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BOOK REVIEWS



Meanings of Maple: An Ethnography of Sugaring.

By Michael A. Lange (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2018, pp. ix, 191, \$69.95; paper, \$27.95).

Michael Lange's *Meanings of Maple* is an ethnography of the production of maple syrup. It is a cultural journey that traces the connections between identity, place, and practice in Vermont. It is also an exploration of some of the most important themes in nature-culture theory through a relatively humble agricultural product from a small state. As he explains in the book's introduction, Lange aimed to use maple as a means to "delve into the many and varied ways that humans make meaning with the objects and processes in their lives" (p. xv). Yet Lange achieves more than that, as the book also demonstrates how a place-based narrative is created, travels beyond its original borders, and comes to define both a place and its residents. For readers interested in the diverse environmental and social values present in contemporary rural Vermont, this book will offer some beautiful and penetrating insights. However, historians may be disappointed that Lange's research is not historical. The theoretical conclusions Lange produced would have been richer if he had developed them from the social history of sugaring, scholarship on the rise of agriculture-based tourism, and Vermont's environmental history. That said, Lange is clear that his work is squarely centered on the contemporary meanings of maple.

Because Lange treats multiple meanings of maple, the book's scope is quite broad. In fewer than two hundred pages, he considers maple from economic, culinary, geographic, ecological, agricultural, and heritage perspectives. Treating each in a separate chapter, Lange puts sugarmaking practices in dialogue with the associated (mainly anthropological) theory in each field. For example: In the economics chapter the reader is intro-

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duced to some of the anthropological literature on exchange value; in the culinary chapter food anthropologists explain foodie culture; and in the ecological chapter Lange uses the perspectives of leading political ecologists and science studies scholars to frame how sugarmakers interact with forests. Many readers, myself included, will admire Lange's extensive engagement with these many perspectives. However, in order to deal with each category of meaning in turn, Lange sometimes repeats descriptions of the processes involved in sugaring: checking lines, running the reverse osmosis machine and vacuum pumps, boiling, and marketing. Perhaps the book could have begun with a short primer on how sugaring is conducted, placing the readers amidst the din of noisy motors and the warm steam coming off the evaporator, and giving them the feel for ducking under saplines as they make their way up a slippery hillside. Lange has a knack for evoking a sense of place that would make this easy work for him. Subsequent chapters could have drawn out the finer points of the meaning that is produced from that sugaring—as an artisanal product, a landscape that is stewarded, and an economic commodity.

As noted, a history of sugaring and indigenous sugaring practices is absent from Lange's research. While he acknowledges that indigenous peoples shaped the landscape of what came to be Vermont for specific purposes, and that they shared sugaring practices with settlers, Lange's story of the meaning of maple begins with settler farmers. Contemporary Abenaki sugarmakers might have other meanings to add to this narrative. Scholarship on New England environmental histories and the story of Vermont's intentional marketing of itself as a pastoral vacationland would have added important evidence for Lange's assertions about the connections between farming landscapes, food products, and cultural identity.

I am grateful to Lange for paying close attention to the production of maple syrup as an economic and material activity that creates emotional attachment to place. Lange carefully skirts tropes of the rural ideal and staunchly refuses to present sugaring as a quaint activity that is a remnant of the past. He explains that sugarmakers regard making syrup primarily as an economic activity that relies on global markets and emerging technologies and is vulnerable to climate change. Lange forces readers to look at modern sugaring with clear eyes. Yet while he is careful to avoid romanticizing sugaring, he demonstrates a deep respect for the livelihoods and landscapes made possible by the work of sugarmakers. His scholarship reveals to us how contemporary sugarmaking contributes to shared meanings about our state:

Externally, maple acts as a vehicle for the state's identity. Internally, it serves the same purpose, or nearly the same purpose, as maple is used by Vermonters to communicate to and among themselves who they are (p. 169).

Indeed, *Meanings of Maple* encourages readers to contemplate how following a rural practice can open up a world of meaning.

CHERYL MORSE

Cheryl Morse is an Associate Professor of Geography and a member of the Environmental Program and the Food Systems Graduate Program at the University of Vermont. She has published on the close connections between landscape, place, and identity among Vermonters.

Unshackling America: How the War of 1812 Truly Ended the American Revolution

By Willard Sterne Randall (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2018, pp. 458, paper, \$29.99).

This latest book by Willard Sterne Randall, professor of history at Champlain College, is an argument for the importance of the War of 1812 in the establishment of the United States as a truly independent nation, and as a significant player on the world stage. Randall's mission is to give readers a new perspective on the process by which America acquired what he sees as full political and economic independence from Great Britain. The book is subtitled "How the War of 1812 Truly Ended the American Revolution," and its dust jacket proposes that it will challenge "the persistent fallacy that Americans fought two separate wars of independence." Randall instead sets out to argue that the Revolution and War of 1812 constituted a single "unrelenting struggle" for economic and political independence from Britain, after the Revolution produced only "partial political autonomy" and even less economic independence.

To accomplish this, Randall begins the book by recounting the colonial crises of the 1760s and 1770s, culminating in the start of the Revolution. There follows a brief survey of the Revolution in a chapter titled "For Cutting Off Our Trade." Randall then jumps ahead to an overview of the personal and party rivalries of the Washington, Adams, and Jefferson administrations, with special emphasis on trade, treaties, and issues surrounding the impressment of sailors. Randall's

account of the War of 1812 occupies the final two thirds of the book, with the action switching back and forth between sections on the war on the coast, on the ocean, and in Trans-Appalachia. In the interior of the continent Randall focuses almost wholly on action around the Great Lakes.

In terms of fulfilling Randall's ambitious goal of giving a new perspective on the War of 1812, the book is at its strongest when it directly addresses issues related to the American economy in general, and more specifically to transatlantic trade. His portrayal of economic issues stretching from the colonial crises of the 1760s to the terms of the Treaty of Ghent, when taken together, paint a portrait of a nation battling to establish a sense of itself as free of undue outside intervention in its decision making. The eventual benefits of that status were as much ideological, about the growth of Americans' pride in their nation, as they were practical. What emerged at the conclusion of the War of 1812 was, Randall asserts, a nation that had passed through "a defining moment" that established it as "a major maritime power" and a "sovereign nation with worldwide commercial networks" (p. 406). Randall's conclusion is that the War of 1812 should be understood to be "the War of American Economic Independence, the last chapter of the American Revolution" (p. 406).

The book is written in a breezy, enjoyable tone; Randall is a very good storyteller. Academic historians might find new details in his treatment of such familiar topics as attacks on Federalists by American Anglophobes, the *Chesapeake* affair, and the creation of Tecumseh's Native American tribal alliance. The book will especially appeal to those looking for an entry point into the origins and course of the War of 1812. Readers who approach the book primarily with an interest in Vermont history might find the broader context given events such as the *Black Snake* Affair and the Battle of Plattsburgh enlightening. The Jefferson administration's exasperation at Vermonters' refusal to comply with the Enforcement Act of 1809 makes a good argument for Vermont's centrality to history during this period.

As readable as it is, *Unshackling America* is burdened at times by a rather greater level of detail given to certain topics than seems necessary. There is no doubt that Randall would disagree with that assessment and believe there is not one word in the book that is not necessary to making its argument; but the length given topics such as the Battle of Bunker Hill and military strategy during the War of 1812 distracts the reader from his main thesis. The detail given to, for example, specific naval battles, makes *Unshackling America* read in stretches as more of a

general history of the War of 1812 than an argument about the establishment of American economic independence. The stories are told well, though, and Randall clearly relishes telling them.

It is not particularly provocative to say that the War of 1812 was a pivotal moment in the history of the United States, or in the history of Vermont, for that matter. But there is certainly room for *Unshackling America*, a book that focuses on the economic dimensions of the war while being written in a way that will appeal to a broad audience.

PAUL SEARLS

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*A Campaign of Giants: The Battle for Petersburg.
Volume 1: From the Crossing of the James to the
Crater*

By A. Wilson Greene (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018, pp. 720, cloth, \$45.00).

It is remarkable that this centennial year of the ending of the First World War should see the beginning of the release of a hoped-for three-volume series on the nearly ten-months-long series of engagements collectively known as the Battle of Petersburg that in many ways foreshadowed the grim trench warfare of the Great War. For those ten long months from June 1864 to April 1865, Union and Confederate soldiers dug as much as they fought, living in the blazing heat, the damp cold, gritty dust, and thick mud that characterizes Southern Virginia. It was, as Dr. John Herbert Claiborne remarks, a “most disagreeable human habitation” for soldiers and civilians alike (p. 324). A. Wilson Greene masterfully blends a traditional operational history focused on the decisions and actions of commanders at both the operational and tactical level with a social history that explores how the campaign affected and was affected by common soldiers and civilians.

The Petersburg Campaign saw the largest concentration of African American soldiers during the Civil War. These regiments were primarily in the Army of the James under Major General Benjamin Butler in the X and XVIII Corps; later in 1864, the Colored Troops Regiments were consolidated in the XXV Corps. Greene deals in some detail with the black soldiers themselves, as well as with the perceptions of them by

their white compatriots in the Union Army, their opponents in the Confederate Army, and Southern civilians. The perceptions Greene describes cover the gamut from the deeply racist from both Northerner and Southerner, to grudging respect by other compatriots and opponents, to open admiration from some they fought with.

A Campaign of Giants may come as something of a disappointment to those seeking a detailed account of the 1st Vermont Brigade's contributions, at least in this first volume of the trilogy. Greene mentions the 1st Vermont Brigade in passing as he discusses the actions along Jerusalem Plank Road on the 22nd of June, where the 10th Vermont Volunteers were engaged in an unsuccessful effort to cut the Petersburg Railroad. The 1st Vermont Brigade itself was on the flank of Horatio G. Wright's VI Corps and was not engaged.

The following day, as Wright's VI Corps was again attempting to cut the Petersburg Railroad, the 1st Vermont Brigade was providing security for the pioneer parties who were destroying railroad tracks when William Mahone's division attacked them. Wright, perhaps still grieving the serious losses his corps had suffered at Cold Harbor, was not at his best during these engagements and did not prepare for or react well to Mahone's counterattack, and many of the soldiers of the 4th and 11th Vermont Regiments who had been pushed forward as pickets were either killed or captured when they were surrounded by Mahone's troops. Colonel Lewis Grant, commander of the Vermont Brigade, is quoted by Greene describing the attack as "one of those sad events of which I have disliked to read or think about" (p. 253). Grant was not alone in his sentiment, as Greene quotes other Vermonters who seem to have felt that the leadership, including their corps commander, may have been drunk.

The Vermont Brigade is dealt with briefly here because its contribution after the battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania Court House, and Cold Harbor were limited due to the heavy losses it suffered in those earlier battles that prevented it from making significant efforts in the early days after the crossing of the James, and because the brigade was sent north to Washington, D.C., to deal with Jubal Early's raid and would spend the next few months in the Shenandoah before returning to the trenches of Petersburg. Greene still has much of the story to tell, as this book ends with the Battle of the Crater on July 30, 1864. This reviewer is confident that before Greene's account of the campaign is over, the 1st Vermont Brigade will figure somewhat more prominently, given its role in the taking of Petersburg in April 1865.

Greene's writing is crisp and clear, and the lucid descriptions of the often-confusing engagements help the reader follow the battle with a

bird's-eye clarity. Well-done maps, that present enough detail to inform the reader without attempting to present so much as to obfuscate, contribute to Greene's account, adding to the understanding of the combat narratives. But it is when Greene is speaking of the aftermath of battle that he finds not only his own most evocative language, but also displays his gift for finding amazing quotations from the participants. Describing the aftermath of Cold Harbor, Greene writes, "That night the graves of those who had been killed two years earlier at the battle of Gaine's Mill shone, claimed Holt, 'With a phosphorescent light most spooky and weird, while on the surface of the ground, above the ghastly glimmering dead, lay thousands of dead that could not be buried'" (p. 28).

Greene's work adds a level of depth and detail to the existing literature, complementing such works as *The Last Citadel* by Noah Trudeau (2014) and *Cold Harbor to the Crater*, edited by Gary Gallagher and Caroline E. Janney (2015), by offering a thick and granular analysis and description of the campaign. Greene's long tenure with the National Park Service, as well as his service with the Association for the Preservation of Civil War sites, and most recently as the executive director of the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier and Pamplin Historical Park, has prepared him well to write the definitive account of the Siege of Petersburg. The Civil War historical community ought to be anticipating the next two volumes in this work. *A Campaign of Giants* is an excellent resource for scholars and enthusiasts alike.

JOHN T. BROOM

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Middletown Springs Historic District. National Register of Historic Places

By National Park Service and Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, Matthew Cohen, principal author, and Middletown Springs Historical Society, David P. Wright, ed. (Middletown Springs, VT: Middletown Springs Historical Society, 2017, pp. vii, 202, paper, \$75.00).

Commendably, the Middletown Springs Historical Society and its editor, David P. Wright, have compiled a superbly illustrated version of the nomination to the National Register of Historic Places prepared for the Middletown Springs Historic District in 1985 by the Ver-

mont Division for Historic Preservation and by principal author Matthew Cohen. Following completion of the nomination, original copies of which are held by both the National Park Service and the Division for Historic Preservation, the local historical society assembled three albums displaying the photographs and building descriptions drawn from the nomination. Public use of those albums during the ensuing decades has been so consistent that the archive has deteriorated, leading to the publication of this book.

Several aspects of the work are especially laudable. At the top of that list are Cohen's photographs, which capture the village's timeless quality, as only black-and-white images can. They are a credit to the photographer, then a recent graduate of the University of Vermont who had gained experience working for the Division for Historic Preservation preparing surveys of historic sites and structures in Vermont towns.

The format of the book is also carefully arranged, with large photographs of single buildings filling entire pages and the facing pages providing short essays and descriptions of the buildings. This inviting layout encourages readers to study each image thoughtfully and allows a comfortable pace for reading what amounts to an inventory of the community's historic resources. The study begins with a short description of the village accompanied by a map of the historic district, also skillfully crafted by Cohen. Chapters are then organized by street, each chapter concluding with an enlarged map of that street and a list of numbered buildings, which correspond to numbers on the map.

Especially important, the book underscores the value of state and national programs created to make the public aware of important historic resources. Far too often, such programs are vulnerable to budget cuts amid shortsighted views about the value of those initiatives. Instead, Middletown Springs has turned a bright light on those efforts and invites other communities to follow their lead by pursuing similar book projects. The potentially widespread dissemination of books drawn from National Register nominations, and in particular the outstanding photographs that typically accompany those nominations, is an exciting prospect and one for which the town's historical society deserves considerable applause.

With that goal in mind, the editors of future publications might introduce one or two improvements. Most notably, the nomination's Statement of Significance should be included. These narratives offer a concise history of the districts and illuminate themes that explain the historic importance of buildings, thereby providing valuable contexts

in which to study individual resources. Awareness of such contexts adds considerable depth to our understanding of local history. As well, editors should be alert to the narrow purpose of the written building descriptions—a very specific type of writing intended to supplement photographs and to assure that a complete record of buildings becomes part of the inventory. Although the descriptive details are valuable, careful editing can render those descriptions more readable, thus providing additional room for interesting chronicles about individual structures. Nor is there any particular reason why knowledgeable local historians should not add new information to those narratives; the original nominations remain available in government offices in the event need arises. In sum, increasing the appeal of those narratives to the reading public will in turn lead to wider dissemination of these books, to everyone's benefit. In that same vein, the source citations can be moved from the text to footnotes for historical writing, and even consolidated into single notes at the end of individual paragraphs.

A short biographical sketch of the author or authors is also appropriate. Today, Matthew Cohen is a practicing architect and professor of Architecture in the School of Design and Construction at Washington State University, where he heads the Graduate Program for Architecture. He completed advanced study in architecture at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, followed by a doctorate in architectural history at Leiden University in the Netherlands. He is also the author of *Beyond Beauty: Reexamining Architectural Proportion through the Basilicas of San Lorenzo and Santo Spirito in Florence*, which received the James Ackerman Award in the History of Architecture in 2012 and was published in 2013. Cohen credits his emergent interest in architecture and architectural history to the surveys of historic buildings in Vermont towns that he prepared after graduating from college. Sadly, funding for those surveys, which also offered valuable experience for historic preservation students during summer months and established groundwork for National Register nominations, ended almost three decades ago, and the task remains unfinished.

I can attest to the value of those surveys, as well. Thirty-five years ago, interest in architecture and historic preservation began to pull me away from my practice as a title and real property lawyer, and I spent part of the summer of 1984 surveying historic buildings in Greensboro and Greensboro Bend for Vermont's historic preservation office. I learned the skill of observing buildings that summer, and I have never regretted that choice. On the contrary, I continue to use those skills

every day and try to pass them along to the next generation of preservationists. By the way, the editor of my Greensboro surveys that summer? Matt Cohen.

ROBERT McCULLOUGH

Robert McCullough teaches in the University of Vermont's Graduate Program in Historic Preservation and writes about American landscape history. His most recent work is Old Wheelways: Traces of Bicycle History on the Land (2015).

Maple King: The Making of a Maple Syrup Empire

By Matthew M. Thomas (Vallejo, CA: Matthew M. Thomas, 2018, 167 pp., paper, \$19.95).

Maple King tells the business story of George C. Cary as he builds a maple empire in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, and beyond between 1880 and about 1930. The book is more than George Cary's story, though. Woven through it are names we know as part of the contemporary syrup empire: Highland, Maple Grove, Log Cabin, Vermont Maid. But it is almost blasphemous to pure maple syrup aficionados to link these four brands together in one sentence, or to have the last two even mentioned in a story about maple syrup from Vermont.

And so the reader is pulled into the story. But it isn't a tale that anyone looking for the quintessential Vermont maple syrup story, with picturesque images of wool-shirted families placing tin sap buckets against trees and using draft horses to pull sleighs full of sap to the sugarhouse to boil, is going to like. Monopoly power? Tobacco driving the growth of the industry? Unbridled predatory practices to gobble up other businesses? Overleveraging financing to build an empire? It's all there. This is really a book about entrepreneurship and how it relates to advancements in technology, integrated marketing communications, company mergers, and the necessary role of a business leader—all at the beginning of the twentieth century. The story bursts the bubble of the image of independent Vermonters making a living off the land, and it separates the entrepreneur from the "nontrepreneurs" who simply supplied the raw maple materials that added to Cary's maple empire.

As chapter 1 points out, Vermont's maple story didn't start with syrup, but with sugar—maple sugar. Today, maple sugar is such a luxury item that it is hard to comprehend that maple sugar is how Carey

started his empire. And that maple sugar was used by the hundreds of pounds to cure smoking tobacco is pretty hard to swallow. Add to the story that it was a case of being at the right place at the right time that started the ball rolling, and you have an unlikely beginning to “modern maple.”

Chapters 3 and 4 are mainly concerned with the growth of the maple empire. Carey might have been at the right place at the right time to begin his maple sugar business, but it was through business acumen that he started to expand. Basic principles like keeping costs down by consolidating, locating near transportation (railroad), conformity of inputs (required packaging by farmers who sold to Carey), and the building of related businesses all aided his commercial growth. Especially interesting was the growth of related businesses, even if not owned by Carey, which made St. Johnsbury a major tourist destination. There was a maple tea room, a modern maple candy facility that could be toured, and lodging. There was even a maple tea room in New York City that was a brilliant marketing idea to generate a tourist trade. Add a cross-country train filled with all that is maple—literally a travelling advertisement that reached across the country. And who knew that Carey was the first to use tubing during sugaring season to move sap efficiently? Don't forget the “infomercials” (short films shown before major motion pictures), recipe books, and finally the related product of actual maple *syrup* for the consumer market, and you have a historical case study of all the pieces necessary to grow a business.

It isn't until the final chapters, however, that the reader finds out that just as it seems “fate” helped start Cary's empire, externalities helped to end it. The stock market crash of 1929 was just that externality. The crash was the catalyst that exposed the dangerous practice of overleveraging assets and not separating family from the business. Too many loans meant not enough cash to repay when they were called in. Making oneself vulnerable by having a business linked to personal assets led to bankruptcy. And the entrance of a cheaper cane sugar alternative to maple sugar for curing tobacco led to the ultimate demise of the maple king.

Maple King will be perceived differently by readers who have some familiarity with the Vermont maple industry, those who have a romanticized perception of the industry, and those who know nothing at all about the industry. It tells the maple story from one perspective, as that is its goal. It is sometimes redundant and at other times leaves the reader asking “and then?” Overall, however, *Maple King* can be

enjoyed by people interested in Vermont business history. In fact, I will suggest it be used in the Entrepreneurship course we teach in my department in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Vermont.

JANE KOLODINSKY

Jane Kolodinsky is Professor and Chair of the Department of Community Development and Applied Economics and Director of the Center for Rural Studies at the University of Vermont.

Images of America: Hope Cemetery

By Glenn A. Knoblock (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2018, pp. 128, paper, \$21.99).

*I*mages of America is an extensive series of books that seek to capture the distinct history of a town or region through images and succinct text. To date its standard format publications include volumes dealing with the history of over forty Vermont communities. Hope Cemetery in Barre is an ideal subject to be added to this number, and historian/photographer Glenn Knoblock, who has profiled other New England cemeteries for the series, is an eminently suitable author to treat the subject. Hope and its stories are hardly typical of other New England cemeteries, however. It is a place closely tied to the history of Barre's famous granite industry and its workers, and it possesses special stature as a unique showplace, indeed a virtual museum, of national funerary art.

Hope was established in 1895 to serve a Barre community experiencing rapid growth fueled by the late-nineteenth-century prosperity of its granite production, sought widely for its fine texture and weather resistance. Beginning with random burials in 1896, in 1899 it received a master plan by civil engineer Edward P. Adams of Medford, Massachusetts, as a fashionable, park-like, landscaped cemetery with winding drives and tiered levels intended to enhance distant viewing of the monuments. It is set apart from other landscaped cemeteries of the day, however, by the grave markers that have filled it over time, seventy-five percent of which were crafted by granite workers for themselves, their family, or their friends. It became a showplace of the craft of these skilled workers, drawn from North Italy, Tuscan Carrara, Scotland, and Spain, whose creations were being shipped nationwide, but who lavished their most personal care on the memorials for their own.

The result is a material reflection of evolving American funerary fashions as well as of Barre, its ruling industry, and the artisans who worked there.

In this image-driven book, Knoblock records the individual monuments through his own photography, accompanying each with a brief descriptive text, and organizing them into thematic categories with introductory discussions. He provides an opening history of the cemetery itself and a concluding account of the granite industry in Barre, its organization and methods. Sections in between deal primarily with types and styles—religion, nature, architecture, portraiture, and modern imagery.

The descriptions of individual monuments (for which the author provides an index of family names) are laced with such considerations as changing methods and technology—handcarving with chisels and air hammers, assembly-line processes, sandblasting, porcelain portraiture, and laser cutting. They document the evolution from traditional forms and symbolism (tree stumps, classical and religious allusions, floral symbolism) to recorded likenesses, to abstract Art Deco stylishness, to highly personalized subject matter. It is the last that provides Hope with such famous monuments as its soccer ball, cello, cat, guitar, airplane, stock car, typewriter, pajama-clad couple resting against the headboard of their bed, husband envisioning his young wife in a puff of smoke, family home, RV, and oil tanker.

Woven throughout the stories and biographical details provided in the descriptions of the monuments are significant glimpses into Barre's social history. One gains insights into the immigrant population, the dynasties of stonecutters, and the families of merchants and granite shed owners. Here is evidence of social tensions, as in the famous monument to master carver Elia Corti carved by his colleagues following his murder during a dispute at the Labor Hall. A reading of dates provides a record of the tragic impact of the Spanish influenza on Barre and, even more so, of the plague of the granite workers—the silicosis that cut short the lives of the craftsmen. There is a pattern of deaths of men in their forties, leaving widows to support their families, many as keepers of rooming houses for the laborers in the sheds. Most emblematic of this tragic situation is the self-designed monument of granite artist and activist Louis Brusa, dying in the arms of his attentive wife. He died in 1937, the year that the Vermont legislature passed worker safety laws that would begin to improve conditions for the granite workers.

The monuments and stories of Hope Cemetery provide a precious window into the history of Barre. Beyond the intrinsic visual interest of the individual monuments and the record of evolving funerary tastes and idiosyncratic gestures that have made Hope a major tourist destination since the 1980s, there are insights into a complex and often poignant history that leave the reader wishing to pursue in greater depth the story of this distinctive community, the dominant industry that shaped it, and the people whom it drew to Vermont.

GLENN M. ANDRES

Glenn M. Andres is Professor Emeritus of the History of Art and Architecture at Middlebury College and co-author of Buildings of Vermont in the Buildings of the United States series (2014).

Secrets of Mount Philo: A Guide to the History of Vermont's First State Park

By Judy Chaves (Barre and Montpelier, VT: Vermont Historical Society, 2018, pp. xvii, 126, paper, \$19.95).

Secrets of Mount Philo is both a book of history and a trail guide to Mount Philo State Park, the 237-acre preserve in Charlotte from whose eponymous peak one can see Lake Champlain and the Adirondacks to the west and the Green Mountains to the east and south. *Secrets* begins with a short history of the landscape of Mt. Philo, from its possible use by prehistoric peoples and later the Abenakis, before the arrival of Europeans. In the 1780s to 1880s, Europeans would claim entitlement and go on to clear land, farm, and graze sheep on its slopes. By the mid-1880s, however, most of the area probably was deforested. The mountain, like much of the state, as Jan Albers has written in *Hands on the Land*, was “cleared and browsed down to the bone.” As uplands were abandoned by farmers for better prospects or better land, the area that was no longer used for grazing sheep, including the upper slopes of Mt. Philo, began to reforest. In the late 1800s, farmers in the area started taking in visitors to Vermont to help make ends meet, and the owners around Mt. Philo found some success in this venture. With the arrival of more and more vacationers during the 1890s and early 1900s, and the reforestation of Mt. Philo, a carriage road to the summit was built, and the owners of the Smith-Jones farm at the base of Mt. Philo developed it into the Mt. Philo Inn.

Eventually, James and Frances Humphreys, visitors to the Mt. Philo Inn, bought much of the land of Mt. Philo, built a home there, and encouraged its use by the public. After James's death, Frances, in keeping with the spirit of the time, donated the land to the state of Vermont in 1924. It became "'a state forest park,' the first state-owned land in Vermont with public recreation as its primary purpose" (p. 20).

After the state of Vermont acquired the land, it planted thousands of seedlings in the park between 1925 and 1930, apparently with the hope of harvesting the trees later in the century. By 1930 the mountain itself had regained much of its forest. In addition, from 1933 to 1938 the Civilian Conservation Corps completed numerous projects throughout the park, all of which resulted in much of the building and landscape that we see today.

I had no idea that Mt. Philo was such a popular destination, but apparently, with its short, easy ascent and location near the most populated area of the state, it is one of the most visited state parks in Vermont. For these visitors the 40-page section of the book titled "Guide to the Historic Sites," and a foldout map on the last page of the volume, should prove useful. In it, Judy Chaves describes each area of the park in detail and includes information about its construction and other historical aspects, as well as notes on accessibility. Often there is a photo of the area or building in question, usually reproduced from an old postcard in the University of Vermont Special Collections. Each area mentioned is also coded and located on the map.

The final chapter, "A Brief Guide to the Natural Landscape," is a quick summary of the geology, vegetation, and wildlife of the park. The Appendix, a grand affair of 30 pages, offers reprints of various early twentieth-century documents, including a brochure advertising the Mt. Philo Inn, several articles from the *The Vermonter*, and the 1924 deed granting Mt. Philo to the state of Vermont. Two great additions to the volume are its large collection of black-and-white historic photographs of the park, as well as some very bad yet charming poems written about the park by Frances Humphreys.

What I find most interesting about this history is that the park seems to reflect, in its many stages, the various ways Vermonters have engaged with and thought about the land during the last two centuries. This story likely is one familiar to most Vermont historians but not to most hikers or walkers of Mt. Philo. Thus, the book offers us a way into this history through our love of hiking this landscape. Although I've hiked the state of Vermont north and south, I've never hiked Mt. Philo; it's one of those destinations that seems to violate my general rule that a hike should take longer than

the ride to the trailhead. *Secrets of Mount Philo*, however, will no doubt send me over there this spring, book in hand, to experience some of the historical places described by Judy Chaves.

KATHRYN GOHL

Kathryn Gohl is a retired book editor who hikes throughout Vermont and beyond.

Red Scare in the Green Mountains: Vermont in the McCarthy Era, 1946-1960

By Rick Winston (Rootstock Publishing, 2018, pp. xxv, 156, paper, \$16.95).

In our current era of fierce partisanship and threats to a free press, individual liberties, and civility in public life, Rick Winston has done an important public service by revisiting a dark (and relevant) chapter in American history. While Winston acknowledges that Vermont was spared the most egregious excesses of the McCarthy era, he vividly demonstrates that the Green Mountain state was not inoculated from suspicions about loyalties, surveillance of citizens, and harm inflicted on individuals with unpopular political beliefs.

Red Scare in the Green Mountains focuses on eight stories as it chronicles Vermont's experience with McCarthyism. As the book's overview, written by the late Richard O. Hathaway, points out, the junior senator from Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, was only the most visible champion of virulent anti-communism. He was neither its generative source (it predated McCarthy's rise to prominence in 1950) nor its most damaging instrument (most likely, the Federal Bureau of Investigation). In this history, Winston features Congressman Charles Plumley of Northfield as one of Vermont's first postwar anti-Red crusaders. He shows how Plumley, a Republican, and his allies, particularly in the press, exploited unfounded claims of the un-American tendencies of his opponent Andrew Nuquist in the 1946 Republican congressional primary. Nuquist, a political science professor at the University of Vermont, was a progressive Republican who only reluctantly ran because he and other Vermonters thought that the state deserved a better-informed congressman who would attend more fully to the responsibilities connected with the office. Dogged by claims that he was a Communist sympathizer, Nuquist was defeated handily by Plumley.

And so, even before Joe McCarthy starting pursuing Communists, Vermonters were warned of a pervasive Communist menace. The sub-

sequent chapters of Winston's book (with one exception) move chronologically until 1960, each highlighting a dimension of the Red Scare as it played out in the state. Winston covers the Vermont response to the controversial presidential campaign of Henry Wallace, who broke from the Democratic Party to run under the banner of the Progressive Party in 1948. He then details the national scrutiny surrounding the sale of a share of a farm in 1950 by Owen Lattimore, a noted expert on Asian affairs who found himself in the crosshairs of McCarthy, to Ordway Southard, who was a Communist; the shameful firing in 1953 of Professor Alex Novikoff from the University of Vermont because of his unwillingness to name names of his associates in Communist circles twenty years earlier; and the trials faced by members of the Hinton family of Putney for their embrace of Maoist China.

These crisply written chapters unfold as dramatic stories illuminating the terms of life in these anxious years, and they appropriately summon outrage at the damage done to individuals and to a free society. Yet another theme runs throughout the book, especially in the second half. Winston's study reveals that McCarthyism did not run unchecked in Vermont. Winston stresses the efforts of Nuquist and his supporters to defeat Congressman Plumley and those of Professor Arnold Schein to stand by Novikoff. He also chronicles the well-known story of Ralph Flanders, a Republican U.S. senator from Springfield, who was so disgusted by McCarthy's methods that he publicly denounced his colleague in early 1954 and then introduced a motion in the Senate to censure him. In his final chapter, Winston shows how in 1958 William Meyer, running as a liberal internationalist Democrat, won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, thus breaking the Republican Party's century-old domination of statewide elections.

Perhaps Winston's most significant contribution is his assessment of the performance of the Vermont press in this era. A number of leading newspapers, including William Loeb's *Burlington Daily News*, fanned suspicions of radical plots; but other papers, notably the *Rutland Herald* (Robert Mitchell, publisher and editor) and the *White River Valley Herald* (John Drysdale, publisher and editor; now the *Herald of Randolph*), called for the public to keep their heads. Meanwhile, the editor of the *Swanton Courier*, Bernard "Bun" O'Shea, aggressively challenged the anti-communist crowd. The heralding of the resistance to McCarthyism is the direct product of Winston's goal of crafting a usable history.

Winston's study is clearly the product of a labor of love. He first began exploring this subject as a co-organizer of a 1988 conference on "Vermont in the McCarthy Era," presented by Vermont College of Norwich University and the Vermont Historical Society. He has writ-

ten a readable, accessible history, enhanced by a helpful chronology placing Vermont developments within a national context, ample illustrations, and a number of inserts highlighting stories and individuals not fully covered in the main text. One of the book's most suggestive chapters explores the differing paths of McCarthyism in Vermont and New Hampshire. Because of a number of distinguishing factors, zealous anti-communists in New Hampshire, Winston argues, did what they were unable to do in Vermont—transform the New Hampshire state government into an instrument of repression. As a result, the Red Scare did not leave as deep an imprint in Vermont.

Winston notes that his is not a “definitive” history of this era (p. 142), and his book invites researchers to excavate even more stories about the Red Scare in Vermont. Future studies of McCarthyism in the Green Mountain State will want to move beyond Winston's narrative approach and follow the more analytic disposition of his Vermont and New Hampshire comparison. Which Vermonters, for instance, were more likely to fear Communist influence? Here Martin Trow's studies of the opinions of Bennington residents in the mid-1950s still remain a good starting place. And it would be useful to know more about how specific sectors of society—beyond the press—responded to anti-communist warnings. What were the stances of specific religious denominations and of the various units in organized labor? Answering these kinds of questions will enable researchers of the Vermont story to more fully engage the leading historiographical debates about McCarthyism and, ultimately, to determine whether the anti-Communist crusade fundamentally redirected America's (and Vermont's) trajectory.

JAMES RALPH

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How to Weed Your Attic: Getting Rid of Junk without Destroying History

By Elizabeth Dow and Lucinda B. Cockrell (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018, pp. xv, 133, cloth, \$32.00; ebook, \$30.00).

As a museum curator some of my best and worst days involved offering for donations. Usually these gifts represented amazing generosity on the part of an individual or family. They were entrusting their cherished documents or artifacts, sometimes carefully preserved

by them for generations, to my institution. The best-day scenario was when the donation had an impeccable history or provenance, was in great condition, met with all of the museum's collections policies, and fit perfectly into the collections plan. The worst day was when the donation came with a story that couldn't be documented or didn't meet some other requirement of the museum's collections policy and therefore couldn't be accepted. Sometimes the donor understood but was clearly heartbroken at the rejection. Other times they were angry that I wouldn't take their word (or the word of their long-dead grandmother) that their story was true. Either case was not a fun experience for either party. Most offers of donations fell somewhere in between. Elizabeth Dow and Lucinda P. Cockrell's book, *How to Weed Your Attic*, tries to help donors through the process of evaluating, organizing, and caring for their family collections and then possibly offering them to a museum or archive.

One can only hope that readers will follow the writers' recommendations in the preface about how to read their book. They make it clear that this isn't a book to be read from beginning to end, but one to be used as a guide depending on one's needs. Assuming, therefore, that readers will not read everything in the book, the authors repeat important information in the middle reference chapters about specific types of collections.

This book will be most useful to families that have inherited a large household collection and are faced with the prodigious task of organizing and deciding what to do with it. It provides an overview of what to consider historically when evaluating various papers and objects. The highlighted examples used throughout the book will aid the reader's understanding while providing interesting historical stories. If the reader wants more information, there are useful annotated resources given at the end of some chapters.

In chapter 9 the authors detail the steps potential donors need to take to give items to a museum or archive. Here they provide a service to curators and archivists by explaining to donors the information museums and archives need before they can accept a donation. They give detailed lists to readers about how to describe their collections. Any curator or archivist would be thrilled to be offered a collection with that much documentation. I do fear, though, that someone taking on organizing a family collection will become overwhelmed by these lists even though the authors do indicate that they should just try to do their best. I wish the authors had indicated that curators and archivists are more flexible and understanding about how much information a family can provide. Again the specific examples provided in the text will help families understand and provide a context for what informa-

tion institutions need. The chapter continues with other steps to take when making a donation, such as how to deal with appraisals, taxes, and shipping. I especially like the details given in Step 2 about how to look for an institution and what questions will be asked, and questions the donor should think about and ask. Most valuable, in my opinion, is the caveat about checking on the long-term stability of an institution. Donors want to make sure that their family's collection will be preserved and made accessible in the future.

In addition to people trying to organize family collections, another group that will find this book a useful reference tool are local historical societies run by volunteers. It will help them think through their own collections policies and assist them in developing questions to ask before they accept donations.

The authors are to be commended for their effort in trying to help families organize and preserve family history and identifying what steps they need to take to be a successful donor.

JACQUELINE CALDER

Jacqueline Calder was curator of the Vermont Historical Society from 1990 – 2016.