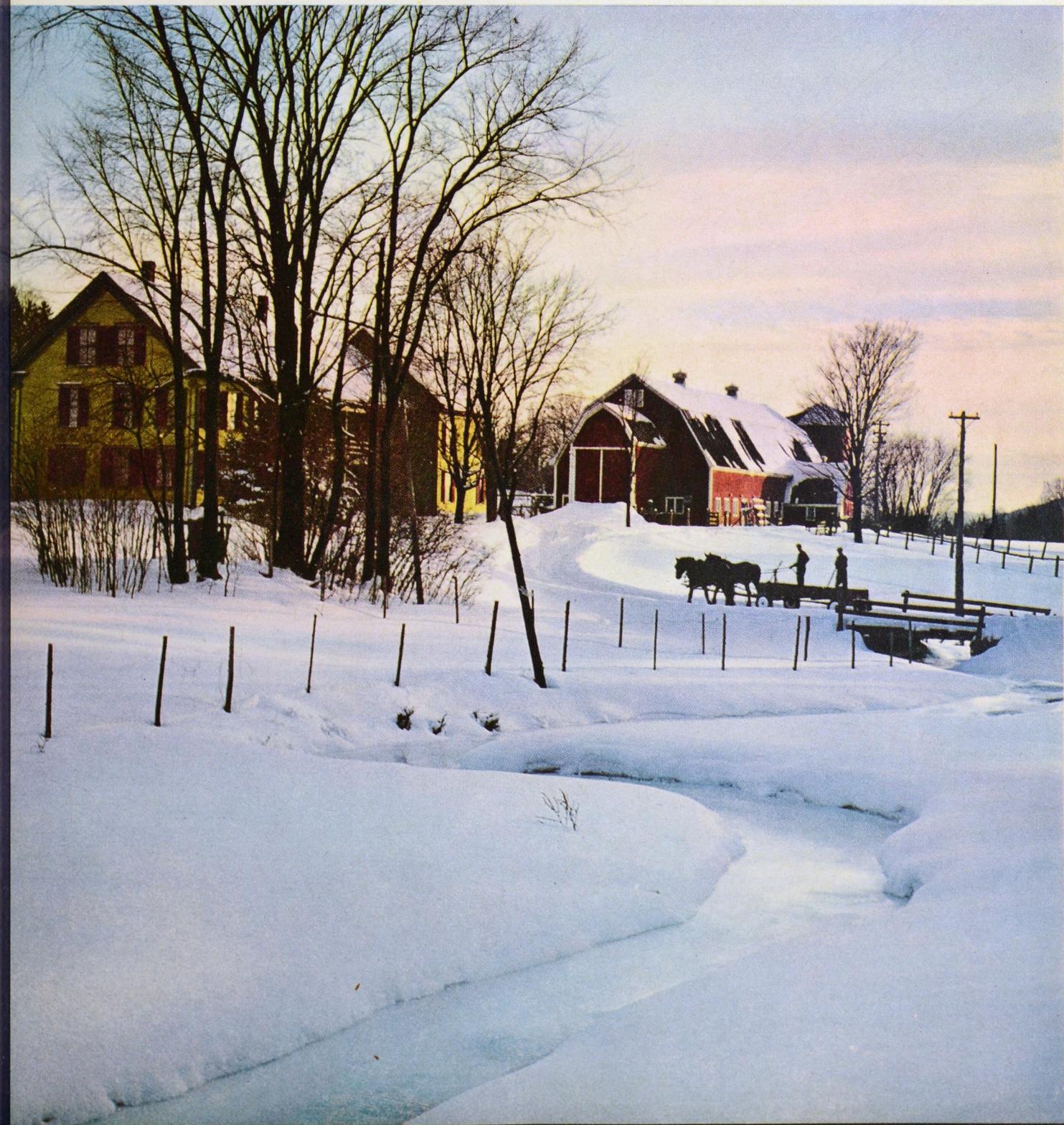


Vermont *Life*

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1953-54

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VERMONT *Life*

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CONTENTS

GREEN MOUNTAIN POSTBOY <i>by Walter Hard, Sr.</i>	1	THE WILDEST PORTION OF VERMONT <i>by Stewart H. Holbrook</i>	28
MOUNTAIN HORSEPOWER <i>by Frank F. Rogers</i>	2	BALANCE AND SWING <i>by Marilyn Fenno</i>	38
PAUPERES CHRISTI <i>by Neil Y. Priessman</i>	8	THOSE LONG WINTERS <i>by Frank Rowsome</i>	42
SOME VERMONT WAYS <i>by Vrest Orton</i>	14	CHRISTMAS ON THE MOUNTAIN <i>by Rose C. Labrie</i>	46
IN THE WINTER SUN <i>by A. W. Coleman</i>	16	NAVION 35H <i>by Edward F. Knapp</i>	49
WINTER PORTFOLIO <i>by Newell Green</i>	18	RUTLAND COTILLION <i>by Eliz. McWhorter & Aldo Merusi</i>	54
SAILBOATS ON SKATES <i>by Don O'Brien</i>	24	AT THE SIGN OF THE QUILL <i>by Arthur W. Peach</i>	58

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Vermont Constitution

Editor's Uneasy Chair

Sincere, well-intentioned readers be-devil us from time to time, to give space on conditions in Vermont which (perish the thought) might stand improving. Always we've said, "no." Now perhaps we'd better be frank with everyone.

Nobody pretends Vermont is a complete paradise. We do have some law-breaking, some poor roads, a few unfriendly citizens, some social and civic problems. But as Dorothy Fisher so well shows in her fine new book, *The Vermont Tradition*, as a state we seem smudged by fewer social and scenic blots than most of our sisters.

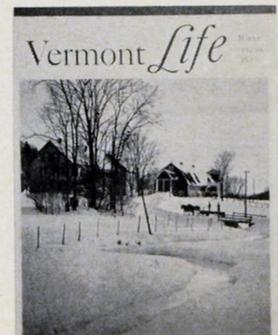
Vermont Life doesn't advocate ignoring our faults, nor does it pretend there are none. But our limited purpose is to tell and show non-Vermonters about our good points. When a visitor comes here, he is intelligent enough, we feel, not to expect all will be unalloyed bliss just north of the Massachusetts line. He will find, as he discovers Vermont, an isolated roadside dump and perhaps an unfriendly native. But he'll find these far outweighed by Vermont's beauty and her fine people.

Vermont Life is meant to introduce people to Vermont. To do this we still believe it is not misleading to place our best foot foremost.

* * *

Many readers will be interested that reprints of Harold C. Todd's color illustrated article, *Birds of Vermont*, (Summer 1953) are now available at 20c each post-paid from Mr. Todd at 77 Tillotson Road, Fanwood, N. J. W.H.

ABOUT THE COVER—This is Whetstone Farm between Craftsbury and E. Craftsbury, pictured in the cold late afternoon of winter by Robert P. Holland of Quechee, nationally known outdoor photographer. This is the Clifford Daniels place, the farmhouse perhaps a hundred years old.



AD, ANTE, CON . . . SUB AND SUPER.

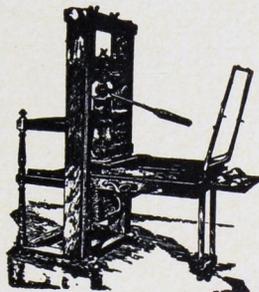
The Post Boy wishes to arrive at his subject in a classical manner and assures his readers that he really could give the whole rule. You recall that the above prefixes governed merely the dative. Now we are in the "Super" era. We drive a "Super-eight" along a "Super-highway" which may bring us, quite naturally to a "Super-market." There one buys many things which are announced to be super-this or super-that. The P.B. admits he enjoys shopping in a modern super market, wheeling a baby carriage around and letting himself in for twice as big an outlay as he would have suffered under the older "ask-the-man" system. When it is a matter of efficiency, especially in extracting dollars from the customer, modern merchandising wins hands down over the old fashioned country store and the personalized service it gave. But the latter gave so much more than efficiency. It was

THE COUNTRYMAN'S CLUB. Imagine one of these modern streamliners equipped with chairs or benches, just to accommodate, not customers chiefly, but anybody who had a desire to do some heavy loafing! The Post Boy recalls just that. Four or five chairs often augmented by some nail kegs, a large box of sawdust, and in winters, a roaring chunk stove as the center of hospitality. Such fixtures were as much a part of a retail merchant's system as the till under his counter, whose contents was probably very little affected by the regular sitters. The proprietor might find no place to sit himself except on the counter, but he'd join in the gossip or argument, as the case might be, just as often as customers would allow, and he wasn't averse to letting one wait until he finished what he had to offer to the gathering.

CLUB FITTINGS varied of course. The Post Boy recalls that his father's drug store, started in 1872, had four chairs, now called "bar chairs", or "club chairs" and eagerly sought after by antique collectors, whose arms were worn smooth by many elbows. A copy of JUDGE was also furnished, that favoring the Republican party, and also a daily paper. This latter was read by certain regulars who came for that purpose usually at certain times. In the evening, especially following some important event like an election or a funeral, there would be the regulars in the chairs and standees leaning against the counters adjacent or sitting on them if there was room. They filled the atmosphere with talk and smoke. The sale of a few good five cent cigars, six for a quarter, was about all the income the group offered.

Green Mountain POSTBOY

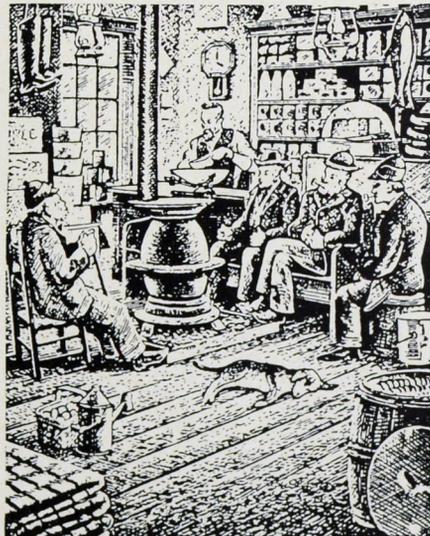
By
WALTER
HARD



The sale of chewing tobacco was naturally somewhat increased too, and for the accommodation of these customers the P.B.'s father substituted a real spittoon for the old box of sawdust. This step was the first intimation of change. It wasn't long before the chairs disappeared, one at a time. One was kept for a regular reader of the daily paper until he was too infirm to get to the store and then that went and along with it the high-toned receiver beside it.

MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY. All of these changes were observed with growing anger on the part of the most regular and least profitable of the loafers. The end of his club days came when the P.B.'s father found he had been continuing to spit where he firmly maintained the spittoon should properly be. In spite of considerable disparity in size with the odds heavily against him, the proprietor insisted on the

Courtesy The Vermont Country Store

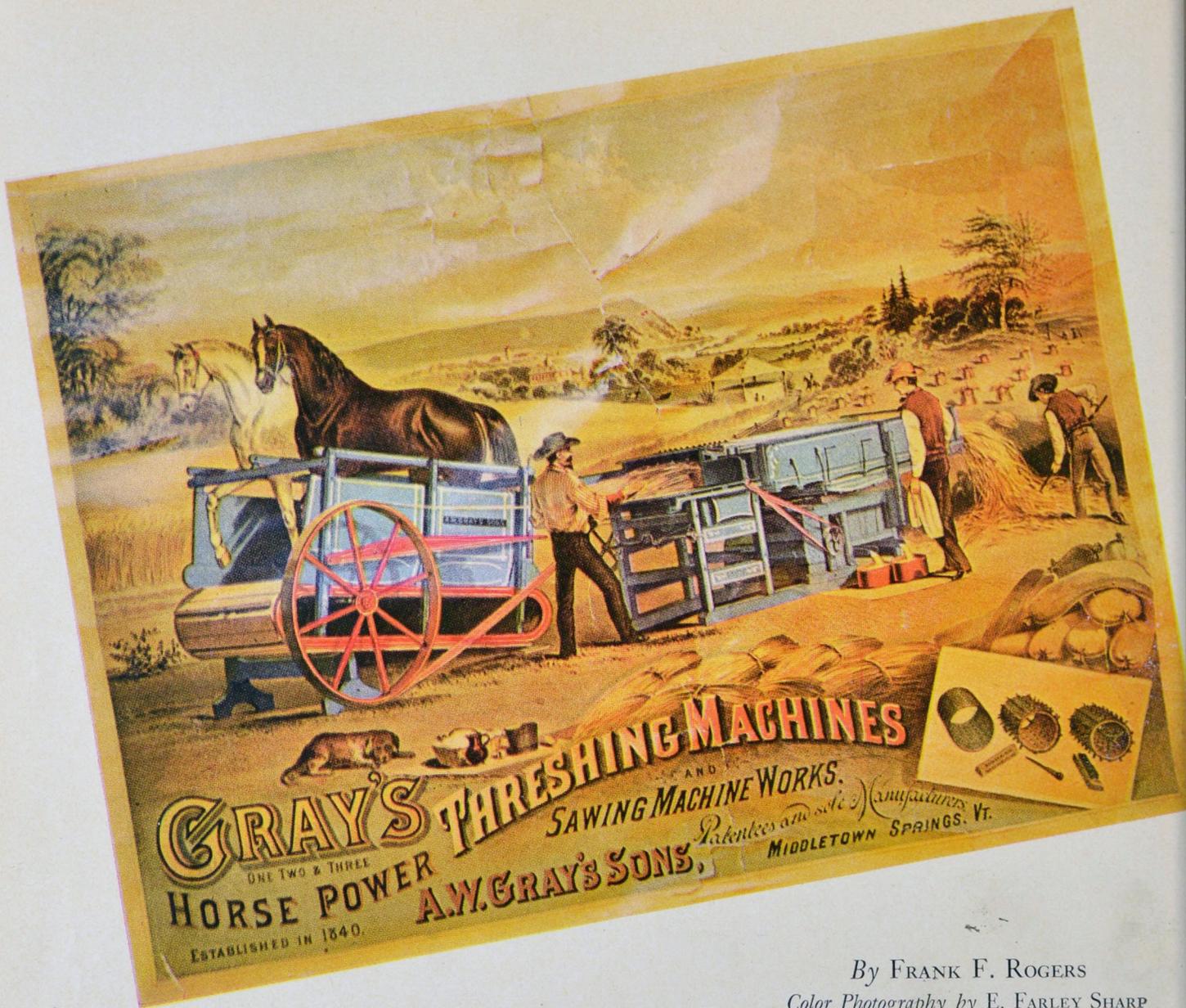


irate loafer's immediate withdrawal. He used a sudden frontal attack to hasten the desired end. A regular customer was lost forever, and the fact that he had withdrawn his patronage was spread far and near by the expelled club member.

DISCUSSION GROUPS and forums now replace the comfortable seats around the old store's genial warmth where many a public problem was brought under scrutiny and debated without rules of order to hamper. Politicians knew the value of a storekeeper's support, which could be brought to bear on the sitters who gathered around his fire. In fact it often happened that the merchant's philosophy of life in general made its imprint on the group.

Things didn't always go smoothly as is usually the case in other clubs. One merchant found himself desiring to close up earlier on winter evenings and he gradually slowed down on feeding the fire. Meantime a young man had opened a rival emporium and he had attracted a younger group of evening regulars; doubtless, also, one or two whose credit had long since run out at the old store. Finally one of the ancient habitués felt it his duty to approach the older merchant on the matter of the comfort of his evening guests. Said he: "Silas, we been reg'lar customers o' yourn. You've treated us good. But sence this new store opened up things have changed. Us few have come here reg'lar winter nights fer a good many years. I hate t' tell you, Silas, but iffen you don't keep up a better fire we're just agoin' t' pick up and do our loafin' to the new store."

A SUPER MERCHANT. In short the old country storekeeper was much more than a merchandiser. He was offering much more than efficiency in selling goods. He was "super" in the sense of better than that. When a man had had a spell of sickness, what he might look forward to most would be the day when he could drag himself to the familiar spot by the store fire and sit down in the comfortable chair and get the latest news from the storekeeper and the familiar group he knew would be there. In fact it might happen that the neighbors would be watching for the right kind of day. "Come a day like that one, they knew if a feller didn't git out and down to the store and set, they wa'n't much hope fer 'im." So, to return to the classical, the sitters gathered in the comfort of the country storekeeper's club house often were the Greek chorus interpreting the day-by-day tragedy or comedy of their communities, without the least thought of being parts of anything that might be called efficient or super. END



By FRANK F. ROGERS
 Color Photography by E. FARLEY SHARP

A forgotten Vermont company one hundred years ago started the mechanization of the farms of the nation

BELOW: Model Horse Power, built by A. W. Gray, now owned by granddaughter.



Green Mountain Horse Power

THE INGENUITY AND INVENTIVENESS of the Vermont Yankee has played a very large part in the development of American agriculture and helped to make it the most highly mechanized in the world. Few men have done more toward this development in its early stages than Albert W. Gray of Middletown, Vermont.

Born at Dorset April 30, 1810, he entered the picture when practically all farm work was done by hand. Shortly after his 15th birthday he was "bound out" to Henry W. Gray, a distant relative, until he should arrive at the age of twenty-one. Henry W. was a millwright.

Albert W. lived with him until he was twenty-one, learned the trade and became one of the most skillful workmen at the trade in that section of the state. At the age of twenty-one he entered into business for himself.

In these days corn was prepared for the grist by rubbing one ear against another until the kernels were removed, a slow

process some use today in shelling pop corn for the popper. Albert Gray's first invention, in 1836, was a corn sheller upon which he received a patent.

In 1844 Gray invented and patented a tread horse power, which, in later years, with the improvements he made on it, was recognized as the best of its kind in the world. This power consisted of a revolving platform of maple lags 2" thick, 8" wide and 24" or 48" long, depending on whether for one or two horses. This power was inclined to a steepness that would keep the animal traveling continuously. Wrought iron cogs on the underside of the lags meshed into a gear on a drive shaft that carried a large band wheel from which a belt transmitted power to whatever machine was to be operated. Where water was not available, this was the earliest and most practical source of power for the individual operator of machines that came within its limits.

Until about the middle of the century

grain was threshed by pounding it out from the straw with a wooden flail, on the threshing floor. The flail consisted of a hickory shaft about four feet long, with a wooden swivel at one end to which was attached a flail of heavier wood, about thirty inches long, by a rawhide thong. It was swung by the operator with an easy motion. But a bit of carelessness or inattention on his part could result in a nasty crack on the back of the head.

Soon after the development of the tread power, Mr. Gray built a thresher to be operated by his power. This first thresher consisted of a wooden cylinder, 18 inches in diameter and about 30 inches long, studded with teeth about two inches long. Above this was placed a concave piece of wood, with similar teeth. As the straw was drawn between these teeth the grain was knocked out and straw, chaff and grain fell together to the threshing floor. The grain was then shaken out of the straw and winnowed by hand.

(continued on page 4)

BELOW: Employees of A. W. Gray's Sons lined up in June of 1912 for this photograph, seven years before competition closed the firm.



Always alert to improvements, Gray soon added a separator to the cylinder to divide the grain from the straw. This was accomplished by two wooden troughs or tables, with holes bored in the bottom, over which the grain passed from the cylinder. These were given an oscillating motion by means of a crank shaft, and a set of fingers kept the grain and straw moving to the rear. Still the grain had to be cleaned by hand until he made another improvement: the addition of a revolving fan that blew the chaff and light grain out, as it came away from the separator. Passing over a series of sieves and screens, other impurities were removed and the good grain delivered to a spout and thence to a half-bushel measure ready for the bag.

One of the first uses to which Mr. Gray put a horse power was to operate the machinery in the little shop where he began construction of these machines. Gray tread powers were used in many small mills and factories where water power was not available or to supplement what power they already had.

One horse, of average weight, in a one-horse power would develop about three H.P. as engines are rated, and two horses or a yoke of oxen about twice this amount of power. In later years, when gas engines began to replace horse powers on the farm this caused much confusion. It was assumed by the farmer that the term "two-horse power" meant 2-H.P. and a 2-H.P. engine would be ordered to do the work of a two-horse tread power, when



ABOVE: The old, wooden-threshing flail.

actually a six or eight H.P. engine was needed.

Tread powers were also used to exercise bulls, and the story is told of a neighboring farmer, driving his prize bull up into the power one morning for his daily exercise and a little job of wood sawing, with the remark, "Git up in thar, durn ye. I'll larn ye life ain't one continual round of pleasure."

A two-horse tread power and 30" cylinder thresher would average from 25

to 30 bushels of oats per hour. The ordinary threshing gang consisted of a man to feed the grain through the cylinder, (usually the owner of the rig); two men on the load, (to shake the grain down to the feed table); one man to take charge of the half-bushel measure and put the grain into the bags; and a couple to mow the straw away when it was pitched up to them by the fellow at the tail end. This last was about the toughest job of all. One had to stand where he got all the dust and dirt that came through and had to keep continually at work. This job was usually given to growing boys as it required no skill, just the ability to "take" it and not complain. A plentiful supply of hard cider, or in more temperate families ginger switchel, was always on hand to soothe the dusty throats of the gang. And what dinners the women folks would serve to such a gang of hungry threshers! Food fit for a gourmet and enough for an army. The usual price for custom work was eight to ten cents per bushel of grain, and about every neighborhood had its custom machine that went from farm to farm doing the work. Throughout all these developments one thought was constantly in mind and that was to eliminate burdensome hand work and increase efficiency and production so far as possible.

About 1856, Albert Gray and his eldest son, Leonidas, who was born in 1834 and had been associated with him for about ten years, began the manu-

BELOW: The inventor-founder, A.W. Gray



BELOW: Son, Leonidas, "The Governor."



BELOW: Son A. Y. was brilliant salesman.



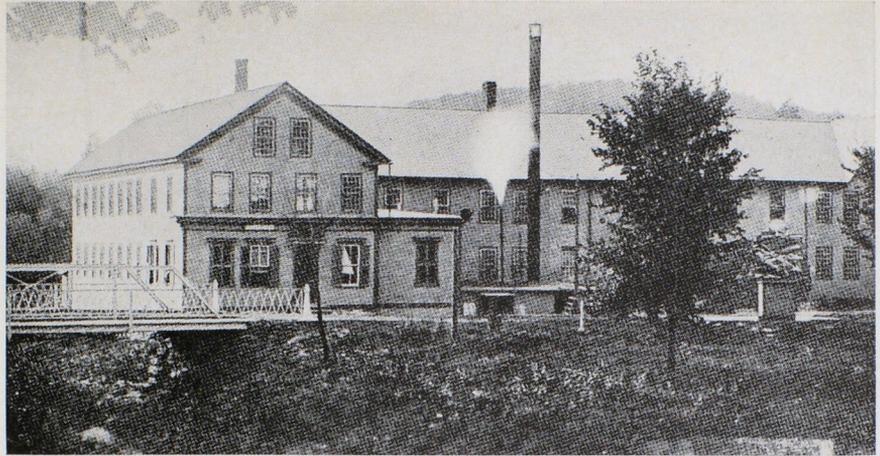
facture in a large way of their horse powers. They incorporated many improvements and easily led the field in this class of machinery. The firm was then known as A. W. Gray & Son. Soon after this they took the younger son, Albert Y., born in 1844, into the firm, then known as A. W. Gray & Sons. Thereby was formed a combination of business and mechanical ability that soon put the firm into the forefront of manufacturers of machinery for farm use. In 1875 Mr. Gray, being in poor health, disposed of his interest in the business to his two sons and it became incorporated as A. W. Gray's Sons. It remained strictly a family business up to its dissolution in 1917.

Until his death in 1886, Albert W. Gray carried his full share of civic responsibility, representing Rutland County in the 1857 Constitutional Convention at Montpelier, and later as a member of the Legislature. In addition he had held about every town office.

Added to the line of horse powers and threshers, in later years, was a line of wood sawing machines, both drag and circular. As silos came into general use a line of ensilage cutters was also manufactured. The common use of the gas engine as a source of farm power necessitated radical changes in the threshers. These changes and improvements allowed the 30" cylinder machine to turn out over 100 bushels of oats an hour instead of 25 to 30. The threshers were adapted to handle all kinds of grain including peanuts, Kaffir corn, feterita, sorghum, milo maize, rice, beans, peas and grass seed as well as the ordinary cereal grains. At one time the University of Illinois purchased twelve of these small threshers for use on experimental farms and the University of Missouri followed with an order for four.

The factory being located eight miles from the nearest rail shipping point, Poultney, necessitated cartage to that point. Castings for these machines came from a foundry located at Poultney. These were hauled to the factory and fabricated into the machines. Cartage by horses both ways, eight to ten cents per hundred-weight, had to be figured in as costs. During the eighties and nineties from 75 to 100 men were employed at the factory at certain seasons of the year. The average wage in the factory at this time was about \$1.50 for a ten hour day, sixty hour week, and many of the operatives built and paid for good homes on these wages.

Until about 1910 the Grays were able to purchase all needed lumber locally, paying for much of it in machinery. This



D. S. Carpenter

ABOVE: A. W. Gray factory was dismantled in early 1920s. Now creamery stands here.

lumber was mostly maple, of which the lags, or treads, were made. These wore out rapidly under the calks of the horses and required many replacements during the life of the machine. Oak, ash, spruce and basswood also were used. But in the early part of the present century the portable sawmill entered the picture. The local supply was soon bought up by lumber speculators and the Grays were forced farther afield for their supply, adding greatly to the cost of production.

Agencies for the sale and service of their machines were established throughout the U. S., with some as far west as

New Mexico and Texas. Export agents shipped Gray horse powers and threshers to nearly every country abroad. Machines were sold in England, Scotland, France, Germany, Russia, So. Africa, Australia, Mexico and the So. American countries as well as the Canadian Provinces. Some are still in use today.

In 1868 Albert W. Gray discovered the mineral springs, which had been opened up by a freshet that year, and soon Middletown became a popular health resort. Companies were formed to bottle and ship the water and in 1870 the Mont-

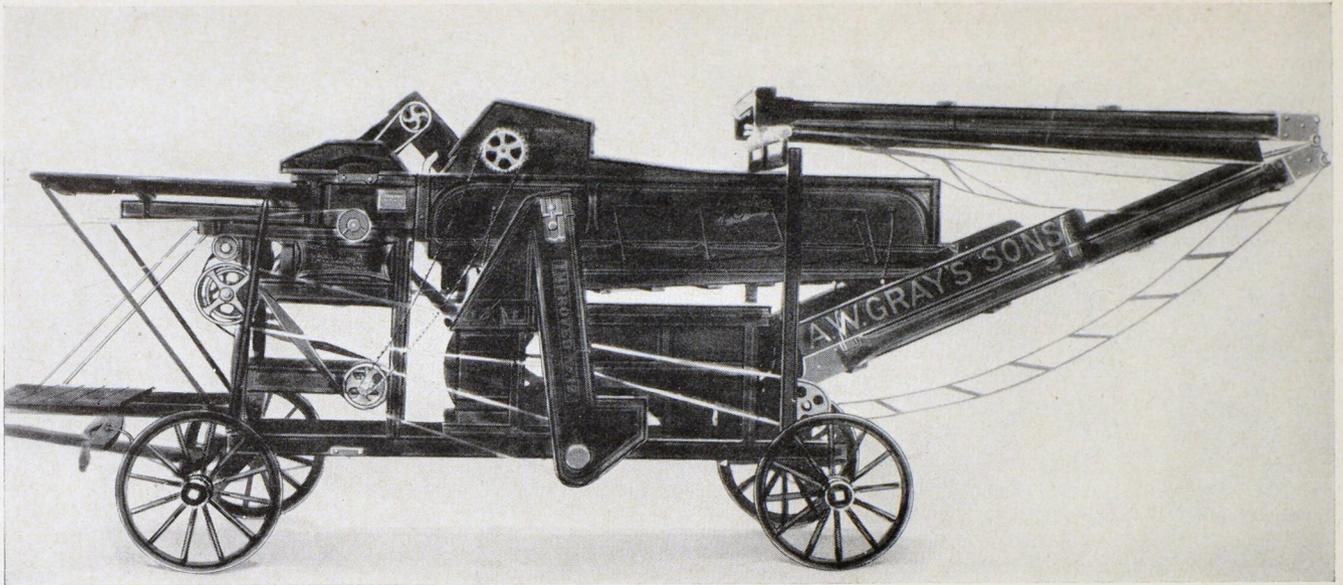
(continued on page 7)

BELOW: Dual purpose advertising; plush Montvert Hotel, built in 1870, is now gone also.

**GRAY'S ONE HORSE POWER,
AND CIRCULAR SAW, COMBINED.**

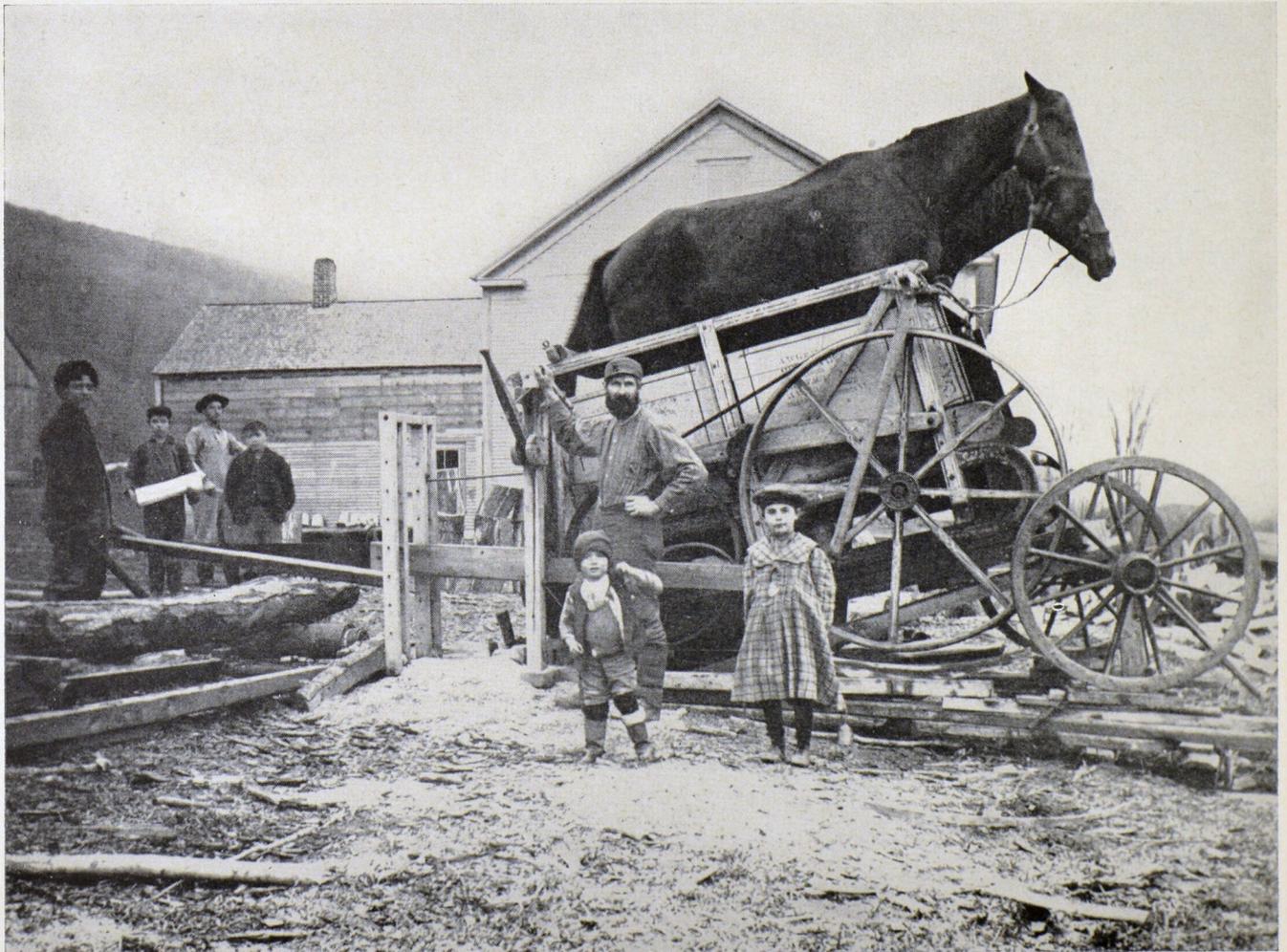
Manufactured by A. W. GRAY & SONS, Manufacturers of their
PATENT HORSE POWERS, and MACHINES FOR SAWING WOOD

With Circular, and Cross-cut Drag Saws; Also, Machines for Threshing and Cleaning Grain, etc.
MIDDLETOWN, VT.



ABOVE: This late Gray thresher could be operated either by horse powered treadmill (not shown) or by the newfangled gasoline engine.

BELOW: Walter Mason, with Gray-powered drag saw in Tinmouth, now lives in Starksboro, celebrated 68th wedding anniversary this year.
Clarence Wilbur



vert Hotel was built at a cost of approximately \$100,000. The property was later bought by L. & A. Y. Gray and sold by them to New York investors. By act of the Legislature in 1885 the name of the town was changed to Middletown Springs. The hotel was operated profitably until about 1900, but then it began losing money rapidly, was sold at auction and the buildings dismantled about 1906.

Honor for the great success achieved by the Grays in building up this successful business is due first to Albert W. Gray for his great mechanical skill and inventive genius; second to Leonidas Gray—"The Governor," as he was always referred to by those who worked for him—for the system that was adopted and manifested in all their business transactions, and third to Albert Y. Gray,—"A. Y." as he was always spoken of—for his dynamic salesmanship that pushed the sales to every corner of the globe.

About 1900 Dr. Otto's patents on the internal combustion engine expired and threw the development of gas engines open to a competitive market. It was a time of great commercial combinations and organizations. Soon large corporations such as McCormick-Deering, John Deere, J. I. Case and a host of others came into the field with low cost, convenient farm power. In a few years tread power was practically eliminated from general use. They also developed other lines to go with their engines, which were in direct competition with those made by A. W. Gray's Sons. They soon took over the field with their gigantic sales organizations, gradually eliminating the smaller companies in the same field.

In 1917 the Gray company was dissolved. Other interests took over and continued the line for a few years, then tried out other products. But inexperience counted heavily against them and in a few years they suffered the fate of many a formerly prosperous business not able to keep abreast of the times—liquidated and sold out.

No longer is the old steam whistle heard at seven in the morning calling the men to a day of honest work. Today the Rutland County Co-Operative Creamery occupies the site of the old Gray factory. A community of over 800 has dwindled to a farming section of about 450.

Such often follows the turning of the wheels of progress. But the influence of these men and their horse powered product has had a tremendous effect upon the agriculture of the world. These Vermonters were the first to free man of some of the slow, hard hand labor in providing food for the world.

END



ABOVE: Horse powers eliminated the hard labor in many farm chores such as filling silos.



Courtesy Ethel L. M. Cady

ABOVE: Circular saw rig used in Ascutney is operated by a yoke of oxen on the treadmill.

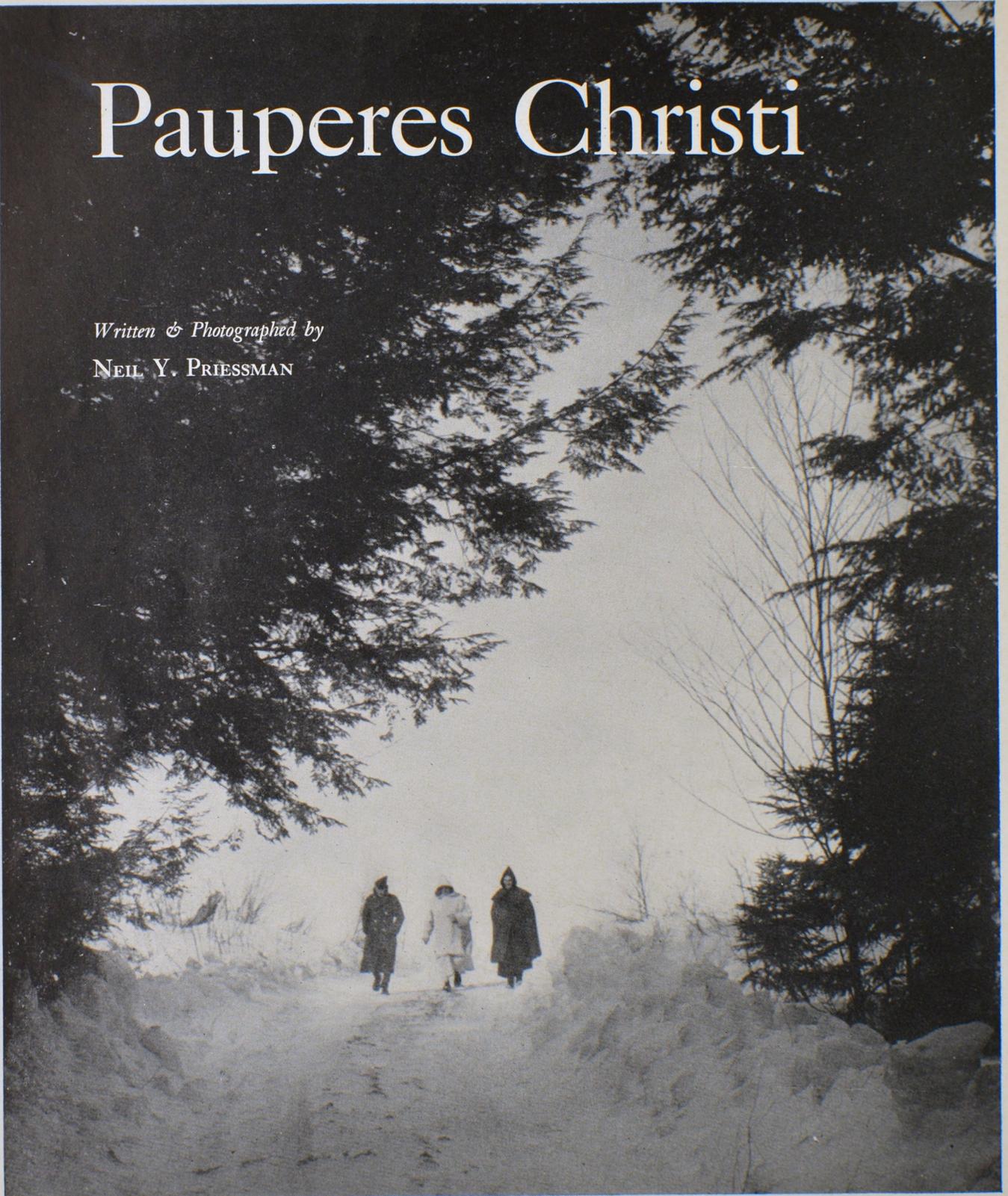
BELOW: Wheat could be handled 30 bushels per hour by a Gray two horse power thresher.



Pauperes Christi

Written & Photographed by

NEIL Y. PRIESSMAN



A 900 year old religious order, based upon frugal living, fits naturally into the life of Vermont.

“SPARE” IS A GOOD WORD. It fits our hill country here in southern Vermont, which is always beautiful but rarely bountiful. It is also descriptive of the life at the Carthusian monastery in Whitingham, first of the order in the United States.

The idly curious will not be interested in visiting the Carthusians, for there is nothing sensational to see here. To passers-by the monastery headquarters looks no different from any other simple, well-kept Vermont farmhouse. Inside there are no secrets, for the life of the fathers and brothers of the order is concerned with prayer, contemplation and work.

No sanctuary for escapists, aspirants to the order must prove themselves over a period of several years of prayer, study and penance. Life in the monastery follows the same strict, frugal pattern that has always been the life of a Carthusian since the founding of their order in the 11th century.

The monks live in solitude, each in his own “cell” or hermitage. Their day is largely devoted to prayer and religious services, with a certain amount of work as relaxation. All members of the monastery meet together for services at midnight, a period which divides the few hours allotted for sleep. One meal a little before noon, and a light supper is all the food they allow themselves. The lay brothers have longer work periods than the monks, each brother working at something best suited to his own capabilities.

BELOW: Brother Edmund lavishes attention on the monastery cattle.



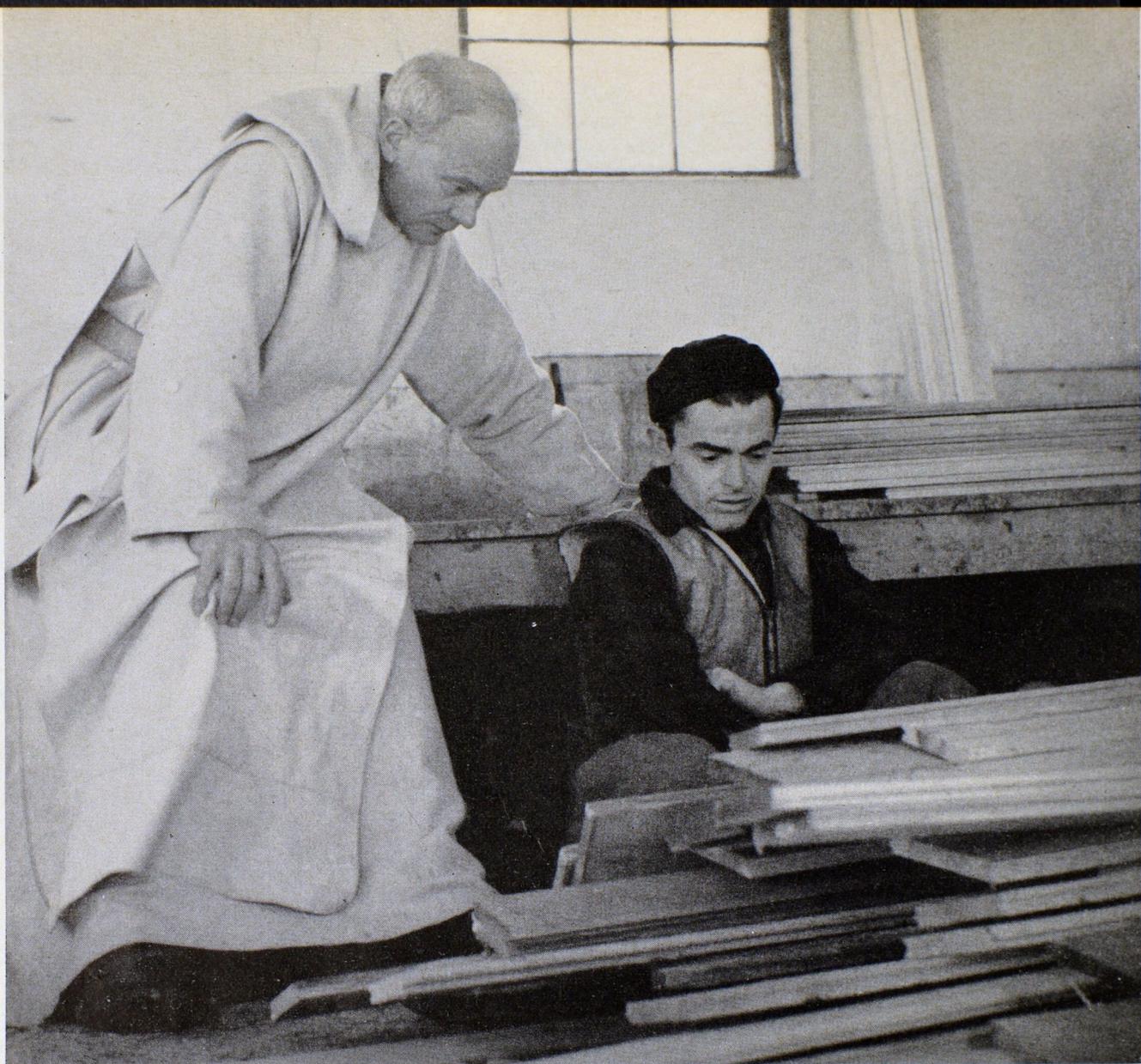
ABOVE: Wood drawing, other farm chores go on through the winter.

It is startling to see for the first time a brown-habited brother, tractor-mounted, snaking logs over the snow, or spreading manure. Then one realizes that this too is a very necessary and important part of a monastery which has grown in three short years from its initial start of about 500 acres to almost twice this size. In addition, a considerable herd of dairy cattle has been built up, as well as the tractors and other equipment so essential to a large farm. Farm problems during these beginning years have been settled with the help of the county agent, the forest service and the advice of friendly neighbors.

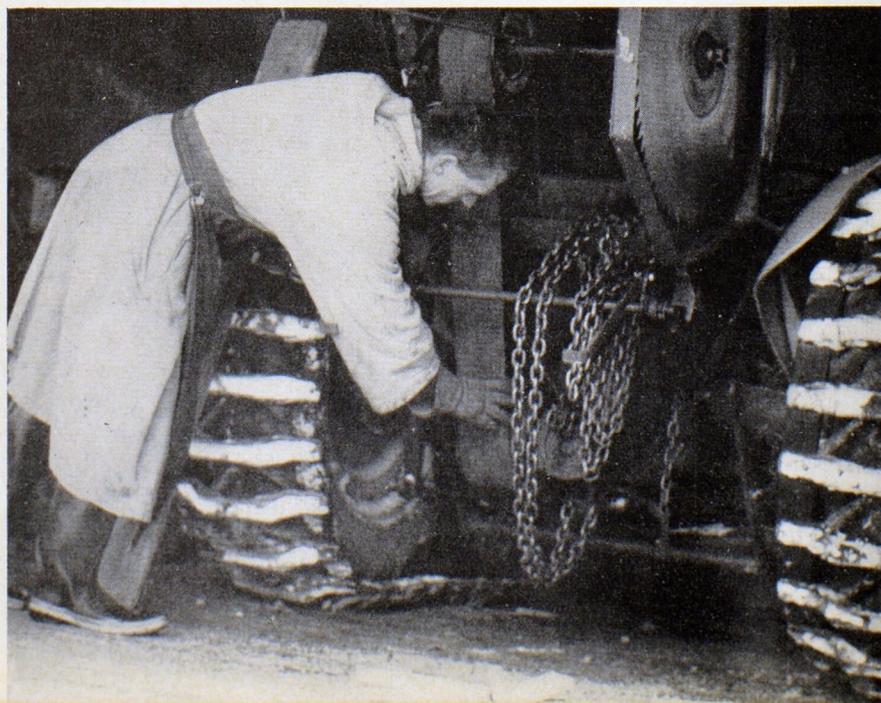
Plans for the future will depend largely on the continuing help of the increasing number of people who are aiding and encouraging the Carthusians in their start in America. It is a comment on Vermont and its people that in a traditionally Protestant community, Father Pawsey, English-born and familiar with much of Continental Europe, took out his naturalization papers shortly after his arrival in Vermont. That he believes Vermont is a good place to plan for the future is proven by his statement, “I like it here—more than any place I have been.”

END

(Continued on next page)



ABOVE: Fr. Humphrey Parwsey, superior of the monastery in Whitingham, discusses building plans with institution's carpenter.



LEFT: A lay brother, preparatory to wood cutting, adjusts a tractor-mounted saw rig. The winters usually are long and cold.



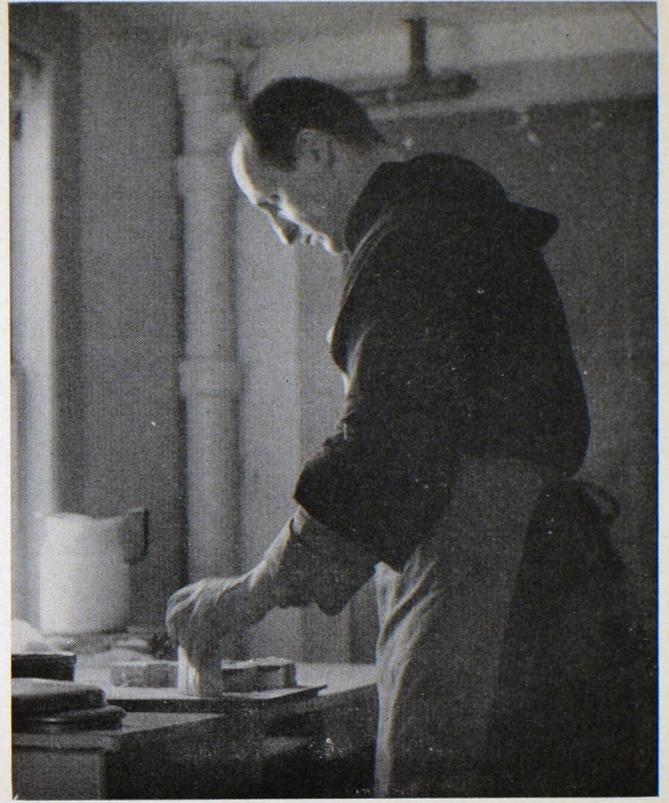
ABOVE: Monks live alone in separate hermitages, here return from services. White-habit is almost invisible against cabin.

RIGHT: Part of each monk's day is given to prayer and contemplation. Monastery members gather for services at midnight.





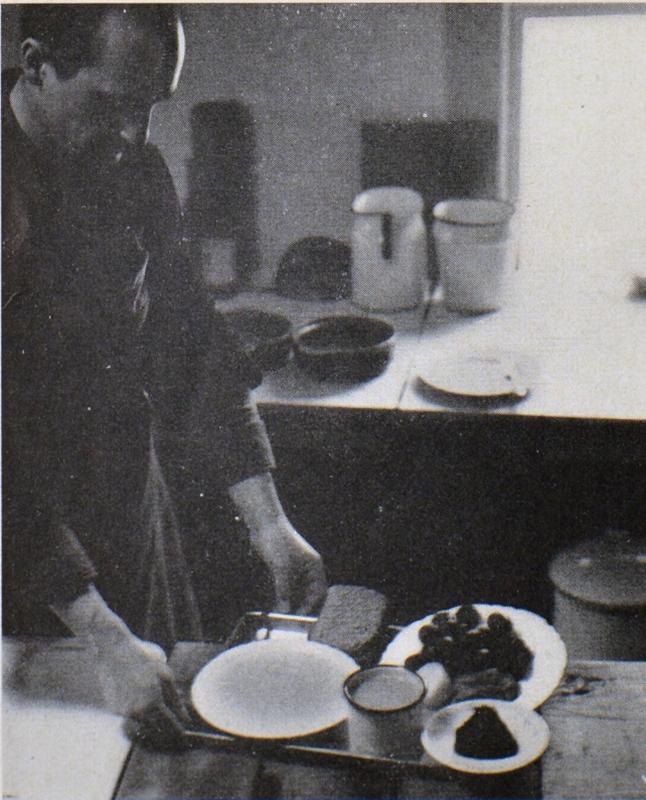
ABOVE: Whole wheat loaves are taken from the monastery ovens.



ABOVE: Light supper completes the Carthusians' daily two meals.

BELOW: Large meal; soup, tea, boiled chestnuts, fish, bread, jam.

BELOW: Brother Edmund in turn is regarded fondly by his charges.





SOME VERMONT WAYS

By

Vrest Orton

COVERED BRIDGES

From talking to thousands of visitors to our state, I am now convinced that of all the things that man has built in our mountain republic, these guests of ours are most interested in covered bridges. Seems if every other person I meet wants to know where the nearest covered bridge is, so it can be seen, walked through, and photographed. While other states, it is rumored, do have covered bridges, there is something about Vermont covered bridges, like Vermont maple syrup, that makes them better, from every point of view, than what they have in the United States.

One man told me this summer: "You can have all the beautiful Georgian houses, and all the charming architectural monuments in Vermont, but for my money, covered bridges come first. There is nothing that evokes memories and far off old happy things so much as a covered bridge. Why, I don't know."

He may be referring to the nostalgic drum beat of horses hooves on the loose plank floor boards and their eerie echoes. He may be referring to that charming superstition, in which I am heartily in favour of perpetuating, of the custom of, indeed if not virtual necessity for, kissing any girl you happen to be riding with, as you pass through a covered bridge. Both are good.

A Symbol of Vermont

In a manner of speaking, the Vermont covered bridge has become a kind of symbol of Vermont:—not only a symbol of the integrity and character of men who built things well and to last, but in fact an expected part of our scenery. Visiting in Townsend this summer, we walked through the old covered bridge across the Wantastiquet River (West, it's called now). Under the bridge is a fine old-time

swimming hole. That day, lying prone on the smooth rock ledge at the end of the deep pool was a man. His wife and young daughter were in the water but the man kept looking up at the bridge and then down the river at the mountain beyond. Suddenly he called out to the girls in the water, "Hey, look! Did you ever see anything like this? There's one of those old bridges there . . . a Vermont brook here and over beyond a Vermont mountain. Gee what a scene . . . what a scene!" He later told us he was from New York and had never been in Vermont before. He had, he related, only read about the state. He added that he never expected to see everything in one picture on his first day here but here it was . . . everything.

No More in 1973

It is not, I think, far fetched to say that the old weathered covered bridges, which in the typical pragmatism of Vermonters were covered not for looks but to keep the water from rotting the wood, are an inseparable part of our Vermont scene, and what is more interesting, many people want and expect to see them when they come here.

And yet, unless something is done soon, there won't be any more covered bridges left in Vermont. A few years ago we had nearly 200. According to my rough estimate, we are losing by fire, vandalism, or necessity, about 15 a year. This means that in a couple of decades these mute memorials of an olden day will all be gone. It should be explained, in defence of town and state road officials, that many covered bridges have to be torn down because, built from 75 to 150 years ago, they are not suitable for heavy traffic. Also many have been destroyed by overloaded trucks. The towns can not afford to guard the bridges to keep off overloaded vehicles. The towns also can not afford to maintain bridges that are no longer useful on town or state aid roads.

So, what can we do to preserve covered bridges? Well, we may be able to do something. There is a growing interest all over the country in this subject, and Dr. Leo Litwin of Massachusetts heads a Society for the Preservation of Covered Bridges. He publishes a little brochure for members. However, many feel that Vermont should do something to keep some of these old-time bridges so people may enjoy them in the future.

A New Program

I am glad to report that at the last Session of the Vermont General Assembly, a small sum was voted to increase the

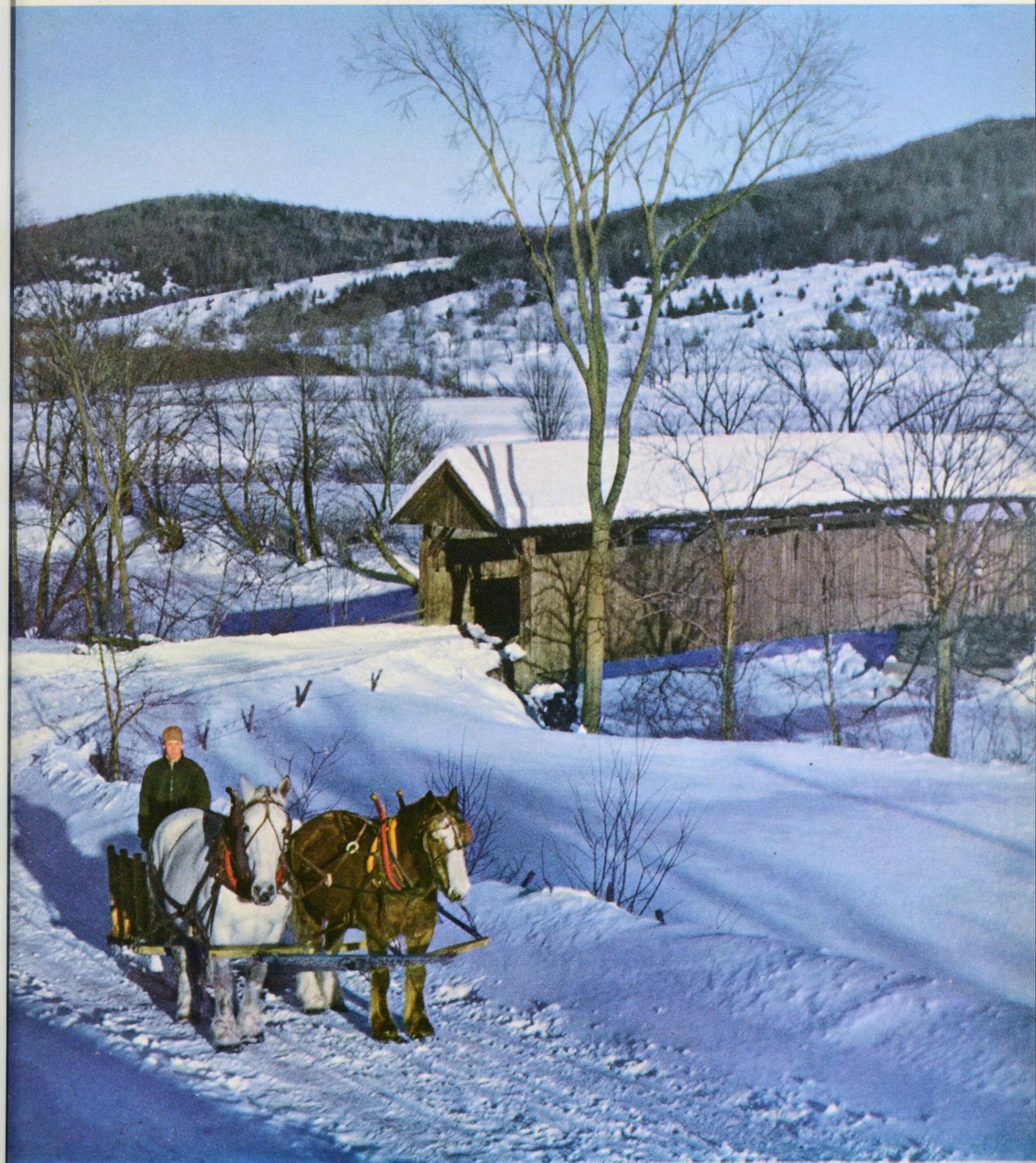
appropriation of the Vermont Historic Sites Commission so a little cash could be available in meeting this covered bridge problem. This Commission, whose mission is to preserve, promote and develop our Vermont historic sites, is planning as this is written to care for a few covered bridges in the state in cooperation with the towns. By the time this is being read, we may, if we have the benefit of our friends the lawyers, be able to embark upon this much needed program. Whether the lawyers will allow us to buy, receive as gifts, or lease covered bridges is now being debated in the Vermont Attorney General's office. It appears that there exists a veritable tangle of complex factors when one comes to deal with land, highway and riparian rights. The bridges are owned in some cases by towns. In other cases the bridges are in the state highway system and in still others the adjacent property owners have defined and legal rights that might, if the bridges were abandoned for highway traffic, revert to private owners.

All my life, or since I was big enough to want to do anything, I have had, and who hasn't, to deal with men who seemed bent on finding out ways why something couldn't be done. Or after it was done, to discover reasons why it was wrong! I am keeping my fingers crossed on this covered bridge program and hoping that no legal complications will keep us from doing a very simple thing which everyone wants done and which is obviously in the public interest.

It is highly possible, if the next session of the Legislature appropriates more money to this Commission, that we may be able to preserve and keep in repair for the interest and benefit of the public, at least one or two of the best covered bridges in each section of Vermont. Because we feel, and we hope we are right, that a covered bridge is a proper historic site.

A Unique Segment

I agree that all this is sentiment . . . but as I have said before, what is the matter with sentiment? Covered bridges are, I submit, a notable and unique segment of our traditions. They were built by hand, with local timber and by local carpenters. They have stood the test of time, as only good things do. Many of these noble bridges stood up during the 1927 flood when so many modern steel bridges built by engineers instead of farmers, went down the river toward the Atlantic. From every possible point of view I can think of, including sentiment, these old wood covered bridges should, must be, and I hope will be preserved. END



KABEL ART PHOTO Courtesy THE ROTARIAN

ABOVE: Lower River Bridge across the Mad River, Waitsfield, a "Queenpost Truss" type, built in 1852, probably by James Newcomb.

In the Winter Sun

An invitation and an explanation, by a noted ski writer, of winter touring on skis for Vermont enthusiasts of all ages.

By A. W. COLEMAN
Photography by the Author

A VISITOR TO VERMONT once plaintively asked me: "Don't you people up here ever talk about anything but skiing?" Not being a skier himself, he might have been forgiven for thinking so. Skiers, winter or summer, are very resolute conversationalists, to put it mildly.

The fact is, of course, that skiing has become a tremendously popular sport, not only in Vermont but all over the country wherever snow and mountains are within commuting distance. So widespread is the enthusiasm that it forms a common ground for many individuals of unbelievably diverse ages and backgrounds.

This popularity is partly due to a fairly universal liking for the outdoors, but more elementally, I think, to the sheer delight of sliding. The sport today, at least for the majority, consists of being carried up a hill by a tow or lift, and then sliding down again as fast as possible.

Perhaps I am going to get in wrong with my fellow skiers for such a simple analysis. I am not forgetting that there is far more to the sliding than just pushing oneself over the edge and letting gravity do the rest. There always is something more to learn that increases one's enjoyment. But it can be fun from the beginning, too.

Just watch the faces of skiers some winter day as they reach the foot of a mountain and wait for a ride back up on the lift. They all will have a sort of glassy, happy stare of enchantment regardless of whether they had swooped, rolled or crawled to the bottom on their last trip down. "What a beating!" you may say. Any skier will tell you it's a wonderful way to die.

Although I am one of these, sometimes I feel it is too bad that skiing has become almost exclusively dependent upon prepared slopes and uphill carriers. There are other uses for skis that can bring equal, though different, pleasures.



ABOVE: In typical, open Vermont hill country three skiers set out in single file, the lead changed often and the pace leisurely. One carries their lunch and camera in a light knapsack.

I have a theory that a lot of people—older people mostly—are put off from trying on a pair of skis because the current furor over the downhill sliding makes the whole thing appear difficult and dangerous. Moreover, the variety and cost of skiing equipment on the market today very often deters a casual interest from going any farther.

Skis, like snowshoes, are for walking over the snow. As to why anyone should want to walk over the snow, I refuse to answer on the grounds of the fifth amendment. Others besides myself enjoy it and they cannot all be crazy, though that may help a little. People like to walk around the countryside in the summertime, and go on picnics and savor the outdoor living we read so much about. Why not in winter?

My suggestion goes something like this. If you like to be out-of-doors at all, and are able to enjoy a moderate walk, try walking on skis one day this winter.

Pick a warm, windless day in late February or in March, when the sun is shining, and take along a lunch and a friend. Drive out in the country to where there is some snow-covered pasture land with clumps of evergreens scattered around and the slopes are not very steep.

Ski along for half an hour or so, keeping more or less on easy, level ground, and eat out on the sunny side of some pines or a rock outcrop, or in some little valley where the sun feels hot. You will be surprised to find you have an entirely new outlook on winter.

"That sounds alright," you may say, "but how about those skis? I don't want to spend a lot of money just to fool around for a few hours. And how about the ski boots and the ski pants and the rest of the equipment I'll need?" You must have been reading the advertisements.

Borrow an old pair of skis somewhere—real skiers have dozens in their cellars

that have been discarded for newer and more expensive models. Borrow some ski poles also. I would suggest asking a skiing friend for help but I fear he would complicate things. Real skiers are not happy unless they have all the latest gadgets.

If you like the out-of-doors enough to leave your car once in a while, you already will have what clothing you need, including some heavy boots which will take a pair of wool socks. Remember, this is going to be a warm day. You are not going to try for Everest, so you will not need oxygen or any specialized climbing paraphernalia.

I realize that probably snowshoes would be easier to manage than skis at first. As a matter of fact, skis are not much good for going through a thick woods unless you have a path to follow. In Scandinavia, centuries ago, skis were originated for fast transportation across relatively flat, open land. It is just this quality of gliding, however, that makes skis more fascinating to use, when you get the hang of them, than the plodding, uninspired snowshoe.

You will have to take this on faith until you find out for yourself, but there is a most pleasurable and satisfying sensation to the mere moving of skis through snow of different kinds. Very likely you never thought before what an infinite variety there can be to snow.

Although many people find the basic sensations of skiing to be reward enough, others will feel the need for some goal or objective. And actually that is what I am trying to get at—the use of skis as the pleasant means to an end, rather than as the end itself.

Aside from the obvious aim of learning to know the Vermont hills in winter as you do in summer, there are all kinds of hobbies you can follow on skis, from bird watching to photography. For the color photographer, as an example, I can think of no more interesting way to find those unusual winter shots off the beaten track than to hunt for them on skis.

Now I am perfectly aware that many of my skiing friends, if they read this far, are going to shake their heads and say that the old man has had it. Or they may think that I have a rather labored sense of humor. But really I am very serious. After all, it's the way I got started in skiing years ago, and some of them did too.

All I ask is that if you give this idea a try, and go back for more, let me know. After two or three successful trips you may find yourself out shopping for fancy ski equipment of your own. END



ABOVE: In mountain foothill areas the leader chases the easiest and not the shortest route, climbing and descending. Here the group halts to rest, adjust equipment and to look back.



ABOVE: Most downhill ski areas also have trails for summer hiking and easy ski touring.

BELOW: Vermont ski trips can also include, with added equipment, overnight camping.



Newell Green's Winter Portfolio

BELOW: Vermont is always picturesque along its byways, no matter the season, and in winter when the roads cut through banks of white and the snow lies deep over fields and pastures, there is color on a sunny day in the rolling drifts, the barns, the farms, the hills and all else that makes up a view like this one near Amsdem.





ABOVE: Winter Blanket. The moods of winter are many and the sights to catch the eye are endless when there is snow over the Vermont countryside. A scene that always appeals is the farmyard the morning after a big storm. There's a white cover on everything and the snow curves and rolls over the land, burying the homely details and disguising every sharp angle. The shadows are blue and the snow shines its purest white in the sunshine. There's enchantment and beauty everywhere as there was on this farm outside the village of Ascutney.

PAGE 20 Dancing Shadows. On a clear frosty morning the snow is full of sparkling diamonds. The shadows of the small pines are sharp and definite as they sweep down this hillside near Ascutney, dancing from side to side as a bit of wind stirs the branches.

PAGE 21 Snow Country. Snow may lie deepest in the valleys, but it can be deep on hilltops, too, the way it was on this farm at Weathersfield Center, where a fresh layer over the old fashioned new shapes along the roadway, and even car tracks in the feathery snow are fascinating details.

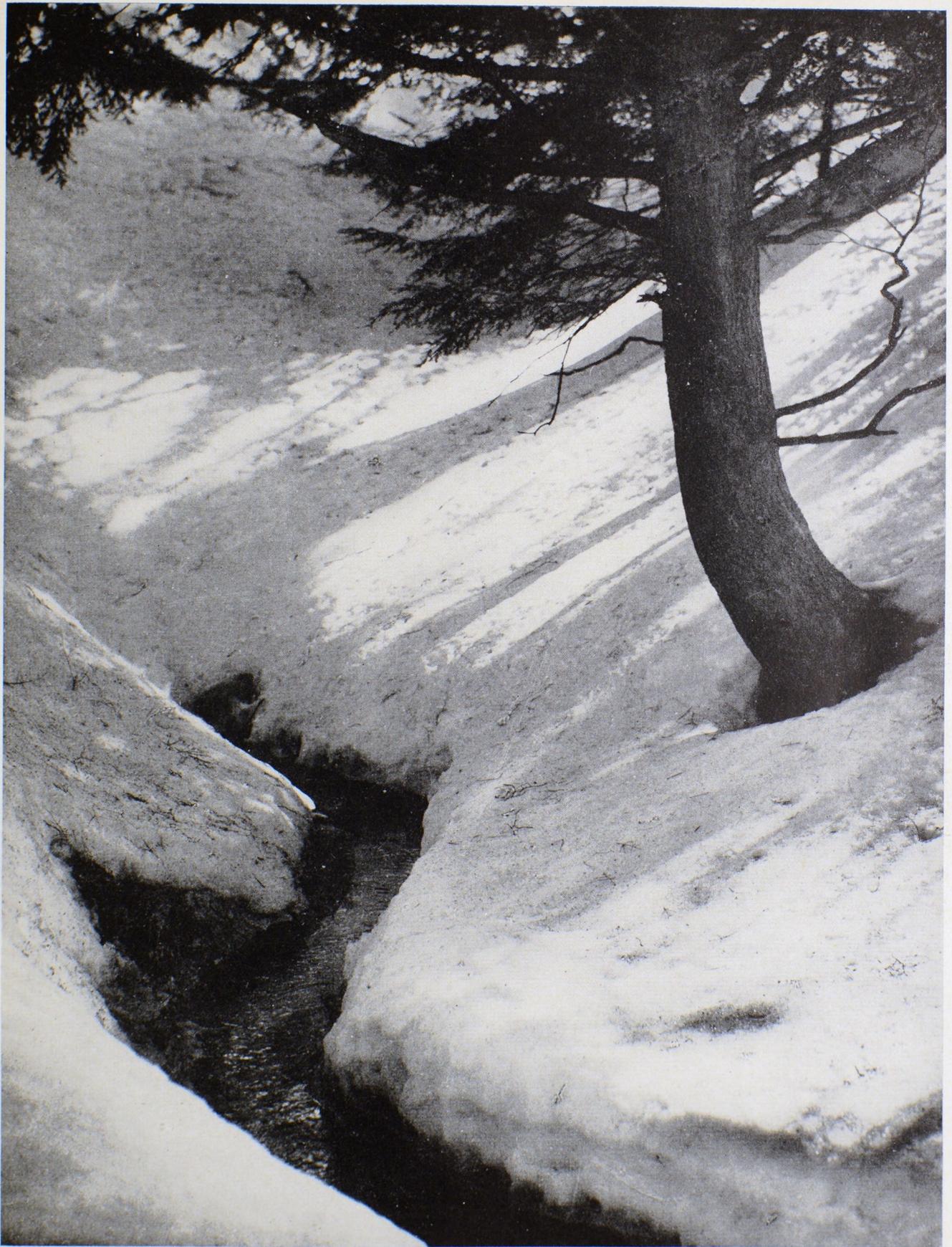






ABOVE: Polar Bears. The brook freezes over solidly in the coldest weather and the snow piles on top of the ice. Yet with a thaw the water rushes over the top and cuts a twisting channel in the frozen mass, as it did in this brook below Hammondsville, until the curving shapes look for all the world like a couple of polar bears pushing through the water.

RIGHT: Prelude to Spring. Early in March, though, there are changes that point toward spring. An ice storm melts to furrow the snow and scatter twigs under the hemlock. The sunlight pours into the ravine at a promising angle and the little stream that was still buried under the drifts most of the way down, tears itself loose at the bottom and zigzags merrily on its way. The snow is soft; the ground is muddy and down there sheltered from the wind, it's starting to be spring.



Sailboats on Skates

By DON O'BRIEN

Photography by WING WOON

ABOVE: The towering Adirondacks providing a western backdrop, southbound Raine-Christopherson boat skims the ice of Malletts Bay.

BACK IN THE DAYS when families huddled around the towering nickel-trimmed range in the sittin' room, doughty Vermonters welcomed the winter for the thrill of speed it brought them.

Mile-a-minute travel was commonplace on the frozen surface of Lake Champlain with that canvas-winged skeleton, the iceboat—the fleetest thing made by man.

Even today, there's no swifter means of motorless, level surface motion than the hard-water yacht, though its heyday on Champlain has long since passed.

Last year there were but two such craft in the Burlington area, lighter, modern descendants of their heavier,

hardier forebears. And only one took to the ice.

Wilbur Christopherson and Paul Raine of the Malletts Bay Boat Club got their boat on the bay's crystal floor those few days when the ice was sufficiently free of snow and slush for the runners.

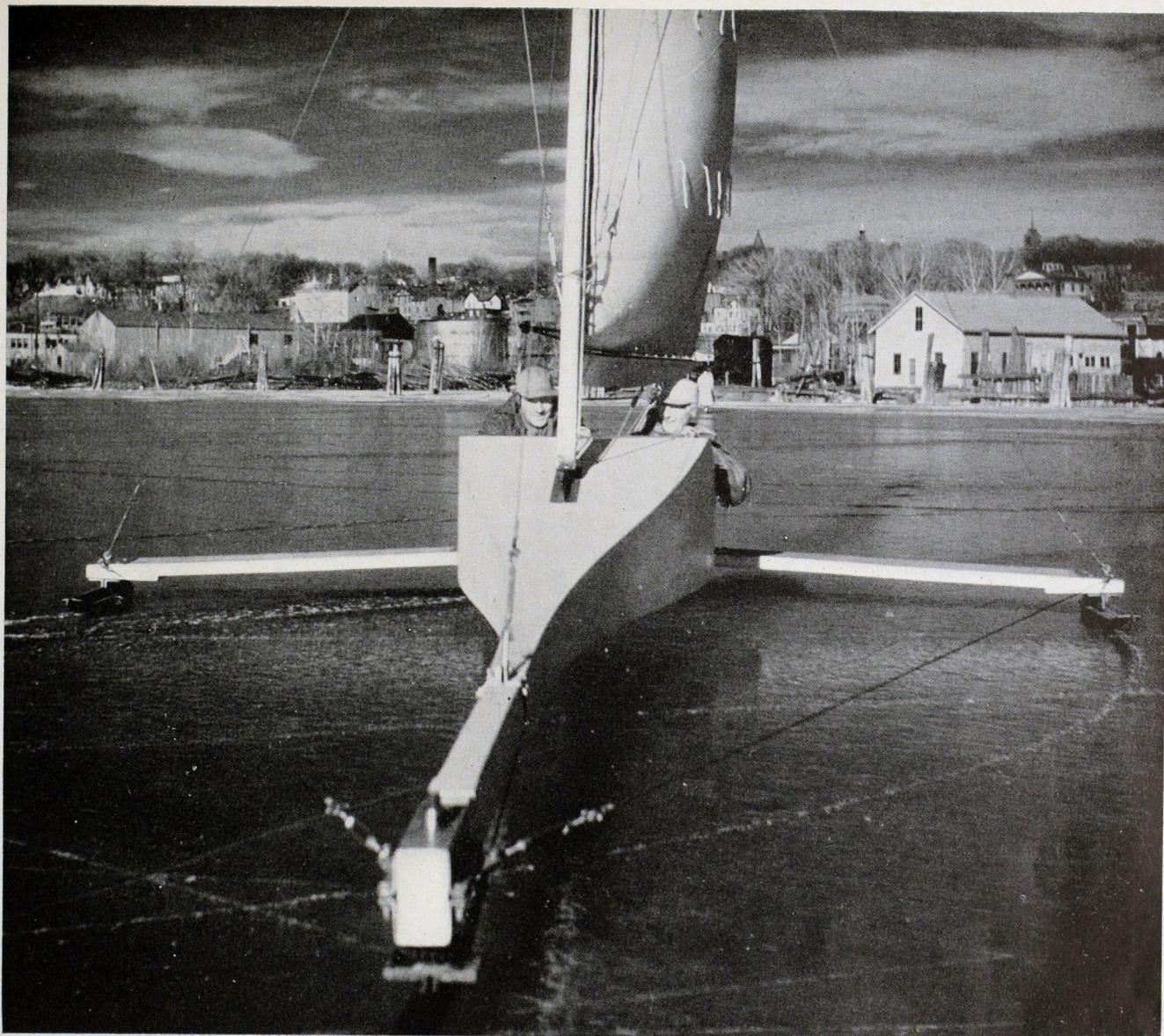
The other, Peter Hanlon's Slo-Poke, rested impatiently on the pier at the Coast Guard Station at Burlington, waiting for the harbor to button up. It never did.

With such yachtsmen as Christopherson, Raine, Hanlon, William W. Freeman stepping up the interest among boat club members, the hope has been voiced that iceboating may stage a comeback.

When cold weather lays up their vessels, the ardent sailmen look ahead with rising impatience to the spring. It's not unlikely that others may decide that they're missing a lot of fun and that winter brings its own opportunity to unfurl canvas and run with the winds.

Half a century and more ago, there were some 40-odd well-known ice yachts in Burlington Harbor and numerous other smaller ones of lesser distinction.

Any winter Sunday or holiday, the area inside and outside the breakwater would be alive with them, and the ice was cross-checked with the tracks of their shoes.



ABOVE: Out from the Burlington waterfront, Wilbur Christopherson (left) and Paul Raine wait for a fresh wind in seven-year-old boat.

A pioneer of the sport was Charles N. (Charlie) LaPlant of Burlington. Charlie has just turned 90 and an engaging, nimble-minded narrator, he is, of the feats of the old-time boats-on-skates.

LaPlant built some of the swiftest of them. The Flyer, he recalled, was the speediest of all the ice birds which took form under his craftsmanship.

"I handled her one time," he said, "in a race over a 30-mile triangular course. I won it—in 33 minutes and 16 seconds."

His eyes sparkled with the memory, as he continued: "It meant bettering two miles a minute on some stretches, for you had to make three miles with the wind for

every one you covered, tacking into its teeth.

"The icy gale that day was a paralyzing thing. It made my face feel like a frozen slab. And my hand ached for hours after I'd finally brought her in and was able to let go of the tiller."

Besides the Flyer, LaPlant also built other famous ice yachts—the Hot Shot, Now Then, Cyclone, Lulu and Winner. He sailed the Winner to a victory over Charlie Crosby's Blizzard in a match race that oldtimers still remember.

Incidentally, this writer has been informed that the Blizzard is now at Red Bank, N. J.—an iceboating stronghold of

the East—and still has plenty of life in her old timbers.

LaPlant, after some experimenting, developed a unique construction trick with the keelson—the fore-and-aft section of the iceboat's frame. He split a plank but not quite end-to-end, then bowed it out (by steaming and applying hot water) to form a cockpit.

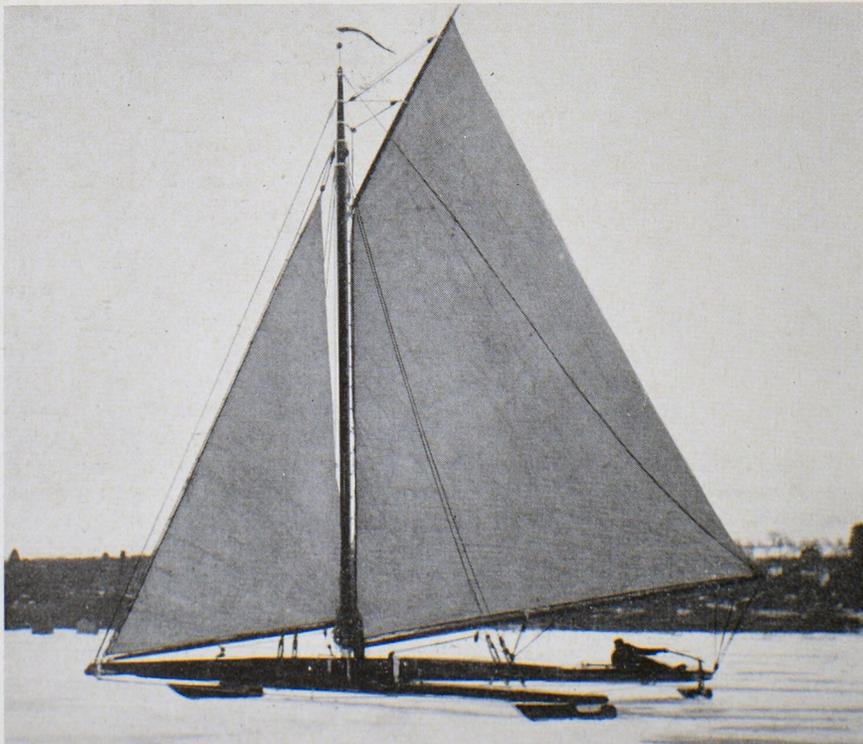
Doctors, lawyers, business men and men of the trades and toils were numbered among the masters of the early racing craft. The more affluent enthusiasts sailed under the banner of the Burlington Ice

(Continued on page 26)



ABOVE: Near the Burlington harbor area the Raine-Christopherson craft, the "Polaris," prepares for another fast run with a fresh crew.

BELOW: Old photo shows Burlington's 50-year-old "Blizzard," now racing at Redbank, N.J.



Yacht Club, an off-shoot of the old Yacht Club.

The others—LaPlant, Crosby, the Chiotts (there's another name that is a lakefront tradition)—formed the Excelsior Club.

"The fellows in the other club," LaPlant said, "used to call us the wharf rats, but all in the spirit of good fun and friendly like."

Competition between the two organizations was keen, but friendships were firm and fast, despite the rivalry. The love of that ruggedest of winter sports was a great common denominator.

Charlie LaPlant, tradition has it, was a trickster of talent when it came to sailing as well as in building the craft that he and his fellow club members handled.

He told of a ruse that won him one race. "The wind was from the south that day," he said, "and I saw a way to get a spurt on the last leg that would give me the edge.

"I was handling the Lulu, I ran her in close to the drawbridge because I knew I'd get a slant out of the southeast. I did—and it worked. But running close to the



ABOVE: Peter Hanlon's "Slo-Poke," a stern-steered, larger craft, belies its name skimming Lake Champlain's smooth ice three years ago.

pier, I hit a crack and the water flew up to the masthead. It froze on me and I had to practically chisel my clothes off when I came in."

In those days, virtually all the boats were stern-steerers. In other words, the runner plank (or crossplank) with the two shoes on it was set forward.

The modern design is the forward-steerer. The single runner is at the fore end of the keelson, the runner plank, with a skate under either end, is aft.

The Raine-Christopherson craft is a forward steerer. It has a streamlined cockpit. Peter Hanlon built his Slo-Poke according to the older style with the single steering runner astern.

Raine and Christopherson, running over a measured course, estimated they have attained a 50-mile-an-hour speed. That was in the bay where they probably didn't get the wind's full power.

Hanlon hasn't calculated his craft's speed. He says, simply: "Man, she'll fly!"

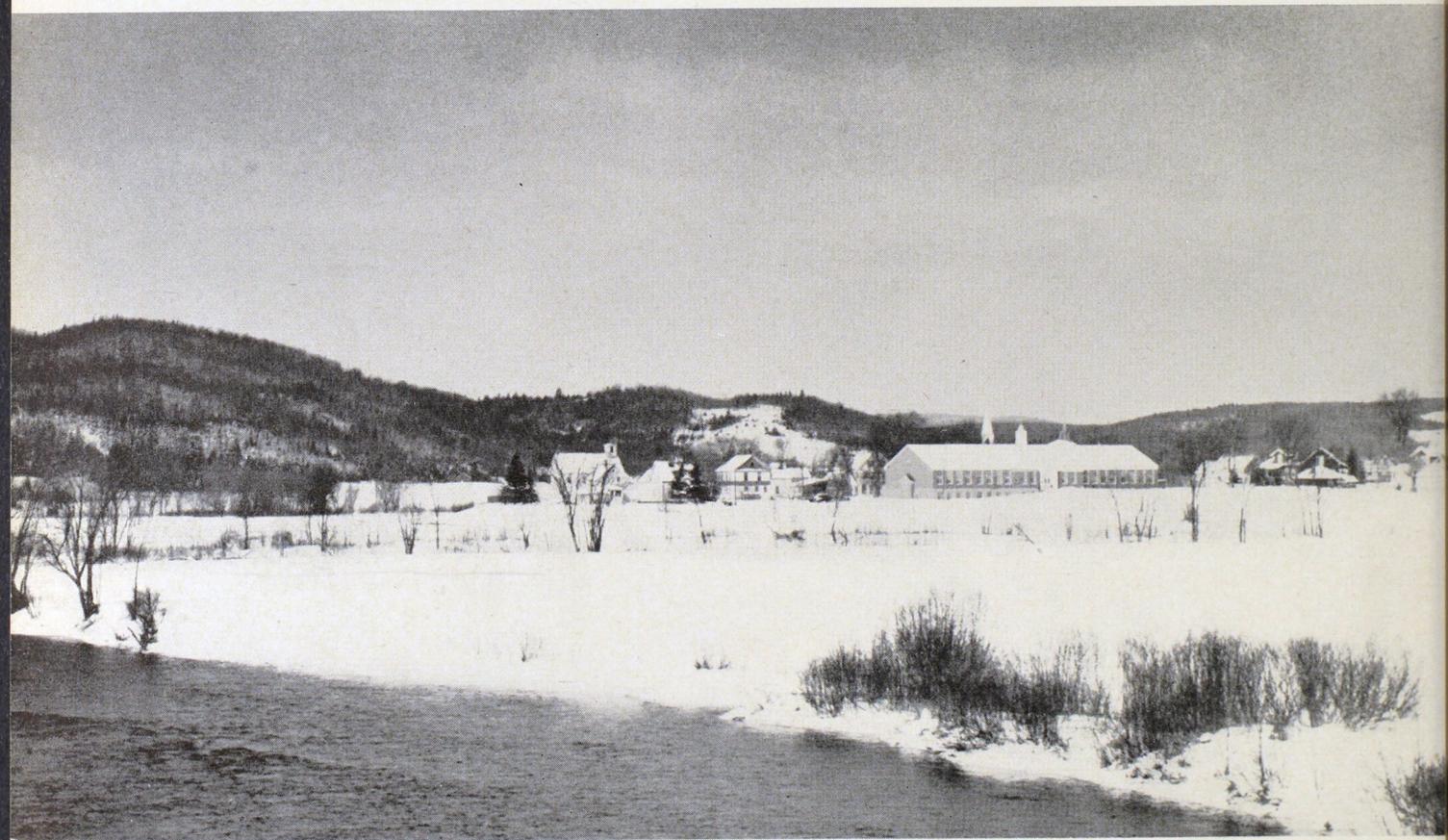
Iceboating offers probably the nearest approach to flying that can be experienced outside of a plane.

END

BELOW: Paul Raine, clothed warmly for fifty-mile-an-hour speed, sits in his iceboat cockpit.



The Wildest Portion of



ABOVE: Greatest community pride is the new Canaan school. From across the narrow Connecticut it appears as the center of the village.

WE LIVED IN Lemington with a mountain at our back. In front was a noble sweep of river. I don't know that one of my great-grandfathers, who chose this spot, ever read poetry, but surely there was poetry in his soul.

Both the mountain and the river had magical qualities, the one of mystery, the other of romance. On a shelf of Monadnock were the empty cellar of a house, the

foundations of a barn, and the stubborn remains of an orchard. To us youngsters these things were the ruins of an ancient and extinct civilization, pervaded with the same mystery that held the excavators of Pompeii. The find of a bullet-mould was an event comparable to the uncovering of the Temple of Apollo.

Elsewhere on Monadnock were other marvels—the rotting piles of The Long Bridge, a frightening ruin which spanned

a deep gorge and was said to have been the mightiest logging trestle in Essex County; and a couple of deep holes called Norton's Mine that glittered, if only with iron pyrites, but regrettably contained no pay-dirt and never started a rush.

The Connecticut, of course, led to romance in either direction. Upstream were the headwaters, which I imagined to be a sort of dependable geyser from which poured an almost biblical flood; and the

Vermont

By STEWART H. HOLBROOK

In that "pinched out corner" of his native state a famous writer finds the rural flavor "has bark on it." The story of an almost unknown woodland empire.



ABOVE: Many miles from the nearest public road log trucks brave a blinding blizzard

Lakes from which every spring came a myriad of logs, accompanied by the drivers, wild fellows who chased and rode the spruce, stopping briefly to howl for a night at the Line House in Beecher Falls, then proceeding down-river, over the Fifteen-Mile Falls, around the Oxbow at Newbury, and so on until they reached the booms at Mount Tom, Massachusetts, a place just this side of the moon.

(Continued on Page 30)

Photography by
NEIL Y. PRIESSMAN, JR.

Logs were the only traffic here on the Upper Connecticut, and logs, no matter what *Child's Gazetteer* loosely remarked about "fine farms" and agriculture, were the flesh and blood of Essex County.

Among the books in the Holbrook parlor was a small and shaky old volume which described our county as "the wildest portion of Vermont." There may have been people who resented this as libelous, but I gloried in the description and read on with much satisfaction to learn that our county contained "some towns that are entirely destitute of inhabitants." More than a century after that was written it still fits Essex pretty well. Nobody has ever lived in the town of Lewis, and few enough in the other eighteen assorted towns, gores, and one grant which appeared on schoolmaps of my day. As for Lemington, when I was young it harbored 138 persons, less than lived there in 1890, more than live there today.

But generations pass and attitudes change. The curse of being almost destitute of inhabitants, of being the wildest portion of the state, of being called remote, lonely, forested, and half a dozen more adjectives which any chamber of commerce would resent as sneers—this curse has somehow dissolved. In recent years I have often read that Essex County is the best example of Unspoiled Vermont.

I'd be one of the last to know for sure, simply because it is difficult to judge objectively the place where I spent a good piece of my childhood. I never think of it as unspoiled or anything else, save with deep affection as Home, even though born in neighboring Orleans County at Newport. And Home, I know, is not a matter of geography. The ties are more emotional, a far more subtle matter than the comparative distances from Boston or Montpelier or even Guildhall, the shire-town of Essex and incidentally one of the oldest settlements in all the state. I am content to let the summer visitors and tourists judge the beauty of the extreme northeast corner of Vermont. As for myself, I travel 6,000 miles every other year chiefly to see how go things in what has also been called "the pinched-out corner" of my native state.

This corner comprises the towns of Lemington and Canaan. For perfectly sound reasons one cannot consider them without bringing in the New Hampshire towns of Columbia, Colebrook, Stewartstown, and Pittsburg. No matter the dividing line of the Connecticut river, those half-dozen subdivisions of two states are an economic and a social unit.

The New Hampshire side got the railroad, and also got the metropolis, which is Colebrook, where I attended the fine Academy. Canaan is the largest village on

the Vermont side; and at Beecher Falls, in Canaan township, is the major industrial plant of the entire region. In neighboring Averill, still an unorganized town after a century and a half, are the extensive camps of Miss Hortense Quimby (see *VERMONT LIFE*, Spring 1949). It is safe to say that Quimby's Club and Beecher Falls furniture are the most widely known things in our section. I've met Quimby addicts in Montana, California and British Columbia. The table on which my type-writer rests in Oregon is a superb piece of "Ethan Allen Maple" from Beecher Falls, and many other Beecher Falls products may be found in forty-seven other states, in South America, and in the Middle East.

The forest itself and its products thus continue to hold the same importance they did in Essex County of 1850, though at that time the chief product of the forest was potash, made from wood charcoal; and all hunting and fishing was done by natives, for the dudes of foreign parts had not then discovered either Essex County, or Coös, its opposite number across the river.

Canaan was the frontier beyond which lay a vague land the older Yankees called Canady, somehow related to the tart plums that grew around farmhouses as far south as Guildhall. Kids knew little about Canady except that once a year it was the scene of an orgy called Sherbrooke Fair,

BELOW: In the deep woods near Pittsburg, N. H. a portable motor derrick loads a log truck (foreground) from snow-covered piles.



BELOW: Mountains of yellow birch logs unloaded in the Beecher Falls Corp. yards later will go into Ethan Allen furniture.





ABOVE: The Beecher Falls furniture company, center, is the leading employer for many miles into Vermont, New Hampshire and Canada.

when horses raced, balloons went up, and the Girl With the Auburn Hair defied death from a flying trapese. Yankee males commonly returned from the Fair with hangovers and sophisticated remarks about shell-games, ale and highwines, and a dancer who wore seven veils.

The very oldest citizens, those who held the *Boston Post's* celebrated gold-headed canes, could recall of their fathers telling of when Canada was a goldmine for smugglers during the War of 1812, and Canaan witnessed murderous affairs between customs men and cattle-runners. Two men died from gunfire, several more were wounded.

Again, in 1836, there was excitement when 300 armed militiamen assembled at Canaan Corners to take part in the Indian Stream War, about which I have written elsewhere; and pounded on into Canada to rescue an American, Sheriff Blanchard

of Indian Stream Republic, from the minions of King William IV, and return in triumph to the Corners and stage a victory whoopee at the general store of Parmelee & Joy, where a tin dipper of rum cost three cents.

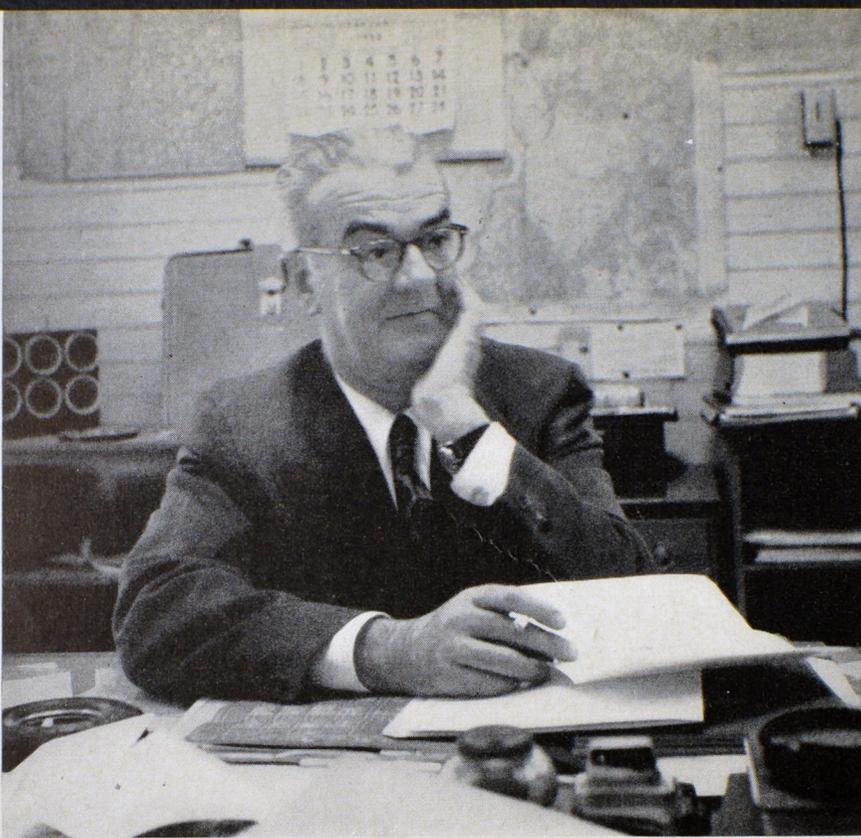
The frontier lingered here as it did nowhere else in New England (except in Aroostook County, Maine). Go look at the main streets of the villages today. In Colebrook, West Stewartstown, Canaan and Pittsburg you will see more false-front buildings than you would readily believe. False fronts are the essence of American frontier architecture, whether in New England or Nevada.

The frontier lingered in our region because it was remote and so sparsely populated than no railroad reached it until just before the turn of the century. Our main export, as I have indicated, was logs. Logs went out by the river. If our fathers

wanted to travel or to ship by the steam cars, then they could hitch up and drive 20 or 40 miles to North Stratford, N. H., where the Grand Trunk came in from Portland and left for Montreal, its thundering Moguls moaning through the wilderness called the Hegan Woods and emitting blasts that could be heard, on a still cold night, in Lemington, even in Colebrook. I think it the most enchanting sound I have ever known, for it is distance that adds magic to the noise of escaping steam, though I retain my childhood belief that the Grand Trunk locomotives possessed bell-toned throats of incomparable power and resonance.

For many years American literature was peopled with New Hampshire rural characters; and the American stage with chin-whiskered farmers of Vermont. They were of course exaggerated as was neces-

(Continued on Page 32)



ABOVE: At Beecher Falls plant the logs first go through a large band saw and as unplanned boards pass on to drying kilns.

LEFT: Bill Morrissey, president and manager, helped revive the faltering Beecher Falls company during the big depression.

sary for fiction and the theater, yet they were subjectively true to a sizable number of inhabitants of the Granite and Green Mountain States. But they were less true to Essex and Coös counties than elsewhere; in our region the rural flavor had bark on it. The people might live on farms and grow potatoes, but they worked winters in the woods, either their own woods or the immense holdings of the Connecticut Valley Lumber Company

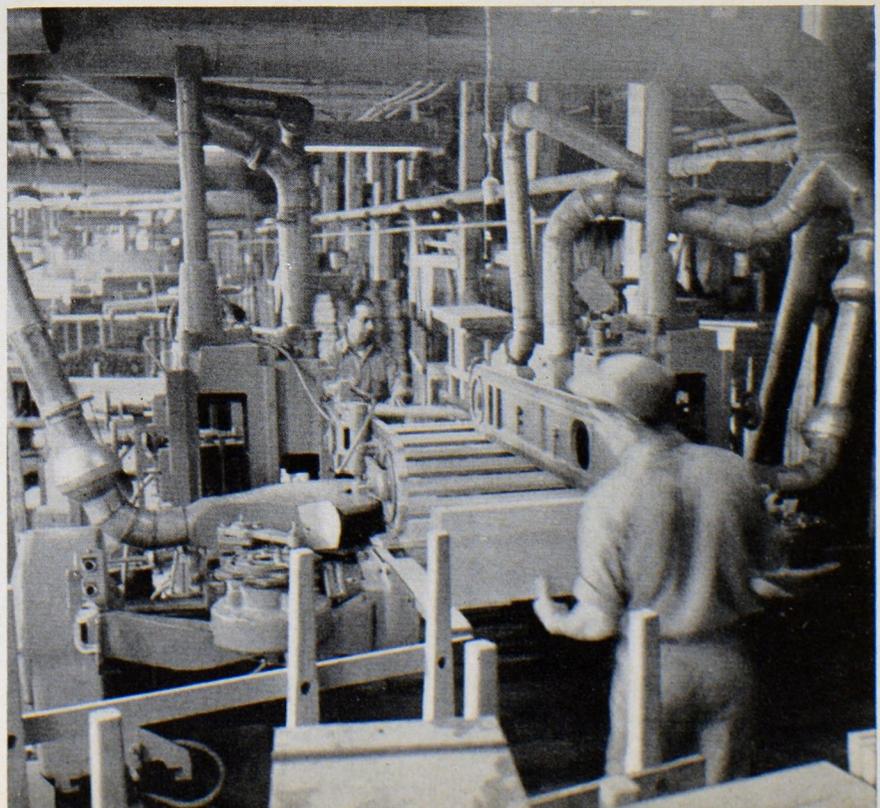
which, in my time, annually drove forty million feet of logs down-river.

The outsize township of Pittsburg, N. H., was the last stand of big-time logging in our region. I knew it when 2,000 men were cutting spruce around First, Second and Third Lakes, and the bells of tote-teams could be heard at all hours of the day and night from First Lake Dam to Scott's Bog. The Lakes are now reservoirs of hydro-electric power, and the whole

region round about is a reservoir for fish and game that are taken by down-country sports who board at professional camps set in second-growth among stumps made in the roaring days of Jigger Johnson, Big Jim LaVoie, and 'Phonse Roby. In Pittsburg village still lives Afton (Rube) Hall, one of the great scalers and cruisers of all time; and in the village is a general store where axes and snowshoes are displayed next to nylon underwear and

RIGHT: Maze of suction pipes carries dust from furniture plant's many automatic machines, here shaping table tops.

BELOW: The company has built several attractive homes for workers. Cooperation in area projects is a company habit.



kerosene lamps. Birch, maple and softwoods still come out of the Lakes country, though the region's largest industrial plant at Beecher Falls must go farther afield for a part of its raw product.

The community of Beecher Falls straddles both the Connecticut river and the International Boundary. It is the most northeasterly village in Vermont. It is the end of the line for the Maine Central railroad. It came into being sixty-odd years ago because what is now the Beecher Falls Manufacturing Corporation chose to build its furniture factory here.

Offhand I can think of no other community in Vermont that has shown more self-reliance and resourcefulness than Beecher Falls. After four decades of successful manufacture of an honest product, the factory was closed tight by the depression of the Thirties. In the melancholy quiet that quickly enveloped the region's biggest industrial town, the villagers started to meet and discuss their quandary. Local money was raised, chiefly among men who had spent their lives making Beecher Falls furniture. The merchants of the village and vicinity also put cash into the venture. The plant was reopened with a pitifully meager amount of capital. But the saws whined again, the planers chattered, smoke and sawdust were in the air.

A little later a substantial amount of outside capital was invested in the new company by the T. Baumritter people of New York City. Yet the original resurrection had been brought about solely by the faith and cash and determination of local individuals. They revived the business to a point where it became attractive to others. Half a million dollars have since gone into plant improvement. The product is as honest today as it was sixty years ago and is more widely known than ever before. In a particularly happy moment the new Beecher Falls company started to trade mark its colonial furniture with the name of a unique character in American history, Ethan Allen, a man whose self-reliance has long since been legendary. Colonel Allen performed wonders with no aid from the Continental Congress, but he did have the Great Jehovah on his side. . . .

Canaan village, once called Canaan Corners—or Corner—is the town center. Its fine new school is a vast improvement on the one I remember, though I miss the town clock in the old building's belfry, the north face of which marked the passing hours with eight letters and four numerals. HARRIMAN 1905, said this astounding clock, and Gilbert Harriman was immortal for a few years, or until fire removed both school and timepiece.



ABOVE: Beatrice Holmes, backed by old drug jars, is postmistress, runs Canaan general store.

BELOW: Penny candy and the youngsters to ponder over it, still may be found in Canaan.



Fire also took the old Canaan House. It was merely an average small hotel until you came to the buggy whips of its livery stable. On the handle of each whip, for many years, was the legend, stamped in gold, "Bill Buck Bejesus," the deplorable result of a whip salesman who took Proprietor Bill Buck literally when the publican answered his question as to what he wanted printed on them. Nello Bordeaux, who met all the trains with the Canaan House fringed-top surrey, and looked after Buck's horses and rigs, recalls that the whips became something of a collector's item among the runners, as commercial travelers were known in these parts.

The Canaan postoffice is housed in Mrs. Schoff's store, an institution that has retained the fine individual flavor of an old New England village at its best. Where else on store shelves, and in daily use, will you see the gorgeous big-mouthed bottles, their contents noted in black-letter and gold-leafed Latin, which recall the time when this was the only drugstore in fifteen townships? What is more, Jane Ramsay Schoff, eighty-nine, is still alert and about, though her daughter, Beatrice Schoff Holmes, is postmistress and storekeeper.

As little changed by the years as Mrs. Schoff's store is Archie Farnham, Canaan's town clerk and historian, who remembers when the playboy murderer of Stanford White, the noted architect,

visited Canaan and regrets that nobody troubled to take in the fugitive, to the end that some house or other might now display a plaque: *Harry K. Thaw Slept Here*. "The tourists would go for that," he says. Thaw was a national sensation, that summer of 1913. Having escaped the chair on a plea of insanity, he broke out of a New York madhouse, fled to Canada, and was promptly deported by Canadian officials. He arrived in Canaan, was arrested and taken to Colebrook. Here for many weeks, while his attorneys fought extradition, and big-city newspapermen swarmed the village, Thaw was a living, breathing, walking two-headed calf, with no admission fee charged.

Historian Farnham is authority on town events and antiquities, including the two famous Line Houses, one of which stood on the border near Canaan village, the other at Beecher Falls. The International Boundary split their barrooms in the middle. Liquor was for sale on one side, tobacco and cigars on the other. A row of brass tacks marked the exact Line where Vermont left off and the Province of Quebec began. The possibilities of such an arrangement were practically without limit for the manufacture of folklore, and the two places, described variously as hellholes and delightful oases, were probably the source of more stories than any other structures in northern Vermont. One was burned, the other survives as a grocery store.

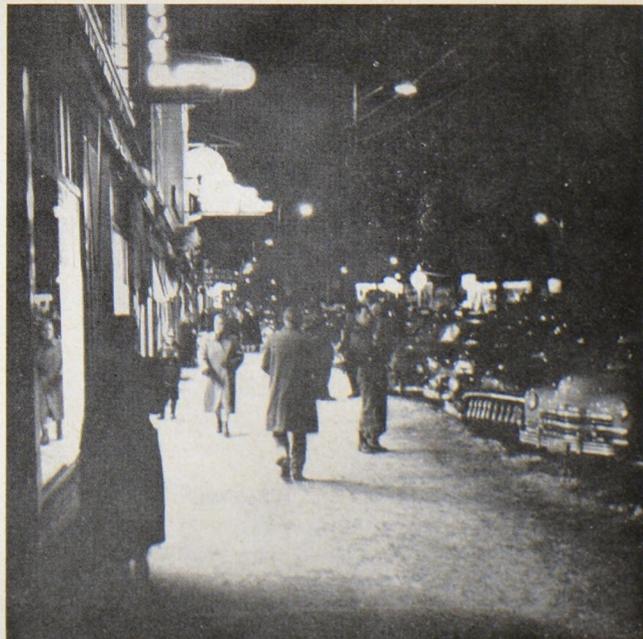
Gone, too, are the covered bridges that spanned the Connecticut at Beecher Falls, Canaan, and Colebrook. Yet Columbia Bridge still stands stout and graceful and over its planks you must Walk Your Horse or Pay Two Dollars. It is constantly appearing on the covers of magazines. Columbia Bridge depot, where on occasion I was permitted to hoist the red flag to halt a Maine Central passenger train for a customer, is long boarded up. A freight comes by every day but its rumble is lost in the roars and snorts of trucks along the highway. Here as elsewhere the railroad comes to mean little to travelers, and I often wonder what became of the train crews, and of the train-butchers who went through with candy, cigars, cigarets, and playing cards. Did they all go where the bells of the tote-teams still jingle in the night and the log-jams break with the thunder of ice in the river?

But the loggers survive even though their ranks are thinner; and they put on a good show, especially in winter which is the loggers' natural season, anyway. With winter the whole region takes on drama. Spring is beautiful in this corner. So is the brief summer. The drama begins to unfold with the first autumn frosts. Then it flares into the crown fires of birch, beech and maple in October, to strike the lens of a color-camera with a mass of brilliance all but incredible. Then comes winter.

BELOW: In Baldwin's store at Pittsburg, N. H. pack baskets and loggers' tools are displayed by cosmetics and fashion magazines.



BELOW: Street scene on a Saturday night at Colebrook, N. H., the whole area's bright center for trading and for entertainment.





ABOVE: Old time log drivers on the Connecticut in this rare photograph are using their typical boats and moving horses on a raft.



ABOVE: Ladies and children were present for the occasion as this Conn. Valley Lumber Co. logging scene was recorded years ago.

Up roll the clouds as dark as the thunderheads of August, the wind turns bitter, and the Line Storm drops the great white blanket that suddenly mutes the world and brings a kind of mystery. When you step out into this new white world, so aloof and silent, it seems to ask a question . . . I can no more explain the mystery than can the poets, who have tried but failed. Even Whittier failed, though he obviously felt the mystery deep in his soul.

The loggers of Essex and Coös feel it, too, even if they pay it no heed and prefer to tell each other what damnable weather it is, and why hasn't the snowplow been out and doing. They use trucks these days, not sleds, and they move with the speed of light compared to the creaking runners of my time in the timber. Machines set the pace nowadays on the roads, and set the pace at the yards and the rollways, too, where power-booms load, unload, then stack the sticks higher than houses.

I don't know that these hardy and fast-moving young men realize what they are doing, save that they are getting out logs and pulpwood. But I know. They are

harvesting the raw product that has kept the "wildest and least inhabited portion of Vermont" solvent—solvent in my time, in my father's time, in my grandfather's time, and in my great grandfather's time, which takes matters back to Genesis, so far as Essex County is concerned.

If this corner of the state still manages to inspire the adjective of Unspoiled Vermont, then it is chiefly because all manner of trees do well here. They quickly cover the scars of logging and much of the region continues to present a scene of unbroken wilderness, even though it has been logged over endlessly for a century and more. It isn't long since I walked over ground on a deserted hill farm that I had mowed with a hand-scythe in 1916. By 1946 it was deep forest, and soon men were felling the tall spruce for pulp and even for boards and small timbers.

Abandoned hill farms are a problem all over New England. They are perhaps a greater problem here than they are in less remote sections because few city people buy and turn them into summer places. There they lie in varied stages of decay, the homesteads of the early settlers on

Todd, Canaan, Kemp and Sims hills in Vermont—and much the same on the New Hampshire side. Here and there some resolute old Yankee like Ward Titus clings to his native hill place, but most of the farms are deserted and the forest is taking over. Perhaps the French-Canadian farmers, with their large and hard-working families, could reclaim the hills for agriculture; they have been doing marvellously well on the river farms which they have been buying in increasing numbers.

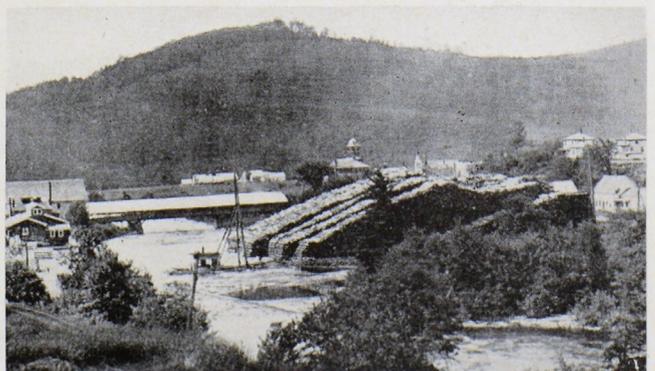
But I hope no attempts will be made to farm the hills. If professional foresters are to be believed, then these hills are no longer economically possible, anyway, except as forest. They should be planted where natural reproduction has not been good, protected from fire and disease, thinned at intervals for the Christmas tree trade, and left to mature into a magnificent forest cover like that which greeted the first settlers. Vermont has a law to encourage municipal forests, and I wonder if town forests are not the answer to the hill farm problem.

(Continued on page 36)

BELOW: Boys in straw hats and knee pants date this early view of Canaan square. Conn. Valley Lumber Co. barn is in background.

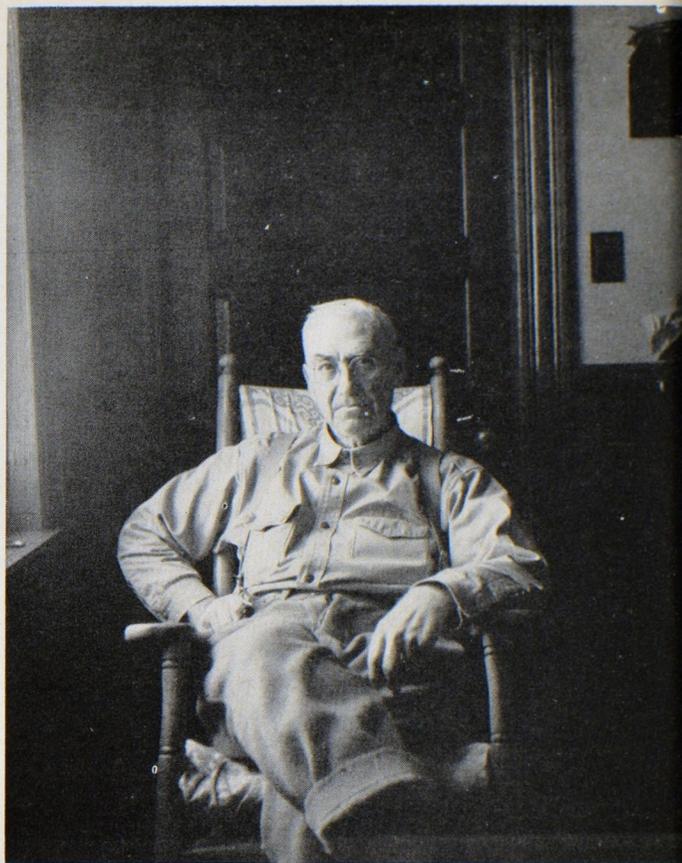


BELOW: Mountain of logs across the Connecticut River marks an earlier Canaan. The old school, center, and covered bridge are gone.





ABOVE: Mrs. W. I. Schoff is one of the area's elder residents.



ABOVE: Afton Hall was one of great timber scalers & cruisers.

BELOW: Nello Bordeau formerly was hostler at Buck's Canaan House.



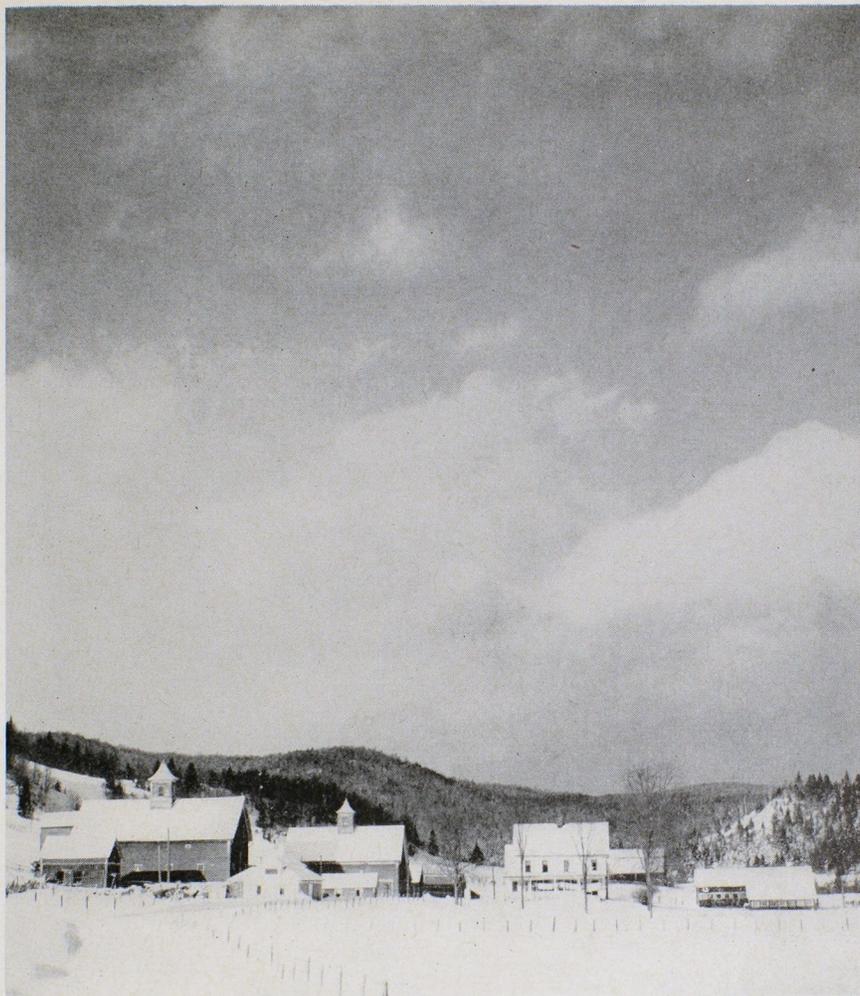
BELOW: Archie Farnham, historical authority, is Canaan town clerk.



Sixty years ago these hills echoed to the axes of hundreds of loggers. A hundred years and more ago, during the Merino mania, these hill pastures rippled with the sweet if costly music of thousands of sheep bells. A hundred and fifty years ago only a few small clearings sparkled like stars in the immense night of the original forest, and jays and flickers furnished the music.

Today the big noisy birds are back in the thick young trees that are swallowing the old fields and pastures, devouring the orchards, putting the stone fences into deep shadow. Wildcats and bears not only prowl the hills but have become something of a nuisance around the town dumps of the villages. Deer are far more numerous than when I was young. And one historic night not long since, a fortunate inhabitant witnessed a sight not seen in Essex County within the memory of living men—a bull moose drinking his fill from the Connecticut river at Canaan. . . I can hope that the great animal realized he had arrived in the wildest portion of my native state, which I pray will remain wild, and solvent. My only fear is that it will be overrun by hordes of less fortunate Americans who are fed-up with the illusions of modernization and chamber-of-commerce “progress”—people who are looking for a piece of country that still stands remote, lonely, forested and in every other condition which orthodox boosters so fatuously consider to be deplorable.

END



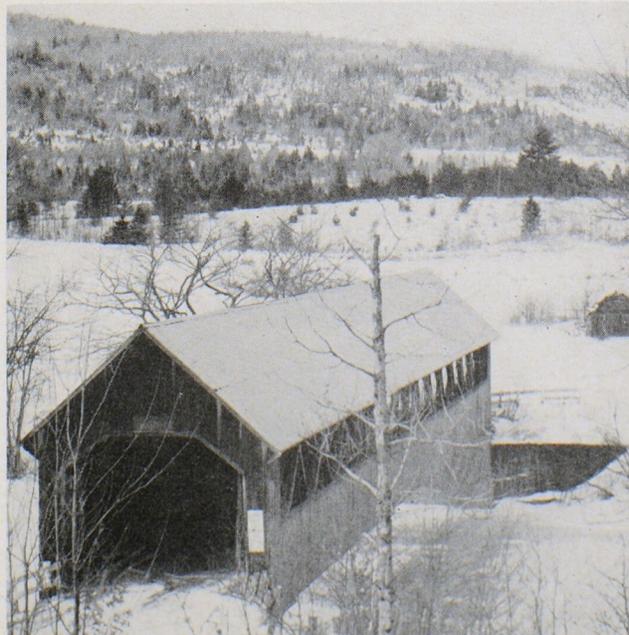
ABOVE: This was the White House of the Indian Stream Republic.

THE AUTHOR (Below) Stewart H. Holbrook in Oregon has been called “one of the strangest characters ever to come west from the rocky hills of Vermont.” The well-known author and lumbering authority was born in Newport 60 years ago and grew up in Lemington, where his father was a logging operator. He played semi-pro baseball, was a reporter, an actor with a Canadian stock company, was a first sergeant during World War I, began freelance writing in 1934 after editing Lumber News and feature writing for the Oregonian in Portland, where he now lives. He is the author of Holy Old Mackinaw, Natural History of the Lumberjack, Let Them Live,



Iron Brew, Ethan Allen. Murder Out Yonder, Yankee Exodus, Burning an Empire, Lost Men of Am. History, Age of the Moguls. Mr. Holbrook, who plans to visit Vermont annually, is reputed actively to dislike movies, undertakers, dogs, horses, and the developing of wild areas (progress). At one point in his career a cartoonist, Mr. Holbrook now finds enjoyment in painting as a hobby.

BELOW: Staunch Columbia Bridge still spans the river at Lemington.



BALANCE AND SWING



By MARILYN FENNO

ABOVE: Youngsters find the dancing fun at one of the first Vermont Country Dance Festivals held at Northfield.

Merusi

Young and old alike are returning enthusiastically to the old dances enjoyed by Vermonters for 100 years.

WHEN AN ESTIMATED 6000 Vermonters gather under one roof on one day, it must be for an event of unusual interest.

From the four corners of the state one pleasant afternoon and evening last April, Vermonters, along with out-of-state visitors, thronged Norwich University Armory in Northfield for the climax of the

winter's merry round of country dance events—the fourth annual Vermont Country Dance Festival, sponsored by the state board of recreation.

The capacious Armory floor was a kaleidoscope of color as hundreds of brightly costumed dancers, old and young, went through the intricate changes of country dances to the calling of Master of

Ceremonies Al Brundage of Stepney, Connecticut, and Vermont's own callers.

It was a wonderful day for country dance enthusiasts. The youngsters of many a rural one-room school and city classroom had spent hours of careful preparation on demonstration dances to be performed at the young people's party in the afternoon. When the big day came, they were there



Burt Phillips

ABOVE: Grand March, led by Governor Emerson (left front of column), at 1953 Vt. Country Dance Festival had 800 participants.

in force, from third graders carefully dancing an elementary square to polished junior high dancers taking a precise contra in their stride.

The evening party was given over to adults, with plenty of general dancing, a few beautiful demonstrations of old-time squares and contras, and, as a change of pace, one medley of modern American squares culled from different sections of the country. More than 800 couples participated in the grand march.

Although the annual state-wide festival is the biggest Vermont square dance event, there are many others that attract enthusiasts for miles around. The Labor Day Festival at Fairlee; square dance parties at the Hardwick Tulip Festival and St. Albans Sugar Festival; the Spring Festival in Londonderry; Montpelier and Rutland Jamborees; parties in Barre, Lyndonville and many other towns—all have been outstandingly successful events. There will be many others.

Vermont is keeping pace in the great national revival of country dancing which has been taking place within the past few years. And no wonder! Country dancing has been important in Vermont life since the 1700s—perhaps never more important than today when the state is dotted with flourishing dance clubs, and more and more Vermonters are taking up this vigorous form of social recreation.

The West has its exuberant, fast-paced squares, the South its circle dances or “running sets,” but New England is

traditionally the stronghold of the contra, or longways, dance. No New England state has a more glowing heritage of this most typically-American form of country dancing than Vermont.

Basically among the most social of country dance forms, the contra is characterized by a repetition of theme as each couple advances to a new place in the set and dances with a new couple.

In recent years the beautiful old “Money Musk,” “Patronella,” “Hull’s Victory,” etc., had been almost forgotten, except by a few groups, but today many Vermonters again are hearing the old calls—“cast off,” “down the center and back,” “half promenade”—and hypnotic jig and reel tunes of grandfather’s day. Even outside New England there is currently an upsurge in contra dance interest.

Old-time prompter Ed Larkin of Chelsea, spry and alert at more than four score years, is still the state’s foremost authority on contra dancing.

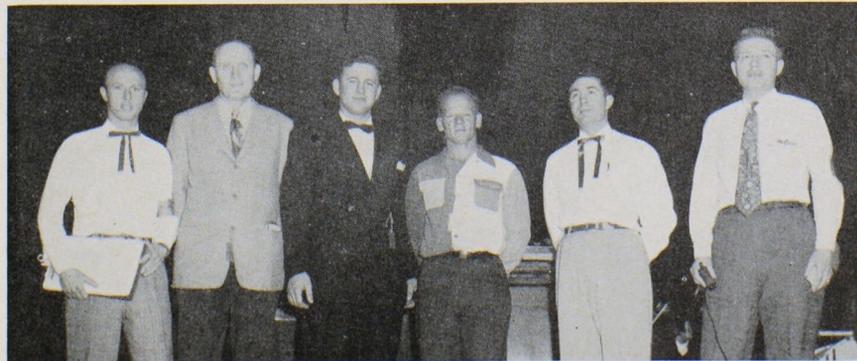
Probably no Vermonter has done more research on contras than Ronald Pitkin of Plainfield, now in the Armed Forces. A recent graduate of Goddard College, Mr. Pitkin has chosen country dancing as the subject for his Master’s thesis. He has collected the calls and music for many old-time contras.

Historians report that the only authentic Vermont square is the stately “Honest John,” which originated more than 75 years ago with the Van Orman family of West Newbury. Contras are a different story.

The picture has changed radically since that robust era when the farm kitchen

BELOW: Callers: Richard Pasvolsky, Rutland; J. E. Johnson, Brandon; Al Monty, Washington; Curly Burnap, Guildhall; Al Brundage, Stepney, Ct.; Stuart Marshall, Middlebury.

Burt Phillips





Burt Phillips

ABOVE: Guy Sanderson, Plymouth Union.
BELOW: A school group at Northfield.



Burt Phillips

ABOVE: At Fairlee dance a costumed Orford, N. H. group performs "Allemande Left."
BELOW: Chick Well's orchestra with guest musicians at the 1953 Vt. Dance Festival.

frequently was the setting for a country dance or "junket" and a lone fiddler many times furnished music for the contras and quadrilles and did the prompting as well. Or, as Emerson Lang of Danville points out, when the upper social strata danced at grand balls and the admission charge of as much as \$5 included dinner and a stable for the horses.

But the spirit remains unchanged. The fiddle is still the nucleus of the country

dance orchestra and the dances are built on the same changeless steps and figures danced by our forefathers.

Ed Durlacher of Freeport, New York, nationally known caller, might almost be considered the patron saint of the current Vermont country dance revival. Always interested in the state and generous with his time and help, Mr. Durlacher assisted Mrs. Theresa S. Brungardt, Vermont director of recreation, in holding several

country dance workshops at the annual state-wide Governor's Conference sponsored each fall by the state board of recreation for both professional and volunteer recreation leaders. The workshops stimulated a tremendous amount of country dance interest.

Another new-type pioneer who has helped give impetus to current dance development is Herbert E. Warren of Fairlee, retired schoolmaster, banker and

Burt Phillips



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Burt Phillips

ABOVE: Young people's afternoon party at Northfield Festival—demonstrations and general dancing by school, recreation, club groups.

traveler. Mr. Warren has served as chairman of each Governor's Conference country dance workshop and of the four state festivals. As a missionary of good country dancing, he travels the length and breadth of the state.

Two years ago a new organization, the Vermont Callers Association, was formed for the purpose of strengthening the ranks of Vermont callers and raising dance standards. C. Getty Page of Rutland was chairman for the first year. Current chairman is Emerson R. Lang, caller, country dance musician, and student of dance history who has in his possession a priceless bit of dance lore, the Mussey call book of contras. This well-worn volume has been in his family since 1793. Busy Mr. Lang, in addition to his numerous calling dates, heads his own country dance orchestra and edits *Sashay*, a sprightly little sheet crammed with information on country dance doings.

The Vermont Callers Association, although still in its infancy, is contributing to the state's dance development. Its members have held several workshops and cooperated with other organizations.

Although the state has a goodly number of callers, and is developing more, a stumbling block in the path of country dance progress has been the shortage of callers in some areas. To partially over-

come this obstacle many a group leader and rural school teacher has resorted to the use of the excellent dance records available, as a substitute for "live" calling.

One of the interesting features of Vermont country dancing is that so much of it is done by school children. Outstanding in her work with square dancing in schools has been Mrs. Frances D. Kiely, principal of the Fairlee Village School. Faced with the common rural school situation of too few youngsters in any one age category for competitive sports and inadequate facilities for conducting an indoor recreation program, Mrs. Kiely recognized country dancing as a valuable tool in teaching social and democratic skills. She was the first of Vermont's teachers to incorporate square dancing into the school curriculum, integrating it with such subjects as social studies, guidance, music, art, English and citizenship.

The well-trained Fairlee School dance teams of upper graders have demonstrated and taught at many festivals, parties and summer camps. This year a set appeared at Jordan Marsh's "Vermont Week."

Municipal recreation departments and recreation committees have played a vital part in the growth of dance interest. All over the state classes have been organized for youngsters and adults, beginners and

experienced dancers. Private dance clubs have sprung up everywhere. Organizations such as the 4-H, Scouts, church groups and others have done splendid work in raising dance standards.

The parties sponsored by the various clubs range from a few sets dancing to music furnished by records to huge jamborees featuring several fine callers. Many a well-known eastern caller has at some time or other visited Vermont. The roster of those who have appeared at Vermont events reads like a "who's who" of square dancing.

Skiers and summer tourists enjoy country dancing as much as dyed-in-the-wool Vermonters. Indeed, with the phenomenal spread of country dancing to urban areas, many already are members of dance groups. Although there are regional differences and new dance patterns frequently are invented, mastery of the basic New England calls and figures is enough to allow a newcomer to take his place in a set.

From yesterday's kitchens, country dancing today is coming into its own in the recreation centers, halls and gymnasiums of Vermont as elsewhere in the nation. In rural and urban areas, ski and summer resorts, Vermonters and out-of-state visitors are re-discovering the pleasures of square and contra dancing at its best. END

Those Long Winters

What does a Vermont farmer do through the long, white months?

By FRANK ROWSOME

Photography by the Author

WHEN CITY FOLK drive by a Vermont farm in the wintertime, the smoke that curls from the family chimney is about the only sign they see of activity.

What does a farmer do in wintertime, anyway, they want to know? He can't work the soil, there's no hay to get in, sugaring hasn't started yet.

"Well," says Harold B. Wheeler of Wilmington, "you're not pushed up so much, but you keep busy just the same."

Mr. Wheeler, operating a 500 acre dairy farm in partnership with his son Henry will point out that feeding 100 head of Jerseys, milking the cows around 4 o'clock both ends of the day, cleaning the stables and getting the manure out on the fields where it belongs—all this takes time.

A load of sawdust for bedding has to be trucked from a local sawmill once a week. Then there's wood to be gotten in: wood for house stoves and sugar wood for a 2000 bucket maple operation. There's a critter to butcher



ABOVE: In the back of a jeep Harold Wheeler ballasts bags of chemical fertilizer. It is spread each day in the cow barn gutters.



ABOVE: Son Henry helps in the twice-a-day milking of the Wheeler's big Jersey herd, tedious work even with milking machines.



ABOVE: Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall, the manure has to be spread on the fields. When the snow grows deep, the horses take over from the farm tractor. Behind the Wheeler farmstead lies part of their sugar bush, soon to become the scene of feverish Spring activity.

once in a while, snow to shovel after a storm, and when the market's right a few thousand feet of saw logs to get out.

Then on the really cold and stormy days there's inside building and repair work to be done and the farm machinery to overhaul. Henry is a pretty good mechanic and does most of the work in that line. Three years ago he won a tractor maintenance contest and went to Chicago as a Vermont delegate to the National 4H Club Congress.

Harold Wheeler, who believes in keeping busy, has served as president of the Wilmington Fair Association,

is a member of the School Board, chairman of the Neighborhood Club, one of the county supervisors of the Soil Conservation Service, and Junior Deacon, Trustee and Superintendent of the Baptist Church Sunday School.

He takes a couple of days off at Christmas, doesn't he? Yes, he slacks off some then—as much as any dairyman ever can. But he also makes the rounds of neighborhood children's gatherings: he's a pretty convincing Santa Claus.

END

(Pictures continued next page)



LEFT: Cattle kept by stormy weather in the barn welcome a few minutes on cold, bright mornings to frisk in the barnyard. The Wheeler herd is of about 100 head.

RIGHT: Snow makes sledding possible, protects from deep freezing, but it means continual shoveling, too. Fresh milk must go out from the farm each morning by truck.

LEFT BELOW: Good sledding and footing for the horses, the right time to cut and gather windfalls and limb wood for the approaching maple sugaring season.

BELOW: Perhaps the best parts of the farm Winter are interludes between chores by the crackling stove and keeping track of Mrs. Wheeler's supper preparations.



Christmas on the Mountain

By ROSE C. LABRIE

Illustrated by BARNEY DUKE



ONE CHRISTMAS of early childhood years, stands out in my mind above all others, and though more than a quarter of a century has passed, the memory of it is as vivid today as when it happened.

It was the first one spent on the farm in West Hartford, high above the valley in the Vermont mountains of No Man's Land, as it was called. Although isolated, the

sheer beauty of the place was breath-taking, once the summit was reached.

The boys, two cousins and a brother from three to eight, looked forward to Santa Claus's coming with greatest of excitement, and Christmas seemed so much more Christmasy here in our mountain home, with the deep snows and the forest almost at the kitchen door.

If we arose early enough, we would see the reindeer bounce out of sight.

Father worked in the machine shops in Windsor, a distant town in the valley, and came home just on weekends, a real ordeal in those days of poor transportation. But of course we never realized this as we laughed and played, enjoying the Christmas holidays. There was much we didn't realize.

Connie (for Constantine) and I were the only children of the family, but cousins Willard and Aenaes (Ernest) came to live with us when hardly more than babies and called Mother and Father, "Mama" and "Papa". It was "Mama", with her big heart, who mothered us all and showed no favoritism.

W e

adorned its boughs with red berries we had gathered, giving it the final festive touch. Mother was just as interested in our tree as we were, and it was she who had swung the ax when, after discarding more than a dozen "possibles," we finally found the perfect Christmas tree almost half a mile up the wood road. No matter that we had to hitch Old Dick to haul the tree when there were many smaller ones close to the house, for hadn't we found the most perfect tree in the mountain? And now, there it stood, filling a corner of the big warm kitchen. Even the baby, Aenaes, had helped in decorating and undecorating the tree, when he wasn't too busy stuffing himself and Rags, our collie, with the popcorn.

Mother had baked all day, and the won-



had summered on the farm for several years but because it had become increasingly difficult to find winter rent in Windsor with four lively youngsters, Mother declared that she would remain on the farm this winter alone during the week. Said was done where Mother was concerned, and it was useless for Father to protest that it would be lonely and difficult. Once her pioneer mind was made up, that settled it. The villagers marveled at her courage especially when they learned that formerly she was from Boston.

The night before Christmas had finally arrived, the immense tree stood there at the end of the enormous kitchen. Various colored cones, painted during the lazy Indian Summer days, and strings of popped corn

derful aroma of pies, cranberry sauce, homemade bread and evergreens filled the air.

All was ready, and we kept watching down the white, snowy road for Father, but he failed to come. Mother kept looking at the clock.

Suddenly, the telephone rang. It was almost our only means of communication in the wintertime. Mother's face fell as she bid Father goodbye and told him not to be worried, that everything would be all right. Then, forcing a smile, she said that Father would not be with us for Christmas. We were greatly disappointed, but like all small children, were soon again in high spirits, thinking of the stockings we were going to hang up so very soon.

What we didn't know, was that Father was bringing

the gifts. They had decided it was wiser to keep them in town, than to run the risk of our discovering the Christmas secrets. Father's train had met with a mishap and it would take a couple of days to restore service.

You can well imagine Mother's thoughts later as she kissed and tucked us into bed, our stockings all hung ready for Santa's visit. I, being a girl, or perhaps a bit more observing than the boys, saw tears in Mother's eyes as she bent over me to kiss me goodnight. I asked her why and she answered it was because she was glad, that tomorrow was such a beautiful day, the little Jesus' birthday, and that was why we had Christmas.

I didn't believe this was why she wept. It was because Father couldn't come, I thought to myself, and I asked God to please send him home soon.

But not for long was my heart heavy for wasn't Santa Claus bringing me "Something"? In those older days we never asked for any special gift, just "something." We were never disappointed in Santa's selection.

Only years later did I learn of Mother's anguish that Christmas night as she wracked her mind to invent gifts for the stockings. The mittens, sweaters and stockings which she had knitted during the long lonely evenings and which were to have been her gifts were now to be from Santa. Tired, after a long day of cooking, cleaning and the endless chores which are a part of all farm wives' lives, she didn't retire until half-past-one Christmas morning. But she had invented some surprises, and she prayed we wouldn't be disappointed.

The roosters were still crowing and dawn breaking, when we awoke next morning and raced barefoot to the big warm kitchen and our stockings!

Words could never describe the joy when we discovered what our "something" was. There beside each of our apple-filled stockings was a bag tied with red ribbon,

full of brown lumps of sugar, with our names on them. Santa had written the names on each bag! We were beside ourselves at this honor. The look in Mother's eyes made me think of the candles in church, the way the light shone out.

Then we discovered another surprise, necklaces of raisins in the bottom of our stockings, done up in red paper. Happiness was complete. Our only wish was that Father could be there to see our gifts before they were all eaten up.

Toward evening the door opened and in walked Father! He was laden down with gifts. He had walked six miles through the woods on snowshoes to be home with us for Christmas. He said he guessed Santa had forgotten to leave "everything." I will never forget the look that passed between Mother and Father. She had more tears but they didn't make me sad, as before.

Every Christmas when the air is sweet with the smell



of evergreen, the fire crackling on the hearth, and my own children's faces full of Christmas joy, they plead to hear about the "Vermont Christmas again." We settle down around the fire and for a magic while I'm back again in Vermont reliving the enchantment of lost childhood, and the never-to-be-forgotten Christmas on the mountain.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR—Mrs. Labrie, who lives in Portsmouth, N. H., was born in Boston. As a very small girl her family brought her during the 1918 flu epidemic to their Vermont farm, described in this story. Later the family moved to White River Junction, where she finished grammar school, and then to Concord, N. H., there attending Concord high schools. Mrs. Labrie, whose husband is a chief electrician, began writing about five years ago, is correspondent for the Religious News Syndicate, has written for other regional publications, is very active in Juvenile Grange work. She is also a trained beautician. The Labries have three children.

A NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS—The Post Office no longer will forward or return to us undelivered copies of Vermont Life if your address has changed. This makes it doubly important that you send us your new address at least six weeks before a new issue appears. Approximate publication dates are December 1, March 1, June 1 and August 1. We try but cannot guarantee to replace any copies lost.

We'd like also to point out to subscribers that the presence of a subscription blank in your copy of the magazine does not mean necessarily that your subscription is expiring. We'll mail you a postcard expiration notice when that time comes. Ed.

NAVION 35H

By EDWARD F. KNAPP

ABOVE: Flying over Cavendish, looking eastward to Mt. Ascutney.

The 50th anniversary of powered flight has meaning in Vermont

MONTPELIER RADIO, Montpelier Radio, this is Navion 8635H." The engine is kicking up quite a bit of noise so we ease back the throttle and turn up volume on the radio. A couple of clicks and wheezes in the receiver, followed by a hollow but intelligible squawk.

"Navion 35H, this is Montpelier Radio. Montpelier surface winds, north 12, altimeter 3012. Over."

"Montpelier Radio. This is Navion 35H. Thank you, and out."

A quick look at the three youthful passengers from the South Walden School to see if their seat belts are fastened. O.K. As the throttle is moved forward, the plane rolls down the runway at an easy gait; now the throttle is opened wide, and in a moment, the ship is in the air.

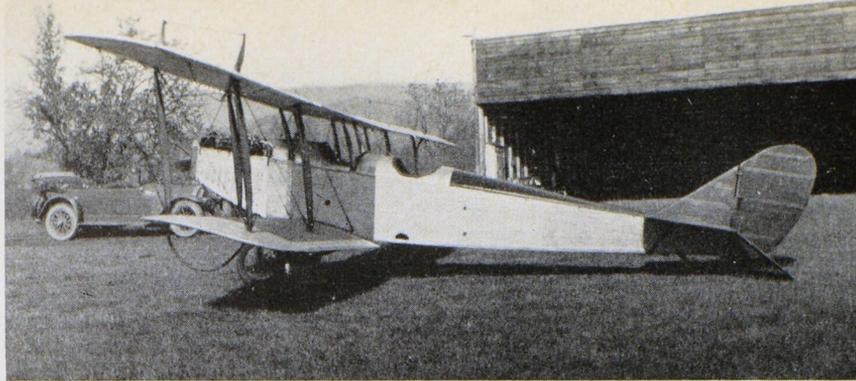
The three passengers, girls this time, are quiet as is usually the case with first

trippers. Don't know what to expect. A few cockpit chores related to up-gear and power settings, then the end of the runway slides underneath two hundred feet below; a clonk as the gear comes up, a blink as the red warning light goes off, power settings adjusted again, and the flight is under way.

Ten minutes later the passengers, now quite voluble, are looking down at the territory familiar to a short lifetime, but never viewed from this angle before.

(Continued on page 50)

Photography by the Author



Frank Gibson

ABOVE: A two-place OX-5 powered Jenny biplane rests at the Springfield Airport, the 1925 date also indicated by the vintage touring car beyond and the primitive hangar.

Things look different; the barn is small; the cows are specks on the hillside; how the road turns and winds past the house; and there is the next farm up the road; whoops, it is out of sight already!

Fifteen minutes later the Navion rolls to a stop back at the airport, and the fledgling first trippers have become experienced travelers. They have flown.

"It was wonderful, and I guess we didn't need to be scared. You know, we went first because we were afraid we would lose our courage if we waited." Three more trips around the route exposed the remaining pupils of the South Walden School to their first flight.

All of this came about, in part, as a result of teacher, Mrs. Jennie Goodenough, having received an earful on the subject of aviation during the preceding summer when the Aeronautics Commission and

the CAA joined forces in a two-week aviation workshop for teachers at Johnson College. Mrs. Goodenough had also flown.

—❖—

Navion 8635H is almost ready to qualify as a Vermonter. It has been in the state since 1947, so that probably reduces the period of residence to only four more years before it can enjoy full status. Within that time, however, it has been around a bit, such as things go—roughly 160,000 miles.

The actual number of guests it has escorted around the state is somewhat of an unknown quantity, but is safely into the hundreds—better than two-thirds of them first trippers, but not all within the age limits of South Walden School pupils—some with gray hair, some grandpas and some grandmas, and some

very early beginners wrapped in baby blankets.

One trip, hauled the darndest hound we ever hope to see inside of a cockpit, known to the trade as a Weimeramer. He was a huge specimen, especially when he became cramped in the back seat and sliced his tail across the back of our neck much like a file, as he did a turn in tight surroundings. For variety and in appreciation of the ride, he threw in a few friendly slurps with a long, wet tongue.

In a sense, Navion 35H has been somewhat of a symbol of aviation in Vermont. We don't expect everyone would agree that aviation began when 8635H went on duty. We won't argue the case beyond stating that for a lot of people who have been introduced to flying by a ride in 35H, the air age did start for them, then.

The state seal inscribed on the rounded sides of the ship has evoked no little curiosity when spotted in such relatively remote sections as Bowling Green, Kentucky; Cleveland, Ohio; or Washington, D. C.

One warm day at the National Airport, almost in the shadow of Washington Monument, a negro boy hauled the gas hose up to the wing tank for re-fill after a non-stop trip from Montpelier. His gaze rested upon the state seal. It took a few seconds for him to unscramble the picture of cow, pine tree, hills, and inscriptions. Having accomplished this feat, he then concentrated on the word "Vermont." For another long moment he stared at the spectacle in awe and then looked up with a half-believing expression of having seen the impossible.

"Do you-all come way from Vermont?"

"Sure did; non-stop."

"Mah gosh—where is it?"

Perhaps we should not stress too much the Kentucky episode at Bowling Green where the appearance of a person living so far away as Vermont immediately brought forth an urgent request that we stay overnight to function as judge of the local Chamber of Commerce's annual beauty contest. Only those from far off, and equipped for a quick get-away were considered qualified. Whatever merit distance may have had under the circumstances, it was lost in the immediate suggestion from our wife that there was still time enough before dark to get on to Nashville. We arrived in Nashville 30 minutes later.

Sample testimonials from airports in eastern USA:

"An airplane owned by the State of Vermont? I thought they were still traveling up there by ox team."

"An airplane from Vermont? I didn't

BELOW: Amelia Earhart at opening of Boston & Maine (now Northeast) Airlines service in Burlington. Left is late Mayor James Burke, at right Mrs. James P. Dowser, hostess.

Courtesy Mrs. James Dowser



know they had enough flat land to build an airport."

"An airplane from Vermont? They are really getting up to date in that country!"

Besides supplying experience to teachers and first trippers and providing a vehicle by which the state aeronautics department gets itself around, Navion 35H has also flown a few thousand miles around Vermont and New England with three Governors on the passenger list. It has aided and abetted the State Police, Forestry Service, Fish and Game Department, Development Commission and numerous state officials when fast travel was important.

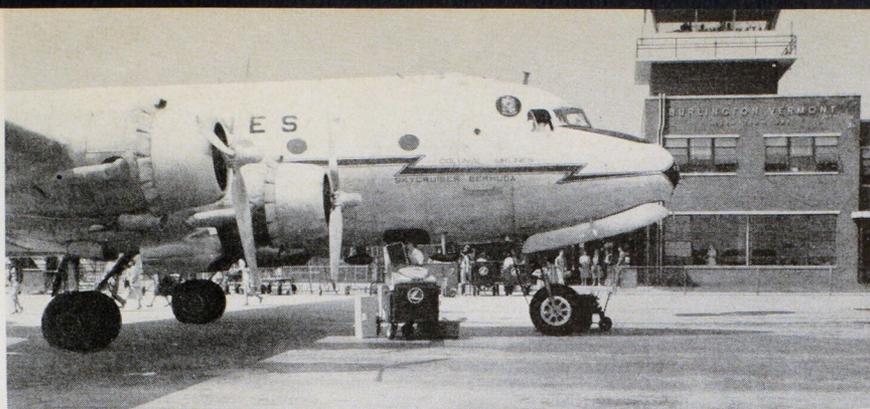
Back in August 1927 a tall young lad came steaming into the small airport at Springfield. Other young men had done the same, but this landing was distinguished by the presence of a few thousand cheering spectators. The pilot happened to be a young fellow by the name of Lindbergh, who had been heard of before.

Perhaps the air age in Vermont started about that time, 20 years earlier than our first estimate. If it did, it would have coincided with a start in about 47 other states, a start sparked by the wave of hero worship which followed achievement of the seemingly impossible task of flying alone across the Atlantic.

Perhaps the first awareness of Vermonters to the usefulness of airplanes came as a result of the flood of November 4, 1927, when all rail and road communications were cut off. Among other things, mail and medical supplies could not get in.

At that time Governor Al Smith of New York offered the use of several Army National Guard planes for such purposes as might be directed by Governor Weeks of Vermont. These planes flew the mails from Montpelier to White River, Burlington, and Concord, New Hampshire until November 14th.

Beginning on that date, the mail was flown twice a day under wintry conditions between Burlington and Concord, New Hampshire, via Montpelier. These trips were flown under contract with the Railway Mail Service by Lt. R. S. Fogg of Concord (who is still an active pilot), and were continued through December 24th, when truck service was restored. For the first time in Vermont, the usefulness of airplanes in an emergency was dramatized. [Perhaps, too, the Lindbergh flight earlier in that same year was now brought sharply home.] The airplane was a dependable vehicle to be reckoned with in planning for the future. It looked as though it might be here to stay.



ABOVE: A regular Colonial Airlines flight arrives at Burlington in 1953. This is a DC-4 carrying about 60 passengers. Behind is new, well equipped Burlington control tower.

In any event, man's urge to fly was soon translated into the more practical aspects of the problem, which was development of local airports. Oddly enough, the depression which set in a few years later resulted in the beginnings of numerous landing strips in Vermont, many of which have since become major units in the network of Vermont airports. The depression brought on a batch of WPA work, and half a dozen communities elected to apply their assignment of funds to the development of local airports. Springfield, St. Johnsbury, Barre-Montpelier, Fair Haven, Burlington, and Bristol all got their start in life this way.

Perhaps, too, the air age in Vermont may have started for many persons as airline service was begun on October 27, 1933 by the old Boston-Maine Airways, Inc. (now Northeast Airlines), at White

River and Montpelier, or when the line was extended to Burlington and Montreal. The Tri-Motor Stinson used on these early runs suggested little of the things to come in later years.

This was to be re-placed in succession by Lockheeds, the Douglas DC3, Convair, and Martin 404, not to mention Douglas DC4 and an occasional DC6 or Constellation which puts in at Burlington.

Little did the eight to twelve passengers in those early planes visualize the prospect of 40,000 persons annually traveling to or from Vermont by present-day airlines. Nor did they anticipate the ease with which it is possible to cross the continent or the Atlantic in a total time of 12 to 15 hours from departure at a Vermont airport.

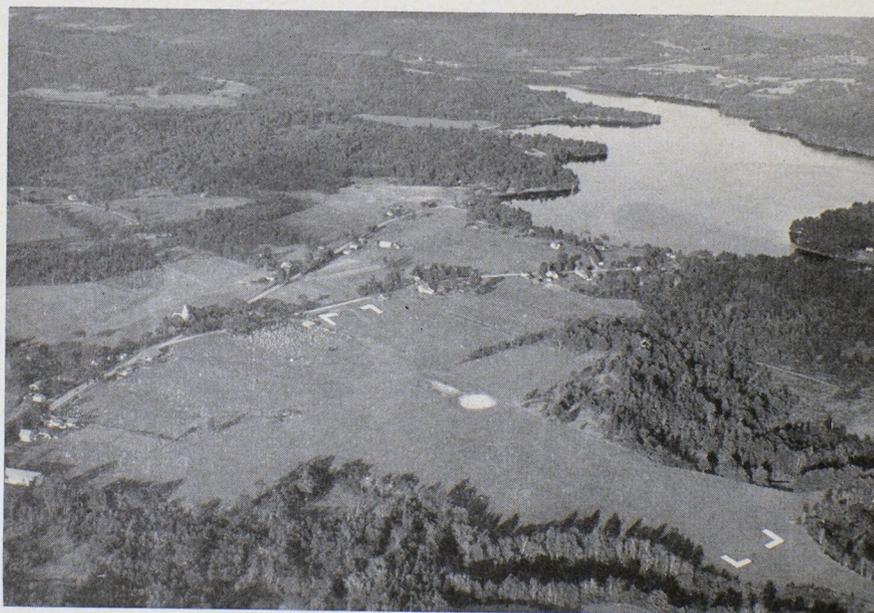
BELOW: Pupils of the South Walden school with Teacher Jennie Goodenough line up before Navion 35H, which carried them to their first unfamiliar views of Vermont from above.





ABOVE: Snow removal here at Barre-Montpelier Airport is a major winter problem.

BELOW: Air strip at Post Mills near Lake Fairlee is typical of a dozen Vermont sod fields.



BELOW: Plowed blacktop runways (Barre-Montpelier Airport) show up well from the air.



Neither did these early passengers, nor do some present-day travelers, realize that the time may not be far distant when the helicopter will bring the advantages of air travel to people living in relatively small Vermont towns where airline service would never be practical.

For the record, perhaps it should be noted that current airline service in the state is now rendered by Northeast and Colonial Airlines. Starting at New York or Boston, the former serves the White River area from the airport at Lebanon, with side service to Rutland, then goes on to the Barre-Montpelier area, thence to Burlington, and Montreal.

Colonial puts in at Rutland and Burlington en route from New York to Montreal, and offers service on its own line to Bermuda as well as the usual connections to New York and points all over the globe. At this writing, it appears probable that Colonial will be merged with Eastern Airlines, thereby becoming a part of a huge system which would then operate from Montreal as far south as the Caribbean and Mexico, and west to Chicago.

Perhaps, too, the air age in Vermont started for some people when the local airport or landing strip was completed through WPA, or even earlier where flying began in a convenient hayfield near town. For instance, the earliest flights on record appear to have been made by George Schmitt at the Fairgrounds in Rutland where things began to happen as far back as 1913. Also, according to the record, Rutland got into the air with balloon ascensions from the same Fairground as early as 1906. Just who ascended and where he came down is still a matter of conjecture.

Honors for the distinction of being the first official airport in the state seem to sway between Rutland and Springfield. The latter's claim revolves around a letter written in 1947, in part as follows: "Do you recall July 4, 1919, when the first commercial machine was flown up the Connecticut Valley, an exhibition flight over the fair grounds (Springfield) in celebration of the return of troops from World War I, and the first airport in Vermont was selected in Springfield? Mr. Hartness was the negotiator, and I was the pilot who did the job." Signed, E. A. Terhune.

Locally, the air age for many towns in the state began when the local airport or landing field was ready for use. A chronology of local fields reads: First landing of an aircraft at East Middlebury, Sept., 1952; Bunnell Farm Landing Field, Canaan, Sept., 1947; Waterbury, May, 1948; Estey Airpark, Waitsfield, Aug.,

1948; Champlain Airport, Colchester, July 1, 1946; Maxham-McAlpin Airport, Worcester, June, 1946; Post Mills, June, 1946; Dailey Airport, South Shaftsbury, August, 1945; Swanton, 1939; Bristol, June, 1936; Brown Field, St. Johnsbury, 1935; Fair Haven, 1934; Middlebury (old airport), 1930; Crowell Field, Brattleboro, 1929; White River, 1928; Equinox Airport, Manchester, June 21, 1928; Barre-Montpelier, Nov. 28, 1927; Bennington, Aug., 1927; Squires Farm, Newport (site of present airport), June 21, 1927; Burlington, 1920; Springfield, 1919; Rutland, (Wilson Field), 1916.

The limitation of landing spots in early days required an airplane designed to get in and out of fields much smaller than present day design will permit. However, these early birds did not have the speed or the range which the present small aircraft possesses, so it turns out that many locations which sufficed as landing fields in those days would be regarded by present day pilots as a scene of certain destruction for modern aircraft. This accounts for the barnstorming tours when fairgrounds and hayfields were entirely sufficient for the purpose. Fairgrounds which functioned as landing fields in those days were Barton, Champlain, St. Johnsbury, Sheldon, Rutland and probably several others.

Who were the early birds in Vermont? An attempt to answer this question is an excursion into dangerous territory. It is evident that, first, a line must be drawn somewhere to fence in the period referred to as "early." When did the "early days" terminate? We don't dare to say, but offer some names which were prominent prior to the early 1930's.

The first 20 pilots of which there is a registration record with the State of Vermont were: Fordyce P. Lape, Ralph S. Stancliffe, Lester E. Jordan and Kasper P. Paxman, of Swanton; Glenn Parker of St. Johnsbury; Walton P. Waite and Robert St. Jock, Jr. of Morrisville; Frederick H. Harris of Brattleboro; Frank E. Buswell and S. G. Davenport of Burlington; Lee D. Bowman, Albert S. Harvey, Robert Hayes and Ervine D. Williams of Springfield; Stanley E. Sargent, of Enfield, N. H.; Henley G. Webster, Ralph S. Mooney and Charles G. Trudeau of St. Albans; Kenneth N. Tomlinson of Richmond and Lyle C. Churchill of Plattsburg, N. Y.

Other pilots, some of whom registered that first year and who have been active in the past, many continuing to the present day are: Emery W. Denis and Walter Cleveland of Montpelier; Harold W. Pugh, F. W. Shepardson, Willit S.



ABOVE: Colonial Airlines inaugurates regular passenger service at Rutland, 1946.

Foster, George A. Kellogg and Frederick J. Fayette of Burlington; Jesse T. Watson of Bennington; Maurice L. Bugbee of Tunbridge; George N. Lathrop and Joseph W. Rock of Bristol; Howard Reed of Waterbury; Fred Greenwood of Randolph; Donald S. Allen of Richmond; Earl E. Blanchard of White River; K. Hazen Woolson of Springfield; Harold Taylor of Milton; and Norman M. Grady of Middlebury.



First trippers in Navion 8635H little realize that they are travelling in a manner which is to become increasingly important in Vermont during the next fifty years. The futuristic counterparts of Navions and their big-sister airline carriers will become the means by which busy people will find time to come to Vermont for a vacation of a week-end, a week, or a month. It will be the means by which

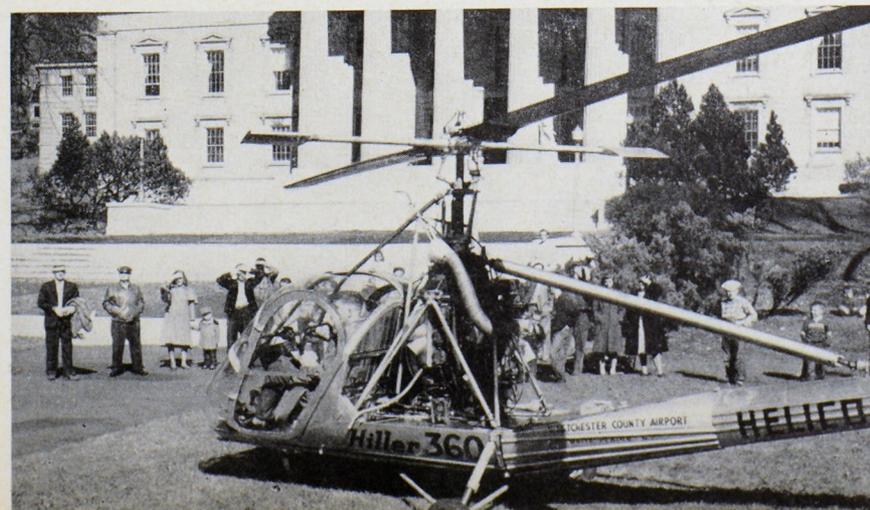
they will come more often, because little time is lost in travel; it is available for its intended use on the spot.

This means of travel will be of increasing importance to Vermont as an asset to business and industries located here. Salesmen, purchasing agents and vice-presidents must get around these days to far-away places. No longer is the scope of an industry in buying or selling limited to the surrounding county; it is a bigger world than we lived in yesterday.

In the next few years and in the next fifty years, Vermont will become increasingly dependent upon airplanes and airports, or it will be different from all other states. And differences in this manner, would be a sign that the state has passed its peak and is on the downgrade. We do not believe that this will happen. It would be contrary to the true spirit of Vermonters. They do not lose by default.

END

BELOW: First landing of a helicopter on the Vermont State House lawn, October, 1949.



By
ELIZABETH McWHORTER

Photography by
ALDO MERUSI

COTILLION RUTLAND



ABOVE: Earlene LaCoe, 1952 Queen, with her attendants and other Cotillion girls.

RUTLAND's annual Charity Ball, with its cotillion featuring 16 of the prettiest high school girls in the area, does double duty in discovering future beauty queens and in adding needed equipment to the Rutland Hospital.

At the Christmas holiday season dance, each year's queen makes a Cinderella-in-reverse appearance, entering, with a

RIGHT: Spivak, 1st queen Theresa Vigneau.



fanfare of music, on the stroke of midnight. The 16 cotillion dancers make up her court.

Proceeds of the dance, held for the past four years, have already provided an oxygen tent and an incubator for the hospital.

Three of the girls chosen Queen of the Ball during these years have gone on to win other beauty honors, while the fourth, who graduated from high school only last June, still has ample opportunity ahead.

The 1950 queen, Miss Carlene Johnson of Rutland, went to the Atlantic City Miss America beauty pageant in September as this year's Miss Vermont.

The first queen, Miss Theresa Vigneau of Proctor, chosen in 1949, later became a top candidate in the New England "Miss Lens Lure" contest of the New England Photographers Association, while Miss Mary Jane Montgomery of West Rutland, the 1951 choice, was carnival queen at Colby Junior College in 1952 and queen of the Middlebury College Junior Prom in 1953. The 1952 Charity Ball queen was Miss Earlene LaCoe of Mendon.

The ball was started in 1949 when the women's auxiliary of the hospital was faced with the problem of raising money to carry out an active program.

Mrs. E. B. Jenney, then president of the auxiliary, gathered about her a small but energetic group of fellow workers, who conceived the plan for a Christmas holiday dance to assist the group financially and, in addition, to fill a need of the young people in the community.

The auxiliary felt, however, that to be successful, the ball would have to offer more than a dance with a big name band. It would need glamour and local color, but in a dignified manner.

The idea for a cotillion, patterned after those held by the society sets in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, originated with Mrs. H. Stetson Fletcher.

That fall, tryouts were held before a group of judges, with juniors and seniors from high schools in Rutland and surrounding communities eligible to compete for one of the coveted spots.

Sixteen girls, plus two alternates, were selected by the judges for their charm, grace and poise.

The weeks of preparation followed. Committees sold tickets, planned decorations and chose an orchestra. In the four years the ball has been held, the orchestras of Charlie Spivak, Ray Anthony, Tony Pastor and Charlie Barnet have played.

Meanwhile, the cotillion group was meeting weekly to practice the intricate maneuvers of their dance. Plans were made for the judges to select a queen from the audience.

As the ball approached, the Rutland Armory took on a holiday air with Christmas decorations loaned by local merchants and colored lights strung from the rafters by the firemen. Even the dates of the cotillion girls lent a hand under the careful guidance of the committee.

At last the night of the ball arrived. The dancers halted twice during the evening, first to watch the 16 white-gowned



belles enter to the strains of "A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody" and perform their cotillion around the traditional pole, and second for the entrance of the queen and her presentation to her court.

The hard-working auxiliary members, glancing around the hall, relaxed and breathed sighs of relief. They could see that the cotillion girls, with their poise and beauty, had captivated the hearts of young and old, to make the Charity Ball a success and start it on the way to become a traditional event of the Rutland holiday season. END

LEFT: Beginning of the Cotillion with girls grouped around the traditional maypole.





LEFT: 1951 Queen Mary Montgomery passes scepter to Miss LaCoe. ABOVE: Carlene Johnson gives scepter to Queen Mary Montgomery.

BELOW: Maria Mondella, Judy Clark near Queen for crowning. BELOW: Cotillion Misses La Pine, Goodrich, Paul and Webber.

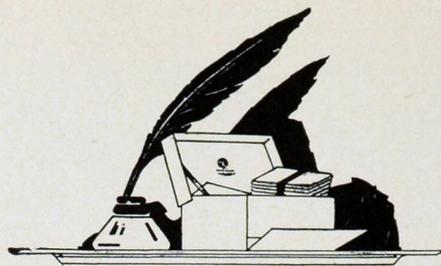


At the Sign

of the Quill

A Department of

Literary Comment



By

ARTHUR WALLACE PEACH

On the high slopes, brown flower-heads stood out above the snow, and we saw the tracks of a thrifty field-mouse. From one clump to another he had gone, nibbling the infinitesimal seeds, looping on across the hillside to other harvests—brown goldenrod, or here and there a wide-open eye of everlasting, its petals now cream-gray against the snow. . . . The goldenrod, however, had gained in grace and significance; the drawing of its fawn-brown sprays was rarer than any autumn brilliance. Winter coloring always brings one up with a gasp. Galleries of woodcuts and winter etchings—only they are better than anybody's etchings! and the air, the wonderful, sparkling air—not found in galleries—brings wine into one's soul. . . .

From *The Lone Winter* by Anne Bosworth Greene, 1923

Firelight Meditations and Books

Looking over the battered years, I realize that some of my happiest moments out of which I have gathered some wisdom and some laughter, have been drawn from hours when I was just "settin'." I mean by that phrase, just sitting on a farm porch in the evening after the day's late chores are done—someone else did them—and visiting—just visiting. Uncomfortable chairs simply do not exist on a country porch; those tried, modelled by the same philosophy that makes some modern buildings look like shoe factories, do not last long. In addition, there is good talk, going back over the years, usually away from the turmoil of the day's news. It may not, of course, be a farm porch; it may be anywhere, a cheerful spot in a hotel or inn in the autumn or in the winter, where the burning wood releases in its flames the springtimes of many years; it may be any home where for a little while, at least, the hurrying days pause.

This matter of "settin'" can be overdone, I know. I recall from some porch comment a friend's remark: "Settin's hard work. 'Specially when a man ain't got nothin' to look forward to except settin' some more." Nevertheless, it was while "settin'" with an old-time Vermont, white of head but with his gray matter still functioning, that I showed him the fashion pages of a city newspaper with its lean girls pictured. He scowled at the lanky girls and said grimly: "I don't like your lanky lassies, I like gals with hills and valleys." I take no position on

this issue, but the rhyme did set me to thinking—and it may comfort some lassie troubled by her "hills and valleys."

Aside from the fun, often drawn from a wide range of years and the human "doin's" within them, profounder themes do emerge on the porch, by the woodfire, or in any place where the pace of the day slackens. It was in front of a woodfire in a northern Vermont hotel where from a group of men—no female among them, alas—the question came: "What is each one of us seeking in life?" The answer was prompt from the salesman in the group, "Three square meals a day and a place to hang my hat." The array of comments that followed was halted by the surgeon among the listeners who had just been called back from a vacation to perform a life-or-death operation; and here is what he read from a notebook in his pocket:

Let us make this intellectual experiment. Assume that social and scientific progress has attained its highest goal. Imagine a society in which there is no war, no class struggle, no fight for existence. There are no illnesses and no prisons, no national or economic boundaries. The process of production works without friction, the fear of death has been eliminated. In such a society, socialism, pacificism, nationalism, imperialism have all lost their reasons for existing. All technical problems have been solved. Men will be born, live, and die, in that society. Only one thing is lacking—the *discovery of a meaning in human life*. Men living in the best of all possible worlds will still ask: How shall I live? How shall I love? How shall I die? These questions will abide

and be appreciated, perhaps for the first time, at their full value.

I hope I know the answer, but any attempt to answer would lead far from the purpose of these informal pages. I mention the questions raised because the past ten years have seen dozens of books written in which their authors have tried to find for modern man a purpose in his crowded, confused, ulcer-ridden day.

It is in Vermont that a Negro, with a wide background of experience that included work and visits in far corners of the globe, sought to find an answer to years of searching for the Something to which the surgeon was indirectly referring. Vermont has been generous to men of different races and particularly to the Negro. One of its most famous preachers was a Negro; once a Vermont court refused to release a slave to her master; and our Vermont Constitution, created more than 150 years ago, expressly forbids slavery.

Nevertheless, there was the practical, immediate question—could a Negro coming to Vermont find a home where he would be with his family accepted as a white man and where his family would be accepted, not on the basis of this, the color of his skin, but on the simple basis of an American seeking a home, where he could work, associate with others on an equal basis, and find some reasonable meaning in life for himself and them?

There is no final and complete answer to such a seeking—see the quotation above—for all or for one, probably; and much depends, decidedly depends, on



WINOOSKI RIVER NEAR MARSHFIELD

By ROBERT P. HOLLAND, *Courtesy* The Lane Press

what a man brings to the place he has selected for the test. Mr. Thomas brought bitter memories and innate suspicions on his quest into Vermont, dark elements that shadowed his first days in his selected environment; but it is still true of Vermont, all carping to the contrary, that the state is one of the last places left in America where a man "may possess his own soul."

It was not easy—the decision that led Mr. Thomas to close his home-hunting in New England and buy a home in Vermont. He brought his family from New York to his home, and on that first night, while his family slept, he faced the question that men have faced immemorially in many places and in many terms—"I'd been so sure, when we were in California, that things were going to work out well for us in Vermont. Now I felt just the opposite. Why? From where had come the seeds of which my fear and suspicion were the bitter fruit?"

He had his questions, and the village

people had—as a right—theirs. The book Mr. Thomas wrote contains his answers to his questions and the questions of the village; and although he did not intend to write on such a theme, I think, in the deeper depths of the book is the answer to a profounder question—how may men of different races, different blood, different color, live together and enjoy that living?

There is the mark of a fine intelligence all over the book. The style is thoughtful but informal. There is no straining at or over any point; under-statement is everywhere; and where the thought dips into dark currents, it turns upward quickly to the light. To sum up, the book is casually written, but its casualness has been shaped by the skilled touch of the experienced writer. High-pressure sentences so characteristic of this type of book are absent. The reason is simple enough—a Vermonter wrote it.

As for Westford, the Vermont village where the Thomas family found an end

to their journeyings, it does not differ from many Vermont villages where the pioneer strain is still strong, coming from men who long ago sought a refuge where they could find freedom to breathe, think, and work, where a man was judged by his ability to work, to use his brains, to lend a hand—not by the question of whence he came and who his great-uncle was. Westford was intelligent enough to accept Will Thomas, and he was intelligent enough to accept it; and both deserve a pat on the back—and here it is.

THE SEEKING by Will Thomas. A. A. Wyn, Inc. New York, 1953. \$3.50. 290 pp. Introduction by Dorothy Canfield Fisher.

"Beyond the Wharves of the Morning"

The paddlewheel boat, with her walking beam,

Her churning wheels, and her plume of steam,

*Has paddled upstream, far, far upstream,
Beyond the wharves of the morning.*

Robert Hillyer has written the verdict of the years in his poem, "In Memoriam: Sidewheeler Uncatena," [*The Suburb by the Sea*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. New York, 1952]: the old sidewheelers are about gone over the horizon. But one still steams majestically over Lake Champlain's waters, thanks to a group of Vermonters. Her name is the *Ticonderoga*, and she has become and is a permanent legend in Vermont history—a legend with a "walking beam" that still walks. I know, for not long ago, with members and friends of the Vermont Historical Society, I reclined in peace and comfort while the famous old steamer, with its eighty-year old Capt. A. S. Fisher in the pilot house and his son assisting him, carried us grandly and soundlessly across the lake and far to the north where the historic island of Isle La Motte, whose history goes back over three hundred years, watched us pass as it watched Champlain in 1609 canoeing south to the fateful battle near Fort Ticonderoga, N. Y., which made the Iroquois Indians the lasting foes of the French.

The rescue of the steamer from oblivion is a dramatic story that Ralph N. Hill, Jr., has told with gusto and with sure knowledge, for he was the prime mover in saving the steamer on the verge of its vanishing from the lake as were Mr. and Mrs. J. Watson Webb of Shelburne, Vermont, rescuers, when it began to slip from Mr. Hill's hands. The "Ti" is one of two steamers, the last in the wide, wide world, with walking beams and paddle wheels; and readers of the Quill will do well to put it high on their summer lists of things to visit, for a cruise on it is something "out of this world," and a sail of only a few hours means memories that few will have. The youngsters in a family, particularly, not only enjoy the cruise, but they, too, in the end will possess memories that few can claim.

Part II of Mr. Hill's volume, 58 pages, tells the story of the "Ti" with swift pictures of relevant details of steamboat days on the lake. Part I, 222 pages, is a general review of steamboating without the massed detail usually characteristic of such books—detail into which one can fall overboard and drown along with his interest. As the author wisely states, "I do not pretend to tell the whole story of steamboating, even in the East. . . . What I have tried to do is to select certain boats, places, personalities and events with the hope that they present something of a total impression of the lusty career in the United States of the sidewheel steamer, now sunk to a whisper in the age of jet propulsion."

Out of such a mixture Mr. Hill has brewed a potion that is alive with interest—even to a non-steamboater. Here they are, the boats of tradition and legend, and the boats that only the inner circle admired—the *Clermont*, *Sirius*, *Great Western*, *Lexington*, *Swallow*, *Armenia*, *Britannia*, *Great Eastern*, *Arctic*, *Bristol*, *Providence*, many others, and the *Ticonderoga* too—with pictures of most of them.

In a day in which men have visions of an atomic engine that will run forever, or pretty close to it, of jet engines that can send them hopping and skipping over the world and perhaps the universe, the patient old steamers "walking" serenely across the waters may seem pretty much of an old story, but in them is the ancient and forever-appealing adventure, glamour, strife, failure and achievement that probably will have meaning to men until the last heart beat of the last man. It seems to me that Mr. Hill has found these values in his story of the steamboats in their gala days and in the last brave defiance of change in his "Ti" still measuring the miles complacently on Lake Champlain. *SIDEWHEELER SAGA—A Chronicle of Steamboating* by Ralph Nading Hill. Rinehart and Company, Inc. New York, 1953. 342 pp. 30 Illus. Biblio. Index. \$5.

A Smiling Shelf

A nudge from a Quiller leads to these suggestions that will appear in a moment. The nudge tells me that I should list writers that might be placed on a "Smiling Shelf." I sincerely do believe that a reader should have among his bookshelves a cheerful shelf, but it is dangerous to imply that one knows a book of fun and cheer. Some of us belong to the sorry clan who have seen their pet jokes turn over and die in even bright-hued company. But I have decided to take the risk. I should say that a "Smiling shelf" should have a good representation of books by Franklin P. Adams, Don Marquis—his *Archy's Life of Mehitabel* is a classic to me—Robert Benchley, and all of Stephen Leacock's books that one can borrow and not return. While I find Ogden Nash's wit often painful—see a reference above—I am willing to go along with him at least once. I would go on to suggest a simple, unpretentious book of French-Canadian verse which was made available in a very small edition and which has now been rescued—*Accordin' to Batiste* by Seth C. Towle.

Mr. Towle, living near the Canadian border in Enosburg Falls, Vt., wrote in his introduction about his French-Can-

dian friends: "I love their wit and humor, their spontaneous jokes and whole-hearted laughter"; and his "Batiste," whose experiences and points of view are reflected in the book, is a thoroughly enjoyable character; so we have a cheery, amusing book of French-Yankee impressions.

The verses cover many themes, but among the most entertaining are those which phrase Batiste's reactions to his hospital experiences; and he adds some delightful "Diffinishuns," of which these are a few samples: "Preperashun Room: Shavin dun at iregular ours"; "Incizun: Jest a plac for missin' sponges"; "Hospitul: Bodie repaire fur all maks an' moduls"; and all of us who have "vacationed" in "hospituls" will join in Batiste's lament:

*Wid al de brite men in dis worl
Yu tell me if yu can,
Why day nev'r change de model
An' make won good bed pan?*

ACCORDIN' TO BATISTE by Seth Clement Towle. 25 poems and "Deffinishuns." 69 pages. The Vermont Bookshelf, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vt. \$2.50.

Winter—and Then Spring

When a native Vermonter begins to ski at the age of four, and then has eighteen years of teaching experience and some thirty years of skiing to his credit, I am entirely willing to believe that he has something to say about the sport that is worth listening to; so skiers and those interested should look into *Modern Skiing* by Robert S. Bourdon. Mr. Bourdon is an instructor at Sepp Ruschp's Ski School on Mount Mansfield, Stowe.

Edwin L. Bigelow has appeared with an idea that might well be imitated all over the state; he has assembled a booklet entitled, *Trips and Hikes in the Manchester, Vermont, Area*. He lists and gives details covering 27 "drives" and 10 "hikes," all of which can be taken from Manchester as a center. The booklet is pocket-size, 32 pages, and has a "Trip Log" with spaces for notations on 15 trips—a good guide to use in planning summer and autumn fun.

MODERN SKIING by Robert S. Bourdon. J. B. Lippincott Company. Philadelphia, 1953. 96 pages. 52 photos, 5 line drawings. Index. \$2.95.

TRIPS AND HIKES IN THE MANCHESTER, VERMONT, AREA by Edwin L. Bigelow. Copyright 1953. Manchester Printing Co. Copies from Mr. Bigelow, Manchester Center, Vt. \$75. END



MAKE YOU WANT TO HEAD SOUTH?

Or does this ski-tracked snow-path seem to beckon to the old sugar house and beyond, to the enchantment of Vermont in her white beauty? We think you'll find Vermont is home in Winter, too. . . . Is it skiing you like or just a different vacation? Write today to the

Vermont Development Commission
Montpelier, Vermont

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Vermont

SNOW CORNER OF NEW ENGLAND



BROWNINGTON

By MACK DERICK *Courtesy* THE LANE PRESS

“My father used to say and he was a Vermonter that the thing you could certainly say about the Vermonter was that he was a safe man, upon whom you could count for the things he ought to do, and that he never failed.”

Pres. Wm. H. Taft

October 9, 1912 at Montpelier