

THE MIDDLEBURY REGISTER

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WITH THE V. P. A.

Seeing Vermont at Last

The Vermont editors had their lining, cutting, upping and downing over the past week-end. They were in for a good time, they were out only a dollar or two, they were up some 3,000 feet, and they must all now write it down, for how otherwise can they pay interest on the debt of thanks that is due to their hosts at Woodstock, on Mt Mansfield and at the Trout Club. It was the largest gathering of the newspaper men, wives and guests for many summers, probably the largest since the long by-gone days of the railroad pass. But, whereas free railroad transportation used to lure the editors often beyond the borders of their own state, to Coney Island, Atlantic City, Niagara Falls and other remote resorts, the present railroad rates and other prohibitive tendencies of the age serve to keep the Vermont journalists at home. They are beginning to see more and more of Vermont, soberly contemplate its merits, and learn to love their native land, "whether born here or not."

A Practical Joke

It was only last week that the statisticians at Washington, still mulling over the census figures which were gathered a year ago, officially announced that the grand total number of white people in the United States is 94,922,431. The figures may be correct, but unless there is positive assurance that the people of Woodstock are included in the stated total, the Vermont editors should petition for a recount. In the shiretown of Windsor county there are some of the whitest folks we ever met. When the editors gathered at the famous Woodstock Inn Friday evening for a dinner, dancing party, and over-night stop, it was with only a rather vague understanding on the part of most of the members that the Business Men's Association of Woodstock would contribute "something to the entertainment of the editors." That "something" was interpreted as a speech of welcome, key to the city, and general good will. It was only the next morning, when, after a hearty banquet, entertainment, excellent sleeping accommodations, and a fine breakfast that the departing editors learned how great a compliment Woodstock had paid to them. As one after another of the guests went to the hotel desk to settle their bill it was the nice little trick of the clerk to ceremoniously thumb over his ledger, and finally announce in a voice, with a smile: "I don't find any charges against you. The people of Woodstock have met all the bill." Practical jokes are usually a hazardous undertaking, but it is safe to say that Woodstock got away with this one without incurring any hard feelings.

A Reaction from "Main Street"

Arthur B. Wilder, manager of the Woodstock Inn, and Dr. Kidder of the Business Men's Association shared honors as the principal hosts, and the setting and the spirit of the occasion were such as to do Woodstock credit. Architecturally the Inn is suggestive of a big club house, and Manager Wilder who has been identified with the Inn for many years is largely responsible for the artistic surroundings, inside and out. Some of his own paintings of real merit adorn the walls. The somewhat isolated location of the village, undefined as it is with B. & M. smoke or noise, is in its favor, and the natural beauty of the town has been enhanced rather than marred by the public buildings and dwellings. Many of them are of the colonial type. Woodstock and the whole valley of the Oranquechee river in which it nestles, and the social atmosphere of the place, are all possessed of sufficient charm to present a complete antithesis to Gopher Prairie. The same might be said, though with perhaps less assurance, of many other New England towns. The critics who said that the "Main street" pictured in Sinclair Lewis' book was "typical of all small towns" ought to be guests of the Vermont Press Association on a tour of some of the scenic and social centers of Vermont life. Woodstock and Middlebury alone

Off to the Mountains

The account of the Press Outing has to be a "framing story" for the party was constantly on the move. At 9 o'clock Saturday morning the exodus from Woodstock was made by more than a score of automobiles, north through the beautiful Barnard gulf, via Rochester to the Granville wood road and thence via Warren and Waitsfield to Stowe. This is only one of a dozen beautiful routes which invite the tourist to Vermont, and on the day in question the roads were in fine shape and the weather perfect also overhead. Stoddard Bates and his predecessors in the highway office did not appear to have done so poorly, after all. When Stowe was reached the advice was passed that all of the Lizes had better not essay the Mt. Mansfield mountain climb, and some of the bigger cars also were stored for the night on a Stowe garage. But most of the drivers set their teeth, threw the gear into low and began the seven mile road up the tortuous mountain road. At the half-way camp some of the engines had overheated and rather than risk a hundred dollars wear out of the cars, the guests accepted Max Powell's lead to ride up the rest of the way on the specially constructed low-gear bus. It carried twelve people and all their baggage at each trip. As one looked back at the steep grades and the precipitous roadsides, it was reassuring to learn that the young bus driver had a record of 97 trips up the mountain without casualties. Although the present road was built as far back as 1876 (at a cost of \$40,000) it is only recently that it has been made safely accessible by auto. A gang is still at work blasting rock at some of the worst places.

On a Bridal Trail

There were not a few intrepid drivers who took their own cars to the very top. And what, to the surprise of the Middlebury guests, could be more amusing than to find that the Register "reporter" was unwisely on the trail of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne C. Rosworth whose marriage he had witnessed on the previous Tuesday. The newly weds were on the mountain top as one feature of their honeymoon. Mr. Rosworth had successfully scaled the mountain in his Franklin car, he and his bride ignorant that all the editors in the state were on their trail. Before night the rocky eminence around the Mt. Mansfield house was parked with a dozen cars—a Chandler, Essex, Buick, Studebaker, Cadillac, Paige and Dodge among them. The last bus trip up the mountain was not made until nearly dark, and a mile and a half from the summit something broke. There was no one hurt, but the bus could not proceed and a dozen men and women had to haul it to the hotel, carrying their luggage. The last man accounted for a party of 87 guests, twenty-four more than the hotel accommodated and there was some Goit during on what could be done for the night. There was talk of sending some of the unexpected ones back down the mountain, but Host Riley, manager of the hotel, couldn't think of that. The men folk shuffled their wives together and gave them the regular rooms, while they themselves put up with the settees, sofas, and cushions, and floors down stairs and in the old annex of the hotel. Manager Riley himself spent the night on a table with an inverted wash basin as a pillow.

The Lilliputians

San flies on Mt. Mansfield at 11,000 ft. Most of the folks who had sung and danced or talked until midnight were inclined to forego the sunrise ceremony, and The Register prides itself on getting a "scoop" on this event. It wasn't a clean scoop, however, as the horizon was veiled with a thick mist. But the deepening pink, and finally the magenta stream of color that spread across the eastward heavens was a sufficient reward. The hard pull came in waiting for breakfast at 8, but when that was spread it was evident that in the matter of provisions the hotel suffered no embarrassment. Every meal was bountiful and savory, rounding off with strawberry shortcake on Sunday noon. Mrs. Smalley was the cook, but she provided largely. Those who spent the whole of Sunday on the mountain made excursions to various points of interest. Mansfield, as everyone knows, presents a gigantic profile, the nose and forehead just south of the hotel, and the lips, the chin and Adam's apple all north of that point. Over this huge face the Press crowd scattered, like a handful of Lilliputians. Some were content to crawl up the rugged nose and exclaim "some nostrils!", while others traversed the precipitous ridge to the chin, visiting the Lake of the Clouds, the Cave of the Winds, and Taft Lodge, one of the shelters of the Green Mountain Club. James P. Taylor, who was among the first to visualize the great work which the Green Mountain Club has at last accomplished, still keeps up his reverence for the mountains and, together with Mr. Loveland, president of the Burlington section, he personally con-

ing themselves at the hotel on the night of the big crowd, these two men ordered a lantern and with a pocket flashlight as their only other guide, they picked their way over the hazardous cliffs that led to Taft Lodge and there spent the night. That was a descent that traders have to take with extreme care even by daylight. The only advantage of doing it in the dead of night is that you can't see just what will happen if you do slip. Every friend of Jim Taylor, and he has a host of them, is glad that he is as sure-footed as he is sure-hearted.

Middlebury Boys Turn Up

Sunday afternoon just as the Register party was bidding adieu to Host Riley, he waked four Middlebury boys, nobly stepping off the trail on Mt. Mansfield after a 35-mile hike just as though it were an every day jaunt. They were Alvin Parker, instructor in Middlebury High School, and three college fellows. It's a long trail on which you fail to meet somebody from Middlebury these days. Manager Riley's actual count shows that over 1000 persons visited the summit of Mt. Mansfield last year, a record fifty per cent higher than any other year, so Max Powell is not altogether visionary in laying plans for a big new hotel in the mountain top. The blue prints for this proposed structure are displayed on the walls of the present hotel, but the high cost of building 5,000 feet above sea level, can be imagined to have some drawbacks. Mr. Powell is confident that the time will come when auto and traders will crowd one another in the quest of the summit, and with the roads improved he figures it will be an easy thing to make the Nose from Burlington within three hours!

Howe, He Did It

While everyone had their individual share of the nervous strain of getting up and down the big mountain, it was Frank E. Howe of Bennington, the president of the Press Association who had the responsibility of locking after the big crowd and helping to meet the emergency of a bigger gathering than was expected. He managed it all splendidly, and when he called the members of the association together for a brief business session on the mountain Saturday night he took everyone's breath away when he announced that since practically everything on the trip was free a tax of only one dollar per member would cover all incidental charges for all three days of the log outing. Most of the editors had expected to appropriate at least \$10, and they are thus confronted with the dilemma of what to do with the balance. Why not take out a life membership in the Green Mountain Club?

The Coming Generation

The Vermont editor is conspicuously a family man. It was noticeable and pleasing so that many young folks were in the press party this year, and there are indications that many young men have inherited a strain of printer's ink in their veins. Dean Thayer of Morrisville has his son, Harrison, who is secretary of the Press Association and who is assisting in editing the Burlington suburban paper; Otto Bennett has a son who is helping him edit the Manchester Journal; Paul Beckman, just out of Dartmouth, is a partner now with his father on the Bellows Falls Times; Luther Johnson's son is making a name for himself in helping his dad at Randolph; Editor Howe of Bennington has a son who has been through the late war and who, now that the big scrap is over, has exchanged the bayonet for the nightgown. Doubtless there are numerous other instances which are hurriedly overlooked, but it is an outstanding fact that the Vermont papers are quite largely passing on from father to son. Editors Hindley of Rutland, Rice of Brattleboro, Langley of Barre, Southwick of Burlington, Reynolds of Essex Junction, Parker of Bradford, too, are all family men and had some fine samples with them on the trip. Mr. Southwick's little grandson, about 8, was with him.

Incidental Matters

While a dancing and singing party was in progress at the mountain house Saturday night, Editor Chew of White River Junction was exploring the Cave of the Winds where he found a "big snow drift still intact, on the 25th of June. As proof of his discovery he brought in a big snow ball, the only chilly element in the reception that was accorded us on the mountain. Editor Belknap of Bellows Falls made the ascent of the Nose with others in order to get the view, but it struck everyone that he could have saved himself this climb. He could just as easily have stood on his toes at the half-way house and peered over the Nose! Notwithstanding that Smuggler's Notch was close at hand, nothing was smuggled in; the only indulgence, liquorwise, was in "reminiscence" of the old days. When Jim Taylor pointed over the valleys of Underhill and

adjacent townships he said they were once under water, some eons ago, and formed a part of what has since shrunk down to the limits of Lake Champlain. Somebody remarked that it was lucky these towns had finally gone dry.

The view as a whole on a clear day presents a magnificent spectacle, but it was choked off by smoke. It was said this came from forest fires that were raging somewhere or other in the remote distance. But enough of the vast expanse of lesser mountains and hills could be glimpsed to substantiate the belief that if Vermont were ironed out perfectly flat its area would exceed that of the state of Texas!

The Trout Club

It is inconceivable that such beauty spots as the Lake Mansfield Trout Club could exist in Vermont without being literally mobbed by guests. True, it is being "discovered" by so many fishermen and nature lovers that its capacity is taxed in season, but many of the editors who visited it either before or after the mountain climb had never seen it before and they raved over it with a genuine enthusiasm which must have been as much to the ears of Dr. Brigham who, since its organization some ten or twelve years ago, has been chief sponsor for the development and upkeep of the place. The doctor—a surgeon at Grand Rapids in the winter season—is making the club his hobby, and incidentally qualifying as a real benefactor to the state and genial host to his guests. The club is a close corporation, of some 200 stockholders, but it is not difficult to get next to someone who is authorized to invite you in. President Howe of the Press Association is a member and fishing devotee at the club, and when he urged some of his colleagues to run over from Stowe for the Sunday night stay, nobody turned him down. The ladies exclaimed when they first saw the pretty artificial lake and club house that it was as charming as a Swiss chalet. Mr. Howe rowed a party around the little lake, showing them points of interest, among them a glimpse of what appeared to be a "moving mountain." It is a rare treat to have been on the lake just as this mountain was passing by.

A Porch Party

But rarer than the "moving mountain" was the good fortune to spend an evening on the Trout Club porch with Admiral Clarke. He has seen quite a bit of the world. Above many of the exploits of the late war, the public still remembers how he swung around the entire South American continent in double-quick time with the battleship Oregon during the Spanish-American war. The admiral didn't recall this at all, but he is full of other good stories and while Frank Howe and Wayne Rosworth were listlessly fishing for trout, the rest of the editorial men and ladies got a good catch of wit and wisdom from the doughty admiral. He regularly spends his summer at the Trout Club, and in his honor one of the big flat top mountain peaks was named after him. Another nearby peak, formerly Round Top, is named after Admiral Dewey.

"Victory"

There are 246 cities and towns in Vermont. While raving with Frank Howe we learned that he has visited 114 of them since he began to travel, politically and motorwise, and that the only two places in the state that he has never visited are Isle La Motte and Victory. Where Victory is we dunna ken, but after moving for a few days in the wake of the Howes of Bennington we are led to wish that they may some time get there. He knows Vermont better than a book: a Walton's gazetteer and a Biographical Dictionary personified, and when the time comes that Vermont knows Howe as well as he knows Vermont, we have reason to believe that his deferred hopes of occupying the gubernatorial chair may some day be realized. This is volunteered on our part without having drawn from him any admission that he will again seek the office, but it seems to us that Mr. and Mrs. Howe could very ably and graciously occupy the political and social center of the state at Montpelier for a biennial period, or longer. She is a charming and wholesome Vermonter, who found that all of the porch party at the Trout Club echoed her sentiments when she said she detested Sinclair Lewis' book. And she said she was backed up in this, too, by a letter from Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Vermont villages have their characters, running to the extremes of Carol and Dr. Kenicott, perhaps, but neither dull sensibility nor exotic aestheticism are dominant elements; the state is more homogeneous than the middle west. Notwithstanding that the critics of "Main Street" have declared that there was no further need for anyone to depict the life of the average small town in the United States, it does remain for someone to bring out in literature the true beauty, natural and social, of many such fine towns as we know in Vermont!

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