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A Richmond Tapestry

by Earline V. Marsh

Champlain Valley Telecom takes pleasure in presenting *A Richmond Tapestry*, a word-weaving of people, events and natural environment that over the years have shaped this richly endowed Winooski River town.

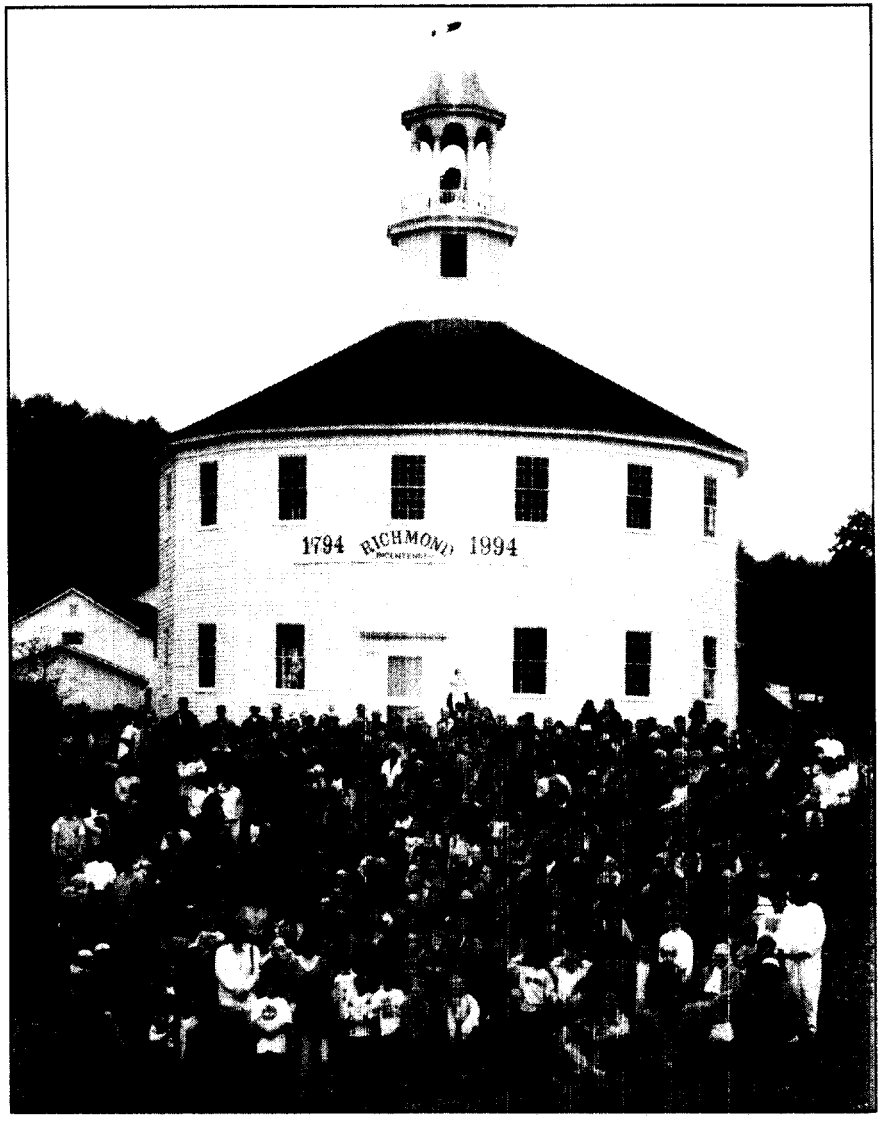


Photo by Louis Borie

This bicentennial photo of Richmond townspeople and their famed Old Round Church appears on the cover of the 200th Annual Town Report. A large print of this photo is displayed in the town offices.

Richmond is such a fine sounding name! England and New Zealand each have one Richmond; Australia, Canada, and South Africa have two— and the United States, sixteen. (This is not including such variations as Richmond Heights, Richmond Hill or Richmond-upon-Thames, a borough of London.) In addition to Vermont, states with a Richmond are Arizona, California, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Texas, Utah, and Virginia, whose Richmond is the state capital.

Did Vermont's Richmond really result from the 18th century entrepreneurship of the Onion River Company dominated by the Allens, Chittendens and others? No one knows for sure; the original petition to the legislature has long been lost. Indeed, the new town, incorporated in October, 1794, was enriched by the Winooski River and some of the best farmland and forests of the four contiguous towns from which it was formed: Jericho, Williston and Huntington. A section from Bolton was added in 1804 to form the town's present day boundaries.

In *Vermont Place Names*, Esther Monroe Swift observes that perhaps the new town was named Richmond "solely because it was a fine sounding name that would, it was hoped, attract buyers and settlers."

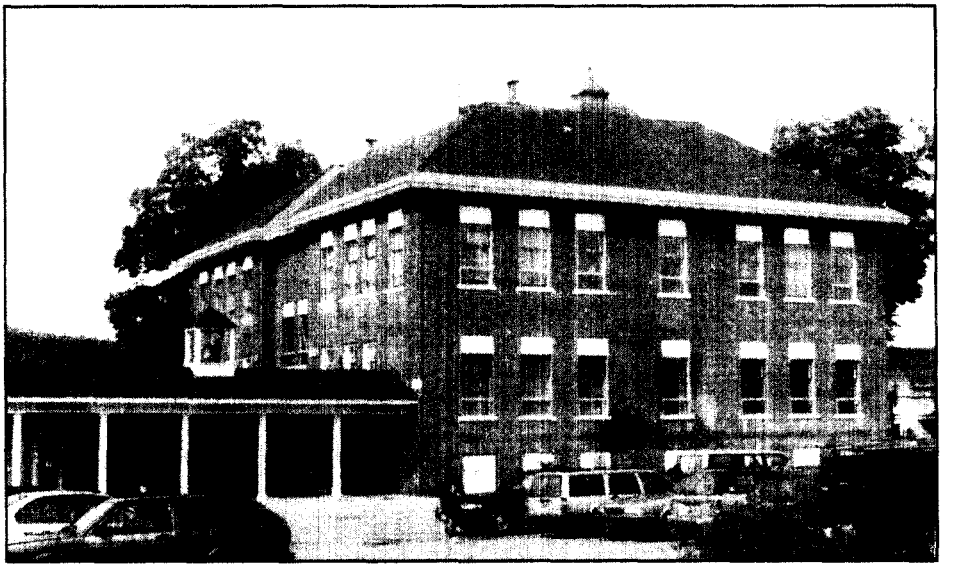
Photo courtesy of Harriet Riggs

Looking south on Bridge Street, Richmond, Vermont, probably 1950s.

A Walk Through the Town Center

On a brilliant late June Saturday, I find a parking space on Bridge Street, just off Main Street, and stroll through Richmond's thriving town center, enjoying friendly greetings from folks walking by or leisurely riding their bicycles. Crossing the railroad tracks, I note the location of the long-gone railway depot, which brought the center of commerce to this side of the river. The spacious Volunteers Green comes into view, with its novel band shell shaped like a smaller, perfect half of the Old Round Church. Near the banks of the Winooski River is a carefully constructed frame of a "long house" with a hand-lettered sign informing me that "Winooski Lore" is the theme of the summer library program. I smile as I watch children enjoying the kid-friendly playground; picnic facilities are ready for the gatherings planned for this perfect outdoors day. Soon Volunteers Green will be the busy center of Richmond's fun-filled Fourth of July activities.

On the other side of Bridge Street is the Richmond Free Library, housed in the former Universalist Church, picturesque with its tall, tapering spire and colors, soft-cream siding with milk-chocolate trim, framed by a clear blue sky. Ample off-street parking on this busy morning serves the library, as well as the town offices which occupy the classic brick 1907 former school building, with its new addition on the back side for the Post Office. In a white cupola on the new section sits a dignified old bell, once located in the tower of the school.



Richmond town offices are housed in the former school building built in 1907. The Post Office occupies the space in the addition on the left. The cupola on the Post Office holds the old school bell.

Walking across the "erector set" bridge over the Winooski River, built in 1928 after the ravages of the 1927 flood, I enter the section of town known locally as Brooklyn. Most likely this area came to be known as Brooklyn, or Little Brooklyn, simply because it was the other side of the bridge. (Brooklyn Bridge, spanning the East River and connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn, was completed in 1883.)

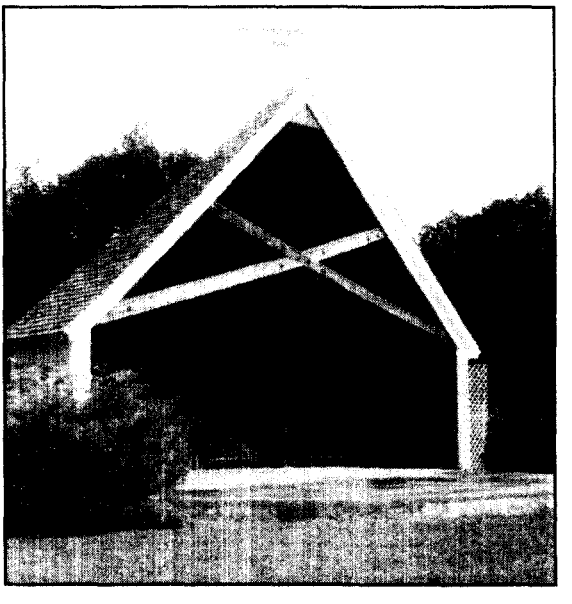
Wedding guests begin to gather at the Old Round Church; conversations in the small groupings on the shade-speckled lawn probably begin with the perfection of this day chosen months ago. My unobtrusive walk through this famous Richmond landmark shows me its lofty interior awash in sunshine. Sunflowers and wildflowers are the simple adornments for this special occasion. Two workmen enter, at the ends of a long yellow ladder, a good moment for me to slip out and cross the lawn to the Cochran Road side.

Here a carved granite monument stands as Richmond's lasting tribute to the internationally renowned skiing Cochran family, whose home and small ski area are just down the road.

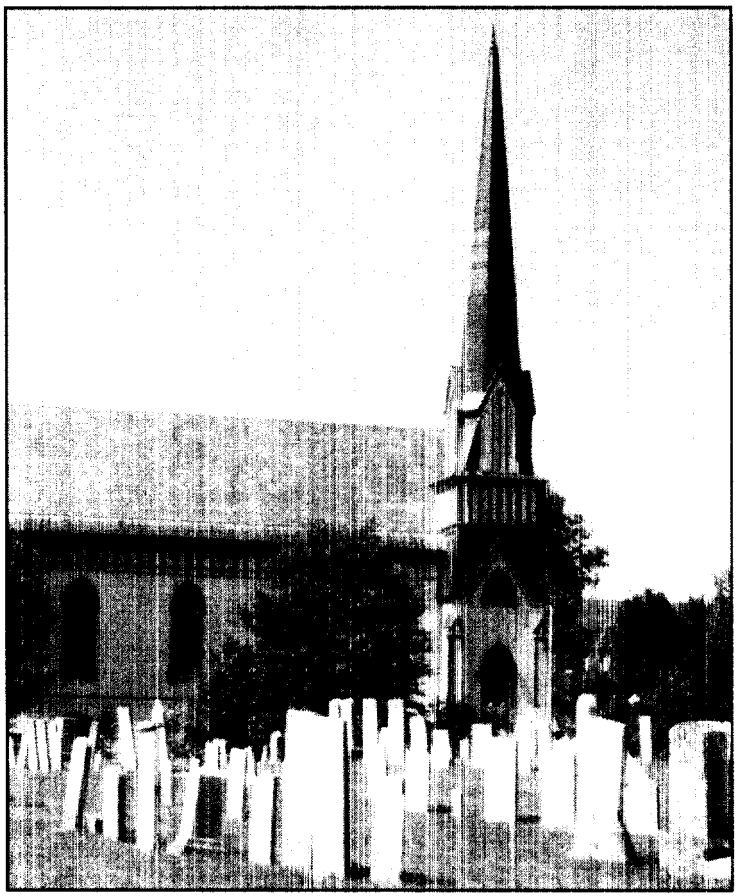
The Winooski River flows under the Bridge Street through-truss span built in 1928 after the ravages of the '27 flood. The washed-out bridge was also a through-truss, more simple in design, which replaced a covered bridge around the turn of the century. The present bridge is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Shown is the home of Ted and Viola Bressor. The area on the south side of the river came to be known locally as Brooklyn, or Little Brooklyn, probably because it was on the other side of the bridge. (The Brooklyn Bridge, spanning the East River and connecting Manhattan and Brooklyn, was completed in 1883 and probably sparked the imagination of local Richmond residents.)

The Old Round Church, built in 1813, is now listed as a National Historic Landmark.

The town band shell, built in 1976, resulted from an award winning design representing an eight-sided half of the Old Round Church.



On the eve of the festive 4th of July Celebration, as red, white and blue flags and buntings begin to adorn buildings, Town Clerk Velma Godfrey talks about the community spirit in Richmond. She says, "There's so much enthusiasm and involvement within the community — from everyone." She cites as examples the well-cared for public property, with colorful flowers donated and tended by the Women's Group; the local scholarship fund; activities that support the library; the playground in the aptly named Volunteers Green; guides at the Old Round Church — and much more.



The Richmond Free Library, a hub of town activity, was once the Universalist Church, built about 1879. Renovations have resulted in a modern library facility on the first floor, with plans for future second floor renovations to create possibly an expanded children's area and meeting facilities. Before the new school was built about 10 years ago, spaces in the old church were used for cafeteria and gym for the school next door.

Librarian Mary Ann McMaster was honored at the last town meeting for her 20 years of service to the library, with a special plaque made in her honor.

In her friendly manner, she talks about the present library building, originally the Universalist Church. Until the new school was built about ten years ago the space now used as a library was the school kitchen and cafeteria. The upstairs, now closed off, was the gymnasium. Plans are underway to convert the upstairs to a meeting area and children's library. Proud of the popular children's section, Mary Ann says, "It all starts with the children."

The Old Round Church

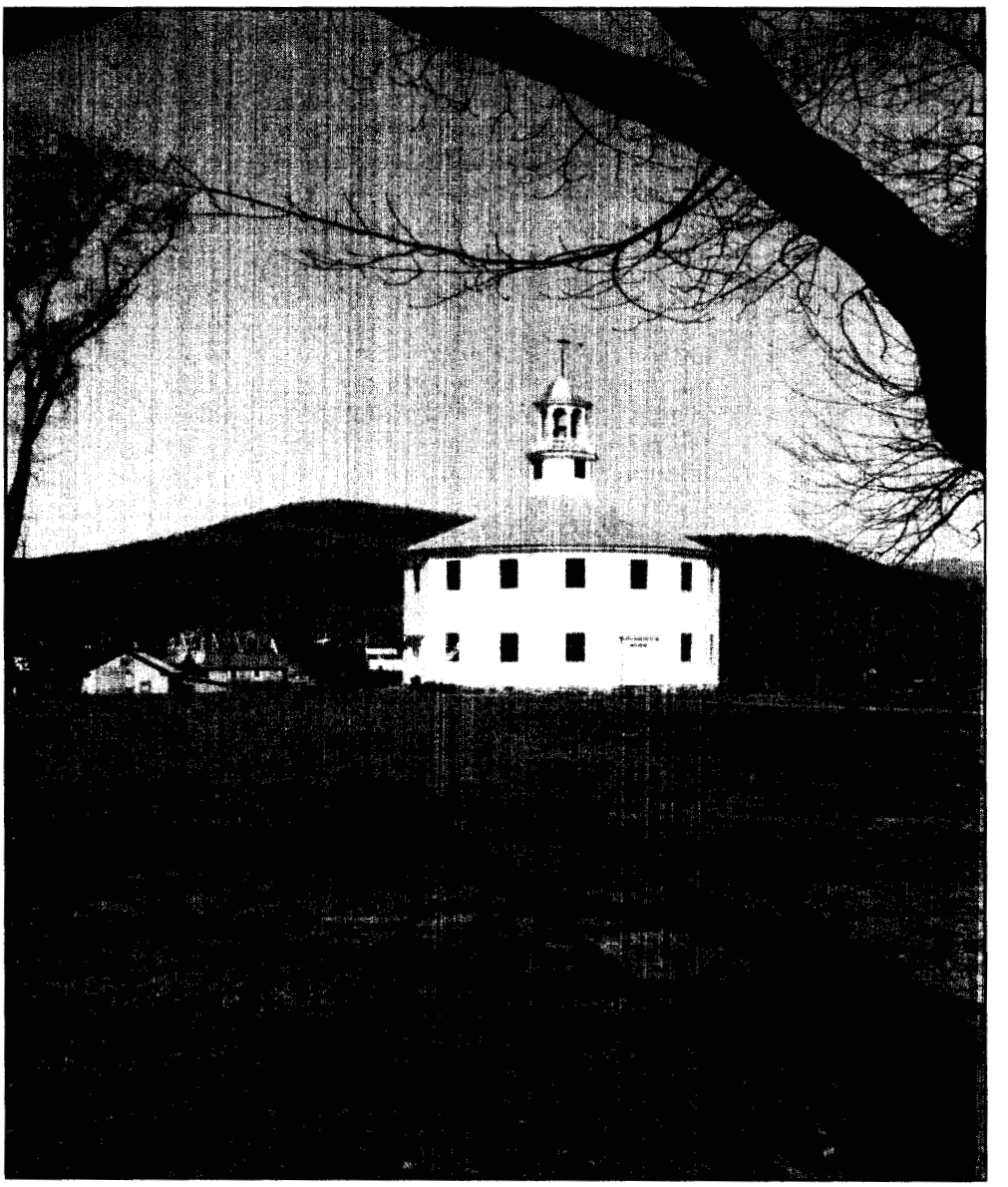


Photo courtesy of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

The Old Round Church in 1974, at the start of a major restoration project that culminated in the 1997 dedication of the structure as a National Historic Landmark, a higher recognition than its former status as a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

A National Historic Landmark

In its 185th year, the Old Round Church added yet another historic moment to its remarkable history. On July 27, 1997, the 79th Annual Pilgrimage was also the formal dedication of the Round Church — its historic name — as a National Historic Landmark, a prestigious rank held by only a select group of significant national treasures throughout the nation.

Threatening thundershowers held off during the late afternoon service, attended by Richmond residents and guests. Representing the Richmond Historical Society, Gary Bressor said in his introduction that one of the factors leading to the massive restoration of the Old Round Church was a concern in 1973 about the stove pipes which were then held on brackets still visible. The fire marshalls who investigated said the stove pipes weren't the problem — but the building must be condemned because of serious structural problems. Gary said, "Today is the completion of a process started in 1973."

In his remarks to the gathering, Townsend Anderson, State Historic Preservation officer, spoke of the "community centered restoration" now culminating with the dedication of the Round Church as a National Historic Landmark. He said that "many people have been touched by this building" as they worked to preserve it. With the "pride and unity" displayed by the townspeople of Richmond is the "coming of age of preservation in Vermont."

The "hope and jubilation" expressed in Rev. Ronald H. Benoit's invocation echoed in the glorious hymn "The Builder," sung by the 14-voice ecumenical choir led by Gale Hansen-Patenaude. Music filled the radiant space — so acoustically fine — as it has for countless decades in the past.

Before joining the informal reception outside on the shaded lawn, several people stopped to look at the classic bronze plaque displayed temporarily in the front of the church. It reads in part: "THIS BUILDING POSSESSES NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE IN COMMEMORATING THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA."

Early 19th Century

Finding a Location for the New Meetinghouse

In early Richmond, wrote historian Harriet Riggs, "town officials were concerned with laying out roads and setting up school districts; finding a suitable spot for a burying ground and prohibiting rams from running at large on the Common and highway." Since community meetings were held at the schoolhouse or in homes, officials were also concerned with erecting a meetinghouse. In a situation not unlike ones we know today, competition among townspeople became keen and the location of the meetinghouse, a controversy. Many committees failed to solve the problem of finding a suitable place for the proposed meetinghouse.

Two citizens, shopkeeper Isaac Gleason and tavern keeper Thomas Whitcomb, settled the matter by giving land for the new meetinghouse, about one block south of the Winooski River in what was then the town center.

In the quiet moments before people assemble, Gail Hansen-Patenaude prepares for the musical part of dedication ceremonies on July 27, 1997.

At the 1812 town meeting, the gift was accepted, and townspeople rallied to support this worthwhile community project. William Rhodes, Isaac Gleason and James Butler were elected to draw up plans and advertise pews for sale. They were directed, according to town meeting records, to adhere to a unique bit of religious tolerance: "Each of the denominations who become builders and proprietors should peaceably enjoy their share of said house."

Subscriptions for the new building came from sixty-three Richmond citizens, representing Congregationalists, Universalists, Christians, Baptists and Methodists. In all probability, in the early history of the Round Church, Catholics attended Mass here, and Quakers held quiet meetings. Today the Old Round Church ranks as one of the first community churches in the country.

An Innovative Design

By November, 1812, the spruce-timber framing was done and construction well underway on this singularly interdenominational community church. William Rhodes, who drew up the radically innovative design, also served as the principal builder. Today a simple wooden sign over the main door proclaims to visitors: The Old Round Church, Built in 1813.

A sixteen-sided, two-story wooden building with a sixteen-sloped roof, The Round Church is capped by a short octagonal tower with an open belfry and cupola. The exterior is white-painted clapboard. The north, west and south sides each have a door on the first floor level; except for the doors fifteen of the sides contain two windows, one on each floor, each window composed of two sections of twelve panes. On the east side, which has the pulpit on the interior, there are no windows.

The interior of the church, only 50 feet in diameter, is a traditional early 19th century meetinghouse with adaptations to comply with the round shape. Enclosed box pews stand in four rows, two rows on each side of the main aisle. Box pews also line the circular walls, with doors that latch on the outside. When the building was used as the town hall, eight front pews were removed to accommodate portable voting booths.

A horseshoe-shaped balcony faces the raised pulpit, the focus of the interior. In the balcony are two rows of open slips and enclosed wallpews. The lofty, round space, in its white simplicity, expresses a unity within yet a connection with the world outside — a sense as vital to us today as it was to its original worshippers.

The graves of William and Sally Rhodes, next to the old Universalist Church.

William Rhodes, Designer/Builder

William Rhodes, builder, blacksmith, plough-maker and holder of many town offices in Richmond, served as designer and head carpenter of the Round Church. High praise for William Rhodes and his multiple skills comes from historian David Ruell who wrote: "Despite the traditional character of his carpentry, William Rhodes must be regarded as a highly imaginative designer. The Round Church was erected in a period when only the most sophisticated American architects were employing anything beside the rectangular plan."

Born in Rhode Island in 1772, William Rhodes died in Richmond in 1860 and is buried in the cemetery next to the former Universalist Church, not far from the Round Church. In 1791 at the age of nineteen Rhodes married Sally Salisbury, also from Rhode Island. Sally died a year after her husband and is buried next to him. Rhodes was the son of William and Anna (Westcott) Rhodes. Her husband died while their son was still young, and Anna Rhodes later married Daniel Fisk.

William Rhodes and his bride Sally moved to New Hampshire where in 1793 he registered a livestock mark with the Claremont town clerk. Within a few years Rhodes bought land in nearby Charlestown, where deeds give his occupation as "housewright" or "carpenter." Having sold his Charlestown property, Rhodes purchased a 157 acre farm in Richmond in 1806. His parents, Daniel and Anna Fisk, then living in Claremont, N.H., later moved to Richmond, where they are buried near William and Sally Rhodes.

Speculation has centered on the source of William Rhodes' inspiration for the non-traditional meetinghouse design of the Round Church. Scholars generally agree that Rhodes was probably unaware of examples of round churches in other parts of the eastern seaboard or in Britain. They generally agree also that his inspiration most likely came from two churches in New Hampshire, in Claremont and Concord. In both instances, the model was an eight-sided, semi-circular addition to the existing church. Federal style detailing and fenestration patterns were similar to the Round Church. Both structures were gone by 1895.

In 1815, the Claremont Round Brick Church was built, only to be demolished in 1852. A mid-nineteenth century painting shows a brick church strikingly similar to the Richmond Round Church: a two story, sixteen-sided building with octagonal belfry and cupola. Without documentary evidence it is impossible to determine William Rhodes' role in the design, whether he was directly involved by providing plans and consultation or whether his Richmond Round Church merely served as a model during a time when plagiarism was not considered improper.

Weddings in the Old Round Church

The Old Round Church has been described as a white wooden wedding cake with a belfry in place of the bride and groom figures, a fitting depiction since major use of the building now is for weddings.

The historic old edifice takes on an aura of romance, as about 40 weddings a year take place here. Many joyful wedding days are recorded in countless albums throughout the country.

Since the building no longer is heated — and October can bring chilly weather — one bride is known to have worn long-johns under her elegant wedding gown. In summer, ventilation inside the building is scanty at best, and some brides have sweltered as they smiled for the photographs to be preserved for their posterity.

Sally Singer, who is in charge of reservations for use of the Old Round Church, is also a justice of the peace and is sometimes called on to officiate at traditional weddings with a large party, or small ceremonies with eloping couples.

Jennifer LaBelle and Greg LeDuc chose a large, formal wedding when they were married in the Old Round Church on June 1, 1996. A reception followed the ceremony at nearby Chequers Restaurant, also known by its historic name of the Checkered House. Jenny said that wedding guests enjoyed the history of the Old Round Church and the Checkered House, which has interesting reading material framed and hung on the walls.

The wedding of Deborah Rosevear of New York City and John (Jake) Rogers, whose mother, the former Erica Sherman, grew up next to the Old Round Church. Justice of the peace Sally Singer performed the ceremony, held on August 31, 1996. Jake's grandmother, Phyllis Sherman, who lives in the old Gleason house next to the church, said that rather than bird seed or rice the festivities included small jars of bubbles for the guests to waft into the air, leaving no trace behind.

The bell, cast by Henry N. Hooper of Boston, was installed in 1851. It was originally rung from the center aisle and later, from the belfry. Is the bell still rung today? Gary Bressor answered the question: yes, but only on special occasions. When bell-ringing is included in wedding plans — for an extra charge — the task falls to Gary. The mechanism has not been functional for many years, so how does he manage to ring the bell? "I climb up and swing it," he explains. "You can see that the wheel is partly broken." Perhaps it reminds Gary of the days before the building was condemned, when he rang the bell by hand on Sunday mornings.

A Community Centered Restoration

The balcony in the restored Old Round Church.

In its restored but largely unchanged state, the Old Round Church today is historically significant as a unique and possibly sole surviving example of an early nineteenth century round meetinghouse.

When structural deterioration led to the closing of the building in 1973, Richmond residents faced a serious problem. As their forebearers did in 1812, the townspeople rallied to the cause. Fundraisers, grant applications, engineering and architectural studies took several years before the actual restoration was started. All work had to follow established federal standards, and throughout the restoration, the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation provided regular consultation.

The entire belfry was rebuilt. Repairs made over the years were themselves decaying. The foundation was reinforced and new foundation piers were built. A fundamental design flaw in the original structure lead to substantial work in the attic. Supplemental trusses were required to support the twelve ton bell and belfry. Along with other needed repairs, the restoration costs came to about $180,000. (Records show the original cost in 1813 to be $2,305.42.) By 1981 this historic treasure, the pride of Richmond, was again open to share with other people.

In June, 1996, the Richmond Historical Society, led by Harriet Riggs, Gary Bressor and Ann Cousins, saw the completion of a long process, as they achieved a prestigious status for the Round Church. It is now registered as a National Historic Landmark, a higher honor than its former recognition as a listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Thanks to the townspeople of Richmond, the Old Round Church has survived through time practically unchanged and stands today lovingly restored as the town's own unique historic shrine.

Folklore

Like other old historic buildings the Round Church has its own unique folklore. Because of its singular architecture — sixteen sides that form a polygon — the church has spawned legends related to this feature. Often repeated is the one that the Round Church was built by seventeen men; sixteen men each built one side and the seventeenth built the belfry. (Research shows the number of workers to be close to seventeen, but not quite accurate; the practicality of such an arrangement is another matter.)

Some people through the ages have claimed that the church is round so there are no corners in its spare and simple interior — no corners in which the devil could hide. Others say that the round exterior serves to prevent an enemy from hiding around the corner.

Are there bats in the belfry of the Round Church? For many years bats have been known to live here, and neighbors still see the winged creatures of the dark as swift small shadows on summer evenings.

Kurt Sherman, who grew up next to the Round Church, remembers when he first moved to Richmond as a young lad in the early 60s. "I could smell and hear the bats," he says. "The smell is like Bosco and they make a cheeping sound." (He explained that Bosco is a chocolaty flavoring and that the bat smell was not unpleasant.)

A Gallimaufry*

One of the two donors of land for the Round Church, Isaac Gleason, lived in the house next to the Round Church now occupied by Phyllis and Neil Sherman. The original Gleason home was a duplex, and though the present structure has been extensively renovated over the years, it is still a duplex. The Shermans' antique shop is named Isaac's.

There is an unsubstantiated claim that Henry Ford once tried to buy the Old Round Church to dismantle and move it — one reference says to Dearborn, Michigan, another says to Sudbury, Massachusetts.

Countless paintings and photos of the Old Round Church are on walls and collections in far-flung places. Among the prestigious publications in which it has appeared is the National Geographic Magazine, August, 1967. Vermont Life has featured the Old Round Church from time to time; the most stunning photo graces the cover of the summer 1991 issue.

Round barns in Vermont were built later than the unusual Round Church, in the general time period from 1890 to 1910, and were promoted by agricultural colleges as a progressive way to house dairy cattle.

* A medley, miscellany

Kurt Sherman came to know every corner of this venerable building. In 1975, while a student at the University of Vermont, Kurt wrote a paper on the history and structure of the Round Church for a Folklore English course. Kurt now lives in Grand Isle and is a 5th-6th grade teacher in Westford, Vermont.

Here are some of the personal insights contained in his paper.

> At the end of World War II America celebrated. In the spirit of that celebration, Theodore Bressor climbed to the belfry of the Round Church and rang the bell. Since the bell no longer had a rope attached, he made do with a hammer, and marks on the bell attest to that event today.
>
> During the years 1971 and 1972 it became a tradition for two families, the Bressor family of Cliff House and my own, to ring the church bell sixty times at twelve noon on Sunday. The ringing was done primarily by Gary Bressor, with periodic turns by his brother Jamie, my sister Lisa and myself. The ringing was done by hand, rocking the bell on its platform as there no longer is a rope set up for that purpose.
>
> On this night [Halloween Eve, known as Cabbage Night] firecrackers banged, garden produce flew around, windows were waxed, and most importantly, the Round Church bell was rung. This entailed a dark trip through the five levels to the belfry where a rope was attached, thrown over the side, and the bell rung from ground level . . . until Richmond's sole constable came and scattered the group. This practice persisted until the late 1960s when the whole tone of Cabbage Night diminished with the introduction of a permanent police force in the town of Richmond.
>
> During 1972, while mowing the lawn around the side of the church, I discovered that a fourth stone step had slowly sunk below ground level and had been covered with roughly three inches of soil. I dug the step up and set it in place. No one seemed too excited about my find.
>
> In 1973, while putting in a fence, I dug up two sections of a gravestone marker. The two slabs were of granite. One portion contained the initials J.D. It appeared to be like stones made in the mid-1800s and the later half of the 19th century. Strangely, however, there is no evidence of a cemetery ever existing on the church site.

The Skiing Cochran Family

When Yankee Magazine celebrated its 60th anniversary in 1995 with a special issue, it featured "60 people who make New England New England." Six of the sixty were Cochrans of Richmond. Their accomplishments in the highly competitive field of international ski racing during the 1970s have made the family a legend in their time. Ski writer Craig Altschul has called them "the most awesome family of ski racers in American history."

At the pinnacle of their skiing careers, when they dominated the sport of alpine ski racing, the Cochran "kids" — Marilyn, Barbara Ann, Bobby and Lindy — appeared regularly in the national and international media, from Life Magazine to CBS-TV. They were even invited to the White House to meet with President Nixon.

Little wonder that I felt a tinge of awe as I approached the interview with Ginny and Mickey Cochran.

"Would you like a cup of coffee?" Ginny asked, after I was seated at the kitchen table, briefcase at my feet. Mickey handed me a green and gold UVM mug, and I felt like a welcome neighbor with these two warm and genuine fellow Vermonters.

How It All Began

When Mickey Cochran and Virginia Davis, both ardent skiers, fell in love and got married, they did not dream that they would someday produce one of the nation's most outstanding skiing families. Mickey, an all-round athlete, had skied since he was a youngster, and his successful high school baseball career in Massachusetts landed him as a student at the University of Vermont. "One thing led to another," he said, and he became involved in ski coaching at UVM.

With a graduate degree in education, Mickey got a job teaching science courses at Windsor High School, Ginny's alma mater. He also coached the baseball team — and organized the school's ski-racing program. Marilyn was born in 1950, and Barbara Ann, Bobby and Lindy followed in quick succession. As youngsters during the 1957-58 ski season — Marilyn was 8; Barbara Ann, 7; Bobby, 6; and Lindy, not yet 5 — the children skied at Ascutney, which was then a small family area.

That spring Mickey decided to leave teaching and take a job as an engineer at General Electric in Burlington; his undergraduate degree was in mechanical engineering. The family moved to Burlington and skied at Smugglers, where they had "half season passes". Mickey, in the meantime, had his eye on a hillside in Richmond; it looked to him like an ideal location for a ski slope.

In 1960 the Cochrans bought the property and farmhouse that is still their home. The family's cooperative efforts and their passion for skiing, augmented by Mickey's skills as a mechanical engineer, became the perfect combination for what has evolved into Cochran's Ski Area, also known as

The Cochran family in 1972: Ginny, Bobby, Lindy, Barbara Ann, Mickey and Marilyn

Cochran Hill. The family worked together to clear the slope and put in a rope tow, and when the snows came in 1961, they were ready. Ginny says, "Like Topsy, it grew." They never really planned what was to follow: a training site for their high-achieving ski racers and an enduring privately owned ski area.

"Soon after opening up Cochran Hill in 1961," Mickey later wrote, "we went into the woods and cut maple saplings to use as slalom poles for our training courses." He hung lights for training after dark. And the innovative backyard training area started the Cochran children on the road to world-class and Olympic competition.

Highlights of Their Accomplishments

Marilyn, Barbara Ann, Bobby and Lindy Cochran have competed in junior championships, World Cup races, World Alpine Ski Championships, and the ultimate — the Winter Olympic Games — during their remarkable ski racing careers.

The Cochran clan chalked up some amazing statistics. Thumbing through the alpine historical records of the U.S. Ski Team reveals an impressive 34 listings for the Cochrans — and these are just major wins in U.S., World Cup or Olympic alpine events. Scanning down the pages of Past

U.S. Champions in women's slalom, one notes three consecutive Cochrans: Barbara in 1971, Marilyn in 1972 and Lindy in 1973. Under giant slalom, Marilyn was the 1974 winner and Lindy, the 1976 winner. The 1973 combined went to Marilyn. Under Past U.S. Champions in the men's divisions Bob Cochran is listed as downhill winner in 1971 and 1973; slalom winner in 1969 and 1970; giant slalom winner in 1971; and men's combined in 1971, 72, and 73.

The 1970 World Championships at Val Gardena, Italy, found seven top wins going to Cochrans: four to Marilyn and three to Barbara Ann. They each took one top win at St. Moritz, Switzerland in 1974. Turning to World Cup winners, Bob appears in the top listing in 1973; Barbara in 1970, 71, and 72; and Marilyn in 1973. Marilyn won the GS World Cup in 1969 and by the time she retired she had three World Cup wins.

All four Cochrans were initially in good positions for big wins in the 1972 Olympics in Sapporo, Japan — now 25 years ago. But Lindy landed on the side-lines with an injury: she broke her ankle in training. Bobby was "on his way" — the clock had him ahead — when his goggles hit a slalom pole, three gates from the finish. His 8th place finish in the downhill placed him as highest scoring American in that event. Marilyn was one of several women to fall at a particularly tricky spot on the slalom course. Barbara Ann won the Olympic Gold in slalom, the only American to win the top honor in skiing that year. Ginny modestly says, "She did well."

After Barbara Ann's brilliant Olympic gold medal win in 1972, Richmond town officials voted to rename the road on which the family home is located, then known as the Back River Road to Jonesville. It officially became Cochran Road.

Bobby was the first American in 20 years to win the Hahnenkamm combined at Kitzbuhel in 1973. (Later Bobby turned pro, and his winnings helped to defray the costs of medical school.) At the Innsbruck, Austria, Olympics in 1976 Lindy was the top American finisher, sixth in the slalom and twelfth in the giant slalom.

Between 1972 and 1976, all four Cochrans had competed on an Olympic team, and Mickey had served during the 1973-74 season as alpine director with the U.S. Ski Team. He managed to get a leave of absence from his job at G.E. He smiled as he said, "It wasn't easy to do."

Did Ginny and Mickey travel a great deal with their high-performing children in those exciting times of international travel from Europe to Japan to South America? No, the parents couldn't afford the high costs of travel. "Everything went into skiing," Ginny says. She and Mickey recall sitting home in front of the television eagerly watching the 1972 Olympics from Japan. "It was exciting," Ginny says, "because it was live."

Two books related to ski racing and ski instruction have come out of the family's experiences. *The Cochran Family Book of Ski Racing*, by Mickey

Cochran and Bill Bruns, was published in 1977 by Hawthorn Books of New York. 1989 marked the publication of *Teach Your Child to Ski, For Ages 3 to 10*, by Barbara Ann Cochran and Lindy Cochran Kelley, with Craig Altschul.

Excerpts from Mickey's Book:

Marilyn had just competed in the French Championships, where she won the slalom, giant slalom and finished fourth in the downhill to become the French National Champion.

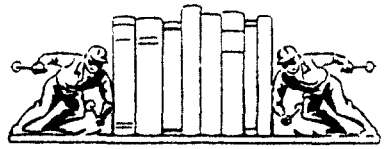
"That spring (1971) our youngsters were all invited down to the White House to be cited by President Nixon. Apparently the kids smiled a lot and let Marilyn do all the talking. She chatted briefly with the president about skiing, and he intimated that he himself wasn't likely ever to put on a pair of skis. Then he congratulated Marilyn on her French victory. "We're very proud of you," he said. "Did you expect to win?"

"No," she answered, with the brevity of a true Vermonter.

"[In 1973] Ginny and I flew to Switzerland for the World Championships, where all of our youngsters would be competing — a first in the history of that event. Furthermore, they were all ranked in the first seed in the world in at least one event."

During the 1973-74 ski season Mickey took a leave of absence from his job at General Electric, to serve as head coach of the U.S. Ski Team.

"Once I returned to work at General Electric, I realized that what I really wanted to do was operate Cochran Hill on a full-time, winter-long basis. We had purchased an additional 160 acres of excellent ski terrain further up the mountain in 1965 and had cleared an upper slope for a 1,200-foot rope tow. Now I wanted to install a 1,600-foot T-bar, an effort I knew could take eight to ten summers if I didn't leave GE for good. So I decided to take the plunge, and it has worked out fine."



Cochran Hill Today

None of the giant conglomerate glitz and glamor here, just fun and friendliness — and the influence of a family who loves to ski.

Now in its 37th year, Cochran Hill is probably the last surviving privately owned area in Vermont. It offers an impressive array of facilities for downright good skiing: a 1600 foot T-bar, an 1100 foot rope tow, a 450 foot Mitey Mite, a 500 foot rope tow — as well as ski patrol, ski school, racing program, Lollipop Races and a lodge with a snack bar. And there is also snowmaking, thanks to Mickey's mechanical engineering skills.

A unique and popular program at Cochrans is one which teaches parents how to teach their young children to ski. In their book, focused on teaching techniques for children, Barbara Ann and Lindy wrote, "Our lifts are low-tech, and we're proud of it." Surface lifts have the advantage of bringing skiers up the hill with skis gliding on the snow. "Kids get plenty of gliding practise," they explain.

The highly successful Cochran Ski Club is a cooperative in which "parents, children, racers and coaches agree to work together to support the club's activities." Included in the ski club racing season, which runs from the first of January to the end of March, are the ever-popular Sunday afternoon Lollipop Races for all ages and all abilities. A note of interest:
back in the days at Ascutney in the mid-50s, Mickey was one of the organizers of the original Lollipop Races.

There's another attraction to skiing at Cochran Hill — the mystique of ski slopes where world-class champions once trained.

An Update: "The Kids" Today

The Cochran kids — and their kids — now live within relatively easy visiting distance of their family homestead.

Marilyn Cochran Brown is the mother of two children. She lives in Norwich, Vermont, and coaches the nearby Hanover, New Hampshire, high school ski team. Her husband, Chris Brown, also from Central Vermont, is a college professor.

Barbara Ann Cochran lives in Starksboro, Vermont, and works at the family ski area in the many capacities needed to keep it running smoothly. She also has two children. She is applying her extensive background to her new business, a clinic approach to developing mental techniques for athletes.

Bobby is a family doctor at a large clinic in Keene, New Hampshire. He is one of more than fifty physicians on the staff. He lives in Surrey and is the father of three children. Bobby helps to coach at the Sunapee ski area.

Lindy Cochran Kelley also lives in Starksboro, with her three children and husband Steve who is an independent sales representative in the construction field. She and Barbara Ann recently collaborated on a ski instruction book for parents of young children.

Notable Quotes

"Shelves in their house are heavy with medals and crystal, bronze and silver trophies won from Japan to Czechoslovakia. The skills to win these trophies were developed on the hill a few yards behind the house . . ."

Vermont Life, Winter 1975

"Mickey and Ginny Cochran have parented one of the most famous skiing clans in the world."

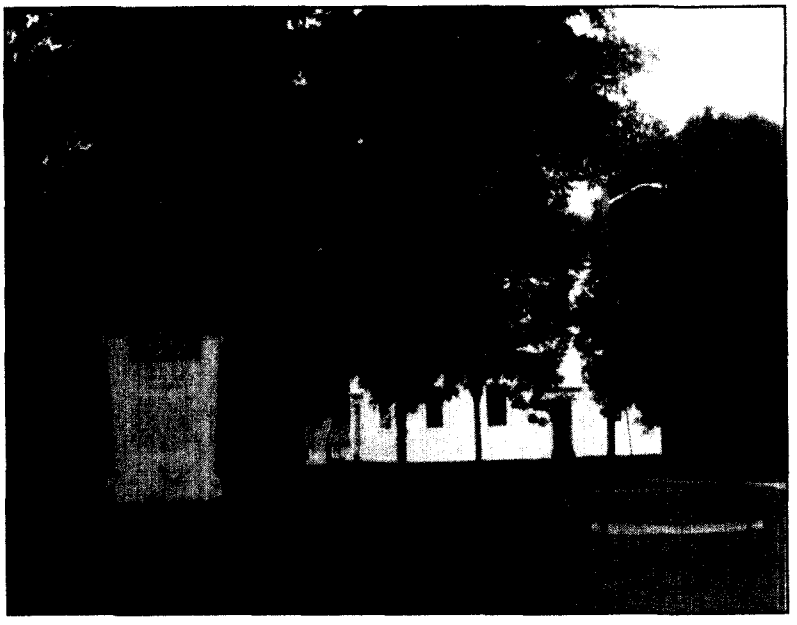
Vermont Life, Winter 1987

"But the passing years have left one thing untouched — the Cochrans of Richmond are still Vermont's first family of skiing."

The Burlington Free press, January 4, 1994

"The Cochran family record in World Cup, World Championship, and Olympic competition would be the envy of many entire nations."

Yankee Magazine, September 1995



Richmond's lasting tribute to the Cochran family, a monument on the green by the Old Round Church, seen in the background.

The Richmond Underwear Factory
Now the Goodwin Baker Building

At the turn of the century a forward-thinking community effort took place in Richmond. Townspeople raised a considerable sum of money to offer a financial inducement to new industry, hoping to establish an economic base which would ensure the future prosperity of the town.

The deal looked attractive to two out-of-state businessmen. In 1900 the Richmond Underwear Company was started by J.S. Baker of Peekskill, N.Y., who served as president, and I.H. Goodwin, his wife's brother-in-law, general superintendent. Goodwin's son Philip supervised the manufacturing department. The medium grade of muslin underwear for women and children was sold to wholesale dealers and large retail stores throughout the country. John Wanamaker's department stores in New York and Philadelphia carried goods from the Richmond Underwear Company.

For several years the company was the town's largest employer and its presence spawned considerable growth in Richmond village.

Photo Courtesy of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation

The Richmond Underwear Factory prior to its purchase in 1988 by William Curtis and Sidney Miller, who undertook a massive restoration and in 1993 secured a listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

A Chronology:

- 1900: Mr. Baker and Mr. Goodwin, proprietors, opened their new underwear factory in July, with about 20 employees. Within six months its work force numbered over 100, with a daily output of over 4000 garments. Mostly women, the workers were paid $1.25 to $1.75 a day.

- 1924: The Betty Ann Underwear Co. took over operations, run by Roland Layfield, whose first wife was Baker's daughter Edith. The company made fancy underwear and ladies' blouses. Before coming to Richmond, Layfield operated a shirt factory in Rutland.

- 1946: B. Milton Kimball was the next buyer. He purchased the building for the Cellucord Corporation, a subsidiary of Gilman Paper Co. of Gilman, Vermont. The plant was called Millets, after the man who originated the process of tightly winding paper to use for the backing of rugs. This was a time when jute, usually used for rug backing, was expensive and scarce. The company became known as Cellucord, and at the height of its operation employed over 300 workers in three shifts.

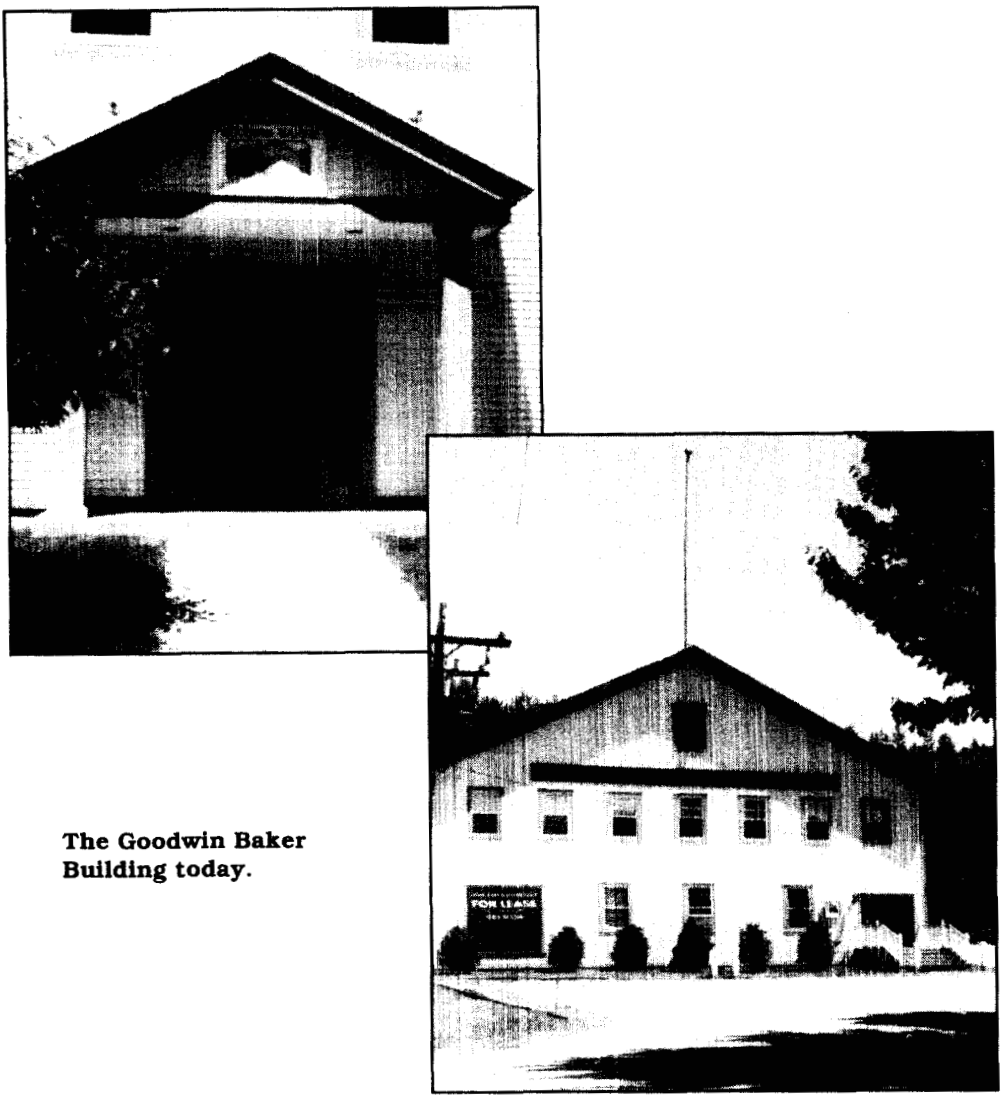
- 1953: Cellucord stopped making the paper backing but left the machinery in the Richmond factory. Operations resumed in 1955.

- 1961: The Cellucord Company moved to Winooski but retained the Richmond building. For a few months in 1964 experimental work was carried on here, in which cellucord fibers were used to make sand bags. For a number of years the old factory stood empty, while none of various ideas for use of the building came to fruition.

- 1971: The factory housed Fuel-Air (Fuelair) Company, founded in 1971 by Ned Pettingill, a Vermont oil distributor. Fuelair was described as "a company chartered to manufacture and sell automotive fuel-saving devices." Inventor Edward P. LaForce of Huntington, along with twenty assistants, ran a laboratory for the next couple of years to develop and test efficient gas-powered engines. Later, Design Craft, Inc., a cabinet making firm, occupied the factory, along with Augustin Gonzalez, a fine furniture maker.

- 1984: The factory was purchased by M.C.H. Associates from the estate of Ned Pettingill. Sikora Auto Parts and North Country Wholesaler Distributors were located here.

- 1988: William Curtis and Sidney Miller purchased the property then "in a distressed state of repair" and in 1989 applied for a listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans were underway "to do a substantial rehabilitation of the building", including restoring the exterior and creating usable space inside.



The Goodwin Baker Building today.

- 1993: Listing on the National Register of Historic Places was granted.
- Today the building is refurbished to the tastes and requirements of the 90s and houses a variety of contemporary offices. The building is still under the ownership of William Curtis and Sidney Miller.

Note: Information for the preceding section came largely from two sources: a paper, The Richmond Underwear Company Building, written by Harriet Riggs and Gary Bressor in 1988, and the archives at the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation in Montpelier.

FireRobin Puppets

Wherever in the world FireRobin puppets go, they are sure to capture devoted fans. A seven year old girl from Augusta, Georgia, in her very best handwriting, wrote to her "idol", puppet maker Carol Feierabend: "I love your puppets. I feel like we know you. Please write back." Carol did — and received a smiling photo to display on the bulletin board in her office.

Some of the fans are famous people. Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy has a FireRobin frog in his office in Washington D.C. Another FireRobin puppet went to Washington: President Clinton bought a parrot when he was in Burlington two years ago.

These magical little puppet animals, designed to come to life on children's fingers, start their existence in a store on Bridge Street in the heart of Richmond Village. Carol Feierabend, founder and owner of FireRobin puppets, designs the captivating toys to bring "joy and lasting play value" to their young owners. There's a pink satin and velveteen pig, a fleecy sheep, penguin, loon, hummingbird, owl, snake, mouse — and more — all made from durable yet colorful and pleasing-to-the-touch materials.

Where does Carol get her unique ideas? "Everywhere," she says — from children who come into the store or write to her, from adult customers, staff members, anyone who has an idea to offer. Carol adds, "A special source of inspiration is Ranger Rick magazine."

Carol's unique skill with fabrics started with scraps from her father-in-law's business. He was a tailor whose company made wool jersey coats, and the colors from his spring line were fascinating. "There would be 8 to 10 samples of just yellows, or pinks," Carol says. "I just had to do something with those scraps." She designed her first puppets in 1978 using these colorful wool scraps. When they ran out, Carol's use of other appealing fabrics evolved from there.

When experienced finger puppet owners told Carol they also wanted hand puppets, she listened — and called her support team into action: children, stitchers, husbands, even the UPS driver. One of the now popular hand puppets to evolve was the turtle, one of the FireRobin designs to win a 1995 coveted Parents' Choice Honors Award. (Parents' Choice is the oldest non-profit consumer guide to children's toys in the country.) In 1996 two more FireRobin hand puppets won awards: a gold for the Snake and silver for the Komodo Dragon.

Carol explains that the name of her company — FireRobin — comes from her family name, which in German literally means "festive evening." Since she started FireRobin as a small craft business in her home in the late 70s, Carol has nurtured its steady growth. Today FireRobin Puppets are sold in 600 specialty stores throughout the country, as well as in Canada, Japan and Switzerland.

In addition to the charming finger and hand puppets created here, the FireRobin store also sells puppets and puppet paraphernalia from other manufacturers, as well as books on puppetry, unusual small toys, children's

Two young visitors from nearby Westford, Mandi Vilaseca and Jamie O'Donnell (left to right), enjoy the array of FireRobin finger puppets.

audio tapes and more. The store is also an outlet for puppet seconds, which are displayed in a large basket ready for children of all ages to browse through. Carol has designed the store to be "a place where customers feel free to come in, look around and ask questions." She keeps in mind "the way I like to be treated as a customer." The store is also a valuable source of visitors, whose opinions are very helpful as Carol seeks new design ideas.

Carol describes her business as a "cottage industry" which employes 12 stitchers and painters who work in their homes. She values producing a high quality product while at the same time ensuring her workers a fair wage. Visitors to the store can see the line-up of interesting fabrics, or watch a skilled stitcher at work. The store also provides space for administration, and the preparation, packing and shipping of the puppets.

L.J. Kopf, children's librarian at Richmond Free Library, is a FireRobin puppet devotee. "The puppets Carol has donated to the library are truly wonderful, a favorite toy in the children's section," he says. "Carol is very community-minded; she's great to us." In addition to the finger and hand puppets for all the children to use, Carol has donated some special, more delicate puppets for older children to engage in creative, imaginative play. She also works with the library on special events, such as the Champ puppet show with an amazing treasure chest, which accompanied last summer's library program related to Lake Champlain.

The Historic Monitor Barns

Familiar Richmond landmarks visible from Interstate 89, these two large faded red barns date back to the early 1900s. Each barn has a distinctive monitor roof, a gable roof with a section along the ridge that is raised up to accommodate a row of windows on each side, allowing ventilation and light. While a monitor roof is a common feature on historic mill buildings, it is unusual on a Vermont barn.

The more easterly barn, with the date 1901 clearly visible, is located at the present Vermont Farm Bureau Center, which uses a likeness of the monitor roof as its logo. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places since 1993, this property has been designated the M.S. Whitcomb Farm as its historic name. At one time, Manwell S. Whitcomb owned this farm, while his brother Uziel S. Whitcomb owned the farm with the second monitor-roof barn, which was built in 1903.

The documentation for the National Register of Historic Places reads in part: "The centerpiece of the [M.S. Whitcomb] farm is the 1901 dairy barn, one of the most outstanding turn of the 20th century dairy barns in Vermont. By its scale and unusual incorporation of a monitor/ventilator system, this four level bank barn is a landmark in the Winooski River Valley. The barn represents the pinnacle of bank barn design in Vermont, being of the last generation of bank barns before farmers moved to the ground level stable barn design."

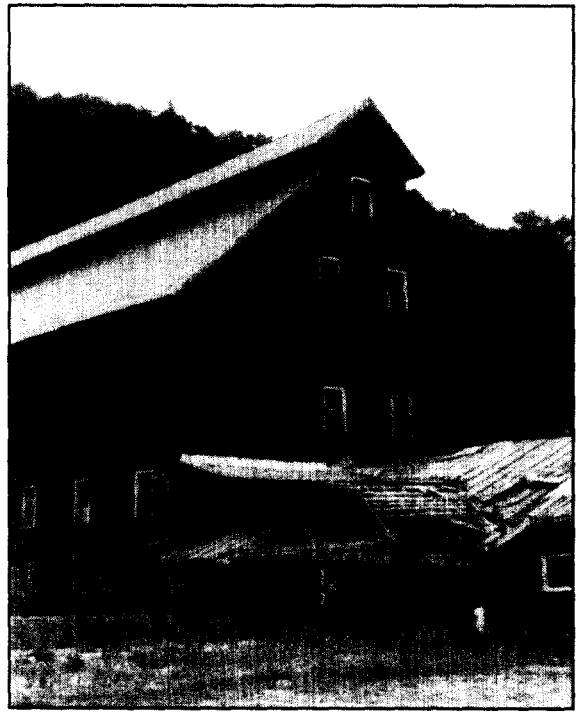
The "twin" barn, located on the neighboring property and still under private ownership, is somewhat smaller and considered to be in poorer structural repair. This barn has the added feature of a louvered cupola which distinguishes it from the earlier barn.

Xenophon Wheeler, who died in August, 1993, had owned this property since 1948; at one time Wheeler's farm encompassed 960 acres and included both monitor barns. During the farm's most productive time, in the 1960s, peak production was 6,000 pounds of milk per day. Wheeler was featured in a *Burlington Free Press* newspaper article about the monitor barns, shortly before his death.

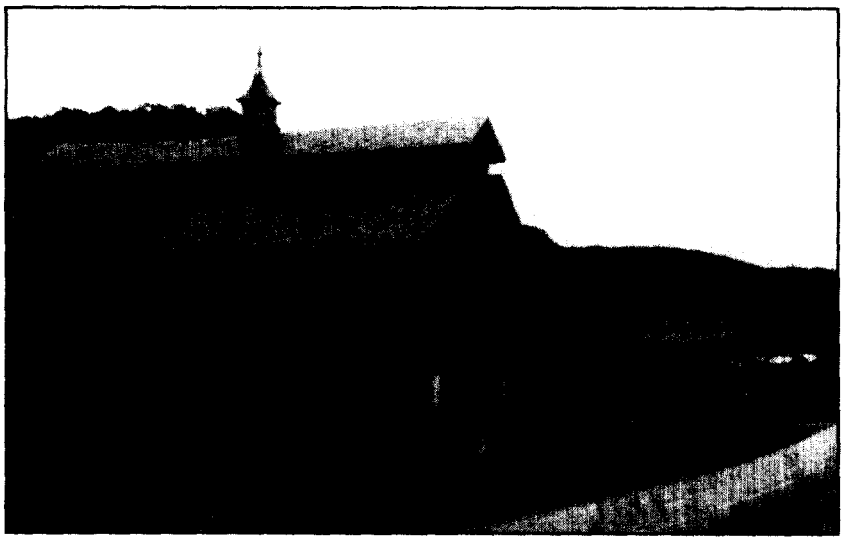
The M.S. Whitcomb Farm is also the site of the birthplace and early homestead of George F. Edmunds, designated with a state historic marker which reads:

> **George F. Edmunds, one of this nation's foremost legislators, was born on this farm Feb. 1, 1828. After serving at Montpelier as Speaker, he represented Vermont in Washington as Senator for 25 years, and presided over the Senate when Arthur was President.**

In 1840 the Edmunds family moved to Richmond village. George Edmunds read law at the U.S. Supreme Court in the winter of 1845/46. In 1866 he was



Right: The older of the two monitor barns was built in 1901 and is now owned by the Vermont Farm Bureau. Below: Built in 1903, the smaller barn is now in poorer structural condition. Both barns are slated for major renovations, under the leadership of the Richmond Land Trust.



appointed to a seat in the U.S. Senate to fill the vacancy left by the death of Sen. Solomon Foot. Edmunds was a senator until 1891, when he resigned for reasons of health. He presided over the Senate when Vermont-born Chester Alan Arthur was president, and was nominated as a Republican presidential candidate in 1880 and 1884. Edmunds died in 1919.

Richmond Land Trust

Organized in 1986, The Richmond Land Trust has over 100 member families and an active board of fifteen people. Chair Lou Borie sums up the group's mission: "To protect significant agricultural land, forest land, scenic areas and open spaces, for the benefit of the public."

This commendable grass roots effort is grounded in the work of dedicated people who have a vision toward the Richmond of the future.

One of the larger projects addressed by the Land Trust is the preservation of the two monitor barns on Route 2, with the goal of restoring both of them. The larger of the two barns, already on the National Register of Historic Places, is owned by the Vermont Farm Bureau. The smaller barn, under private ownership, is eligible for listing on the National Register. Currently the Land Trust is working with owners of both barns on a restoration that would result in some form of an agriculture-related use.

Another significant undertaking is the development of a trail system along the Winooski River. Through the cooperative efforts of the Land Trust and the town appointed Recreation Path Committee, what is now a simple walking trail will become an extensive, well-developed path system with river access and river shore preserve. Also in development is a process, through gift or purchase, to preserve farm land and open spaces between the village and Jonesville.

Lou Borie says, "We want people to realize that all the [acquired] land is open to the public." He added that the Land Trust pays property taxes; the land does not come off the town's tax rolls. No ongoing public funds are used in the operation of the Land Trust, which is supported by membership fees and fund-raising events, with an occasional grant for a specific preservation purpose.

Requiring extensive restoration, the 1903 barn might possibly be dismantled and moved further from the highway.

Jonesville

In the 1880s, S.H. Davis, Esq. wrote:

Jonesville, named after Ransom Jones is a very pleasant little village in Richmond; [it] has a few fine dwelling-houses, and a pleasant location near Bolton line at the mouth of the Huntington River. It has one hotel, and owing to the somewhat wild and picturesque beauty of the surrounding scenery it has been a place of some considerable summer resort.

Early Jonesville showing the old covered bridge in this undated photo.
Photo courtesy of the Cohn Family

Jonesville Academy

Built in the Italianate style about 1865, this well-kept private home in Jonesville just over the Winooski River at the junction of the Duxbury Road was once Jonesville Academy, the local high school. At that time, Jonesville was a bustling mill village, which included a railroad station, hotel, hardware and paint stores and several mills.

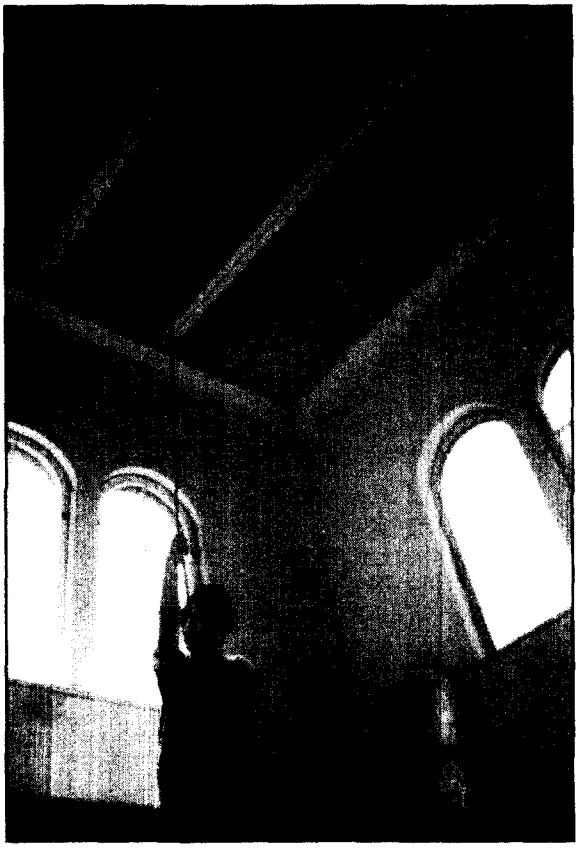
Originally the land for the school was donated by Safford Colby with the stipulation that it be used "only for the purpose of holding public schools, for holding religious meetings, for public lectures and moral entertainment and other literary purposes and for no other purposes." The building was used as a school — originally a high school and later for grades one through five — until 1955, when it became the local Grange. Predictably, when all educational use of the building ceased, the property became entangled in legal questions. Once they were resolved, the land and building were subsequently purchased by Michael Saxe, who secured a listing for the building on the National Register of Historic Places in December, 1982.

John Cohn had watched the old Academy building longingly, and when a For Sale sign appeared one day fifteen years ago, he was quick to purchase it. Four years later he and Diane Mariano were married in the Old Round Church, and the Jonesville Academy became a family home.

A Tour of the Jonesville Academy

On a perfect summer day, as abundant flowers bend in a gentle breeze, I open a gate in the white picket fence and step over pastel sidewalk-chalk drawings in the walkway leading to the open door. Inside Diane Cohn prepares lunch for her three young boys and visiting playmates, in a modern kitchen area in the open, sunfilled room. Diane introduces me to her next-door neighbor, Janet Quinn, who taught grades one through five at the Jonesville Academy for two years when she first completed her teacher training in 1952.

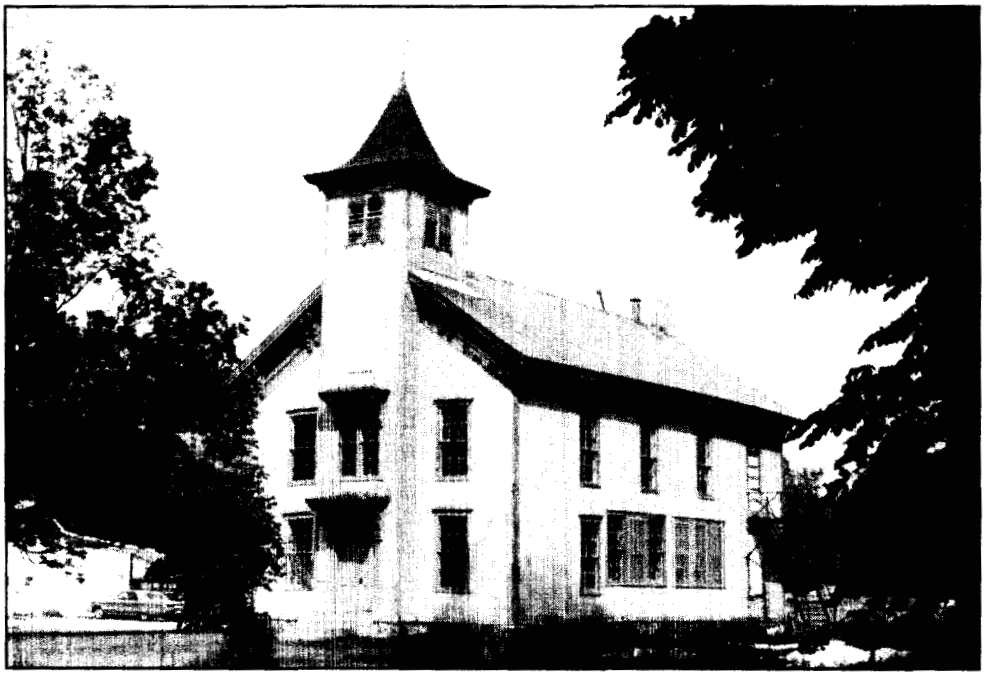
As two-year old Gabriel and five-year old Sam play with their friends, Diane and nine-year old Max conduct a tour of this impressive old schoolhouse, now more than 130 years old. Sun floods through the long bay of windows typical of early schools and gleams on restored wood floors, in which Diane points out signs of their earlier function — a burn-stain where a pot-bellied stove once stood, marks where desks were once anchored to the floor.



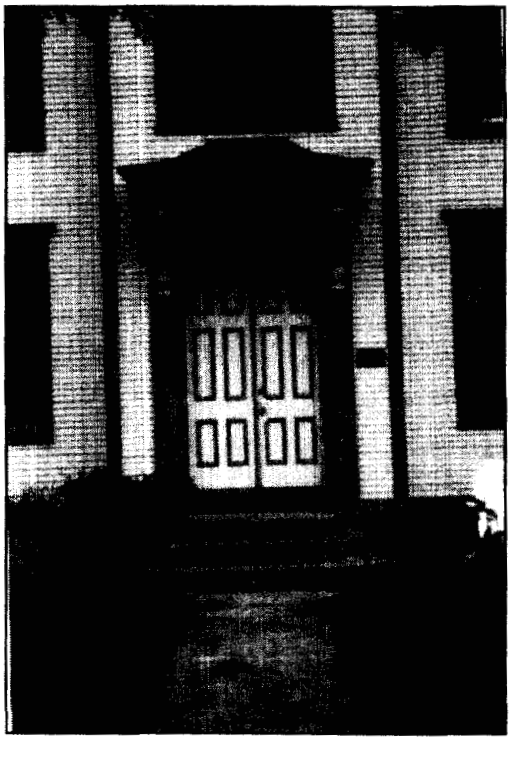
On the second floor, now divided into bedrooms, the old stage forms a platform in the boys' bedrooms. Further up is the bell tower, the old school bell now attached to a new rope. Gently, not to raise an alarm in the neighborhood, Max demonstrates how the bell is rung.

To this charming young host, I observe, "It must be fun to grow up in an old Academy." Max replies, "It sure is."

Max Cohn in the bell tower of his home, once the Jonesville Academy.



Above: The Jonesville Academy prior to its current restoration. Photo courtesy of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.



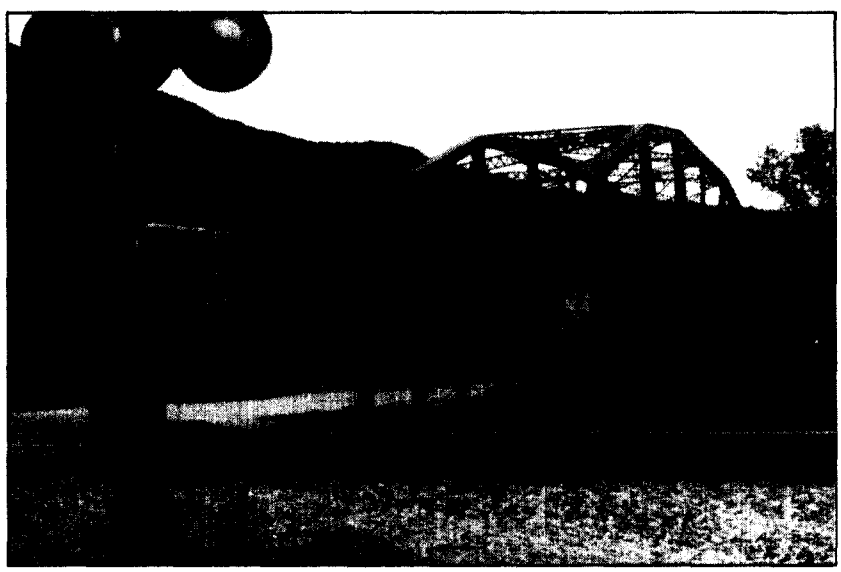
Right: The inviting doorway of the restored Academy, now the home of John and Diane Cohn and their children. The plaque on the right indicates that this building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Jonesville Bridge

This classic through-truss bridge over the Winooski river in Jonesville is significant as a representative example of the bridges built after the massive destruction of the 1927 flood. This major natural catastrophe in Vermont's 20th century history prompted an engineering effort of unprecedented magnitude, as state agencies rallied to rebuild a large number of bridges as quickly and as economically as possible. The standard design of the bridge at Jonesville, a Parker through-truss bridge, was used for nearly all spans greater than 150 feet. The extensive rebuilding effort brought in construction firms that did not generally find work in remote Vermont. This bridge was fabricated by Bethlehem Steel, who subcontracted work to the J.E. Cashman Co. of Burlington.

Although in 1997 construction work has not started, plans are underway to build a new bridge across the Winooski River at this location, with a process to save the old Parker through-truss span.

Three Richmond bridges over the Winooski River built in the same time period are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Jonesville span described above, the Bridge Street bridge in the village and the Checkered House bridge on Route 2.



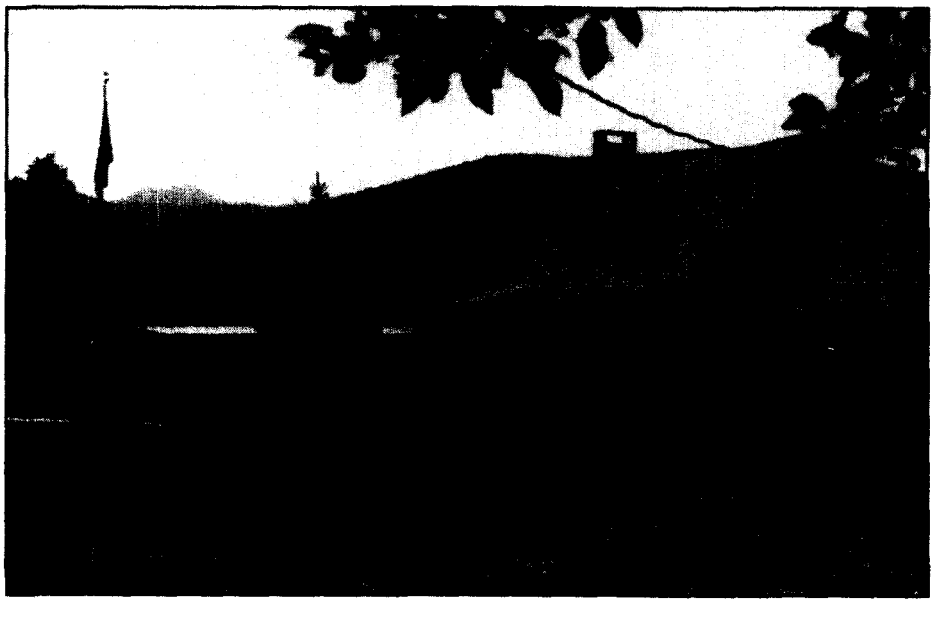
Harrington's

Listen to the words of historian Ralph Nading Hill, written fifty years ago for his book *The Winooski: Heartway of Vermont.*

"On the eastern outskirts of this town the Winooski passes, on the right, a small white freshly painted building. In this hut over corncob and maple fires, Luke Harrington smokes a ton of ham, bacon and sausage a week, and cures the meat in a pickle that is an old family recipe and his own closely guarded secret. Luke's tearoom nearby serves as a trap for summer travelers who, when they savor the meats, join his scattered clientele. In order to leave the tearoom they must pass through his display of Vermont products and are tempted by woodenware, hooked rugs, cheese, honey and maple sugar."

Luke Harrington had lived for many years in Montpelier, where since 1873 Scribner's Market had a reputation throughout Vermont for its delectable smoked hams, bacon and sausage. When Luke and his wife Mary bought the business in the early 30s, they soon decided to look for a rural environment mind. Their search throughout New England led them to Richmond, where they found the perfect location on Main Street — with a view of Camel's Hump.

In the Fall, 1951 *Vermont Life*, author and friend of the Harringtons' Vrest Orton wrote: "Here indeed was the view. They walked over to a farmer working in the field near the road. They asked if he would sell them a piece of land on that spot. He replied, 'Sure, I'll sell the whole farm on this spot!'"



This current photo of Harrington's differs surprisingly little from the one in Vermont Life 46 years ago, with a view of Camel's Hump.

Vrest Orton continues: "This was how the Harringtons got started in Richmond. They bought the land, a big 14 room house, and then built across the road where the farmer had been standing, a long, low slant-roof building typical of so many trim Vermont farm houses. That was 1936."

Showing the enterprising spirit that was to carry the business onward, the Harringtons ran this advertisement in the Vermont Sesquicentennial Souvenir Book in 1941.

"Everything for the Larder. We ship maple sugar cured, cob-smoked hams and bacon to every state in the Union. We are northern Vermont agents for famous Vermont Guild stoneground cornmeal. We are one of Vermont's leading maple products merchants. And our attractive dining room is open during the Summer months."

Back in 1951, Orton tells us, "Twice a year they issue a simple little folder setting forth the plain facts about their smoked hams, sausage, bacon and pork loin, all cured incidentally (at the risk of giving away Luke's secret) with the best Vermont maple syrup."

Today Harrington's of Vermont is prospering under the ownership of Peter Klinkenberg, who purchased the business in 1988. His son R. B. Klinkenberg works in the family enterprise and has an office in the original building in Richmond. The simple little folder that went to 14,000 households in 1951 has been replaced by a handsome catalog that features the appeal of Vermont as well as the appeal of Harrington's products. Direct mail, the bulk of Harrington's business, accounts for more than 3 million pieces of mail a year. Harrington's also advertises its Vermont specialty foods in about fifty upscale publications.

"Checkered House"

This Richmond landmark, now a popular restaurant known as Chequers, gets its sobriquet "Checkered House" from the fact that the bricks on its end walls are laid in a checkered design. It is built in the Federal style, widely used in Vermont architecture from the late 1700s through the 1830s. Above the door in this classic brick house, on the second story, is a Palladian window typical of the time period. (A Palladian window has three parts consisting of a tall round-headed window flanked by two shorter and narrower windows, each window usually being framed by pilasters or columns.) Once a stage coach inn with a ballroom on the second floor, this building is a fine example of the high-style used by more affluent builders and owners of the time.

19th Century Discovery of a Mammoth Tusk

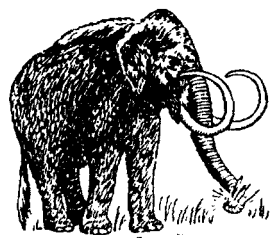
About 1865 S.H. Davis wrote: "A few years ago Col. Rolla Gleason, while digging muck in a swamp near the top of Bryant Hill, struck on some hard, bony substance, and on getting it out of the mud and examining the same, it proved to be the fossil remains of an elephant's tusk.

"It was presented by Col. Gleason to the University of Vermont, and can be found by the curious in its museum."

More accurately identified as a piece of a mammoth tusk, Col. Gleason's amazing discovery can still "be found by the curious" in the Perkins Museum of Geology at the University of Vermont. Richmond resident Peter Thomas, an archaeologist at UVM, says there definitely were large animals here — mammoth, mastodon and huge elk — just after the glaciers 13,000 years ago. Within a few thousand years they were gone.

Next to the tusk, in the same glass case, is a mammoth tooth found in Mt. Holly. One ten year old attending summer science camp at UVM looked at the approximately two foot segment of the mammoth tusk, brown with age, and said, "It sort of looks like an old log."

Although similar fossil remains from this general time period have been unearthed in Vermont, the hard bony substance credited to Col. Gleason more than 130 years ago was indeed an unusual and significant discovery.



Mammoth

New Archaeological Discoveries at the Mouth of the Huntington River

Recent large scale excavations at the mouth of the Huntington River in Jonesville have yielded significant information, hitherto unknown, about the town's prehistoric past. Richmond resident Peter Thomas, who worked on the excavation and the resulting report, says that the site is "the only one with such detail in Vermont."

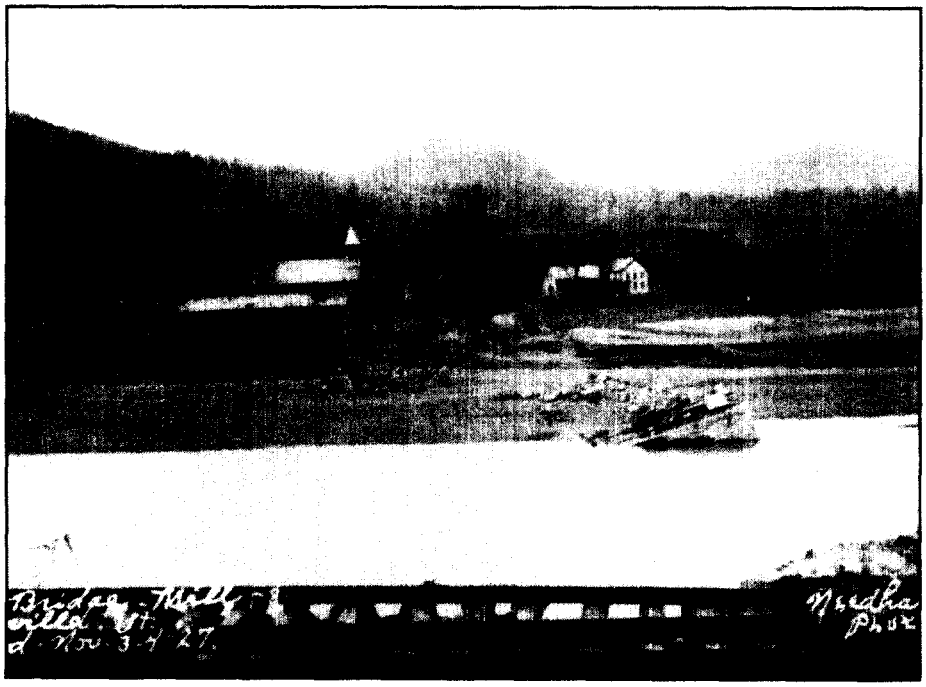
When the Vermont Agency of Transportation first considered construction of a new bridge over the Winooski River at Jonesville, Peter Thomas was among the University of Vermont archaeologists who conducted a survey to identify historic or prehistoric sites in the area that might be affected by construction.

An excerpt from the resulting report reads: "At a time when Richmond was celebrating its bicentennial [1994], excavation ... allowed us to understand life during part of the 10,000-11,000 year period before European exploration and settlement." The two years of detailed excavation and analysis allowed public involvement. "The project provided local residents, and particularly

several hundred students in the elementary and middle school, with a first-hand look at a professionally excavated archaeological site. Several public presentations and an exhibit at the town library further piqued interest in Richmond's more distant past."

The site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because of its "significant information about prehistoric technology, subsistence and settlement patterns and environment during and since the period of prehistoric occupation."

The Richmond Public Library has a copy of the report submitted by Peter Thomas and others connected with the Consulting Archaeology Program at the University of Vermont.



Jonesville after the 1927 flood, the Academy in the background having withstood the ravages.

Photo courtesy of the Cohn Family

In these days of world-wide travel, residents of the two dozen far flung Richmonds are likely at some time to visit other Richmonds, with a resulting unique feeling of kinship. Here are glimpses into two overseas Richmonds, united through common threads of language and heritage, yet geographically at opposite sides of the globe.

The First Richmond

England's Richmond is located in the austere beauty of the Yorkshire Dales, since 1954 a National Park covering 680 square miles. James Herriot fans associate the Dales with the legendary veterinarian, immortalized in several books and the popular BBC television program "All Creatures Great and Small". Visitors to Richmond can view the set of the veterinary surgery used in filming the TV series, now a highlight of the Richmondshire Museum.

In 1071, long before settlement in any other Richmond in the world, Alan the Red built a magnificent castle on the sheer rock cliffs overlooking the River Swale. Richmond Castle, so dramatic and impenetrable a fortification, has survived through the ages. Today its splendid 12th century keep affords magnificent views across the North York Moors.

Visitors to the Dales can explore a wealth of ancient history: signs of Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age settlements; a surviving Roman road system; 4th century Anglo-Saxon field systems; influence of 9th and 10th century Norse Vikings and more. Tangible reminders of monastic influence remain in wondrous abbey ruins. The Dales provided a high degree of medieval England's wealth, based largely on wool.

In an age of hurried visits, tourists frequently overlook the walking exploration of some of the most beautiful scenery in this unique National Park. The Dales Authority has negotiated access to hundreds of acres of moorland for those who seek the pleasure of the beckoning terrain on foot.

Top of the South

At the far end of the globe, New Zealand's Richmond is situated on Tasman Bay, at the "Top of the South" — the northern part of the South Island. New Zealand is renowned for its magnificent scenery, and Mount Richmond Forest Park is just one of many spectacular National Parks beckoning the adventurer. Hiking is so much a part of the Kiwi way of life that in 1975 Parliament set up a system of trails designed to run the whole length of New Zealand.

A transplanted Chittenden County resident, Alan Riegelman, now lives near Richmond and runs New Zealand Travelers, Inc., offering tours for day hikers and backpackers. Further information about New Zealand Travelers, Inc. is available in Vermont at 802. 985.8865.

One of the attractions of the Richmond area is the proliferation of artists and high quality craftspeople who are drawn to the pleasant climate and bountiful landscape. Among the artistic treasures, a visitor is quick to discover the distinctive pottery at Waimea Pottery, the studio of Paul Laird, located in Craft Habitat, part of the Richmond art scene since 1984. The address for Waimea Pottery is PO Box 3065, Richmond, NZ.

Author's Notes and Acknowledgements

With such a plethora of amazing and wonderful stories in Richmond, I know there are many more not captured in these pages. Those that are here provided me with one of those great assignments in which the hard work is actually fun.

There was never any question that the lead story would be on the Old Round Church, which stands today as a remarkable tribute to a caring community. As the mother of a ski historian, I was aware of the extraordinary Cochran family and their enduring place in the annals of American skiing. As a grandmother, I was well acquainted with FireRobin puppets, and I admit that my extensive collection is not just for the youngsters. Great material just seemed to flow from there.

Richmond is such a friendly place, I have many folks to thank for their warm hospitality and generous sharing of information — as well as their infectious enthusiasm and pride in their town and its history. On a blistering hot day Harriet Riggs offered me iced tea — and a wealth of information. I look forward with a particular interest to the forthcoming History of Richmond in which Harriet plays such a significant role.

Special thanks go to Ginny and Mickey Cochran, who made me feel right at home at their kitchen table with a cup of coffee. And to Gary Bressor, a Richmond visionary connected with the Historical Society, Land Trust and more; Carol Feierabend, owner of FireRobin Puppets; Lou Borie, chair of Richmond Land Trust; Phyllis Sherman, the first person I met in Richmond; Velma Godfrey, town clerk; the Cohn family, John, Diane, Max, Sam and Gabriel, owners of the old Jonesville Academy; and Peter Thomas, UVM archaeologist. Many more helpful people along the way also deserve my thanks.

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Earline Marsh is a former elementary school principal whose retirement career includes freelance writing and hand papermaking. She lives with her husband Wavell Cowan in an old Moretown farmhouse that frequently echoes with the happy sounds of grandchildren.