



# Patent Medicines

*A unregulated market in the 1800s briefly spelled success in Vermont for makers of all kinds of outlandish cure-alls.*

AT THE END OF THE CIVIL WAR, THE UNITED States was ready for economic and physiological healing. Several Vermonters stepped into the postwar financial and health care vacuum, selling healing elixirs to their fellow countrymen. The names Paine, Wells, Greene, Smith, and Kendall became well known across the land as cases of patent medicines were shipped across the country to alleviate people's ailments and to create fortunes for their producers.

The term "patent medicine" had its origins in the late 17th century when European monarchs issued "letters patent"

granting certain rights to individuals or companies, including the right to use royal endorsements in the marketing of medicines that the royals found beneficial. In this country, the term is generally applied to a wide array of elixirs, nostrum, salves, liniments, and tonics advertised as having broadly beneficial and often extraordinary health benefits along with "guarantees" of their effectiveness.

The formulations of these proprietary medicines were carefully guarded secrets but they often included roots, herbs, water, alcohol, and opiates; some had positive effects but many were dangerous and some produced addictions. The unbridled patent medicine marketplace was reined in by the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906, but before that date many patent medicine companies achieved notable successes in the Green Mountain State.

In Vermont, one of the early, successful patent medicine enterprises was founded in 1855 by druggist John M. Henry of Waterbury. He advertised his product, "Henry's Vermont Liniment," as "The Best Pain Killer in the World." He warranted its use for "rheumatism, inflammation, cramps, sprains, bruises, cuts, burns, flesh wounds, spasms, toothache, sudden coughs, colds, bowel complaints, dysentery, etc."

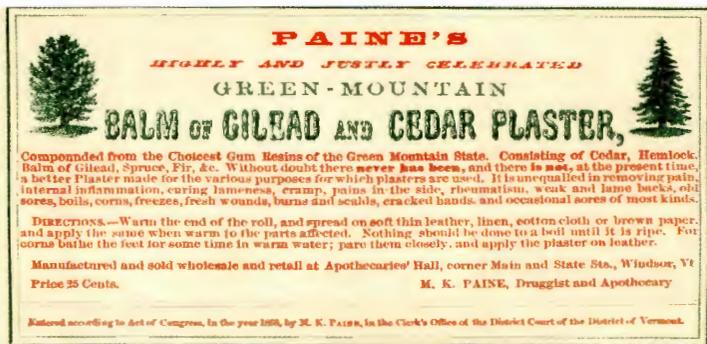
When John's son, William Wirt Henry, returned to his hometown following the Civil War, he rejoined his father's company, Henry & Company. They soon brought into the company Waterbury native and much-decorated Civil War hero William Wells. Both veterans began simultaneous political careers in Waterbury and continued them in Burlington after the company moved there in 1868.

Henry & Company went through several splits with one of its offspring, Wells, Richardson & Co., founded in 1872, retaining the patent medicine business. In less than two years Wells, Richardson was supplying patent medicines, dyes, and flavoring extracts to a large portion of the druggist trade in New England and northern New York. Wells, Richardson grew to an internationally recognized brand through aggressive advertising techniques. In 1874, the entrepreneurs built a large, four-story building on College Street that not only housed their manufac-



The interior of a Montpelier apothecary in the late 1800s. Druggists compounded prescriptions from basic ingredients, and some started their own medicinal companies. Old glass bottles from their stores are collectors' items today.

**PAINÉ'S**  
HIGHLY AND JUSTLY CELEBRATED  
**GREEN-MOUNTAIN**  
**BALM OF GILEAD AND CEDAR PLASTER,**

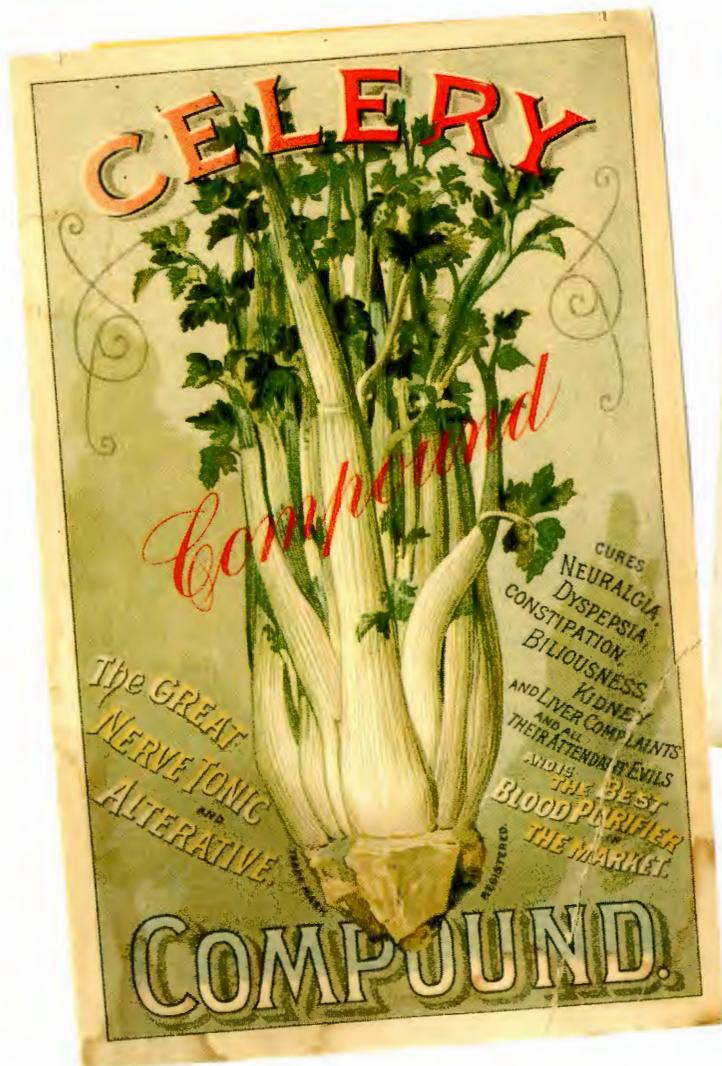


Compounded from the choicest Gum Resins of the Green Mountain State. Consisting of Cedar, Hemlock, Balm of Gilead, Spruce, Fir, &c. Without doubt there never has been, and there is not, at the present time, a better Plaster made for the various purposes for which plasters are used. It is unequalled in removing pain, internal inflammation, curing lameness, cramp, pains in the side, rheumatism, weak and lame backs, old sores, boils, corns, freckles, fresh wounds, burns and scalds, cracked hands, and occasional sores of most kinds.

**DIRECTIONS.**—Warm the end of the roll, and spread on soft thin leather, linen, cotton cloth or brown paper, and apply the same when warm to the parts affected. Nothing should be done to a boil until it is ripe. For corns bath the feet for some time in warm water; pare them closely, and apply the plaster on leather.

Manufactured and sold wholesale and retail at Apothecaries' Hall, corner Main and State Sts., Windsor, Vt.  
Price 25 Cents. M. K. PAINE, Druggist and Apothecary

Patented according to Act of Congress, in the year 1858, by M. K. PAINE, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the District of Vermont.



**CELERY**

*Compound*

CURES  
NEURALGIA,  
DYSPEPSIA,  
CONSTIPATION,  
BILIOUSNESS,  
KIDNEY  
AND LIVER COMPLAINTS  
AND ALL  
THEIR ATTENDING EVILS  
AND IS  
THE BEST  
BLOOD PURIFIER  
ON THE MARKET.

The GREAT  
NERVE TONIC  
AND  
ALTERATIVE  
COMPOUND.

turing areas but also included an extensive printing department to aid their vigorous advertising efforts. According to historian Don Fritschel, Wells, Richardson's advertising budget went from \$4,000 to more than \$500,000 in 25 years.

One of Wells, Richardson's most popular products was Paine's Celery Compound, a product that they purchased from Windsor druggist Milton K. Paine in the late 1880s. It contained celery seed, red cinchona, orange peel, coriander seed, lemon peel, hydrochloric acid, glycerin, simple syrup, water, and alcohol. In fact, when this product was analyzed after the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act, it was found to have between 18 and 21 percent alcohol!

**PRO BONO PUBLICO!**

THE  
**UNION**  
**Hair Restorative!**

THE BEST PREPARATION EVER OFFERED TO THE PUBLIC.

- To permanently restore the Hair and Beard to its natural color,
- To remove Dandruff, and all other accumulations,
- To keep the Head and Hair clean,
- To relieve all irritation of the Head and Scalp,
- To restore its natural and healthy action,
- To prevent the Hair from falling off,
- To promote its rapid growth,
- To render it soft and lustrous.

The preservation and adornment of the Hair has, in all ages, been considered of the greatest importance. Science and Art have contributed their powerful aids in improving and preserving this beautiful appendage. The toilet world is deluged, and every paper filled with the advertisements of various manufacturers of "Restorers," "Regenerators," &c. In introducing to the public my preparation for the Hair, I have but little to say, preferring to urge it upon your attention entirely upon its own merits, rather than upon the glaring testimonials of unknown persons, fully assured that if the directions which accompany each package are carefully followed, there will be none to complain.

As a Hair Dressing, the UNION HAIR RESTORATIVE has no equal. It is perfectly harmless, containing no ingredient that would be as all injurious if used separately. It is delightfully perfumed, and contains all those ingredients necessary for restoring the Hair to its natural color, and those excellent, invigorating properties that will prevent its decay, promote its growth, and render it indispensable as a HAIR DRESSING. BUY IT, TRY IT, and BE CONVINCED.

Price, only 75 Cents for a large Bottle.

Manufactured and sold, wholesale and retail, at  
**APOTHECARIES' HALL, . . . . . WINDSOR, VT.**  
M. K. PAINE, Proprietor.

For Sale by

In the "dry" state of late 1800s Vermont, it was no mere coincidence that alcohol was a key component of many popular patent medicines; Paine's Celery Compound (left) contained between 18 and 21 percent alcohol.

While M.K. Paine hit it big with his Celery Compound, he also had other products. His Union Hair Restorative was, he claimed, "the best preparation ever offered to the public." It possessed a variety of powers including restoring color to hair and beard, removing dandruff, preventing hair loss, promoting hair growth, and making hair "soft and lustrous."

Milton also advertised a product called Green Mountain Balm of Gilead and Cedar Plaster. Advertising his product with an engraving of nearby Ascutney Mountain, Milton bragged that his product "is universally acknowledged to be the best plaster ever known." It was supposed to dissipate soreness and extract "the coagulated poisonous impurities of the system." Milton, while

# IDOIT

INVARIABLY  
 CURES  
 LOSS OF  
 APPETITE,  
 ALL GONE  
 AND TIRED  
 FEELING,  
 DYSPEPSIA,  
 HABITUAL  
 COSTIVENESS,  
 JAUNDICE,  
 NAUSEA,  
 FAINTNESS  
 OF THE  
 STOMACH,  
 BILIOUSNESS,  
 BOILS,  
 PILES,  
 HEADACHE,  
 DIZZINESS,  
 GOUT,  
 NERVOUSNESS.



# IDOIT

**A Medicine of Intrinsic Value, A Powerful Blood Purifier and Renovator.**

It Cleanses and Purifies the Blood, in fact it makes

**••• PURE BLOOD. •••**

It is a True Tonic, an Active Alterative. It restores Strength and renews Vitality. It removes Torpidity of the Liver, and restores it to its normal condition, gives tone to the Stomach, and invigorates the Kidneys.

## IDOIT

Increases the appetite. relieves that awfully tired feeling, builds one up, gives them a strong, healthy animation. No person who takes IDOIT can remain long unwell. Years ago it was found that IDOIT possessed remarkable alterative properties. It was approved by our best physicians, who recommended it to their patients, who in turn mentioned it to others, and thus its fame has been heralded far and near. It restores to the Sallow, Bilious complexion, the rosy hue of health and strength.

—MANUFACTURED BY THE—

**IDOIT COMPANY,  
 ST. ALBANS, VERMONT.**

# IDOIT

Works Quickly and  
 Effectually in  
 Eradicating from  
 the Blood  
 SCROFULA AND  
 SCROFULOUS  
 HUMORS,  
 RHEUMATISM,  
 NEURALGIA,  
 SALT RHEUM,  
 CANCER,  
 ULCERS,  
 HUMORS,  
 PIMPLES ON  
 THE FACE  
 OR BODY,  
 SKIN DISEASES,  
 LIVER  
 COMPLAINT,  
 PAINS IN THE  
 SIDE, BACK,  
 OR SHOULDERS.

The notion that the company's name might be easily transposed with the term for a feeble-minded, gullible person may have escaped this patent medicine advertiser in his rush to promote the I-do-it-all product.



# Dr. B.J. Kendall Company

PROPRIETORS OF  
**Kendall's Spavin Cure**

C.L. MARSH, President  
M.P. PERLEY, Secretary  
O. MERRILL, Treas. & Manager.

Also Publishers of  
"A Treatise on the Horse and his Diseases"  
and "The Doctor at Home."

A. Horn E. Co. Baltimore

Offices:  
Enosburgh Falls, Vt.  
384 St. Paul St., Montreal.

Dictated. *Enosburgh Falls, Vt., Dec. 4th, '89.*

B.J. Kendall's company, with offices in both Enosburgh Falls, Vermont and Montreal, Quebec, Canada, was a prolific advertiser in the days before the first automobiles made their appearance.

## A Famous Vermont Remedy.

**Every Team Owner**  
should be prepared for the common ailments and hurts. Wisest plan to have on hand the approved remedy, the one everybody knows and endorses,

**Kendall's Spavin Cure**  
For Spavin, Curb, Splint, Ringbone, Cuts, Wounds, Sores, Sweeney, Galls, etc. No equal in the world.

**Cured All Ailments.**  
Albany, N. Y. 77 Park Ave., March 8, 1905.  
Dr. B. J. Kendall Co.,  
Enosburgh Falls, Vt.

Gentlemen:—Please send me a copy of your "Treatise on the Horse and his Diseases." I find your Kendall's Spavin Cure all right, I am employed by W. M. Whitney & Co., of Albany, and it has cured all ailments in our stables, Spavin, Curb, Ringbone and Hip Diseases, and other ailments.

WILLIE J. MAUGHTER,  
Coachman.

**Price \$1; 6 for \$5.** Greatest known liniment for family use. All druggists sell it. Accept no substitute. The great book, "A Treatise on the Horse," free from druggists or

**DR. B. J. KENDALL CO.,**  
Enosburgh Falls, Vermont.

## DR. B. J. KENDALL'S PECTORAL ELIXIR

FOR COUGHS, COLDS AND ALL LUNG TROUBLES

admitting in advertising that he had made money on the product, emphasized that he was offering his product as a public service.

Wells, Richardson wasn't the only large patent medicine company in the state. Another was the Dr. B.J. Kendall Company of Enosburgh Falls. Founder Burney James Kendall graduated from the University of Vermont Medical College in 1868 and developed a "spavin cure" to treat lameness in horses. He expanded his product line to include a variety of remedies for human and animal ailments. His company advertised that its "human flesh" formulation could cure rheumatism, corns, bunions, frostbites, bruises, cuts, sprains, and lameness. One advertising sheet contained a testimonial from Robert M. Krum of Leighton, Pennsylvania: "I walked on crutches for ten years until I used your Spavin Cure."

Carmi L. Marsh, a local farmer and Civil War veteran, joined the company in 1879. Olin Merrill and Moses P. Perley soon joined the firm as business took off. The company eventually employed 30 to 40 people and had a large Victorian headquarters in Enosburgh. Burney left the company in 1889 but the other three businessmen remained, becoming important philanthropists in their hometown.

Although not as prolific an advertiser as Wells, Richardson from the big city of Burlington, B.J. Kendall was still a formidable promoter. At the height of its popularity in the late 1890s, the company had an advertising budget of \$75,000 a year and produced many pieces of advertising, including a stunning large chromolithographic poster of a woman standing beside a horse with the company's imposing factory building in the



John C. Coolidge (right), father of President Calvin Coolidge, and neighbor John Wilder sit near the stove at Cilly's Store in Plymouth Notch. Signs advertising Kemp's Balsam salve hang above their heads.

## THE HERMITAGE DEERFIELD VALLEY REAL ESTATE



# Discover DOVER, VERMONT

**V**ermont Country Contemporary. Great house in a great location with uninterrupted views of Haystack peak and ski area. Warm and inviting from the minute you walk in. 20 ft ceilings, floor to ceiling stone fireplace and wall of windows looking to the west. Recently remodeled kitchen, stainless steel appliances & large dining area. Main level has a generous foyer and a cozy den w/ fireplace. Master suite and guest bedroom with bath. Lower level features 2 bedrooms, ample storage, workshop and bath. Exterior boasts a 42X12 deck with incredible views, landscaped yard, stone walls, over sized 2 car garage and a paved driveway. Being Offered for \$599,000. Call to find out more.

183 Route 100, West Dover, VT 05356 | Office: 802-464-3055 / Fax: 802-464-2069 | [Info@HermitageDVRE.com](mailto:Info@HermitageDVRE.com)



# Kimball Bros. and Company, Inc.

Manufacturers of Family Remedies, Flavoring Extracts, & Toilet Articles.

ENOSBURG FALLS, VT.



The poster for Greene's cold remedy (below, left) doesn't identify its ingredients, perhaps no wonder, since labels on bottles of the syrup discreetly mentioned it contained alcohol, heroin, and chloroform!

background that has become emblematic of the patent medicine trade in Vermont.

B.J. Kendall employed other advertising techniques in addition to print media. The company sent out distinctive wagons with matched pairs of horses, a driver, and a groomsman to promote its products at agricultural fairs across the country. Dr. Kendall wrote two pamphlets, *A Treatise on the Horse and His Diseases* and *The Doctor at Home*, which were widely circulated by the horse-drawn sales force and even translated into German.

A smaller yet prosperous company was operated by Lester H. Greene in Montpelier. Lester, who had operated successive drugstores in Swanton, St. Johnsbury, and Montpelier, claimed that his Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar was "sold by nearly every druggist in New England." The demand for his cold remedy became so great that in 1898 he formed a separate company for the manufacture of the syrup. The company erected a three-story building on River Street in Montpelier and employed numerous people there.

The label on the bottle of Greene's syrup claimed that it contained alcohol, heroin, and chloroform "compounded in proportions and by processes known only to the proprietors." In 1916, the United States attorney for the District of Vermont began an investigation into Greene's Warranted Syrup of Tar not for its addictive and intemperate ingredients, but for its claims to be a remedy for croup and all throat and lung affections in violation of the Food and Drugs Act. The company pled guilty for false advertising and the court imposed a fine of \$50. The unwanted publicity from the lawsuit seemed to have put Greene's out of business because its manufacturing building was soon purchased by the U.S. Clothespin Company.

While Wells, Richardson & Co., Dr. B.J. Kendall Company, and Lester H. Greene were big names in the patent medicine business in the state, there were numerous other, smaller enterprises scattered around the state. According to historian J. Kevin Graftagnino, most Vermont patent medicine producers were quite small, consisting of a local druggist and a few employees. Although all areas of Vermont had their patent medicine companies, many were located in Franklin County. At least two other companies were located in Enosburgh: D.S. Green made a blood

**GREENE'S**  
WARRANTED

---

**SYRUP OF TAR**

---

—CURES—

**COUGHS, COLOS, CROUP, BRONCHITIS,**  
AND ALL THROAT AND LUNG AFFECTIONS.

---

It Relieves Asthmatic Coughs  
at Once and Cures Croup  
Immediately.

---

WHOOPING COUGH IS LESSENED TO A GREAT  
EXTENT AND THE DURATION OF THE  
DISEASE SHORTENED.

---

TRY A BOTTLE. IT IS WARRANTED TO SUIT.

---

FOR SALE BY ALL DEALERS.

---

—MADE BY—

**THE LESTER H. GREENE CO.,**  
MANUFACTURING CHEMISTS,  
15 and 17 Berlin St., MONTPELIER, VT.

UNION CARD CO., PRINTERS, MONTPELIER, VT.

TWO - - - - - DOZEN.

**DR. ROWELL'S**  
 +CELEBRATED+  
**Invigorating Tonic**  
 -AND-  
**FAMILY MEDICINE.**  
 The People's Favorite for affections of the  
**Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys.**

25	-	-	Doses,	-	25	Cents.
125	-	-	Doses,	-	\$1.00.	

---PREPARED BY---  
**DR. E. ROWELL, SON & CO.,**  
 EAST FRANKLIN, VT. FRELIGHTSBURG, QUE.  
 Small Size. - - - - - Small Size.

**INDIAN LINIMENT.**  
 EVERYBODY'S FRIEND.

Good for Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Headache, Toothache;  
 Ague in the Face, Sore Throat, Cramp, Stiff Joints, Con-  
 tractions of Cords, Burns, Freezes, Chilblains, Sprains,  
 Corns, Dizziness in the Head, and for all kinds of lame-  
 ness, &c.

**DIRECTIONS.**  
 For Rheumatism, bathe the parts affected on going to bed, if the  
 pain continues repeat in the morning, keeping the feet dry and the  
 Bowels loose. By a few applications the patient is relieved. For  
 Toothache, a few drops on cotton and placed in the tooth. Earache  
 treated in the same way, and bathe the Jaw freely. Sore Throat  
 bathe freely, then apply a woolen flannel. For internal use from  
 two to five drops in warm water and sugar.

**Price 75 Cents.**  
 Prepared by A. C. DOLLOFF, CORINTH, VT.

Eleven men gather at an unidentified store in Hart-  
 ford, Vermont (below). An advertising man has ap-  
 parently stopped by recently, posting signs for El-  
 mer's Pain-Killing Balm and Sloan's Liniment on the  
 front steps.



**VERMONT ESTATE PROPERTIES**

**2,354 Acres in Marshfield**

A trophy timberland investment - one of the largest parcels in central Vermont. Nearly \$3 million in timber value provides a solid timber investment. In addition, the landscape is highly scenic with mountain peaks and lake views, is adjacent to extensive state lands and is close to Montpelier - making it a compelling estate opportunity.

**\$3,620,000**

**218 Acres in Stockbridge**

Panoramic views from north to south from this high elevation kingdom parcel. Level terrain and established trails on the ridgetop facilitate recreation and developing building sites. Close to Killington and other recreational amenities yet exceedingly private in your own mountain top domain. Timber value estimated to be \$197,000.

**\$296,000**

**fountainsland.com**  
 Trusted brokers of  
 timberland and rural estates

**Fountains Land Inc.**  
 Michael Tragner  
 (802) 233-9040  
**fountains**



Among signs in the window of the general store in West Windsor (above) is one for Dr. Daniel's Medicines and Diamond Dyes, made by Burlington patent medicine manufacturer Wells, Richardson & Co.



## JUST THE FACTS

To see more examples of advertisements for Vermont patent medicines, visit [vermonthistory.org/patent\\_medicine](http://vermonthistory.org/patent_medicine).

Vermont Historical Society  
Vermont History Museum  
109 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05601  
Call (802) 828-2291 or visit  
[vermonthistory.org](http://vermonthistory.org).

Vermont History Center  
60 Washington Street  
Barre, VT 05641  
Call (802) 479-8500 or visit  
[vermonthistory.org](http://vermonthistory.org).

purifier and nerve tonic while Kimball Brothers made Blackberry Balsam, Quick Relief, and other products. Bedell's Balsam or "Indian Salve" came from Richford and Dr. Rowell's "Invigorating Tonic" was produced in another nearby town, East Franklin. St. Albans was home to G.W. Lepper's Unrivalled Healer and concoctions made by three generations of the Dutcher family, while Georgia hosted Smith's Green Mountain Renovator, a tonic that used alcohol and other ingredients to cure syphilis and other diseases.

Franklin County did not have a monopoly on patent medicines. Farther south, C.F. Smith in West Topsham made Church's Elixir and George G. Smith made Smith's Rheumatic Cure in South Londonderry. In Newbury, F. & H. Keyes produced Dr. Carter's Pulmonary Balsam while in Norwich, Israel Newton prepared bitters that were sold by M.K. Paine. Israel and Milton Paine claimed that "As a preservative of health, it ranks high, perhaps above anything ever before offered to the public. It strengthens the viscera, adds tone and vigor to the whole system, and defends the constitution against moisture, cold and many contagious disorders."

Despite their questionable ingredients and exaggerated claims, patent medicines were an economic force in post-Civil War Vermont. They generated fortunes for several veterans of that conflict and provided a presumed panacea to a populace reeling from the effects of war. Patent medicines also ushered in a new era of advertising in which bold graphics and oversized claims caught the public's attention. Many examples of patent medicine advertising survive in repositories of historical artifacts across the state, including at the Vermont Historical Society in Barre. ▮

Paul Carnahan is the librarian of the Vermont Historical Society.