



## The Vermont Encyclopedia

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When outsiders think of Vermont, they conjure up images of pumpkin picking against a backdrop of stunning fall foliage, skiing the Green Mountains in wintertime, harvesting maple syrup in mud season, and canoeing on Lake Champlain in the summer. Ethan Allen comes to mind, as do Robert Frost, Norman Rockwell, Calvin Coolidge, and, more recently, James Jeffords. Other Vermont touchstones include Ben & Jerry's, Holstein cows in hillside pastures, and tranquil village greens featuring a single white church. This is romantic Vermont, a place that seems to have changed little since it joined the union in 1791. In reality, Vermont is much more complex. It is a place of dramatic contrasts, with a rich and provocative history. First a contested frontier region and then an independent republic, Vermont eventually became one of the most politically conservative states while gaining a reputation for innovation in areas such as the production of machine tools. Although agriculture was its mainstay, Vermont became famous for its high-grade marble and granite and, later, for the development of skiing, now one of its most important economic activities. Beginning in the 1950s, Vermont became a mecca for enterprising individuals from other parts of the country whose alliance with native-born Vermonters gradually changed the state into a liberal political bastion. Active in the preservation of the good life through conservation and land management, Vermonters also pioneered the legal recognition of gay relationships. The state has preserved such civic forms as the town meeting and the citizen legislature while also providing a welcome for environmentally sound new industries and start-up businesses. Most existing encyclopedias on Vermont were published more than seventy years ago. The Vermont Encyclopedia's thousand-plus entries, the work of 140 contributors, present a completely up-to-date and comprehensive collection of information on the Green Mountain State. Drawn from the most recent research available, its subjects range from prehistoric settlement to events in today's headlines. Entries include famous and infamous Vermonters, features of the physical landscape; political, economic, and social history; organizations like the 251 Club; and tidbits on nudism, the Wasp (the only car ever made in Vermont), the fabled fur-bearing trout, and the invention of the jogbra. Four topical essays introduce the volume. These treat the geography, climate, and natural history of the state; offer an account of settlement from precolonial times to the present; analyze and discuss contemporary features of Vermont's demography, commerce, and culture; and describe the evolution and current structure of the Vermont Constitution as well as state, county and municipal government. The essays are followed by the individual entries, arranged alphabetically. Supplemented by charts, maps, and photographs, The Vermont Encyclopedia will serve as the quintessential guide to the Green Mountain state for years to come.

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