The Editor's Uneasy Chair

A challenger has appeared to contest Willis Mould's claim for The World's Largest Apple Tree (Spring 1960 Vermont Life). A. H. Willis in Bantam, Connecticut has one which is 9 feet 2 inches around at waist-height and at chest-height measures 11 feet 6 inches.

The peculiarities of Mr. Willis's tree, its girth affected by its massive branches, might be argued. But the Vermont Champion is no more, Spring storms having leveled it. Mr. Mould concedes, then, to Connecticut, the title of The World's Largest Living Apple Tree.

In response to many requests we print here a recipe for the ancient hayfield drink, switchel, mentioned in our past Summer issue. Our source is none other than the Vermont culinary authority, Mrs. Appleyard:

Mix 2 tablespoons of ginger with
1 cup of sugar (*)
5/4 cup of cider vinegar (or boiled cider)
8 cups of cold water.
Boil gently for ten minutes, cool and chill. Makes eight good glassfuls.

(*) Mrs. Appleyard doubts that honey was used but molasses or maple syrup might be substituted, alone or in combination with sugar.

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THAT FREQUENT RECURRENCE TO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND A FIRM ADHERENCE TO JUSTICE, MODERATION, TEMPERANCE, INDUSTRY AND FRUGALITY ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO PRESERVE THE BLESSINGS OF LIBERTY AND KEEP GOVERNMENT FREE. [VERMONT CONSTITUTION]
SUGARBUSH
among Vermont's
newest and loftiest
winter sports areas,
boasts America's
longest ski lift.

Photographed by
HANSON CARROLL

ON THE smooth shoulder of the
Green Mountain massif lies a
skier's major mecca, in facilities
among the nation's best, and in atmosphere
unique.

Sugarbush runs its 9300-foot gondola
lift to the top of 4013-foot Lincoln Peak.
Flanking are two double chair lifts, one
new this season, the practice slopes with
their own T-bar lift. The area lies off Rte.
108 near Warren and Mad River Glen.

Though one of the country's newest
major ski areas, Sugarbush Valley already
has doubled the capacity of its base-located
Valley House. Below, four new lodges and
a restaurant have been added.

Sugarbush combines in ample measure:
top facilities for serious skiers; an easy,
informal atmosphere; spectacular scenery;
prime conditions for beginners; and with
these an emphasis on the social, after-hours
pleasures of a winter holiday.
Part way down the Jester trail a group of skiers stops to plan the route they’ll take on this run. At right: Damon Gadd, Sugarbush president (left) and Manager Jack Murphy watch skiers approach the base lodge from Gondolier trail.
Mrs. Gail Shaw of Stowe on the expert Organ Grinder trail.

Ski-mounted clowns compete before an appreciative crowd in the Sugarbush Easter festivities. The Valley House at foot of area is behind.
Halfway up the Downspout: Expert skiers try the fresh powder snow. Above midway station of nearby Castlerock chairlift, the area is for experts only. Below: with Mrs. Thomas Kemper, New York socialite, is ex-Dartmouth and international racer Peter Estin, director of his ski school’s staff of top Austrian instructors.
Pancakes, sugar-on-snow are served to skiers at nearby Sugarbush Sugarhouse, run by Florence and Mahlon Jamieson (in checked shirt).
When the snow lies heavy on the fields and woods, it's wonderful fun for all the family to pack a lunch and go out into the white world on a WINTER PICNIC

Photographs by ANGELO LOMEO & SONJA BULLATY
Skiing has its various ups and downs. The whole family is ready for hot food and a rest by the time the sheltered hilltop grove is reached.
The trail points homeward through lengthening blue shadows, to warm fireside, and then to dreams.
Each color of the spectrum, by definition, is reflected to one's eye by the white snow. The rich and subtle hues of winter days should not surprise us, then, by their infinite beauty. Here, in high sun, late shadow and in cloud cover muting the colors, is the mood and feel of Vermont winter.
BULLATY-LOMEO

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Near East Haven—GRANT HEILMAN

Blowing Snow near Mt. Snow
BULLATY-LOMEO
A YEAR AGO last spring a friend of mine whom I shall call George because that is the name his parents bestowed on him, was bowling along in his pick-up truck not far from his Vermont home. To his dismay, he was accosted by a state trooper, who with kindly condescension pointed out to him that the time had passed when he should have procured a new inspection sticker for said truck. He thereupon summoned the reluctant and expostulating George to appear before the municipal judge in the county-seat. The young man opened the proceedings informally by saying, “Well Judge, I got him.” Thereupon George was invited to exculpate himself. He launched into what was afterward reported to be a notable oration. He detailed how he had just been looking for a garage to get the inspection done, but that the (blank) garagemen weren’t up yet, unlike himself, who worked from morning till night. He entered upon a discussion of how those little boys in green uniforms might better be employed checking up on the (again blank) buses that go ninety miles an hour through the village, than in bothering honest citizens. At this point the trooper appeared to be going through some kind of convulsion, almost unable to keep back his tears. But the judge scowled at him, and he controlled his emotion. George continued with an eloquent dissertation on the injustice of taxes in general, and of his having to pay for a minor piece of forgetfulness, this last being slightly inconsistent with his previous claim that he was hunting for a garage when apprehended. He paused for breath.

The judge saw his chance and broke in. Peering over his steel-rimmed spectacles he said mildly, “Settle for half price?”

George reached for his wallet.  

Now when I heard that story it seemed to me to exemplify some of the best features of Vermonters’ dealings with the law. It was prompt, in fact practically instantaneous. It mitigated the rigors of the law by judicial knowledge of human nature and local conditions. It guarded free speech. The culprit had full opportunity to defend himself. Justice was neither sold nor denied. No bribes were offered or solicited. It was effective. Two inspection seasons have passed since then, and George’s truck has sported its little pink or orange sticker weeks ahead of time.
But not all Vermonters, I find, agree with me that flexibility and informality are desirable attributes of the courts. This too must be taken into account in considering their attitude to their law. I told George’s story to a neighbor of mine not long after it happened. He glared at me. “You mean to say,” he sputtered, “the judge let that idiot off for half price? And you think that’s funny?” I was abashed.

It dawned on me that along with due respect for their courts, Vermonters think it is a good thing to keep an eye on their judges. They have never been eager to entrust permanent authority and power to anybody, no matter how worthy of trust. They fear any infringement on their liberty. So they elect their judges every two years. No life appointments for them. Only the municipal judges are appointed by the Governor. Assistant and probate judges are elected by the voters of the county where they live, justices of the peace by voters of the town. Supreme and Superior Court judges are elected by the Legislature. These latter, once they attain office, are almost always re-elected, but they can never be quite sure that they will be. They could be chucked out, if the Legislature chose. Maybe that is one reason why no judge has been impeached within our memory, and why there have been no serious scandals in the history of Vermont. In the county offices, it may happen that a judge appears to be taking a greater interest in his political career outside his court job than the local voters think is entirely compatible with strict impartiality on the bench. In such case a word from the leaders of the party to which he looks for renomination can be depended on to bring—at least outwardly—a rapid change in attitude.

For Vermont is proud of its legal system. Making due allowance for the frailties and errors of humanity, it feels it has worked out laws that suit its way of life. If they don’t, they can be changed at the will of the people. Unlike most states, Vermont has never installed a code of laws. It relies on its constitution, on subsequent laws and the precedents laid down by the courts, and in the final analysis, on the English Common Law. Some of its laws are unique. Some, like the Freeman’s Oath, go back to roots in the origin of the state as an independent republic almost two hundred years ago; others are devised to cope with modern conditions, like the one restricting billboards, in order to keep Vermont’s mountains visible.

Among these unique provisions, which some call archaic, but which do serve a useful purpose, is the one establishing the assistant, or as they are usually called, the “side” judges. They sit, one on each side, of the presiding judge in county court. They are men without legal training, and almost always old men. The theory is that they exercise their judgment on the facts in a case, while the Superior Judge, who travels from county to county, sitting in each one once in three years, supplies the knowledge of the law. The side judges are anything but mere appendages. Under the law they can gang up on the presiding judge and outvote him, and occasionally they do. And sometimes when they have done this, their judgment has been upheld on appeal. The effect of such behavior on the disposition of the presiding judge can be left to the imagination, but every Vermont judge knows that he has to get along with the side judges in the various counties. He tries to make sure that at least one of them will be amenable, and that he can bring him to see eye to eye with himself. Often in cases where both sides waive jury trial, they have great influence. They may argue for a small or a larger fine, they may soften judgment in a suit for damages, saying, “Yes, sure Judge, it was his fault letting those cows run the road, and they did do a lot of harm to that cornfield, but the fellow’s wife’s been sick, and he’s got way behind, and he’s really a good farmer. If you stick a $100 fine on him, he’ll never be able to catch up. Better make it $10 and give him time to pay it.”

In divorce cases, tried without juries, again the side judges are important. They are quite likely to have their own opinion and be ready to advise the Superior Judge on the merits of the case. Vermont has a liberal divorce law, in keeping with its tradition of personal rights. “Marriage is a private affair.” The courts will grant divorce not only for cruelty or adultery, but for a three years separation and a statement that there is no prospect of renewing the marriage. But the privilege is reserved for genuine Vermonters, who can prove residence. Vermont has no intention of becoming a Reno.

Of course, there are those who think the side judges are obsolete. There seems to be a general impression that when the Judge turns and whispers to one of them behind his back, he is saying nothing more momentous than “Damn hot in here. Think we might open a window?” but in truth the side judges do a lot of work besides sitting in court, for which a salaried county commissioner would have to be appointed if they did not attend to it. They look after the courthouse and jail, and other county property. They set the amount of the county tax. Often
they watch over expenses like elderly hawks; when a new sidewalk was built back of the courthouse in one Vermont city, the local side judges came each morning to sit on the steps and see to it that the county was not being rooked for poor material or wasted time. They can fix bail for a man the police bring in, which may save a minor offender a night or two in the lock-up. They can act as justices of the peace if need be. They cost very little, for they are paid no salary, but only their expenses and $10 a day for the days they work. Since their office is embedded in the state’s constitution, and so cannot be eliminated without an amendment which would have to be passed by two successive legislatures and then submitted to the people in a referendum, it is likely that Vermont courts will enjoy their side judges for a long time yet.

The probate system is another example of adaptation to the circumstances of the state. Of the twenty probate judges—some counties have two districts—several are women who served as clerks of the probate court before their election. They do not necessarily have legal training, though in the course of their work they acquire legal knowledge. They are apt to find themselves acting as both judge and legal adviser, since few Vermont estates are big enough to justify hiring lawyers to settle them. One conversation I knew of went something like this, 

“Tell Annie, you’ve made up your mind to fight this bequest to Rose, even though the farm comes to you? You’ll have to take it to court, you know, and prove undue influence if you’re going to break your father’s will. How long was Rose keeping house for him?”

“Six years.”

“How much’d he pay her?”

“Five dollars a week—and her keep of course.”

“That’s not much the way wages go now. You didn’t want him over to your house?”

“But Judge, my husband never would have stood it to have him around.”
“Pretty cranky, was he? She take good care of him?”

“Oh I suppose so. But that money belongs to us.”

“Well Annie, you go find you a lawyer—and don’t forget those boys don’t work for peanuts these days. But 'fore you do that, hadn’t you better go home and talk it over? Then you come back and tell me.”

And that was the end of that lawsuit.

Justices of the Peace are still elected in the towns, and sit with the selectmen on the Board of Civil Authority, to hear appeals on taxes and other town affairs, but they seldom hold court any more. The automobile has made it too easy, except in the most remote districts, to attend the court in the county seat. Older lawyers look back with some regret to those rural courts. They used to give the young lawyer his opportunity to get experience, and also gave the townspeople considerable entertainment. One justice’s address to his six-man jury became famous. “Gentlemen of the jury, I must now give you instruction in the law. You have heard the testimony. If you believe the prosecution you will find the prisoner guilty. If you believe the prisoner, you will acquit him. If you believe the way I do, that the whole kit and biling of them is lying their heads off, then I don’t know what in hell you’ll do.”

Oldtimers tell also of a case where a young man who later became one of Vermont’s most distinguished judges was defending a motorist who had killed a farmer’s rooster with his Stanley Steamer. Not only did he get his client off, but he brought a counter action before the Justice by which his client was awarded $10 for damage to his car. The young lawyer’s future was assured from then on.

Nobody living in Vermont has to have a license to carry a gun, or keep one in his home. The innocent Vermonter, crossing the state boundary in any direction with a neat little Smith and Wesson in the glove compartment of his car, is liable to arrest and fine if he happens to get caught. But in his own state, his elected representatives firmly believe that a licensing law “disarms the honest man and doesn’t hinder the crook.” Again the law is suited to the circumstances; if Vermont included a great metropolis the lawmakers might have to change their minds. But as of now, any attempt to enact a licensing law meets with objections in the House—“I’ve been carrying a gun if I wanted to for forty years, and nobody’s going to tell me I’ll have to pay to.”

Vermont lawyers were irritated two or three years ago when some criticism was directed at the state for maintaining “imprisonment for debt.” They say imprisonment for debt is impossible in Vermont, being forbidden by the Constitution. What it does have is “certified execution.” This doesn’t mean capital punishment. It means that if a jury in a civil case awards damages for malicious mischief, as when a man burns down his neighbor’s barn, and the guilty man refuses to pay, the judge can send him to jail until he does. Of course such cases are rare, because usually the culprit will be in prison or mental hospital before a civil suit is brought, but they do occur. It may be that injustice is sometimes done under this provision of the law, but most lawyers in Vermont think the right of appeal and the right to take the poor man’s oath are safeguards enough.

The most dramatic instance of Vermont’s special and unique laws, and the most cherished, is the Freeman’s Oath, which everyone must take before he can vote in the state. A young friend of mine, a girl home from college and just turned twenty-one, announced she wanted to vote in the coming fall election. Her father told her to go to the next farm, whose owner was a selectman and a justice of the peace. She found him milking a cow in his big barn, and explained what she wanted. He rose from his three-legged stool and dictated the oath to her. She swore to vote as in her conscience would conduce to the best good of the State of Vermont, “without fear or favor of any person.” Then her elderly neighbor delivered to her a brief lecture on the importance of what she had just done, on the meaning of the oath, and on her duty as a citizen of state and nation. After that he went back to his milking. She has never forgotten it.

END
When I nudged that porcupine with my foot, I got a big surprise,” my logger friend told me last winter. “He’d been sliced down the middle almost as if with a knife. Then he was hollowed out from the underside the way you’d scoop out a muskmelon. It wasn’t really a porcupine at all—just an empty skin.”

I recognized his description at once. This could be the work of only one living creature. Some call it the black “cat” because of its feline appearance and grace. Others call it the “fisher.cat,” or simply the “fisher.” But no matter what its name, it’s the best porcupine trap ever known to the northwoods.

It will scamper up a sugar maple and slash at a hedgehog from the underside. A hunter in Essex county once saw this happen. He was sitting on a streamside log, waiting to see what would come past. He looked up and saw a porcupine in a tree fork.

“Then a fisher went up after it, like a big black squirrel,” he recalled. “The porcupine bristled and slapped with its tail, but it never touched the fisher. I never saw an animal so quick.

“All of a sudden there was a fight up there. The fisher ran back down the tree like a streak. It had hardly touched ground before the porcupine came crashing down. From the way it fell, I think it was dead before it landed.

“I sneaked over to have a look. But the fisher must have heard me. By the time I got there, there was just a dead porcupine. He was opened up from his throat to his tail.”

Although the fisher is the sworn enemy of the porky (food studies show that one stomach in three contains a porcupine meal), it’s able to take nearly anything it fancies as food. It can catch a Snowshoe Hare. It’s so nimble that it often feeds on the red squirrel. In fact, it’s the fastest treetop mammal of North America.

Yet the only fisher of my experience was poking along a lake shore. In spite of its common name, it doesn’t
catch living fish, but looks for dried ones in the debris. At other times it feeds on berries and fruits. A born economist, it carefully hides any extra food for next time.

My lake-shore specimen was typical in its appearance. Brown-black, with luxuriant fur and a bushy, tapering tail, it was about 3 feet in over-all length. Its small rounded ears were almost hidden in the fur. Mine was probably a male, as it was somewhat grizzly-grey about the head. Fully adult, it must have weighed nine or ten pounds. Females are evenly colored and smaller, weighing five or six pounds.

A district forester told me of his meeting with a fisher. "I'll never forget the sight of him," he said. "We met around the tip of a big ledge. He arched his back and hissed like a big cat. Then he showed the wickedest teeth I've seen. For a minute I didn't know what was going to happen. Then he turned and ran. He had a long, looping run like a big weasel. I measured the tracks—nearly five feet between bounds. He was really traveling."

No unwounded fisher has been known to attack a human. It would rather not fight a dog, either, but it seldom loses. Its curving claws are like those of a cat. Since it's not a member of the cat family, however, it can not retract them. The clawmarks are good things to look for in a fisher track—those and the prints of five toes instead of the four shown in many animal tracks.

You'll seldom see more than one fisher at a time—if, indeed, you ever see one at all. Like its cousins, the mink, otter, and wolverine, it loves privacy. It claims a territory of several square miles as its own. Then it makes a regular circuit, traveling mostly by night. It visits the same spot perhaps once a week. It has regular sign posts where it deposits a bit of musk from scent glands near the tail. If it comes across the scent of another fisher, it chases the intruder away. An Indian legend states that it was a far-ranging fisher that broke through the floor of heaven and first let the spring warmth out on a wintry world.

Once a year, in late winter, it relents of its nonconformist ways. The female goes to seek a mate. They may breed and part at once, or hunt together a few days before mating. She leaves him for a short time each day, for she already has a nest of young in a hollow tree and must nurse them periodically. If the male tries to accompany her, she chases him savagely away. She seems to know that he has little against eating his own kind.

In a few days they're both back home. The fertilized eggs in her body then go through one of the strangest cycles known. They develop a little and then come to a halt. All summer and fall they remain with no further change. Finally in the winter, they finish their growth. Two to four are born just a few days before the spring mating period. So this Vermont resident has the longest

SOME FISHER FACTS
The eight to twelve-pound fisher, so slim he can enter a 5-inch diameter hole, is a fearsome fighter. Leaping as much as 40-feet from tree to tree he can out-maneuver a squirrel, and on the ground is an agile, tireless runner, capable of catching a rabbit easily.

The fisher can outfight the raccoon, the lynx and even dogs when cornered or with their young. Deer may be taken by them but only the sick or weak. They are thought to eat some nuts and berries in the fall during their usually nocturnal foraging.

The fisher, though not a water animal, can swim adequately. He is shy but often vocal, one call reported "like a mournful child's cry," again making short, sharp whistles, and sometimes low grunts.

"Winter 1960 • 25
THE PORCUPINE

This forest-dwelling rodent will gnaw on anything which smells of salt. Most campers are sadly familiar with the quill pig’s taste for flooring, doors, furniture, tool handles and even aluminum utensils, cans and auto license plates. Porky has acquired a taste for synthetic rubber and now includes in his menu auto and tractor tires, tractor hydraulic lines and even ski lift tower pulleys. Evidence of his strong stomach comes in a report of nibbled dynamite. Then there is the hazard of stuck-in quills to other wildlife, dogs, people and even a cow (in one instance).

In the forest the porcupine is especially fond of the bark of living trees, young saplings and older timber trees alike often attacked, seriously wounded and deformed. In concentrations porcupines strip young trees by the acre, often girdling and killing valuable timber trees.

As most animals give the porcupine a wide berth its population without control increases. A single animal can damage as many as one hundred trees during a winter, proving the destructive power of a high population is enormous.

to be any complaints about lack of rabbits in the Adirondacks.”

The Department of Forests and Parks released about half a dozen fishers in 1959 and early 1960, mostly in the Appalachian Gap and Warren areas. Mr. Walker points out that it’s too early for concrete results with a creature so slow to multiply. But if the picture is the same as it is in Maine, New York, and a few other northern states where the fisher has been helped to return, a great natural balance will be restored: Up fisher—and down porcupine.

The pеПеа, as the Indians called the fisher, has been protected in Vermont by law since the twenties. But there’s one other creature—unprotected by law—with which it might be confused. This is the mysterious “black panther” of Vermont, whatever this may be. So a hunter, seeing a dark-furred creature stretched out along a limb, might be tempted to bag a “panther.”

Barring such mistakes, however, there’s real hope that fortune has turned at last for the fisher. There have been recent signs of him in many parts of Vermont, including Barnard, Bethel, Concord, Halifax, Ripton, Searsbury, Starksboro, Westford and Williston. Soon, perhaps, he may return to his rightful inheritance.
The Woman Who Told Everything

Her love affair with a reluctant Vermont filled her life and inspired the most intimate portrait of any State in America

JANET GREENE

Illustrations by Hamilton Greene

Near the base of her family’s stone in Ludlow Cemetery is the legend ABBY MARIA HEMENWAY, OCT. 7, 1828, FEB. 24, 1890, and the wording, though too short on details to please her as history, would have suited her on another score: it gives a beginning and it gives an ending. And if there was one thing Miss Hemenway wanted in her lonely, fanatical life, it was to tell a story from beginning to end.

She almost did. Goaded by her ideal of preserving a past “too rich and, in many points, or some, too unique or romantic to lose,” she labored for thirty years to record the story of Vermont county by county and town by town, and died with one county still to go. The result is a sociologist’s dream. The Vermont Historical Gazetteer, compiled and edited by Abby Maria Hemenway, embraces five volumes containing six thousand pages and four million words and every fact she could get her hands on.

With its first installment her project was hailed as an “historic monument to the Green Mountain State such as no other State has”; this judgment is still valid a century later, and so is the view that it was like history shoveled in. Work of genius or a mishmash, the Gazetteer is considered Item No. 1 among today’s collectors of Vermontiana.

The author acknowledges help from many sources, chief among them Volumes I through V of The Vermont Historical Gazetteer, and Abby Maria Hemenway (1827–1890) Historian, Anthologist, and Poet by Frances Harriet Babh, Division of Graduate Study, University of Maine, 1939. Mrs. Greene has contributed to Vermont Life during the last ten years.

Abby Hemenway traveled in any weather to collect her material. She researched. She enlisted contributing authors—three, six, ten to a town; she flattered or wheedled; when reasons failed she extorted, and never turned...
a hair. Lack of money, not of energy, made the Gazetteer’s progress eccentric. She had to sell enough of one volume to pay printers working on the next one. So she sized up her market and devised her come-ons, committed burglary, even fled her Green Mountains to escape from debts. “I understand that you had trouble with Miss Hemenway,” a Chicago lawyer wrote home to her creditors shortly after she died. “Everybody did.”

There is little direct information about what she was like, but certainly Abby was no trouble in her early years. Records show that she was the fourth of ten children born to Daniel and Abigail Barton Hemenway of Ludlow, and family stories mention her as a bright little thing, honing her wits on discussions of such grave problems as Abolition and trained to marshal her ideas and present them, unflinching, in prose or verse. It is said that she taught in a district school at the age of fourteen, well before she enrolled in Ludlow’s Black River Academy in 1846. She studied hard and worked hard for the next five or six years, was a leader in the Baptist Church and found time to star in dramatic productions, plummy with uplift and sensibility, put on by the local Ladies’ Association for Mental and Other Improvement.

Details of her life are even more shadowy from around 1852 to 1858. She spent three not very happy years as a teacher in Michigan, where she wrote verses of a particularly emotional sort. She returned to Ludlow inspired to exhibit the condition of “general poetic literature” in her home state and published Poets and Poetry of Vermont in 1858. The anthology enjoyed two highly successful printings because this bookish old maid—Abby was thirty by now—had an instinct for merchandising that was a hundred years ahead of its time.

She solicited poems through notices put in county newspapers, thereby receiving three thousand manuscript pages and some fine advance publicity. Cannily she named an “examining committee” to approve her one hundred and ten selections; they mirrored the current taste for doggerel, sentimental ballads and an occasional flash of competent verse. Interest in her book was heightened, too, by a caustic dissent regarding its merits. Yet Poets would have had a market without fanfare or controversy, for Abby Maria was passionately sincere. Poetry was noble, it was beautiful; Vermont was wonderful. Her public agreed—and what more genteel occupation for a female than to preserve the poesy of such a region?

Her next project was not welcomed as being so decorous. “We had ‘Poets and Poetry of Vermont’ well off [our] hands,” she wrote later, “and were looking around for something of a Vermont character to do.”

What she found to do was to compile a history of her state different from any before or since. There existed several excellent chronicles of Vermont. Among them, Zadock Thompson’s History of the State of Vermont From Its Earliest Settlement to the Close of the Year 1832 (Burlington, 1833) still is, in two of its three parts, unsurpassed as a standard reference. However Abby felt that his third section, the two hundred-odd pages called a gazetteer, should be amplified.

Local and personal: this was the answer. Let Thompson give Vermont’s early civil and natural history, but let her set down the human details of each town’s past before it was too late, before the material became “daily more indistinct and irrecoverable.” She would get trustworthy leaders in every community to collaborate and she would publish their accounts as pamphlets issued quarterly, by counties and alphabetically, for twenty-five cents. She must start right away.

Flushed with praise for launching Poets and Poetry she ordered a thousand circulars inviting contributors to her wonderful design, and was told that her plan was “not suitable for a woman.”

Disapproval came from no less august a body than the faculty of Middlebury College. The county historical society was then sixteen years old and had forty members. If forty males had not yet produced such a history, how could Miss Hemenway possibly—? She would break down before she was half through the county. And maybe her idea carried an overtone of woman’s equality. At any rate the professors had an alternative, a nice anthology of prose for which they happened to have some ideas.

But history was what she was after, and the histories of Addison’s twenty-three towns Miss Hemenway eventu-
ally got. She turned the flank of masculine superiority, parried the blows of indifference or delay, and on July 4, 1860, published the *Vermont Quarterly Gazetteer*, No. 1, "embracing the civil, ecclesiastical, biographical and military history of each town" in Addison County. In her exhilaration over getting it done she minimized her troubles in gingering authors or selling subscriptions. By midsummer of 1860 she was already in debt, she was behind her schedule and she was more certain than ever that the *Gazetteer* should be finished, regardless. The pattern for the rest of her life was established.

The Civil War naturally slowed her down, and five more issues, still titled as quarterlies and still not making expenses, appeared over the next three years and dealt with Bennington, Caledonia and Chittenden Counties. After the issue of August 1863 she suspended the *Gazetteer* until the war would be over.

Meanwhile Abby collected another book of poetry, published in 1863 as *Songs of the War*. It contained seventy-three entries, many of which she had clipped from newspapers, and had poems by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, William Cullen Bryant and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

The following year Miss Hemenway announced that she had been converted to the Roman Catholic faith. It is impossible to trace the steps by which this daughter of a rather sternly evangelical Baptist family arrived at her decision; it is equally hard to assess the strain her conversion was to place on her dealings with many Protestant clergymen whom she needed as authors for the *Gazetteer*. The history tabled until war's end, she moved to Burlington to make her home with Mrs. Lydia Clarke Meech, an elderly widow who was also a recent convert to Catholicism, and to write the first of three books of religious verse.

Then in 1867 appeared the next work on her history, this time as Volume I of *The Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. It covered Essex County in addition to the material already presented in the quarterlies. With this section bound in
permanent form it was now possible to preevaluate the finished work—and to discover, in its 1,096 unself-conscious pages, what Miss A. M. Hemenway, Publisher, was really like.

In her preface she had said, “Vermonters are New Englanders, and like naturally to know about a thing that interests them, from beginning to end.” From this major premise she reasoned that, since the personality of Vermont so interested her, everyone else in the state shared her thirst for details. Her hope was to tell everything: she pursued it with the unleavened single-mindedness that hallmarked the emancipated Yankee spinster of the middle eighteen-hundreds.

Apparently she gave free rein to her nearly four hundred contributors to Volume I, for she jumbled masterly political resumés and countermarches with church foundings and geology, repulses of Indians and bears, and lists of especially long-lived residents. First settlers, first charters, military rosters; merchant tonnage on Lake Champlain and local eccentrics and sermons and hardships among the heathen—she told it all. When a town’s correspondents failed to produce, the Editor obliged by quoting Thompson and adding tidbits clipped from the papers. Sometimes the result was a mere rundown of important events; or, as in the case of Vergennes, she achieved attitude with an invocation to Labor, Worship and Nature before imparting the statistic that the falls of the Otter River have a descent of thirty-seven feet.

The pages are spangled with asterisks leading down to her footnotes, and in these asides she is even more self-revealing. Painfully conscientious, she gave credit for every source. It is hard to believe that she cut or reordered the scripts, but “Oaths are omitted,” she might note primly, or wonder which of two infants was really the first born in a certain town. She cross-referred; she gave pats for good conduct, and praised support of the Gazetteer. In the next few months she must have labored without rest to drum up advance sales and prepare the two more volumes that would complete her project. Always plain, her face became permanently stamped with a combination of force and anxiety.

In March 1883 all of Volume IV, bound and unbound, was seized by her creditors and stored for safekeeping in a Montpelier bindery until she should pay some of her bills. This was too much. They must have known that without her copies to sell she could never pay; or worse—that with no more money she might not continue the history. Why could people never see?

She went to the bindery in the night and took, by main force, the copies of Volume IV.

Her finaglings had been one thing, out-and-out burglary was another. Yet Abby Maria Hemenway was changed, whether or not her mind was really unbalanced. She was finally convinced that she, by herself, must be responsible for the Gazetteer. She would keep collecting material and she would never stop wooing subscribers. She would set
the text in type piecemeal, with her own hands if she had
to, and sell it pamphlet by pamphlet to individual towns
until she could bind Windham and Windsor Counties as
the fifth and sixth volumes, and her life's work would
be finished.

This was her program when she sought refuge back
home in Ludlow, and she followed it after she moved to
Chicago beyond reach of her creditors. There she lived
as a recluse, doggedly building the Gazetteer. A fire de­
stroyed the printshop where she had part of the manu­
script and some town histories already in pages. She re­
ported the tragedy halfway through the body of Volume V:

"May 25, 1886, parts of Windham county Vol. V.,
including 16 pages of Brookline with the type, stock,
paper, etc., were utterly consumed [by fire], and no in­
surance; to refurbish . . . we have worked at a disad­
vantage, but believe us, Vermont, hard for you this time,
so in the midst of otherwise deserved criticism remember
mercy."

Her style had become eccentric—perhaps from hysteria,
and who could blame her?—but it holds no trace of self­
pity. There was simply no time for it. She replaced the
burned sections of Windham County, setting in type each
day the scripts she had edited the night before, and
started arranging contributions for the book on Windsor,
the final region her history need cover.

Volume V of the Gazetteer was three-fourths done when
she died alone in her room, February 24, 1890. Her sister
Carrie completed the text from material on hand and pub­
lished it for Abby the following year. Three decades after
her death the State of Vermont awoke to the value of
Miss Hemenway's treasure and authorized an Index to
the Gazetteer at a cost of $12,000.

But nothing could be done about Windsor, and no one
has set down the rest of the story that she wanted, with
all her heart, to tell.

VERMONTIANA #1

Vermonters may be justly proud of the books re­
lating to their state—for in extent, variety &
interest no state can match Vermont. It is hard
to choose, but perhaps the most important of
all is:

HEMENWAY, (Miss) Abby Maria. Vermont
Embracing a History of Each Town (etc.)
5 vols, thick 8vo (6" by 9½") and Index Vol.
Together, 6 vols, pp 1096, 1245, 1200 & 1180,
portraits & plates. v.p. 1867 & v.d. This work
was first issued as a magazine and 6 parts were
thus issued; apparently this part of the project
was a failure as no more were so published.
Vol. 5 published posthumously in Chicago to
those who had paid in advance; in effect, a
private printing. This accounts for the rarity of
this volume. Vol. 6 was never published (though
one small part of it was issued, ANDOVER) be­
cause the ms was destroyed by fire after her
effects were partitioned among her heirs. Thus
Windsor County, save for Andover, is left out
of this great work. In 1921-23 an Index was
prepared under the auspices of the State; the
downright ill luck that had pursued Miss Hemen­
way in life persisted in harassing her ghost—the
Great Flood of 1927 carried away almost all of
the copies of the Index. The posthumous Vol. 5
relates to Windham County and is so rare as to
be almost unobtainable: it should be reprinted;
but there are, of the several towns, separate off­
prints and these are relatively common. In scope
& quality this work is unmatched.

Miss Hemenway, generally unknown to
Fame, is not even mentioned in the Dictionary of
American Biography(!). She was author of other
works (see Gillman: Bib. of Vt. p 121, 1897),
particularly Poets and Poetry of Vermont Rutland
(1858).
The Bennington Museum

The color and excitement of form and history
in a leading regional museum, as seen by
two noted gallery photographers

Sonja Bullaty and Angelo Lomeo

Historic relics in the Museum include the famous Bennington Flag, oldest Stars and Stripes in existence. In the foreground is one of four cannons used by Gen. Burgoyne's forces in Battle of Bennington. Above: a gangway headboard of state seal from Gunboat, USS Bennington.
Extensive collections include china, wood, wax, tin, paper and rag dolls. Among rarities are a tin talking doll made by the Edison Company; a full set of 1852 Jenny Lind paper dolls.

Halfway up Old Bennington’s Town Hill, backed up to the historic cemetery of the Old First Church, stands one of the country’s finest regional museums. It is an exciting, alive institution, filled with priceless treasures.

Here is America’s oldest Stars and Stripes, the famous Bennington Flag of ’76. Here is one of the world’s rarest collections of early American glass, the finest of the Bennington pottery and porcelains.

Early Vermont and America comes to life here each year for thousands who see the displays of flags, firearms and uniforms, the early household items—from tools to furnishings. Early American portraits are included in the extensive art gallery, and here also is one of Vermont’s finest genealogical departments.

Bennington, directed by Richard Carter Barret, is a museum young in spirit. Here local children come for history and art classes. For children in a wider area the Museum School provides daily art classes in summer.

The Museum, which is completely supported by private funds, is closed now. It will re-open late next spring with a large new wing, to provide a museum more extensive and fascinating than ever.

Bennington Museum is open, starting late June, daily including Sundays from 9 until 6.

Handsome four-foot water cooler is of Bennington pottery, the firm begun by Capt. John Norton in 1793 and operated by his family for 101 years. Much was such functional stoneware.
Vermont's first Post-Office was this special desk, so used from 1784-1791 by Anthony Haswell, Bennington's first printer-editor-postmaster. Left: Arrogant Bennington Poodle is one of the rarest items made in the 1850s at pottery of C. W. Fenton. The Museum has the country's largest collection of Bennington Wares.
Portrait of prominent local business man was painted in mid-1800s by Thos. Von Zandt of Albany, N. Y. Detail is shown in color above. Museum also houses collections of contemporary Vermont and older European paintings and sculptures as well.
"There are the Red Coats, and they are ours . . . .
Bennington Battle items include a British Red Coat taken at the battle; canton of Gen. Stark's personal battle flag; one of his own flint-lock pistols. Powder horn, engraved with views of Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral, was taken by General from a prisoner. Lantern belonged to Col. Pfister, British troop leader mortally wounded during the battle. English map of 1780 shows positions of American troops, referred to as "the Enemy."

Historical items at left include Molly Stark's night cap and pink kid slippers. Lowestoft tea-caddy is from complete set, bears Stark coat-of-arms on front, insignia representing Green Mountain State on other side. Candlestick, spectacles, shawl are of the period, as is booklet of essays printed by Anthony Haswell of Bennington. Gen. Stark is said to have uttered the historic words shown below the pictures just before the Battle.

"At this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow."
Blown and Pressed American Glass examples include a handsome blue-green tulip vase and one of four famous amethyst open-work footed compotes in the Hare-Coolidge group of Sandwich glass. The blue "sparking-lamp" in front of the rose gemel flask is the only known example of this form in color. At right: the Channing Hare-Mountfort Coolidge Collection of Early American Glass includes these witch balls, whose fascinating forms were made at important glass houses at Saratoga, Lake Dunmore, South Jersey and Sandwich. With the Gertrude D. Webster Collection, the American glass at Bennington Museum is now regarded as one of the finest collections in the United States.
Staff members prepare handsome wedding gown of 1880s for exhibition. Collections number thousands of articles worn by Bennington inhabitants since Revolution.

Museum's toy collection, from post-Revolutionary period to 1920s, includes such favorite items as this cast iron fire engine. Permanent exhibit of toys and school items, carved sleighs and complete farms are included with a popular collection of early mechanical toys.
Quilt specimens include those made of cotton, silk, velvet, and wool. They are patchworked, appliqued, embroidered, knitted, crocheted and woven. Important Civil War items displayed include uniforms and the Libby Prison flag.

At right is signboard used on Peru toll road in 1814. Confession below, evidence of Bennington's powerful church influence, is part of Museum's fine manuscript and document collection. Genealogical Library is one of best in Vermont.

I, JAMES HICKS, of Bennington, do hereby certify that I was strongly attached to Mrs. Margaret Adams; and was desirous to marry her, but in consequence of her refusal, I was led away by the wiles of the adversary, by passion, and a corrupt and wicked heart, to say what I have said against her, and whatever reports are circulated in respect to my having had carnal knowledge of Mrs. Adams are FALSE and WITHOUT FOUNDATION, and I give no reason to believe that Mrs. Adams is a lewd woman.

I confess and acknowledge to her, and the world, that I have wickedly injured her; and am sorry for it, and wish to be forgiven by her, by her friends, and my Maker, and Redeemer.

JAMES HICKS.

Bennington, April 13, 1835.
J ust about anyone who has driven in Vermont has noticed piles of fresh-cut logs waiting at roadside loading stations, and almost any village will turn up a lumber mill.

Not so easily seen, however, is the actual logging of the timber, which takes place most often high on wooded slopes away from traveled roads.

It starts, of course, with a standing tree, selected for its species, size and quality. It may be a softwood such as spruce or hemlock or hardwood maple or yellow birch. Whatever kind, the logger fells the tree with his chain saw, trims its branches and cuts it to usable lengths. The skid horse then drags the single logs to an intermediate point where a load of heavy logs is built upon a heavy bob sled, the load tightened in place with chains. Then the bobber heads his team down to the roadside where the mill truck can be driven.

To get out his timber many a mill owner contracts with teams of loggers, usually two or three men working together. He pays them so much per board foot for the logs they deliver to agreed-upon roadside loading points.

Logging today is a study in contrasts—modern equipment being used side-by-side with methods time-tested for more than a century. The powered chain-saw has replaced the two-man cross-cut, but it’s hard to imagine anything supplanting the peavey, the basic tool by which the skilled logger can roll, wedge, halt, pry, lift and place the heavy logs. And while a crawler tractor may better a team of horses in bobbing loads, the skidding horse probably will always be around.

The logging operations pictured here show some of the work on the slopes of Mt. Mansfield and the neighboring Worcester Range. The men were hired by Craig O. Burt of Stowe to supply the long-established C. E. & F. O. Burt mill.
Delford Smith has sized up his tree and made his notched cut. Now (below) his chain saw makes a higher, back-side cut away from the line of fall. Timber! Smith (at left) already knows where the tree will hit. He's alert to dodge possible flying debris. At right Sydney and Walter Champney use peaveys to roll logs onto the bob sled.
Vermont’s annual cut of timber runs about 340 million board feet, an increasing figure which now equals the crop taken in the heyday of big logging. Measured in foot-wide boards laid end-to-end this would make more than two-and-a-half laps around the world.

But this doesn’t mean Vermont’s forests are being denuded. Eighty years ago only 44 percent of Vermont was woodland and now the figure is 63 percent. Ultimately as poor and abandoned farm land reverts probably 73 percent of Vermont will be timberland.
Left: Dave Smith heads down the mountain with a load of logs. Later (at right) he finishes his lunch with coffee and a smoke. Down on the road (below) the men work late into the short, winter afternoon making up a truck-load of logs for the sawmill.
Marlboro—the Serkin Fantasia on a Theme by Busch

"This is the place for musicians who do not need the spotlight to perform at their best" Rudolf Serkin explained as he sat with me on a sawed-off stump in a clearing high in the Green Mountains. Around him were the near-dozen white clapboard buildings of Marlboro College in its summer manifestation as the Marlboro School of Music, a seat of learning which neither seasonal infusions of chamber music nor steady feedings of the liberal arts will ever transform into anything more academic-looking than the barnyard of the dairy farm.

It was this twelve years ago when a band of impulsive Vermonters decided to designate it a campus. On concert circuits of the world, 54-year old Rudolf Serkin is known as a phenomenal pianist who is also a masterful musician—two entirely separate attainments, in that the best of piano playing requires only finger skill and aesthetic discernment while eminence for musicianship derives from true erudition at the service of a gifted intellect.

A part-time farmer in Guilford, Serkin is known throughout Vermont to be the Marlboro school's director in the summer. But to get him to assent precisely to this is to drive him to a double-edged denial of it. Serkin does not regard Marlboro as a school but as a serious musicians' retreat for intensive study, and he does not allow that he is vested with any special authority to determine the lines the study will follow, for he regards his students and teachers as citizens in a Republic of Equals. Chamber music is, of course, the only subject studied there and the atmosphere around the campus bristles with the valid though aristocratic thesis that most other music is for large crowds of smaller spirits. For the most part the republicans on the campus are the fledgling or well-scarred professionals who play for hire to great packs of people the rest of the year. Even Serkin does that. But in the summer they repair to the bracing heights of Marlboro where they play for themselves most of the time, and only occasionally for tiny audiences who negotiate the Molly Stark Trail and rattle down rutty side roads to attend unadvertised concerts whose usually esoteric programs are decided on a few hours before the performances. I had come for the performance that August afternoon last summer, and at it Serkin showed that he does not need the spotlight to perform at his best.

Brahms' Liebeslieder Waltzes, a catalogue of lovers' complaints forming a bitter-sweet song cycle, were sung by a mixed foursome accompanied by the four-hand piano team of Leon Fleisher and Rudolf Serkin. To say that the singing was excellent but insufficient is the necessary setting for the argument that the piano playing was subdued throughout but essentially overwhelming. With Fleisher at the upper registers of the instrument and Serkin at the more-concealed down-stage position, the two pianists wrested singing of a sublime order from an instrument theoretically incapable of sustained song. In the mimeographed programs distributed to the audience, neither pianist was listed as assisting in the Liebeslieder, and when the pair headed off-stage behind the singers Serkin was wearing the deferential aspect of a hireling whose job might have been to serve as page-turner for Fleisher.

Before the Brahms, Fleisher opened the afternoon's program playing Leon Kirchner's satanically difficult Sonata (1948), and the concert closed with a sizeable segment of the Marlboro student body assembled into a chamber orchestra to play Mozart's Symphonie Concertante in E Flat Major. Scattered through the ensemble, and seldom in the first chair positions, were a near-dozen string players with considerable reputations as solo recitalists. All of them, like Serkin, were keeping well out of the spotlight and performing at their very best.

"For some who come here" Serkin told me, "it is this place that makes the rest of the year endurable." Serkin is a shy man always, and particularly poor at producing self-serving explanations of what the restorative haven he keeps in the mountains actually does for those who come to it. His students are better at that. "He doesn't talk much about how to play a piece" one of them told me, "and most of the time all of us are so busy that we seldom get to hear him play. What he has done though, it seems to me, is get this place loaded with the idea that audiences and conductors and union scale and all that business gets in the way of music. This is one place I get to shuck that nonsense I suffer with the rest of the year and find out what a fantastically joyful thing just playing music can be when I have nothing in
mind but playing the music. Does that make any sense?" It did, and another hardly professional tried putting it somewhat differently. "Serkin loves music so much that around here people are ashamed to read through a piece casually with the intention of bearing down on it later on, or at concerts. We see Serkin put as much into his practice as a lot of professionals ordinarily put into their performances, and after being around here a while I'm beginning to do the same thing. I hardly know myself anymore."

This concept that music has meaningfulness apart from public performances permeates the Marlboro studios and rehearsal halls in a way that sets the place apart from any summer music activity I have encountered. Other summer music schools aim everything at the performances for paying customers. This one aims at the improvement of the musicians, and the audiences who get a chance to look in on this rehabilitory rite go away edified. Music-making did not start at Marlboro quite the way it ended up. "We began here ten years ago giving faculty concerts," Serkin said, "but then the students became so good that they took over." Since then the dividing line between the Marlboro teaching staff and its student body has been a diffuse one, and there were moments in my talks with Serkin when I had the fleeting impression that the pianist most other pianists regard as "the master" regarded himself as the school's sole student and the other ninety musicians on the premises as his teachers. The locale perhaps induces that receptive stance in him, for Serkin regarded Adolf Busch, the violinist who lived in nearby Guilford and who died eight years ago, with the same tutorial reverence as dozens of superb young American musicians regard Serkin. When he first met Busch in Vienna in 1920 Serkin was seventeen. The pair played Beethoven sonatas together in European recitals, and fled together from Germany in 1933 to settle in Switzerland, where Serkin married Busch's daughter Irene in 1935. In the late Thirties the Busch-Serkin troupe settled in the U. S. and ultimately in the Vermont hills around Marlboro. In addition to its principals there were Busch's cello-playing brother Herman, the flutist Marcel Moyse with his son Louis and Blanche Moyse and a steady succession of beleaguered European emigres who depended on the Buschs to provide political asylum, square meals and chamber music. It was in this setting that the pianist first savored the pleasures of a community of musicians, and in a very real sense the Marlboro school is the result—a Serkin fantasia on a theme by Adolf Busch.

The three Moyse are there yet as part of the teaching staff which at times includes Alexander Schneider, the Budapest Quartet violinist, pianists Eugene Istomin, Claude Frank, Jacob Laetiner and Leon Fleisher, occasionally violinist Isaac Stern, and last summer Pablo Casals the cellist, who said on leaving Marlboro, "I came here expecting a great deal but I did not expect to find a temple of music."

The week-end I came there, not as disposed to worship as when I left, there were questions and suggestions in the air about what performances the musicians should make permanent in the Columbia recording sessions planned for the following week, the last of the summer session. Here the rude economies of the music business intruded, for the cost of maintaining the school is large, and the income from tuition is insufficient to the point of being trifling. The inclination to record the less than recondite presents itself, because the royalties from the record sales help pay off the school's annual debt. The rest of the money, and by far the larger part, comes from an array of benefactors, with Serkin himself prominent among them. Yet debt, like art, endures there. To enlarge the income at Marlboro by enlarging the Festival aspects of the school would diminish its excellence. Chamber music can make its points only in chamber-sized enclosures, not in Tanglewood-sized sheds. And if the school's musicians are ever oriented towards performances before the public, instead of toward studies for their own fulfillment as artists, Vermont will gain a tourist lure but desecrate the temple Casals found.

Joseph Roddy.

Mr. Roddy has been music editor of Life for the past five years, before that being general assignment editor and music editor for Look. He has done editorial work for the Encyclopedia Britannica and has been a contributor to The New Yorker, High Fidelity, Horizon and McCall's. He lists himself as 38, married, father of two and "an ambitious but incompetent amateur pianist and cellist."

Photographs by Clemens Kalischer.

Pablo Casals holds a class at the Marlboro Music School
VERMONTERS are accustomed to entertaining visitors but the summer of 1962 will require an unprecedented redressing up—at Button Bay, an undeveloped state park on Lake Champlain. The Girl Scouts are coming for their National Round-up, ten-thousand of them.

A new member of Vermont’s extensive mineral product field is pink granite, soon to be taken from the Rock of Ages quarry near East Haven, in northeastern Vermont. Like the special white granite quarried in Bethel this will be used for building stone.

Tremendous crops of seeds yielded last summer by elm trees all over the state set local botanists to conjecturing the causes. Bearing in mind the incursions of Dutch Elm disease they recalled nature’s habit of providing as a dying effort prolific yields. But healthy young elms, too, joined in the great 1960 seed crop.

The best guess is that the mild spring caused it. There were no late frosts to curb the crop while the elms were blossoming. Some trees put forth such great clusters of seeds that their foliage was sparse, and this may have weakened a few trees. The main outcome of the crop is that elm seedlings by the millions are rooted everywhere. And hundreds of Vermonters still are trying to unplug their seed-packed eaves troughs.

Amid the many clubs-of-the-month, the Postboy notes with pleasure the Vermont Harvest Club in Pittsford. Seasonally members receive such Vermont specialties as handcrafts, maple products, honey, apple syrup, candles and fruits.

One of the country’s youngest entrepreneurs is Howard Zoufaly, just out of high school, who operates a worldwide orchid business in his East Arlington back yard. Howard keeps his backyard greenhouse bulged with some 8,500 plants, and between times edits and publishes World Wide Orchid News. According to John Ryan of Bennington, our reporter, Howard finds orchids favor a cool climate, are easier to grow in Vermont than in such places as Florida and California.

Mystery Picture

NUMBER 16

The first correct location of this Vermont hostelry, filmed by Geoffrey Orton, postmarked after midnight November 21st, will receive one of our special prizes.

Our Autumn issue Mystery Picture, a view from Rte. 111 in Morgan of Lake Seymour, was first identified by Bernard F. Oppelt of Hartford, Conn.
IT ALL STARTED with one six-unit antique candle mold and a couple of Dorothy Canfield Fisher’s books about Vermont. The mold provided the key to an unusual business and the books helped Barbara and Thomas Weakley to decide that Vermont was the place to start it.

Tom Weakley was a writer for a business magazine—his wife a commercial artist. Neither of them knew the first thing about the art of making candles. The mold had been purchased on a honeymoon trip to Vermont and while in the city they had experimented with hand pouring their own candles. For something which had been a household essential in colonial times, there was surprisingly little information available about the waxes and techniques used. Libraries were of little help and the modern commercial candle manufacturers were reluctant to share any trade secrets with these amateurs. This was probably fortunate, for their final product is a far cry from the machine-made commercial product in a great many ways.

Armed with a “do-it-yourself” article they managed to pour a few plain white candles—and the germ of an idea was born. Why not resurrect the traditional candle-making techniques on a commercial basis and produce authentic, early American candles?

Obviously the city wasn’t able to provide the right atmosphere for this kind of project. Mrs. Fisher’s books gave the answer. “Made in Vermont” had the right sound. They found their spot on a hillside overlooking Mt. Equinox in Sunderland, not far from Mrs. Fisher’s home in Arlington. Here, Highland Candles got its start.

There were still technical problems to be solved. Some of the waxes they tried didn’t work properly and had to be discarded. Color was easy, though, with the bayberry and beeswax candles. They have their own distinctive colors. But as the Weakleys expanded their line to in-
A few of the unusual in the Weakley’s collection of more than eighty antique candle moulds. Single mould in front is a rare find today.

Cakes of beeswax melt, as kettle of bayberry waits at left.

elude other colors, they ran into difficulties with the dyes. Most annoying were combinations which looked fine when mixed, but changed when added to the wax. Uniformity of color is essential in the finished candles, and Barbara’s artistic eye is back-stopped by accurate records and precision scales for exact weighing of the dyes.

The molds are problems in themselves. After a hundred years or more they begin to show the marks of time. The seams and dents turn out to be assets, contributing to the authentic appearance of the candles. But time also produces leaks, and pouring sessions sometimes are disrupted by a mold spewing molten wax all over the place.

The Weakley’s collection has grown from one to more than eighty molds and they are adding as fast as they can locate others. It is often these new acquisitions which provide the most spectacular pouring sessions.

The old candle mold and the books, which brought the Weakleys to Vermont, in 1959 and again in 1960 brought them two of their most prized possessions, the Green Ribbon Award. This is Vermont’s highest honor for excellence in craftsmanship.
Moulds must be filled quickly while molten wax is at exact temperature. A constant fear is the century-old moulds may spring a leak.

Some hardened candles pop out easily but those in dented moulds test the muscles. Customers like the dents.
These enchantments are medicinal, they sober and heal us. These are plain pleasures, kindly and native to us.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON