length up to several thousand feet.

Unlike granite and marble, our other Vermont sub-surface valuables, talc is not a pure stone, but exists in ore form and therefore must be processed before the pure talc may be achieved. This is why both at Johnson and Waterbury great mills for the separation of talc have been erected, and it is in these mills that the most complex process goes on.

In Johnson the mill stands on a side hill at the opposite end of the town, four or five miles from the mine, a location necessary to place the final operations on the railroad. Here, too, we saw a tall 5-story frame structure looking very much like one of the flour elevators of Wisconsin.

As Wing and I entered the building, we stood spellbound on the main floor of this towering wooden structure and looked up through a veritable labyrinth of snake-like curving pipes, angular tubes, elevators, winding stairways, moving belts, motors, supports, and tubes . . . all covered with white talcum powder. Wing turned to me, threw up his hands, shrugged his shoulders and smiled. I immediately made up my mind that

←*Top Left: Mill Superintendent Roger Perkins against maze of ducts carrying powdered talc to collectors.*

Right: Sup't. Vic Backels and Sales Representative Jim Reilly equip visitors Kay Benway, Audrey Sargent and Eleanor Stewart.

Bottom Left: Truck from mine dumps ore into hopper at the mill, where it will be ground and refined.

Right: Red Leonard and C. J. McLean, Jr. fill 50-pound bags of powdered talc at Bates Packer machine.

General Superintendent Vic Backels explains to Vrest Orton, writer of this article, some characteristics of the talc ore.



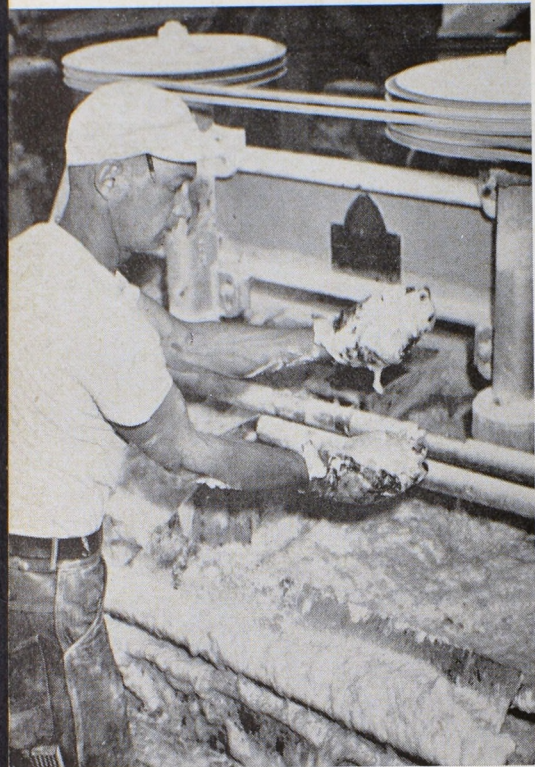
Kenneth Stewart, Flotation Plant foreman, starts the talc pulverizer. What looks like organ pipes is a giant dust collector.

neither Wing nor I could devote the next six years of our lives to a technical education which we should have to do in order to understand what went on in this maze-like exhibit. Although we had Roger Perkins, the Johnson superintendent, at one side explaining everything as we went along, I soon realized that only a graduate engineer could ever grasp this complex system.

However, both Roger and Victor had drilled into my head the basic principles of what was going on, and as I came out of the mill four hours later covered with white soft dust I was imbued with the knowledge that two things were, in the main, happening:—talc was being extracted from ore by a dry process and by a wet process.

The dry process seemed comparatively simple. Trucks bring the ore from the mines and dump it into a hundred ton hopper at the bottom of the mill. It is easy to understand that this is the beginning. At the bottom of the mill, on the other side, the talc rock comes out as talc powder and with a bagging machine is packed in paper bags and loaded into freight cars. In between these two terminals the ore is crushed and being naturally moist from underground water, is dried in great ovens heated by draft oil furnaces, then further sifted, separated and finally ground into powder of a fineness suitable to the use to which it is to be put. In between these two terminals it goes up and down, cross-wise, back and forth, sidewise, and every other way into what seemed to us to be the 4th dimension.

The wet process was a little more difficult to understand. Probably it would be even to some mining engineers, for the



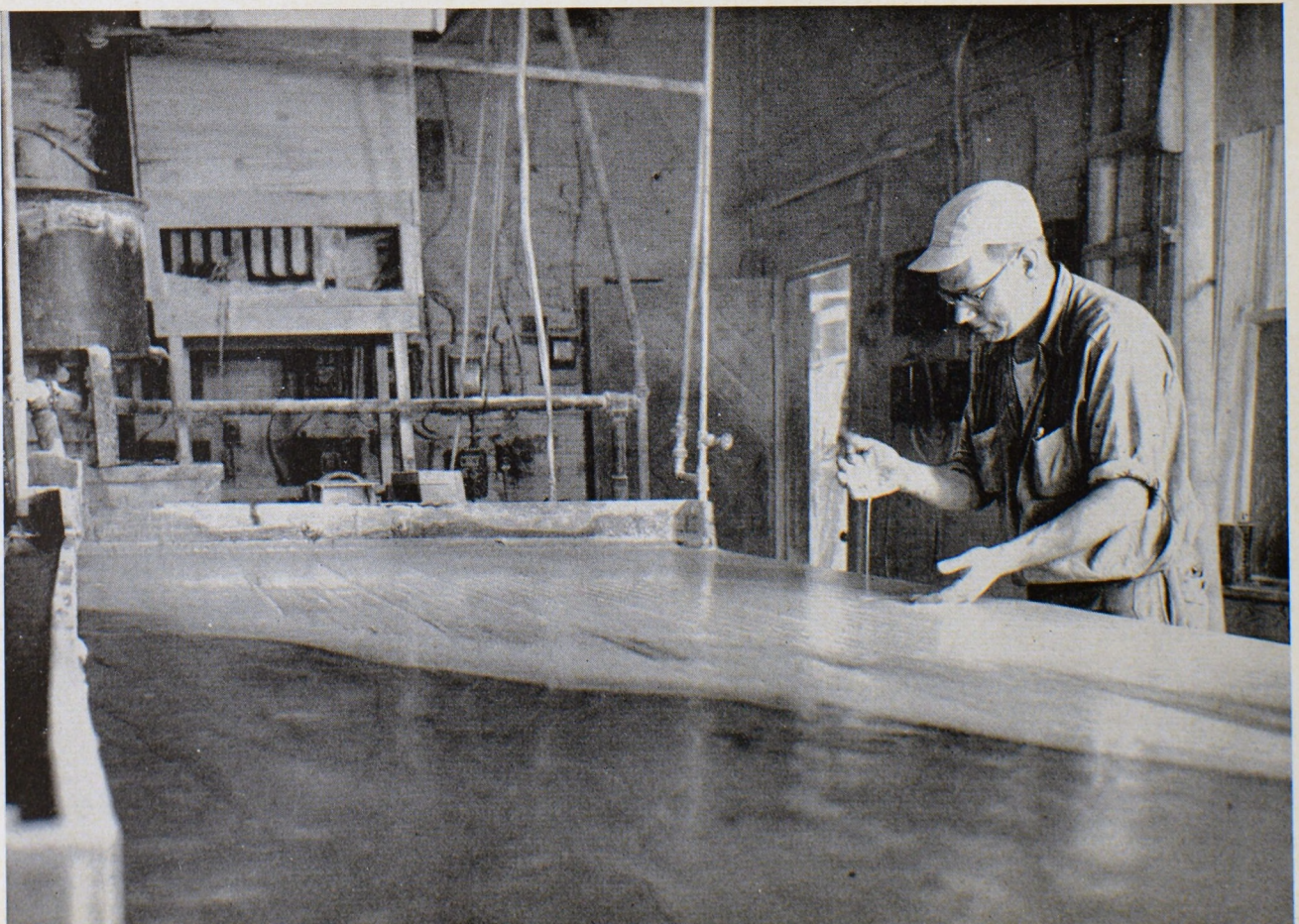
Stuart McCuin tests the talc foam on this Flotation Cell. Water and talc are mixed with a reagent and bubbles bring the fine talc particles to the surface where they are skimmed off.

Eastern Magnesia Talc Company is the only talc company in the United States using the wet flotation process which was developed by them for talc extraction. Its essential purpose is to separate the pure talc from the magnesite, nickel and other minerals. The interesting economic value of the flotation process is that this operation extracts more talc from the residue of the dry mill process which waste was formerly considered of no value. Before the wet process was developed only a few years ago at Johnson, there was a mountain of this waste material piled back of the mill. The first raw material used in the wet process came from these great piles.

Simply stated, the flotation process works about like this: the talc ore after it has been crushed and ground in a great cylinder filled with small round stones is then mixed with water. This liquid mixture is piped to a large, slightly slanted metal table with a corrugated surface. The table is jiggled back and forth by motors so that the mixture of talc, magnesite, nickel and water which comes on to the table at one side, separates and runs off the table at the other lower side as separated talc, magnesite and nickel. This separation happens because of the different weight or specific gravity of each of the three minerals . . . a process not unlike the crude panning of gold from different weight gravel and water.

The resulting talc and water is then pumped into what the men at the mill call "bubble baths." First a chemical reagent is added to the mixture and when this liquid fills the long bubble bath tanks, huge bubbles rising from the bottom bring the pure talc to the top because the reagent makes it stick to the bubbles. These bubbles are then skimmed off with an automatic skimmer.

Foreman Kenneth Stewart adjusts the Wilfley Table. The machine's corrugated top surface vibrates the water and talc solution, moving the coarser particles to one end where they are discarded, and collecting the fine grains at the other end.



The separated talc and water go to the thickener, and then to a huge rotary filter where the water is extracted and a cake of moist talc is left. The cake talc is then scraped off the filter and is taken by a conveyor belt to the drier where it is dried.

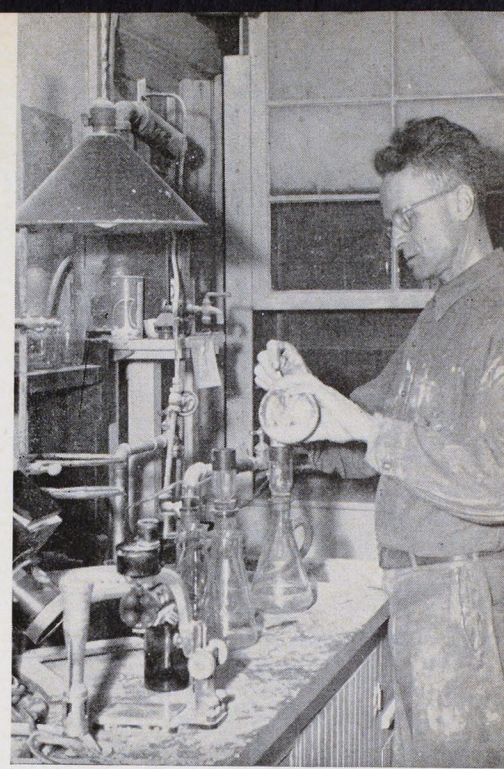
If anyone wants to know more about how this all happens, the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company can furnish a four-page folder written by engineers, chemists and geologists, totaling about 2000 words of which I understood only 167!

What I did understand better, however, was the type of men who are making this thing work.

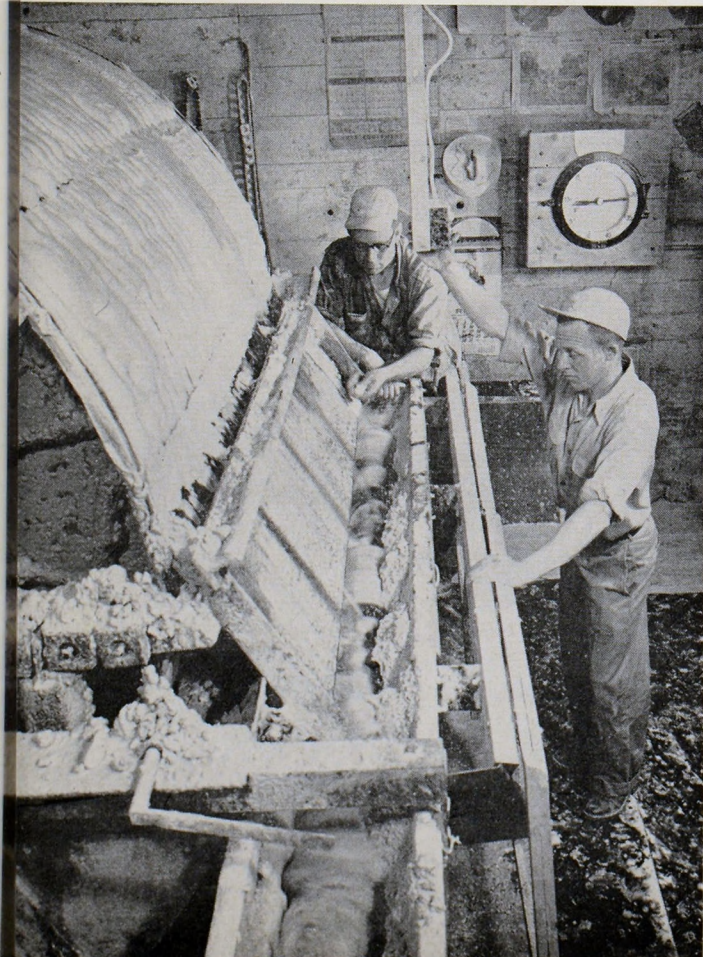
In the course of our visit with these men I came away with two distinct impressions about this interesting but little known operation in our state. The first was this: here was one Vermont business which will probably go on into perpetuity. For there is enough raw talc ore under the Green Mountains to last forever. In dollar volume only granite, marble and asbestos outrank talc as a Vermont sub-surface operation. Further, as American industry broadens and becomes more complex, without question the uses of Vermont talc will also increase. But there is a catch in this equation: you don't start with raw stuff dug out of the ground and develop it into the largest business of its kind in the world in 25 years without the genius and ingenuity of men. And so in this equation we must grant that to achieve a successful future the Eastern Magnesia Talc Company will be always run by men like Joe Smith, Gene Magnus and Roy Patrick.

And now we come to the other impression that has stayed with me these several months since my visits to Burlington, Waterbury, and Johnson where I talked not only with the management, but with many of the men in the mills and mines.

Lester Jacobs, Chemist at the Johnson plant, samples and tests all ore taken from the mine. Earl Akey is Waterbury plant chemist.



Kenneth Stewart and Ronnie Lord at Johnson operate the Vacuum Filter to remove excess water from the talc, which next is baked.



I have never seen an industrial operation anywhere in the United States, and I have visited hundreds, where there was such remarkably cordial, pleasant and cooperative spirit between the men and the management. From Roger Perkins at Johnson and Vic Backels at Waterbury, to Gene Magnus and Roy Patrick in the Burlington offices, everyone of these members of the management team knows, I am sure, most of the hundred men in the mines and the mills by their first names. And while this is a trite statement and a stereotyped one, all these fellows actually act like a big family working to the same end—a big family that has a genuine and warm interest in its mutual affairs.

When we talk about labor management relations we tend to become formalized and cold. But I am convinced today that in Vermont we have better and more cordial labor management relations than any other state. I realize this is no place to editorialize, but this good feeling is one of Vermont's finest assets, and you don't have to take my word for it. Doctor Elton Mayo of the Harvard School of Business Administration only a few years ago published a learned tome in which he set forth a solution of the problems of labor management relations. He said that the solution was not only in higher wages, more vacations, or shorter hours, but it was in decentralizing industry back into the country towns.

In small country villages and communities, said Dr. Mayo, men who work for wages in mills, shops and factories are no longer (as they indeed are in big cities) nonentities . . . just numbers . . . just men nobody knows. In these small communities they are individuals! They have and enjoy what this eminent Harvard social scientist and economist calls "social identity." They are part of something important. They are not only part of the community, but they are part of a small company where human relationships are also easy and informal.

I feel sure that the men and women who work for the Eastern Magnesia Talc company in its offices, mills and mines have got their "social identity" and even though no one ever calls it that in Vermont, it is certainly a good thing to have. END



by MERIAM CHAPIN

THE VERMONT BUTT'RY

THE room we called the butt'ry was the pleasantest haunt of my childhood when I lived on my grandfather's old farm in Pittsford, long ago in the 90's. Father and mother brought us children there when they came back from the city to take over the farm from the old people. We had no phone, no electric light, no radio, no plumbing, but we did have lots to eat. The butt'ry was the location of the eatables available for immediate consumption—cellar and back room (off the woodshed) were storage places. In the butt'ry stood the cookie jar and the wooden sugar bucket, the flour barrels and the milk pans. Nowadays no house is built with room for such a larder, and even the name has dropped out of use. In that far-off time even *pantry* was sort of a newfangled word and sounded as if the user was trying to put on airs.

Our butt'ry opened into both the dining room and kitchen. We never ate in the kitchen as people do now, for there would not have been room even in that good sized place for the family and for the three or four hired men and the hired girl who always ate with us. The butt'ry itself was large as many a modern bedroom. It had a window at one end, looking out into the back yard, the busiest spot on the farm, where my cosset lamb wandered about, and the Plymouth Rocks fluttered from under the feet of the fat team horses being led to the trough to drink. Here the woodpile, high as a small hill, towered over us children playing house below one side of it.

Under the butt'ry window was a "broad shelf". That term is not only a description, it is a name, for it never referred to any other shelf but that particular one in the butt'ry. It was broad indeed, at least 30 inches wide and five feet long, made of one pine board cut from a virgin forest tree in my grandfather's grandfather's day. It was he who built the house.

Here in front of the window the fat white loaves of bread were kneaded for the twice a week baking, and set to rise before being put in the oven of the wood stove. There the pie crust was rolled out, and the pies filled with mince and apple. It was my job to grate the nutmeg for the apple pies with the tin grater with a little compartment on top to hold three or four whole nuts. None of your ready-made powder sprinkled from a bottle. There on the broad shelf the sausage was mixed by hand, squeezing the meat and spices through the fingers, to be stuffed into cloth bags and put out to freeze.

Pig-butcher time was a day of wild excitement and some qualms for us children. Early in the morning, before the men went to the barn to milk, the fire blazed around the big black iron kettle in the yard and the steam rose in the frosty air. Soon by mid-morning we heard the terrible screaming of the animals as one after another they felt the knife, while our mother kept us in the front part of the house away from the scene. Later in the day we would be given the pig bladders to blow up and kick around,

while we looked over the row of carcasses hung pink and white in the shed. I never felt much affection for pigs, but that memory is not one of my happiest.

Today when even farmers buy their bread, and cream is skimmed by separators or more often the creamery simply buys the whole milk, the thought of the milk pans that stood on the buttery shelves starts a rather nostalgic trend. Though my grandfather kept Holstein cattle, he always had one or two Jerseys to provide richer milk for the house. A little fawn Jersey led the herd, and always on the way from pasture to barn she came proudly down the road well ahead, with the big black and white cows lumbering after her. When we children went to the big pasture we called the Dugway, because the road to it had been dug into the side of the hill, we knew we had to find the Jersey first of all and get her started, or the herd would wander off in every direction. Her milk was kept separate and lugged into the kitchen, to be strained through cheesecloth into the 15-inch wide shining tin milk-pans. In the morning and at evening the cream was skimmed off to pour over our Scotch oatmeal or our fruit at night. Skimming those big pans of milk was a sensuous delight, for the yellow heavy cream wrinkled in thick folds and crumpled up on the skimmer, a home-made shell-shaped tin with holes punched in it. As for the ice-cream we made from Jersey cream with wild strawberries mashed up in it, no lovelier taste ever crossed the human palate. We children hauled the chunks of ice—which we had watched being cut on our pond the winter before—out of the cool dark icehouse on a hot afternoon, washed off the sawdust at the watering-trough, pounded it into bits in a burlap bag, salted it with coarse crystal salt, and the one who turned the freezer could lick the dasher. Fooley on your electric refrigerators!

On a little shelf near the broad one stood an enormous brown earthenware pitcher with a broken handle and a chipped cover, which always held potato yeast fermenting. It was kept ready for making raised buckwheat pancakes, which had to be mixed the night before using. The buckwheat had been freshly ground at the stone grist mill in the village, along with corn and rye. One of the most pleasant glimpses into the past shows me again those trips to the mill, riding on the sacks of grain while my father drove the farm team. While the grist was ground we youngsters played around the dusty mill floor.

Sweetening was either soft maple sugar or molasses. We used little granulated sugar, though it was kept on hand. The maple sugar was melted with water to make syrup; it was dark and very sweet. We used to spoon it out of the wooden buckets; the dark brown liquid over the top which had oozed out made it look much like the dark brown soft soap. Soft soap was likewise kept in buckets after it had been made in the iron kettle out of the year's accumulation of scraps of fat, and the leechings

of the wood ashes which were dumped into a ten-foot high wooden contraption so the rain would drip through them. That soap was *not* guaranteed to keep the hands soft and white, nor did it taste in the least like the sugar it resembled. Molasses, thick, sweet and black, filled the old brown jug under the broad shelf. The flour barrel stood under one edge—does anyone buy flour by the barrel now? Or crackers? Our crackers were the kind that are split in two and toasted. They were hard and tasteless, but they kept forever if necessary.

Hired men and growing children can put away a lot of "vittles," so it took constant cooking to keep the various wooden tubs and jars filled with doughnuts and cookies. The cookies were usually molasses, but there was a lot more sweetness in molasses then than now,—refining methods not having been perfected to extract all the sugar. Soda and vinegar was used instead of baking-powder. Grandmother cooked mostly by ear, but she did have a hand-written (the s's made like f's) notebook of recipes, with yellow, dog-eared pages. In this were her special rules for currant buns and things like eggless cake with sour milk. This last came in handy in wintertime when the hens rebelled against the cold weather and stopped laying, in spite of the hot mashes we youngsters had to carry to them.

Apples were our only fruit, oranges being a rare treat at Christmas. The cellar was full of many kinds of apples. Windfalls went for cider vinegar, which was kept in a pitch-dark closet at the head of the back stairs, a closet which stretched miles, it seemed to us, under the eaves of the house. I never fully explored this eerie spot, for the half dozen big hogsheads were in the way, and the flickering candle I carried when I went to draw vinegar in a wooden bowl merely made whatever lay in wait in the darkness behind them more terrifying to a small girl. The apples had of course been crushed in our own cider mill; three years it took before the vinegar began to be fit to use.

Time and space were essential ingredients for the wholesome cooking done in our buttery. They are lacking today, and they made things taste better. Or could it have been youth and hard work outdoors? Not entirely, I think. For foods have their own tempo—sour cream left to take its time, unpasteurized, unrenneted, set to keep warm many hours on the back of the kitchen range, makes cottage cheese like none other. If vinegar needs three years to grow sour, hurrying it will not enhance its flavor. Russet apples were never fit to eat until May—but then how sweet they were! It used to take me all an evening before my bedtime to pick out butternut meats from the nuts my brother had cracked, but they were the sweetest kernels that ever went into a cake or nut bread. Keeping house the old way meant a lot of work, but sometimes I wonder if it wasn't worth it. END



Reminiscing happily in his cubby hole office is jack-of-all-trades Bruce MacDonald. Never a lover of paper work, his desk reveals correspondence unanswered since 1923.

Junk and Genius

A Vermont Tradition

by VERNER Z. REED III

Photography by the author.

BRUCE MACDONALD is a man of many talents; principally a blacksmith, a clock maker and a cabinet maker. In his spare time he is deputy sheriff, maintaining the peace at Saturday night dances and the movies, and occasionally and reluctantly arresting a drunk. A wise and contented man, he is much respected and his opinion on almost any subject is widely sought after. A man extraordinary, and yet a man typical of a Vermont way of life.

Born on Prince Edward Isle in 1884, his family migrated to Morrisville in 1904. His father was a blacksmith, and Bruce and his three brothers labored long at the family forge. He learned the trade well, and after having taken time off to get married in 1906, he set up shop for himself in his present location in 1910. Old timers recall how he shod as many as nineteen horses on a good morning.

He kept up the blacksmith shop until somewhere in the twenties, when it tended to merge with general iron work and stove repairing. Soon he was selling second hand stoves; he estimates that he sold 2100 stoves in his best year. Once, while out buying stoves for resale, he couldn't resist the Yankee urge for a bargain, and bought a "whole houseful of junk." Since then he has been in the antique business. Modestly he calls it



Above: A canny buyer, Bruce gives a chair a thorough examination before buying. Sometimes people bring him things; other times he searches the auctions and the town dump.

Below: The shop on Portland street has changed little since 1926 when this photograph showed Bruce in the door with his helper, Wilfred Bushey.

Photo by Sweetser





There is always a good crowd around the stove. Bruce is never too busy to stop and join them. Left to right are George Cross, Homer Smith, Earl Foss, Ted Miller, Herbert Smith, Harry Smith and Ray Richards. Below: Herbert Smith, the wit of the crowd, gets off a sly one.

the junk business, or at best the second hard business.

But it is more than this. True, he buys junk. In his shop you can find broken wheels, gramophones, old hats, bath tubs, cartons full of bent nails, and at least 350 chairs of all kinds in various stages of disrepair. These things he will sell as is should some one want to buy them. But most of them are reclaimed, restored or transformed into furniture that ranks with the finest anywhere.

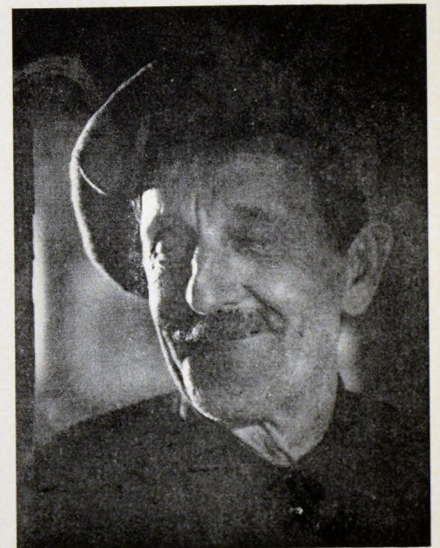
Some of his pieces are all original, polished up and repaired if necessary. Others he builds from scratch. Another might be an ingenious combination of a desk, a bureau, a piece of a chair, a bit of firewood—all assembled into a blanket chest. All are magnificently done, and all are 'honest.' How different from the successful (by a pecuniary standard) merchant who got his start by buying factory chairs at \$1.25, storing them in

manure pits for the winter and selling them to unwary tourists as antiques for \$15.00 and up in the summer!

Bruce lives retiringly with his daughter, who keeps house for him. His son, married, has a good job in New Jersey. A few years ago his wife went down for a visit and has yet to return. She writes constantly about the money she is making, and about the good jobs that Bruce could get there. Once every six months Bruce succumbs to these blandishments and makes the trip down in his ancient Ford, looks things over, and is so appalled at the vicissitudes of city life that he quickly retreats to his sanctuary in the Green Mountains.

He takes his part time sheriff job very seriously. He won't even have a friendly beer in public because he feels it would be a bad example for "the young 'uns to see the law sloppin' it up."

Politically he's a bit vague. "One



thing's for sure, though; I ain't for that gol dang whatchamacallit we got now!" That is the most definitive, and also the most imprecatory statement that he will make.

Business is terrible, he says. "Why, in the old days I had so many gol dang people in the shop . . . why, dang it, a body couldn't even set down and rest. Money in every pocket. . . ." He swears that he loses money now on most transactions, or at best breaks even. Who can say whether this is sales talk or truth? Yet the performance he puts on when a well-to-do customer comes in is magnificent. He can make tears run down his cheeks at parting with some treasured old chair, lamenting he must sell it, lamenting he must sell it so cheaply, almost broken that he must use the money for tonight's supper. Sale completed, the merry twinkle returns to his eyes, and he takes up where he left off in some story with "the boys," as he calls his cronies aged up to 93, who seem to live in his shop. Yet there is perhaps some truth in what he says. He has often been known to call on some family to whom he had sold some nice piece. "I came to see the grandfather's clock," he will announce at the doorstep, and then solemnly go and look at the clock, run his hands over it, almost talk to it. In truth, he came to see the clock, not the people. Chances are that he will be back within the year for a similar communion.

Many people come to Bruce for advice, particularly the young auctioneers. He has started many on their way, patiently coaching them in the vast field of antique furniture. Having gained his own knowledge the hard way, he is a stern teacher. Yet he will travel to the end of the state to help them with some problem. These men look at him with respect and something akin to reverence. Others smile at mention of his name, for they hold him to be just a little eccentric.

A life so simple, so conscientious, is hard for people to understand today, even in Morrisville. Yet they bring him their broken furniture for mending, and they tarry in his shop to listen to his stories and his simple philosophy, and though they smile, they will admit that they go away the richer.

A love of working with his hands, a talent of near genius calibre for making something out of nothing, for recognizing beauty relegated to the auction hall and trash bin, plus a contentedness that radiates from him and touches all who come in contact with him, make Bruce an exceptional man.

Like a solid rock in the stream of

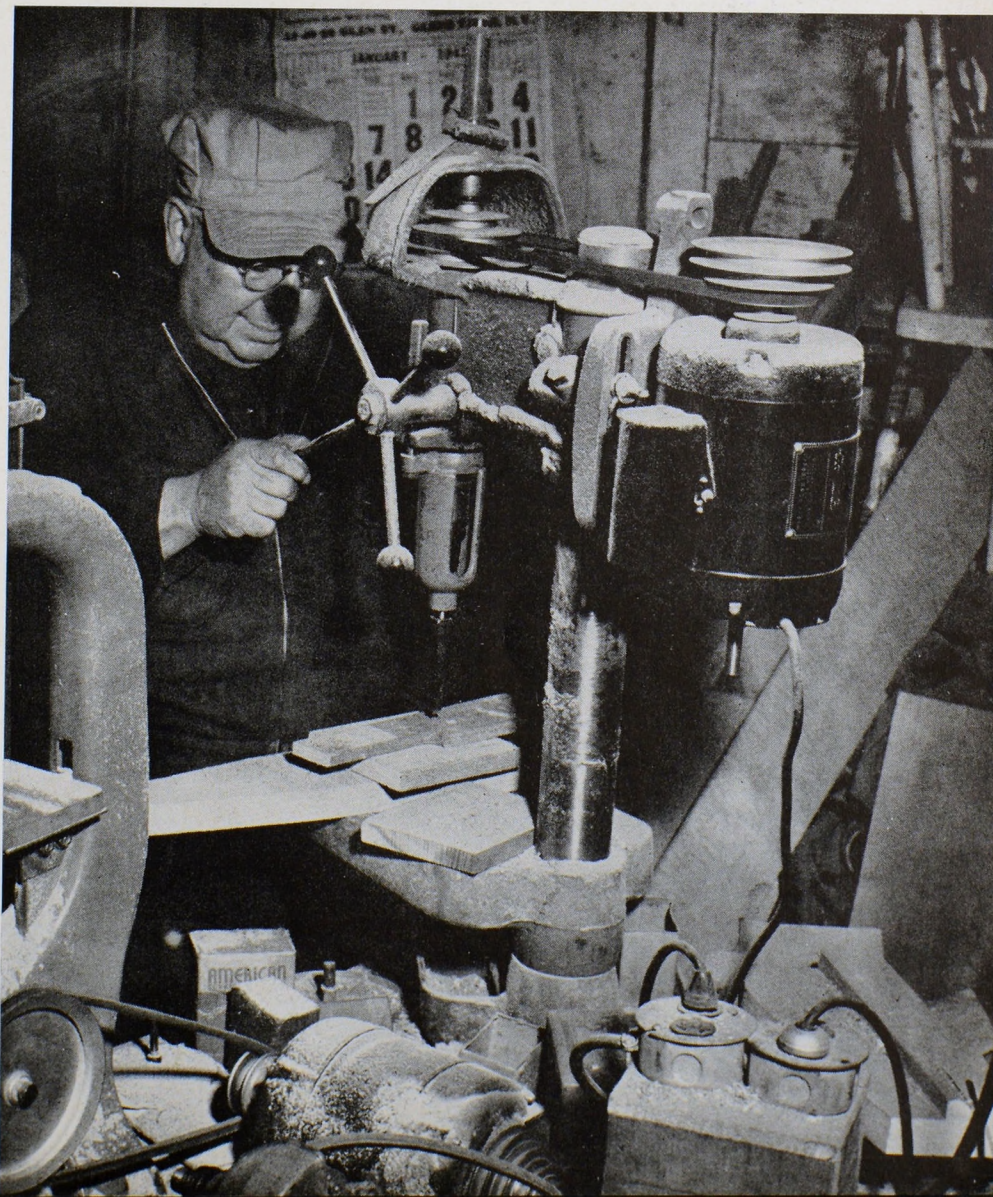
today's rushing pace, he has little regard for progress. He refuses to advertise, refuses to move from his beloved heaps of rubble or even clean up his shop, refuses to stop making beautiful furniture in the surroundings he loves so well. Business may indeed be poor, and Bruce will probably never get rich from it. But stoutly and proudly maintaining that he is a blacksmith first and last, and a cabinet maker only by hobby, he has what so many more ambitious and avaricious people will never know: peace of mind.

END



Above: Two completed pieces. The bureau is old, all original and of a rare wood as yet unidentified. The clock Bruce made completely, including the works.

Below: Almost buried in sawdust and lost in a rubble of junk, the one dim bulb he works under makes him look more like a plump gnome than a Yankee trader.



THE VERMONT STORY

in

POSTAGE STAMPS

by RICHARD C. HARRIOTT, D.M.D.

TO MOST OF US, a postage stamp is merely evidence of the prepayment of postage. However, closer inspection shows that each stamp carries a little picture story of the nation, its history, its heroes, or its arts. The vignettes are a powerful educational medium, not only in the country of origin, but in foreign countries as well. The United States Post Office Department has adopted a policy of issuing stamps that honor events of national importance only. Because of this, it should be almost impossible to illustrate the story of a single state with postage stamps. Vermont is one of the very few states whose story can be illustrated in this way. It is remarkable not that a few points have been omitted, but rather that so many of its more salient events have been worthy of philatelic honor.

It would be heresy not to start a story of Vermont with the words, "Vermont was first seen July 4th, 1609 by Samuel De Champlain while sailing on the lake that now bears his name." Our sister nation of Canada has honored Champlain by the one dollar stamp of 1935 which shows the statue erected in his honor. The painting of Champlain starting his exploration of the West is pictured on the Canadian Tercentenary Issue of 1908. Although the French were the first white men to visit Vermont, colonization by them, and the English was very slow and hazardous due to the almost continuous French and Indian Wars.

In the American Revolution Vermonters responded to the call of freedom; the historic exploits of groups and individuals in its cause sparkle the pages of history. In the over all picture the defeat of the Burgoyne campaign to divide industrial New England from the rest of the colonies was of great military importance. The two cent stamp of 1927

honors the Battle of Bennington, and the part played by the Green Mountain Boys in this decisive battle, which predicted the defeat of the British plan to divide and conquer, and has been called the turning point of the Revolution.

The Vermont Sesquicentennial Issue of 1927 was issued to honor the Westminster Convention of 1777 which declared independence from Great Britain, and established the independent Republic of New Connecticut. In six months, the Windsor Constitutional Congress, in framing the state's constitution, changed the name to Vermont. The central design of the stamp represents a Green Mountain Boy dressed in buckskin, leaning on a rifle. When this stamp was first issued, the picture was thought to represent Ethan Allen; the Post-Office Department denied this, stating, "It is the picture of a Green Mountain Boy." The wording "Bennington" in ribbon scroll commemorates the one hundred fiftieth anniversary of the Battle of Bennington.

The arts and sciences have played an important part in the life of Vermont. The first newspaper of Vermont, issued during the years of the Republic, was printed on the first printing press brought into the colonies. The Stephen Daye press was brought from England, and set up in 1639 as the printing press of Harvard University. Then Dartmouth College acquired it. Later it was set up in 1781 at Westminster to print Vermont's first newspaper *The Vermont Gazette* or *Green Mountain Post Boy*. It was moved to Windsor to print the *Vermont Journal and Universal Advertiser*, Vermont's oldest surviving newspaper. The press is now on display at the Vermont Historical Society in Montpelier.

After fourteen years of independent government a convention at Bennington

in 1791 ratified the Constitution of the United States. President George Washington presented Vermont's petition for statehood to Congress, and on March 4, 1791, she became the fourteenth state of the Union. The Vermont Statehood Issue of 1941 commemorates the sesquicentennial of the admission of the state. The stamp depicts the present state house at Montpelier, and has a symbolic shield with the thirteen stars of the original colonies. Over the shield is another star—the fourteenth, for Vermont.

When the British started war against the United States in 1812, the New England states were again threatened by invasion. Commodore Thomas MacDonough was appointed commander of the defences of Lake Champlain. He built a ship yard, and a fleet on the Otter Creek near Vergennes. A total of fourteen ships were built, including the flagship *Saratoga*. On September 14, 1814, MacDonough defeated the British fleet off Plattsburg, a decisive victory. The two cent emission of the Navy Commemorative Issue of 1936 pictures MacDonough, and pays honor to his flag ship.

Admiral George Dewey, born in a small house opposite the state capitol at Montpelier, is pictured with his two contemporaries of the Spanish-American War, Admirals Sampson and Schley, on the four cent Navy Commemorative stamp of 1936. Admiral Dewey, a graduate of Norwich and Annapolis, fought in the Civil War under Farragut. In the Spanish-American War he commanded the Asiatic Fleet, brilliantly winning the Battle of Manila Bay.

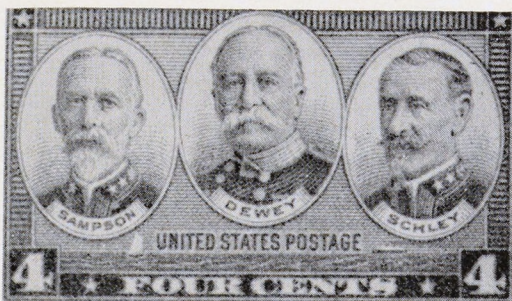
The two Vermont born Presidents of the United States, Chester A. Arthur, and Calvin Coolidge are pictured on stamps of the Presidential Issue of 1938.

Chester A. Arthur, the twenty-first President of the United States, was born

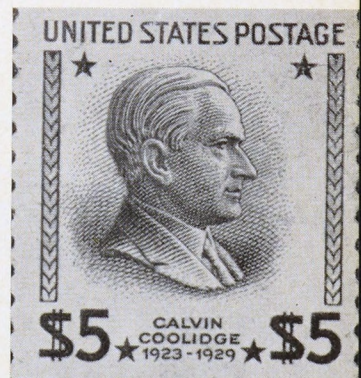
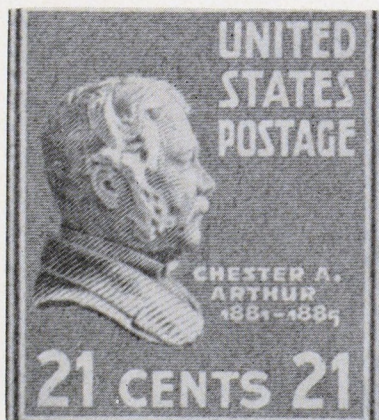
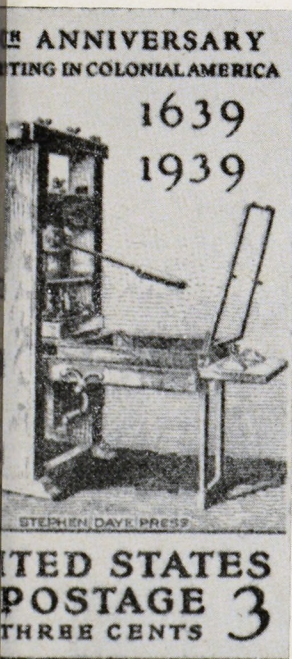


Above: Champlain Monument; Champlain's Departure for the West; Battles of Bennington and Saratoga.

Stamps courtesy H. E. Harris Co.



Admirals Macdonough and Decatur; Dewey, Sampson and Schley; State Capitol Building. Left: Stephen Daye Press. Below: Green Mountain Boy; Chester A. Arthur; Calvin Coolidge.



at Fairfield in 1830. A graduate of Union College, he later taught school at Pownal. Rising in the Republican Party he became New York State Quartermaster General, and later the Collector of the Port of New York. Elected Vice President in 1880, he succeeded to the Presidency September 19, 1881, following the assassination of President James Garfield. His administration is noted for the creation of civil service. He died in 1886.

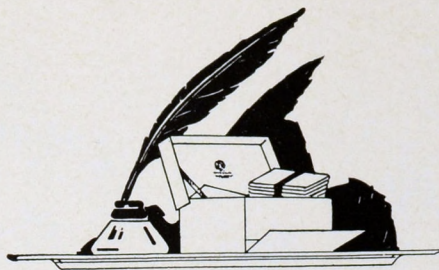
Calvin Coolidge, the thirtieth President of the United States was born at Plymouth, July 4, 1872. In successive

promotions in public service, he became Mayor of Northampton, Legislator, Lieutenant Governor, and Governor of Massachusetts, and then Vice President of the United States. On August 2, 1923, President Harding died. In one of the most dramatic demonstrations of working democracy, Coolidge's father administered the oath of office to the new President, in his own living room by the light of a kerosene lamp. He died in 1931, and lies in the Plymouth cemetery.

It is perhaps unfortunate that a story of stamps places emphasis on the individual.

Yet such is history; a few are remembered for the deeds done by many. Yet in aggregate, the Grand Army of the Republic stamp, the Victory stamp of 1919, and the Armed Services Series of World War II, and many others are a tribute to Vermont sons and daughters as well as those of the other forty seven states. Vermonters can be proud of the philatelic honor bestowed on it by an appreciative nation. Deeper than this; it can be proud of its rich history which has contributed so much to make the United States great in the nations of the world. END

At the Sign



of the Quill

A Department of Literary Comment

By ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

You men of northern Vermont and northern New Hampshire, living among its rocks and mountains in a region which may be called the Switzerland of America—you are the people here who have had hearts full of the love of freedom which exists in mountain people, and who have the indomitable spirit and the unconquerable will which we always associate with the lake and the mountain lands of the Alps and Scotland . . . And then your country is unequalled in the beauty and variety of the scenery with which Providence has blessed you. No other part of the eastern America can compare for the varied charms of the wild and romantic nature with the States that lie around Lake Champlain and the White Mountains.

From the Address Delivered by Viscount James Bryce, Ambassador from England to the United States (1907-1913), at the Tercentary Celebration of the Discovery of Lake Champlain and Vermont in 1909 by Samuel de Champlain.

A Question and an Answer

A FRIENDLY, quietly phrased letter comes from North Dakota with this question: "What is the most beautiful spot in Vermont? This coming summer, we plan to visit the state. Perhaps, you can give us a hint or two."

Like many outwardly simple queries, such a query drifts away into the eternal labyrinths that lie practically chartless in human experience. The Vermonter who knows and loves the beauty of his state thinks immediately of some such view as the one of Lake Champlain from Mount Mansfield. Then promptly, because anything beautiful is really a high personal experience, he recalls some special spot that lingers hauntingly in his memory—possibly nothing more than a rush of color where lilacs, like a band of brightly uni-

formed guardsmen, keep faithful watch through the years beside some abandoned farmhouse door; or possibly the picture of a mountain lake in its green setting, its waters cool and pure as in the days when the glaciers fled northward; or possibly a hill farm among its elms facing a wide sweep of meadow and far mountains. No, there is no possible way to send even a sincere visitor to such places. The modern geneticist tells us that it has been demonstrated beyond all doubt, mathematically, that each of us will not be duplicated in all the future to be just as we have not been in the past; so beauty becomes so highly individual that, in essence, we must seek beauty alone if we seek a final answer.

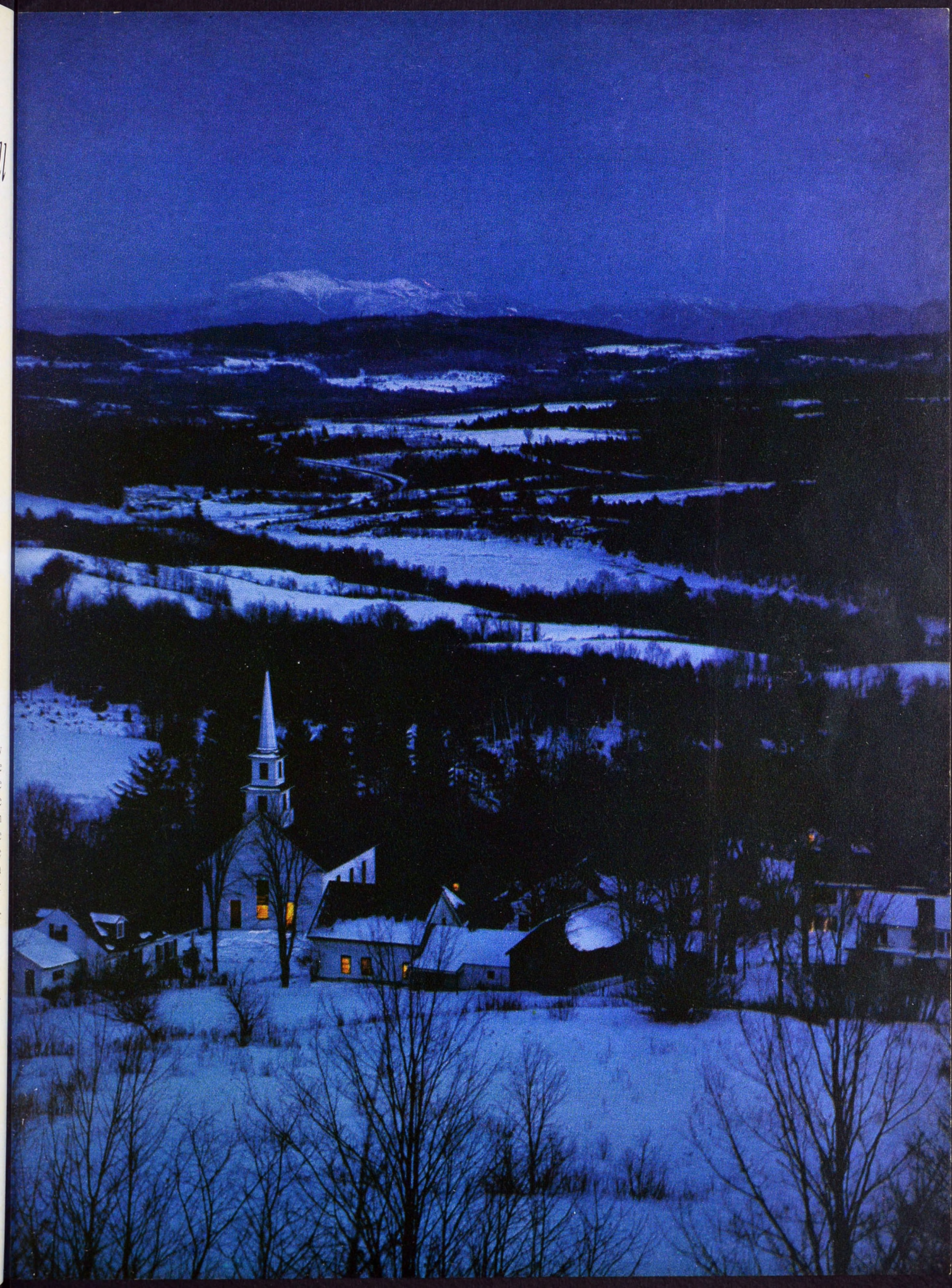
In more practical terms, a poll of summer visitors might indicate a choice of certain popular spots that had appealed to

them; a poll of Vermonters might show different results; and then the average might be struck—although I question the value of averages: an average suit made by averaging the measurements of a dozen men would result in a suit that fitted none of them. The point, then—at least to me—is simple: the search for beauty is a personal journey—and that is the way it should be.

Also, while the tendency is to think of scenery in terms of its summer setting, the transformation that spring works even in humble places must be considered—for instance, a hill-rimmed circle of gray meadow where the green, silent fires of spring work their magic, an unbelievable miracle until one has observed it with

Continued on page 52

The striking twilight scene on the facing page was taken by New Hampshire photographer, Winston Pote, not far from his Lancaster home. This is Lower Waterford, Vt., "The White Village." In the distance are the White Mountains of New Hampshire. A faintly discernable light gleams from the far peak of Cannon Mountain.



AT THE SIGN OF THE QUILL *Continued from page 50*

understanding eyes. Then there is the autumn, particularly beautiful in a state whose mountains are forested to the top and whose hills at the climax of the autumn are vast cauldrons of flame. And the winter—

There is a natural tendency for many reasons to think of a New England winter in terms of blizzards, colds, chilblains, and aches of one kind and another. Those who seek to escape a Vermont winter can be generously and joyously waved on their way. The wise will remain, and the doubtful should be advised to do some exploration in the new conception of winter—a vacation land which has a beauty all its own. But what would be the most beautiful spot in Vermont's winter wonderland? The mountain top reached by a ski-lift? A beautiful view certainly, perhaps bringing to the mind a panorama to be cherished always in memory's book and doing something to the soul, besides; but there are others, too—at the turn of the hill road a village lovely in its sunlit, snowy setting; a sweep of far valley with the farmhomes snug against the cold, the smoke of chimneys sending the bloom of lilac sprays into the clear, placid sky; at evening, the friendliest lights the eyes of man ever see—the home lights golden through the dusk with peace abroad on shadowed field and hill.

"The most beautiful spot in Vermont"? Who knows? The best answer, after all, is the ancient one—Seek and ye shall find—even the scene, perhaps, that will give meaning to a lifetime.

A Suggestion—and a Winner

In these days of the generous awarding of plaques, certificates, and other symbols of achievement to "Men of the Year" and others, I have in mind another award—to some national figure who makes the "Boner of the Year" and to some citizen of each state who emulates the national figure. Most of us would have a candidate for the national award; I nominate myself for the winner of the "Vermont Boner of the Year."

In my review in the summer issue of our magazine, I called attention to the entertaining and also valuable historical sketch Ralph N. Hill wrote for his *Contrary Country*—the sketch that told the story of Col. H. Nelson Jackson's journey across the continent in a "horseless carriage" in 1903 when an automobile was a gamble and a trip across the United States in one an heroic nightmare. In that sketch I referred to Col. Jackson as a "Vermont Democrat who had survived

the tides of Republicans rolling over him in various elections." His goodnatured telephone call informed me that he had been a Republican all his life. To call a lifelong Republican in Vermont a Democrat is the highest of something, a ground for libel and a fighting phrase; and the oldtime Vermont Democrat feels the same way if labelled with the odium of being a Republican. In my case there was no real excuse. A hasty checking of three references did not give me the data I needed, and I went on to confuse Col. Jackson's brother, at one time the Democratic mayor of Barre, with the Burlington Jackson. "I should have known better"—and the telephone call brought me up short, for in that moment I remembered that Col. H. Nelson Jackson had not only long been identified with good works in Burlington but also with the American Legion, on a national and state basis. A veteran of the First World War, winner of the D.S.C. for heroism in action, holder of the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, and a member of the French Legion of Honor, he is a Vermonter who should stay in a Vermonter's memory. That he did not, for a few fatal minutes, makes me an excellent candidate for an award I shall try to escape in 1952.

Another Question—and a Few Remarks

We have in the United States the costliest, most elaborate system of education known the wide world over; so you would infer, would you not, that we must rank high among the nations as a nation of bookreaders? Where would you place us in this list: Australia, Canada, England, Sweden, United States, Norway? Well, a Gallup Poll recently sought to find out which nation had the most bookreaders; and here is the result—England 55%; Norway 43%; Canada, 40%; Australia 35%; Sweden 33%, and the U.S. 21%. And there you are—at the bottom. But we have more radios, TV sets, automobiles, and so on—of course.

It would be interesting to see how the states would rank in a similar quest. I would have high hopes for Vermont, largely because our regional library system under the direction of the Free Public Library Commission and its capable staff reaches every small library in Vermont and every lonely last little schoolhouse in the most remote regions of the state—a record no other state has, to the best of my knowledge; and while a wise legislature provides generous funds, even today the demand for books by Vermonters is greater than the supply. I am convinced and I am prepared to defend my belief that there is no more

important activity carried on in the state of Vermont than the system I have outlined—nothing that reaches more profoundly and lastingly into young lives and older lives in terms of values that endure through the years.

A Vermont interest in books does go back to pioneer days, and many a library in Vermont traces its beginnings to pioneer times. One of these days, I shall list some of the principal books in one of these old libraries. Just now I should like to offer a list of Vermont novels and stories, fiction in a word, covering nearly a century—and all of the books alive today. "A classic," said George Ade, "is a book people refuse to let die"; and I know no better definition. Some of the fiction on the list will perish, no doubt; some will last "whereunto the memory of man runneth not to the contrary."

Mrs. Henry D. Holmes is a familiar name in such departments as "Queries and Answers" of the *New York Times* in which puzzled readers seek to find authors, titles, or the poem or prose which linger in their memories unidentified. Mrs. Holmes, out of a lifetime of reading and a marked sensitivity to what she reads, out of a wide range of accumulated references, very often is able to help a beleaguered reader. She belongs to the blessed clan, who even amid the tumult and shouting of our harassed days, aid in keeping alive a love of books, knowing full well that on "dune and headland will sink the fire," but books will live on, holding as they do the final records of man's defeats and triumphs, and in the end his achievements and aspirations. Even blindness has not made her cease her altruistic work in her home in Montpelier.

Here is the list of Vt. classics she prepared at my request. Neither she nor I would claim that it is final, but it does chart an interesting journey for those who belong to the valiant 21%—and those wise enough to seek entrance: D. P. Thompson—*Locke Amsden, Green Mountain Boys*; Rowland Robinson—*Uncle Lisha's Shop, Danvis Folks, Uncle Lisha's Outing, Sam Lovell's Camp*; Mary E. Waller—*Woodcarver of 'Lympus*; Dorothy Canfield Fisher—*Seasoned Timber, The Brimming Cup*; Robert L. Duffus—*That was Alderbury, Victory on West Hill*; Louise Andrews Kent—*Mrs. Appleyard's Year, Country Mouse*; Howard Breslin—*The Tamarack Tree*; Gerald Brace—*The Wayward Pilgrims*; Dilys Bennett Laing—*The Great Year*; Mari Tomasi—*Like Lesser Gods*.

Take to your reading wings—and happy landings! But don't mind a skid now and then. END



Some VERMONT Ways of Life: By VREST ORTON

They Put Things Together to Stay

Did you ever wonder why antique chairs, made in the 18th century in America and still found in many homes, are giving as good service today as the day they were made over 150 years ago . . . and that you can buy a modern machine-made chair and sometimes have the rungs pull out and the back fall off in less than a month?

This is why: the 18th century cabinet maker dried the wood for chair rungs in the brick oven so it was bone dry and with a draw shave hewed the rungs out of this super dry wood. Shaping the rung just right to fit the hole in the leg, he drove the rung in and it stayed. It stayed not only then, but is still staying 150 years later for the simple reason that the rungs, dried in the fireplace oven, began the minute they were put into the chair, to absorb the moisture in the air. Since houses in those days were not dried out with hot air furnace heat, the rungs swelled as they absorbed the air moisture and thereafter fitted so tightly that they could never again be pulled out.

This is only one of the many craft secrets of the colonial cabinet maker revealed to me by Earl Whitmore of South Londonderry who didn't learn them from a book but has, in his 25 years of restoring antiques and making new furniture, figured them out.

When Earl was in high school he started working for his father, who had an antique business near Middletown, Connecticut. Since then Earl has read a lot of books about period furniture and antiques, but, as in all cases of fine work, the theory follows the experience. I

suspect Earl now reads the books to find out if the old timers did it the way he figured they had to.

Earl's father taught him that every single operation, from finding the right wood, to rubbing in the finish, had to be done just right or else the end product would not be just right. He discovered, so he told me, that in making good furniture that would last for generations, you could not afford to skimp or hurry, or to get around doing each step 100% perfect.

So They Came to Vermont

Earl and his charming young wife liked skiing so they used to come to Vermont week-ends all through the snow season. One day, after the war, they said to themselves . . . why do we commute to Vermont? Why don't we come here to live? And so they did. In 1947 they bought the farm house and land of Colonel Robert Gray Allen, former Congressman from Pennsylvania, and moved in. It has a trout brook in the front yard, and Glebe Mountain in the back. The large sheds and barns lent themselves at once to Earl's scheme of making a living:—It was not long after they got settled before Earl was installing cabinet makers' tools and wood working machines. Ever since that day, Earl has been busy restoring antiques and making furniture. Passing by you can see lights burning in his workshop long after George, the Whitmore's three year old son, has been put to bed. Earl is so busy he doesn't have time to do much skiing any more, or even to fish in the front yard brook.

Earl tells me that what he likes best is the challenge offered him fairly often when people bring in an old piece of furniture that has been given up as hopeless. If he finds that the integral parts are worth saving, he enjoys bringing back a beautiful example of the early cabinet maker's art. For it was an art . . . not just a trade.

Earl explained that, in saying this, he means that if you do a job and put a great deal of yourself into it, it is art . . . but if you go ahead and work by rote and without any feeling, it is a trade.

More Secrets of the Art

"No . . . you can't fake an antique" Earl said when I asked him about a lot of the stuff one sees in certain antique places . . . "I mean you can't fake it so an expert is fooled. There are dozens of ways that a dishonest workman can fool the public, but anyone who has worked on antiques can always tell what has been changed or added."

I challenged him to prove this statement so he took the chair he was sitting on. It was a chair made about 1770 and one my great, great grandfather had owned and it had, fortunately, been passed down to me.

"I would put the calipers on this leg first," Earl said. "If these legs were turned perfect . . . I mean the diameter was shown by the calipers to be the same all the way . . . I would know it was a fake or that a new leg had been added." The old-timers, he explained, did not have the tools to do a perfect precision job in all measurements, but such can be done today on an automatic lathe and other precision machine tools.

"Another thing" Earl continued, "you have got to have the piece of furniture you are working on 100% correct. You have got to know not only how the early workmen made everything, but you have got to know all about each tool they used, and you have got to know a good deal about wood and what happens to it from tree to plane.

I asked him if a man who was handy with tools could do a little studying in the books and become a good restorer of antiques. Earl said one could study books for years, but without years of actual hard work one would make a lot of mistakes. And what was more important, one would not get much of a kick out of the work unless one had a feel for the way it was done when the original furniture was made.

More Secrets of the Life

I like Earl Whitmore's Vermont story because, unlike many who come to the country from the city, he was well experienced and he knew exactly what he wanted to do and could do to make a living. Also, he figured that since so many people come to Vermont to retire that there would be room for one more man who had come to Vermont to work.

But what I like most about the Whitmore's Vermont story is this . . . they are making their own way, in a fashion that brings them happiness and independence. Earl is not trying to figure on how he can get "security" from the government in one form or the other.

Security to him, he says, is finding something you can do well . . . something that needs to be done . . . and then keep on doing it. No one, he figures, can then take it away from you. That is all the security any man needs, Earl says. END

Readers are urged to send to Vrest Orton, Weston, Vermont, notices of unusual new businesses and ways of earning a living which have news and human interest value. Mention here in no way constitutes endorsement by either Mr. Orton or VERMONT LIFE.



HARTLAND FOUR CORNERS by Wendy courtesy The Rumford Press

The true test of civilization is, not the census,
nor the size of cities, nor the crops no,
but the kind of man the country turns out.

Ralph Waldo Emerson