New Birth of Freedom

A Walk Through the Civil War Home Front in Woodstock, Vermont

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC. [map], WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, [cover photo]

5 Tribou Park
6 Charles Dana House / Woodstock Historical Society
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8 Peter Washburn Office
9 Charles Wentworth Barber Shop
10 Grand Army of the Republic Meeting Space
11 Town Green
12 Solomon Woodward Woolen Mill
13 River Street Cemetery
14 Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

The tour route is approximately 2.5 miles long.
For your safety, please use crosswalks and watch for traffic.

For additional details, visit www.nps.gov/mabi.

[Cover Photo] The men of the Woodstock Light Infantry, the local militia company, practiced their drills on the Town Green before heading off to join the Union forces a few weeks after the Civil War began in April 1861.

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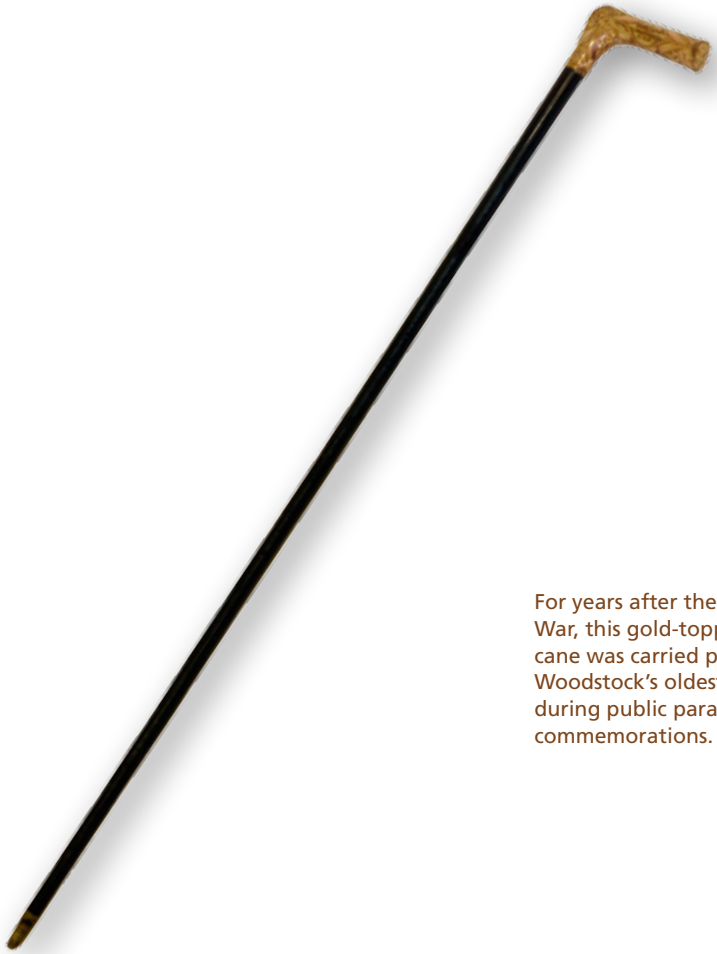

For years after the Civil War, this gold-topped ivory cane was carried proudly by Woodstock's oldest veteran during public parades and commemorations.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD

If the Revolutionary War Was the Birth of the Nation, the Civil War Was Its Turbulent Adolescence

We are all in this war; those who fight and those who stay at home.

—*Central Press,* weekly Republican newspaper of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, October 1862

The late 1800s was a time of uncertainty, pain, and growth. From battlefield to home front, people questioned the responsibilities of government and their identity as citizens. The town of Woodstock, Vermont, offers a remarkable window into life on the Civil War home front and the changes that swept the country—and continue to shape our lives today.

With the nearest battle raging 500 miles away in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, life seemed peaceful in Woodstock, nestled in the foothills of the Green Mountains. But once the administrator for Vermont's war effort set up office on Central Street in 1861, Woodstock became a nerve center of the conflict. The town's men marched off to fight in nearly every major battle, while those left behind faced new challenges.

With wonderfully preserved buildings that have stood since before the Civil War, Woodstock offers the ideal place to go back in time. This walking tour, created by Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, offers a deeper understanding of the far-reaching effects of the conflict on the role of women, the meaning of citizenship, and the beginnings of land conservation and stewardship.

Benjamin Franklin Bugbee Jr. of Glover, Vermont, carried this drum in the Union army's Third Battery Light Artillery. He served for one year beginning in August 1864.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD

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Redefining What It Means to Be A Country

. . . these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

—President Abraham Lincoln
Gettysburg Address
November 19, 1863

From the small town of Woodstock to America's big cities, the Civil War brought staggering changes to nearly every citizen and every institution, transforming the course of the country's history. Four million enslaved people gained their freedom. More than 600,000 lost their lives on both sides of the conflict. The country reunited after the secession of Confederate states nearly ripped it apart.

Politically, the war meant a more powerful and centralized federal government. States' rights were no longer all powerful. For the first time, the federal government legally guaranteed the equality of all Americans, regardless of race. Constitutional changes launched a long struggle for civil rights that would continue for more than a century.

Economically, the war expanded the impact of the Industrial Revolution, helping propel the United States to a new position as one of the most powerful industrialized nations in the world by 1900.

It was all part of what Lincoln had predicted would be a "new birth of freedom." From the devastation of the war emerged a reborn democracy and a heightened sense of national identity. In the end, the country's name stayed the same, but a stronger, more inclusive nation would give the words "United States of America" a more powerful and enduring meaning.

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July 8, 1777

The Vermont Constitution is the first to outlaw slavery.

September 18, 1850

Federal Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 is passed.

November 6, 1860

Abraham Lincoln is elected president.

Forging a New African American Identity

Once let the black man get upon his person the brass letters U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder, and bullets in his pocket, and there is no power on the earth or under the earth which can deny that he has earned the right of citizenship in the United States.

—Orator, Writer, and Abolitionist Frederick Douglass

In Woodstock, African Americans ran businesses, owned land, and raised families. But when the Civil War broke out, they could not enlist. All they could do was join as servants to officers.

Once the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation made enlisting a possibility, a dozen African American men from Woodstock joined thousands of others across the country in proudly putting on the Union uniform. It seemed a promising start to a vision of equality, even if the black soldiers had to fight for equal pay and were often relegated to hard labor rather than combat.

After the war, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments took the next steps—abolishing slavery, granting citizenship to former slaves, and ensuring the right to vote. But a barrage of laws legalizing segregation and discrimination turned the concept of equality on its head. Another century would pass before the civil rights movement of the 1960s effectively outlawed discrimination.

A Woodstock citizen drives an ox cart down Central Street.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD [top], BILLINGS FAMILY ARCHIVES [right]

April 12, 1861

The Civil War begins.

May 2, 1861

Woodstock Light Infantry goes to war.

January 1, 1863

President Lincoln issues Emancipation Proclamation, freeing millions of slaves.

Rethinking Women's Roles

If all that has been said by orators and poets since the creation of the world in praise of women was applied to the women of America, it would not do them justice for their conduct during this war.

—President Abraham Lincoln
March 18, 1864, Sanitary Fair, Washington, DC

As their husbands marched off to faraway battlefields, the women of Woodstock were thrust into new responsibilities. Wives of farmers already had their hands full with gardening, cooking, cleaning, sewing, and child raising. Without husbands or sons to help, the women also picked up axes and chopped wood, slaughtered animals, and harvested crops. They managed the home finances. Some women began working in mills or factories. In Woodstock and thousands of other towns, women organized themselves into soldiers' aid societies, gathering nearly $54 million in money and supplies.

They had not enlisted, but they were as much a part of the war effort as the soldiers. Their new roles paved the way for future generations of women to make inroads as students, as employees, and as citizens.

For children growing up during the Civil War, uncertainty and worry were constant playmates. Their games often mirrored wartime news—they fought mock battles and carried each other on improvised stretchers.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD

April 9, 1865

Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox Court House.

April 14, 1865

President Lincoln assassinated.

December 6, 1865

13th Amendment adopted, abolishing slavery.

Sowing the Seeds of Conservation

It is the main duty of government . . . to provide means of protection for all its citizens in the pursuit of happiness. . . . The establishment by government of great public grounds for the free enjoyment of the people under certain circumstances is thus justified and enforced as a political duty.

—Frederick Law Olmsted
Yosemite and the Mariposa Grove: A Preliminary Report, 1865

The Civil War years produced another legacy—the birth of the conservation movement and the conceptual framework of what became the National Park Service. Two men of Woodstock, Vermont, played significant roles in creating that legacy.

As a boy growing up in Woodstock in the early 1800s, George Perkins Marsh witnessed the problems caused by overfarming, overgrazing, and overtimbering. During the war years, he served as Lincoln's ambassador to Italy. He also wrote *Man and Nature,* the first book to examine the destructive impact of humanity on the environment.

Meanwhile, another Woodstock resident, Frederick Billings, was practicing law in California. Through his professional contacts and his support of the Sanitary Commission (the "Red Cross" of the Civil War), Billings worked closely with Frederick Law Olmsted, landscape architect of New York's Central Park. Billings and Olmsted joined others in campaigning to preserve the stunning beauty of California's Yosemite Valley. In 1864 Congress established Yosemite as a public park—the first action of its kind, and one that led to the creation of the National Park Service. After the war, Billings returned to Woodstock, buying the estate where Marsh once lived and implementing many of Marsh's conservation theories. Today, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is one of nearly 400 national parks—and the only park to tell the story of conservation history.

© ROB WOOD

May 30, 1868

First Decoration Day (now known as Memorial Day) is observed.

July 9, 1868

14th Amendment adopted, granting citizenship to four million freed slaves.

February 3, 1870

15th Amendment ratified, giving freed men the right to vote.

Billings Farm and Camp Dike

STOP 1

Preparing for War

5302 River Road

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

www.billingsfarm.org

On this field, local farm families paraded their prize livestock and showed off their best jams and needlework for the Windsor County Fair. The Civil War turned the field into a military encampment filled with the shouts of marching orders and the metallic clank of guns. A month after the war began, 39 men marched out of Woodstock in the pre-dawn darkness, led by the Cornet Band, to

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD

The camp was named for Lt. Andrew Dike.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

join the First Vermont Brigade. The entire village turned out to say farewell. They had responded to President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops to serve for 90 days. They thought there was plenty of time to reunite the republic and end the war—but this was only the beginning. A year later, men were arriving at Camp Dike from all over the country to prepare for war. That September, 1,500 people gathered here for religious services, and the women of Woodstock presented each soldier with a bible.

At the war's outset, the woolly Merino sheep craze (with six sheep for every Vermonter) had already stripped the land of trees to allow for grazing.

Vermont was a deforested, environmental mess. Four years after the war, Frederick Billings purchased 270 acres here and turned it into a model of responsible stewardship.

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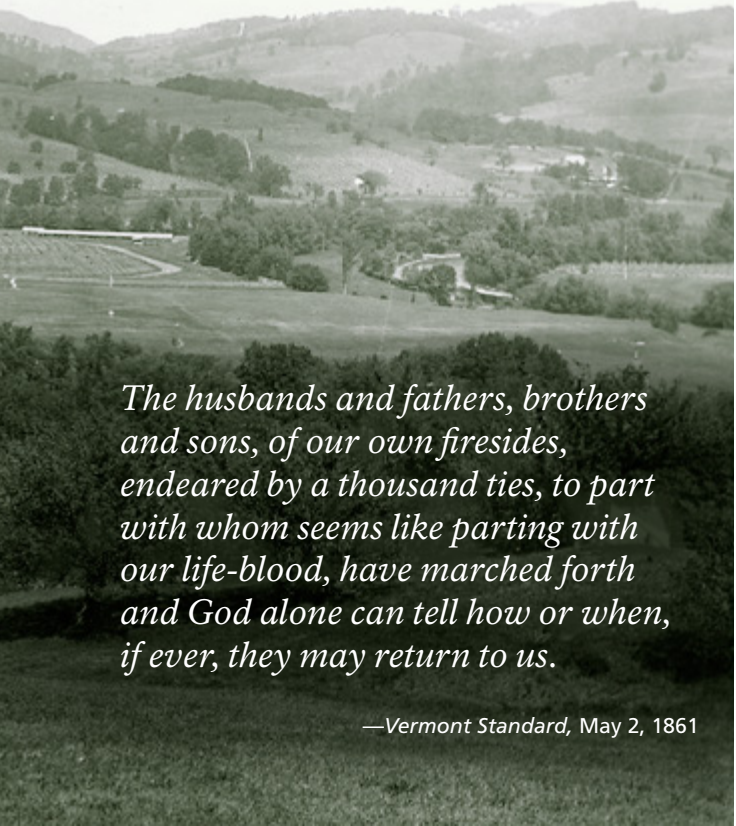


The husbands and fathers, brothers and sons, of our own firesides, endeared by a thousand ties, to part with whom seems like parting with our life-blood, have marched forth and God alone can tell how or when, if ever, they may return to us.

—*Vermont Standard,* May 2, 1861

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

COURTESY / JOHN A. GIBSON

Worthington Pierce, a blue-eyed, brown-haired farmer, enlisted at age 19. He served with the Union's Vermont 12th Regiment, returned to Woodstock to recruit soldiers, and then re-enlisted. He was captured in Virginia and spent seven long months in prison, where the circumstances "were enough to place the human system in a condition from which it would not recover in the ordinary lifetime," he said. For the rest of his life, he suffered from debilitating headaches.

Camp Dike (left) *was the place where farmers became soldiers.*

Senator Jacob Collamer House

STOP 2

Slavery and Political Causes for War

40 Elm Street

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

Private residence. Please respect the privacy of those who live here.

When he was elected US senator in 1855, Jacob Collamer had lived in this Elm Street mansion for nearly two decades with his wife, Mary, and seven children. In the critical years leading up to the Civil War, he and other lawmakers made compromises on slavery to try to reduce tensions between northern and southern states. It did not work.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (both) / ROB WOOD (right)

Most of the homes and buildings on Elm Street were built before the first shots were fired at Fort Sumter in 1861. Today, thanks to careful architectural preservation, the streetscape looks much as it did then.

Three months after the war began, he drew up an act that gave the president new powers and gave the war its first congressional sanction. The act came to be known as "Collamer's Statute." One of the president's strongest supporters in reuniting the country, Collamer became outspoken about ending slavery. He was in the garden here when news of Lincoln's assassination made him cry out, "My God, what will become of our country now!" He did not live to find out. The "Green Mountain Socrates," as some called him, died a few months later.

Jacob Collamer

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

One of only two
Vermonters whose statue is part of the US Capitol's National Statuary Hall Collection, Jacob Collamer served in Congress for more than 15 years. "Like President Lincoln, Collamer had a keen legal mind and an unimpeachable reputation for integrity," according to the Lincoln Institute.

The only course of sustaining this government and restoring and preserving national existence, and perpetuating the national integrity, is by a vigorous and successful prosecution of the war . . .

—Senator Jacob Collamer, December 1862

First Congregational Church

STOP 3

Slavery and Morality

36 Elm Street

NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

The oldest place of worship in Woodstock, the First Congregational Church was established in 1801—four years after the Vermont constitution outlawed slavery. The anti-slavery movement had strong roots in this church and throughout the religious community. By the mid-1840s, nearly all Vermont churches had declared their opposition to slavery, although few churchgoers walking up the stone steps to this white-towered church would have called themselves militant abolitionists.

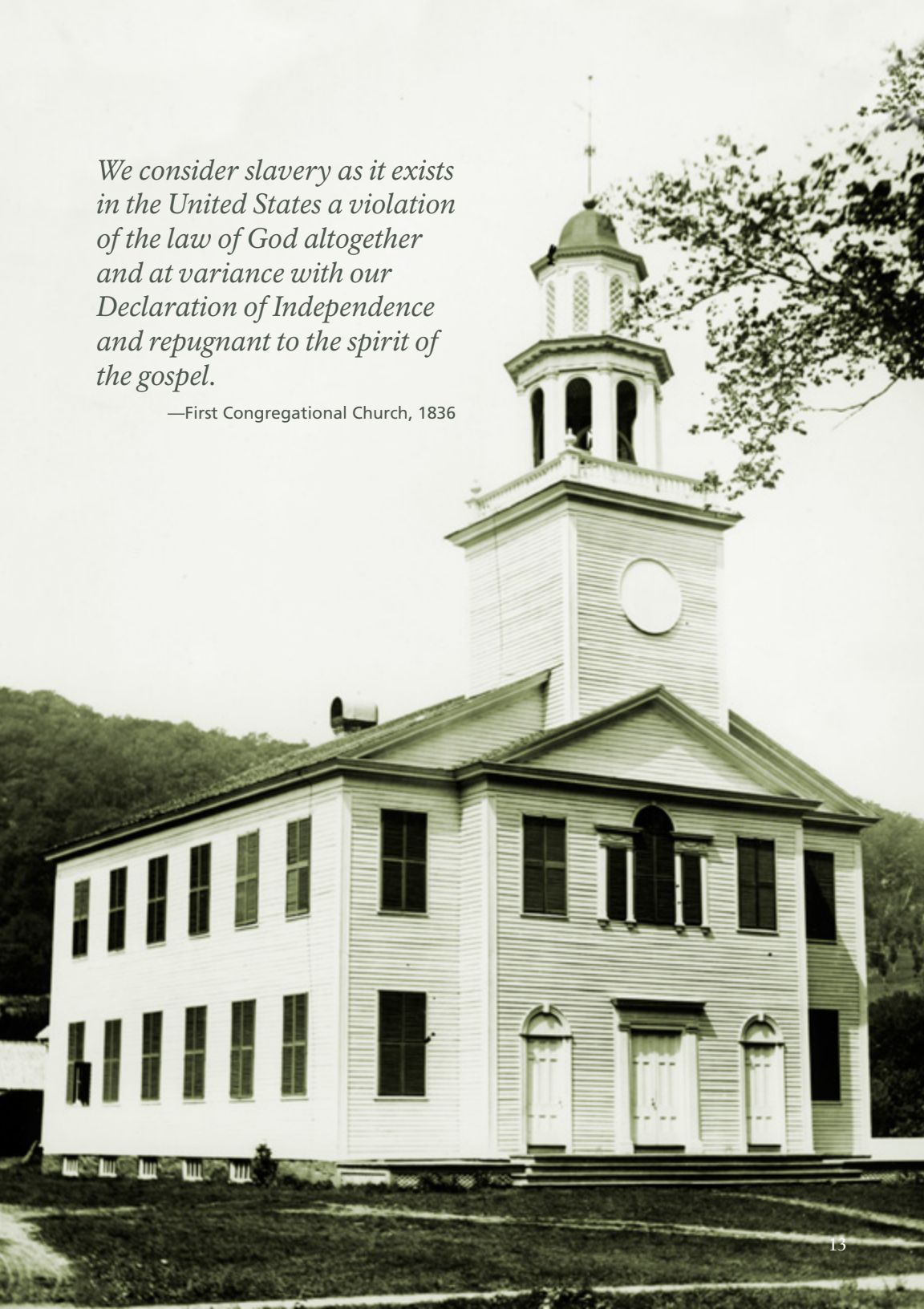
When President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, declaring freedom for enslaved people, it was a mind-boggling concept for many. But for First Congregational Church leaders, their stance was clear: the gospel did not allow human bondage, so freedom was to be celebrated.

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

The 711-pound bell that rang for generations in the church's iconic tower was forged in Paul Revere's foundry in Boston in 1818. It was this bell that rang to celebrate Gen. Robert E. Lee's surrender. A few days later, it tolled again, this time to mourn President Lincoln's death. After a crack was discovered in the 1970s, the bell was moved to the portico.

A generation after the Civil War, the church installed the clock on the tower and added Tiffany stained glass windows.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY



We consider slavery as it exists in the United States a violation of the law of God altogether and at variance with our Declaration of Independence and repugnant to the spirit of the gospel.

—First Congregational Church, 1836

Mellish House

Letters to and from the Home Front

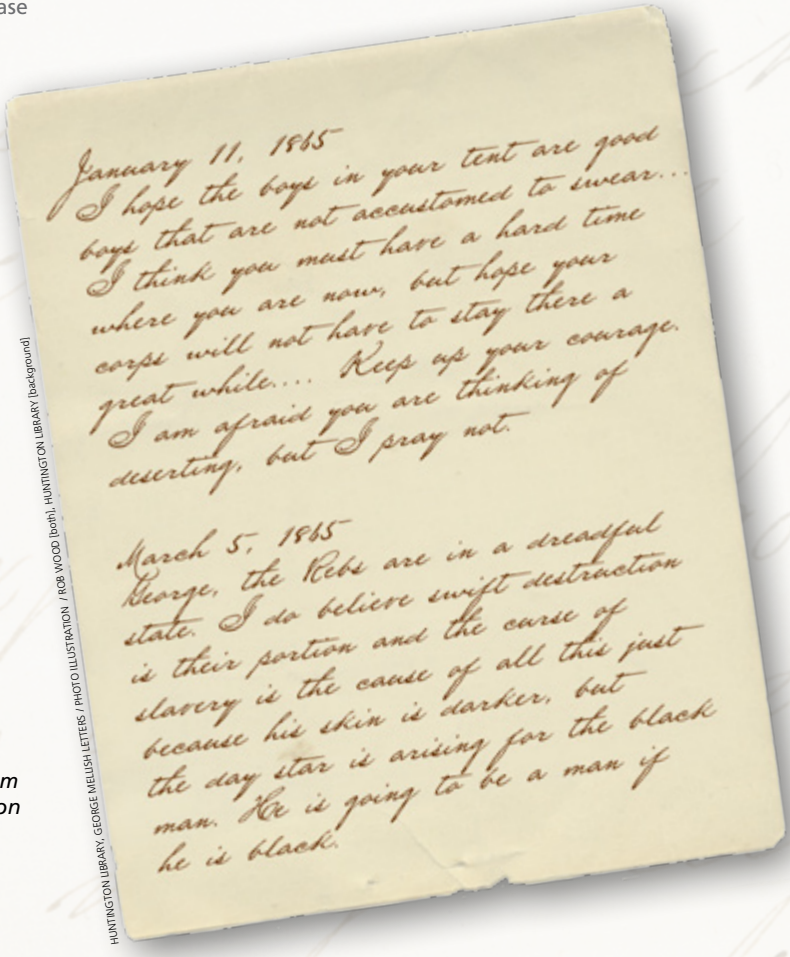
STOP 4

34 Pleasant Street

NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

Private residence. Please respect the privacy of those who live here.

Handwritten letters, often inked with a quill pen, were the lifeline between Woodstock families at home and their sons, husbands, and brothers on the battlefront. Sometimes the letters required weeks to arrive; sometimes they never arrived at all. Inside the brick walls of this duplex home, Mary Mellish would sit, writing tirelessly to her only son, George, who enlisted when he was 18.



January 11, 1865
I hope the boys in your tent are good boys that are not accustomed to swear... I think you must have a hard time where you are now, but hope your corps will not have to stay there a great while.... Keep up your courage. I am afraid you are thinking of deserting, but I pray not.

March 5, 1865
George, the Rebs are in a dreadful state. I do believe swift destruction is their portion and the curse of slavery is the cause of all this just because his skin is darker, but the day star is arising for the black man. He is going to be a man if he is black.

HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, GEORGE MELLISH LETTERS / PHOTO ILLUSTRATION / ROB WOOD (both), HUNTINGTON LIBRARY (background)

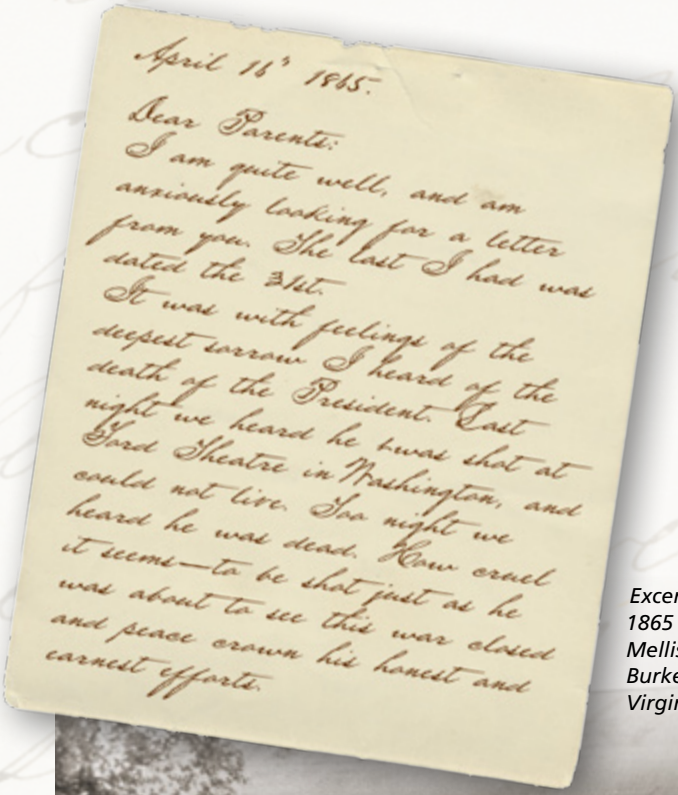
Excerpts of letters from Mary Mellish to her son George.

Like most soldiers, George waited eagerly for those letters with news from home. And like most soldiers, he had to throw the letters away after reading them—there was too much equipment to carry from battle to battle. But the letters his mother wrote in the last few months of the war survived.

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

George Mellish
enlisted in 1862 and fought in major battles throughout the war. He was never wounded and returned to Woodstock to work as a printer.



April 11th 1865.

Dear Parents:
I am quite well, and am anxiously looking for a letter from you. The last I had was dated the 3rd.
It was with feelings of the deepest sorrow I heard of the death of the President. Last night we heard he was shot at Ford Theatre in Washington, and could not live. Sat night we heard he was dead. How cruel it seems—to be shot just as he was about to see this war closed and peace crown his honest and earnest efforts.

Excerpt of an April 1865 letter from George Mellish, stationed in Burkeville Junction, Virginia, to his parents.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Tribou Park

Woodstock Honors Its Veterans

STOP 5

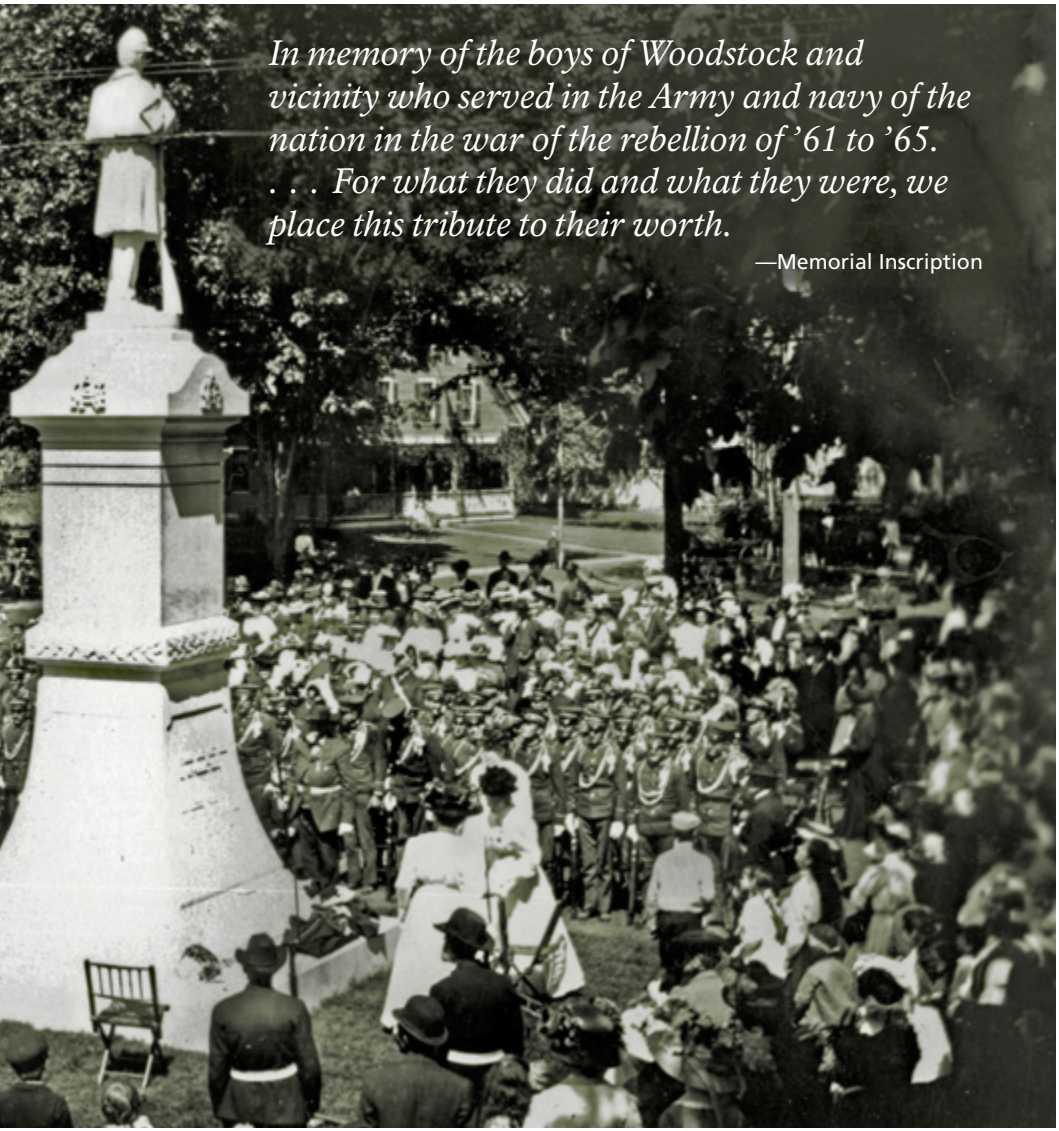
26 Pleasant Street

NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

On a clear and sunny Memorial Day in 1909, 1,500 townspeople gathered here to honor their "fearless and faithful" Civil War veterans by dedicating an impressive granite monument topped with a soldier standing guard. After a parade and speeches, the

This was Woodstock's second Civil War monument, created after veterans decided that the first monument, on South Street, was not visible enough.

veterans who had served 40 years earlier gave three rousing cheers, and everyone raised their voices to sing *America*. A town of about 3,000, Woodstock had sent approximately 244 men to war; 39 never made it back alive. Others were scarred or plagued by lifelong health problems. With this monument, Woodstock joined a growing movement nationwide to memorialize and honor Civil War veterans.



WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Charles Dana House
Woodstock Historical Society

STOP 6

26 Elm Street

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

www.woodstockhistorical.org

Civilians Give to the War Effort

There is no telling how many evenings Charitie Dana sat by the fire inside this house, knitting socks or hand-sewing garments for her brother serving on the battlefront—and for other soldiers she would never know. Like so many others in Woodstock, she and her husband Charles Dana Jr., a dry goods merchant, were

Charles and Charitie Dana

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY / ROB WOOD [above]

Charles Dana Jr. lived in this house, which was built for his parents. He raised his own family here while running his father's dry goods store in Woodstock. Built in 1807 the house remained in the Dana family for more than 135 years, until they sold it to the Woodstock Historical Society for use as a museum. Today it is furnished in the style of a merchant's home in the 1800s. There is a small Civil War collection.

a critical part of the war effort. The army could not supply enough clothing, blankets, hospital garments, and bandages for the soldiers. So civilians—mostly women—volunteered to help. In Woodstock, they traveled through town gathering donations of money or old linens and cotton bandages. They knitted whenever they had a free moment. They baked pies to raise funds. They put together packages for their loved ones with canned jellies, maple syrup, and paper for writing letters.

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

Pvt. Dana Whitney has the sad distinction of being the first Vermonter killed by hostile fire in the Civil War. The 33-year-old Whitney lived next to the Dana family at 28 Elm Street. When his body returned home on July 23, 1861, many townspeople turned out to escort the hearse to the cemetery. He was the only one of his company who did not return home alive after their 90-day service.

The Whitney Home is a private residence. Please respect the privacy of those who live here.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Built in 1807 the home at 26 Elm Street is now the Dana House Museum, part of the Woodstock Historical Society.

Titus Hutchinson House

The Underground Railroad and Abolition in Vermont

STOP 7

Corner of Central and Elm Streets

NPS / ROB WOOD

One of Woodstock's most vocal anti-slavery activists, Titus Hutchinson likely penned his letters to newspapers here from his home bordering the Town Green. The former state supreme court chief justice wrote to point out the illegality of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850. Under the federal act, runaway slaves were to be returned to their slaveholders—and those who did not help return them were subject to heavy fines. Because suspected slaves did not receive a trial, free blacks were forced into bondage. Instead of suppressing anti-slavery activity, the Fugitive Slave Act fueled the abolition movement. Local oral tradition has it that Titus Hutchinson's 1790s home was part of the Underground Railroad, which in Vermont was a loose network more likely to shelter, rather than hide, fugitive slaves and provide help on their way to freedom in Canada.

The Civil War launched the movement to bring freedom and racial equality to African Americans. But turning the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments into reality proved a huge challenge. Between 1865 and 1968, hundreds of laws legalized segregation and discrimination. Today, 150 years after the Civil War, the struggle for equality continues among all races, colors, creeds, and beliefs.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Peter Washburn Office

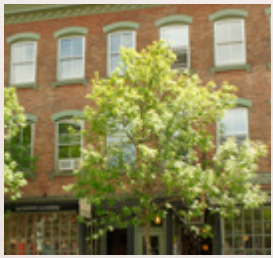
Center of Vermont's War Effort

When Woodstock lawyer Peter Washburn was elected administrator of the state's war effort in 1861, the town became the "Pentagon of Vermont." From the upper floors of the newly constructed Phoenix Block, Washburn controlled the nerve center where troops were called, requisitions were made, reports of injuries and deaths were handled, and pleas from loved ones were answered. By the end of the war, with 300 meticulous volumes of bound records under his belt, Washburn had managed logistics for the more than 34,000 Vermonters who served in the Union army. He was elected governor of Vermont in 1869.

The Civil War is an ongoing story of discovery in Woodstock. The location of Washburn's office was not determined until 2001.

STOP 8

15 Central Street



NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

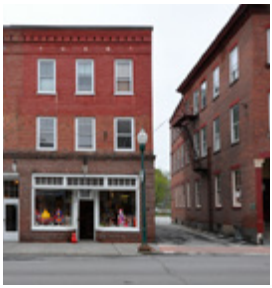
WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (both)

Charles Wentworth Barber Shop

African Americans Join the War

STOP 9

37 Central Street



NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

Charles Wentworth Sr. opened his barbershop tucked below a furniture store in 1840. It became a respected landmark in Woodstock's integrated downtown. When war broke out, he joined the Union cause in the only way he could as an African American—as a servant to an officer. In 1863 President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Commemorating the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, a bronze relief of the Shaw Memorial is located 20 miles from Woodstock at Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site in

NPS

Cornish, New Hampshire. Commissioned in 1884 and 14 years in the making, the Shaw Memorial remains one of sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens' most moving masterpieces. Ninety years after it was completed, the memorial inspired the film *Glory.*

not only freed slaves, but also allowed African Americans to fight for their country as soldiers. Wentworth, then age 49, and his two sons, as well as several others from Woodstock, enlisted and joined the Massachusetts 54th Regiment, the Union's first official African American regiment. Once the men of the 54th saw battlefield action, they earned a reputation for valor, inspiring other African Americans to enlist. By the end of the war, more than 150 black Vermonters—and 180,000 free blacks and slaves from around the country—served on the Union side, a development that President Lincoln said helped win the war.

Charles Wentworth's barber shop was located on the level below George Fisher Furniture.

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

George Hart made the journey from slave to free man to Union soldier. He was born into slavery in Louisiana around 1837, but later escaped north. He was one of three Woodstock men to sign up as Union officers' servants before joining the Massachusetts 54th Regiment in 1864. After the war, he lived in Woodstock as a stone mason. According to his obituary, he was "a patriotic soul" who delighted in taking part in the annual town meetings.

Grand Army of the Republic Meeting Space

STOP 10

Veterans Help Each Other

Corner of Elm and Central Street

NPS / ROB WOOD

At the end of the war, veterans' groups surfaced across the country. The most prominent was the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In Woodstock, members of the George C. Randall Post, named for a local captain killed in battle, met in this corner building. Unlike chapters in other parts of the country, Woodstock's GAR was never segregated. Black and white veterans trudged up the steps to the top floor to swap stories, sing war songs, lobby for pensions from the government, help needy veterans and their families, and raise funds to build Civil War memorials. Each Memorial Day and July 4, they paraded through the streets wearing their dark blue GAR uniforms. The oldest veteran among them carried the GAR cane, made of ebony and topped with gold.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY (all)

Memorial Day was the idea of the Grand Army of the Republic. First known as Decoration Day, the annual observance began on May 30, 1868, when members of all the posts were asked to decorate the graves of their fallen comrades with flowers. The idea was inspired by Southern women who decorated Confederate graves.

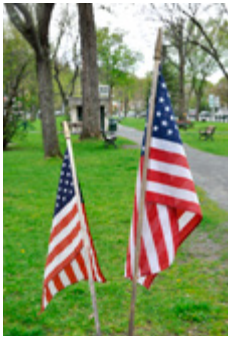
Town Green

A Community Comes Together

This ground bore the joys, sorrows, and hopes of Woodstock citizens during the war years. It was here that boots thudded and officers' orders rang out as the Woodstock Light Infantry marched through their drills. In this small park, townspeople welcomed soldiers back from the battlefront with the piney scent of evergreen arches spelling out "Home Sweet Home" and "Honor to the Brave." At the western end of the park, the Town Hall offered its usual round of concerts and dances in an attempt to keep life as normal as possible. But other events made it clear it was wartime. Patriotic rallies encouraged men to enlist. Prisoners of war told first-person horror stories. Famed abolitionists spoke. Fundraising events were held for the troops. Woodstock's women gathered to make bandages and clothing for sick and wounded soldiers.

STOP 11

Between Central and Prospect Streets



NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

In 1865 the townspeople gathered on the Green to celebrate the end of the war.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Solomon Woodward Woolen Mill

STOP 12

54 River Street

NPS / LAURA ANDERSON

Turning the Wheels of the War Economy

Solomon Woodward established his woolen mill here on the banks of the Ottauquechee River in 1847, using the water flowing from the Green Mountains for power. Like so many others, he was drawn by the opportunities offered by the Industrial

The home of Solomon Woodward Sr., owner of the woolen mill, on Mountain Road.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY [both]

With many able-bodied men off at war, a growing number of women worked in mills and factories. Women from surrounding towns who came to work at the Woodward Mill lived down the street in dormitories (now a church).

Revolution. Northern states had embraced the Industrial Revolution with its smoke-belching factories and rumbling machinery. Southern states continued with their agrarian, slave-powered way of life. Once the Federal government cranked up the war machine, manufacturing turned from peace-time to war-time products all over the North. The Woodward Mill was awarded a contract to manufacture cloth for Union soldiers' uniforms. In nearby Windsor, the Robbins & Lawrence Armory switched its output from machine tools to rifles for Union troops. The industrialization gave the Union an advantage—and helped it to victory.

The Woodward Mill was a towering complex on the Ottauquechee River.

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Solomon Erskine Woodward came to Woodstock at age 12 when his father opened the woolen mill. Woodward went to Norwich University in central Vermont for two years before returning to work in his father's mill. He enlisted in 1861, moving up the ranks and becoming major of the Union's 15th U.S. Infantry. He resigned his commission in 1866. His military service caused health problems, and he died at age 40 at a sanitarium in New York.

River Street Cemetery

A Just and Lasting Peace?

STOP 13

River Street
(Near Mountain Avenue)

NPS / ROB WOOD / WOOD RONSAVILLE HARLIN, INC.

More soldiers died in the Civil War than all other wars combined, according to many experts. Across the country, small towns and big cities mourned the losses. Approximately 244 Woodstock men served in the Civil War. They suffered a 25 percent casualty rate.

- 6 killed in action
- 5 died of wounds
- 13 wounded
- 7 taken prisoner
- 14 died of disease
- 2 died in prison
- 17 discharged for disability
- 6 deserted

Here in the shade of towering spruce trees, at least 38 Civil War soldiers—both black and white—lay in their final resting place. (Most can be identified by the star-shaped flag holder of the Grand Army of the Republic.) The cemetery includes the graves of eight members of the Massachusetts 54th, the first African American regiment to see combat, as well as many others who contributed to Woodstock's history. In his second inaugural address, Lincoln was hopeful the war and the sacrifices of these soldiers would lead to a "just and lasting peace." He would never find out. He was

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assassinated six weeks later, only five days after General Lee surrendered. When news of Lincoln's death arrived in Woodstock, "The strongest men were moved to tears, and all gave way for the time to the gloomiest forebodings of the future of the country," the *Vermont Standard* reported. They had reason to worry. Although the war had freed four million enslaved people and initiated constitutional changes that promised equality for African Americans, the country was not ready. For nearly a century, state and local laws segregated blacks and whites—and equality remained an ideal, not reality.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FACES OF WOODSTOCK

VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Thomas O. Seaver earned his college degree and joined the Union army just 16 days after his wedding. He rose to the rank of colonel. After the war, he received the Medal of Honor for "distinguished gallantry in action near Spotsylvania Court House." He lived and practiced law in Woodstock and became judge of the probate court.

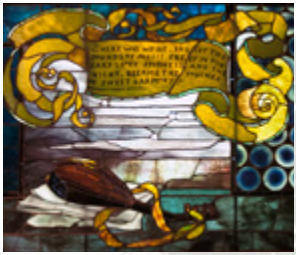
With malice toward none . . . let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and for his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

—President Abraham Lincoln, March 4, 1865, Second Inaugural Address

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park

STOP 14

54 Elm Street



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This Tiffany stained glass window was commissioned by Frederick Billings for his Woodstock mansion.

Refinement of the Republic

Two important figures from the Civil War era lived in this mansion—and both contributed to the emergence of an American conservation ethic and the origins of the National Park System. George Perkins Marsh grew up here in the early 1800s. During the war, he was President Lincoln's minister to Italy, working to keep

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

George Perkins Marsh inspired a conservation movement.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The mansion in the late 1860s.

Europe from aiding the Confederate war effort. Drawing on his observations of nature here and elsewhere, he wrote the pioneering *Man and Nature*, which described the destructive impact humans have on the environment—and inspired the modern conservation movement. An admirer of Marsh's conservation theories, Frederick Billings purchased this home in 1869. During the war, Billings was a lawyer and financier who helped found the Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the American Red Cross, to improve medical conditions for sick and wounded soldiers. He began a program of reforestation on his property and lobbied Congress to protect America's landscapes by preserving public lands in perpetuity. Years later, his granddaughter married Laurance Rockefeller, and they went on to give this mansion and land to the American people to serve as a national park. With its roots in the Civil War, the park shows how four years of devastation spawned new ideas about democracy that continue to shape the country today.

Hanging in the mansion's parlor, Albert Bierstadt's dramatic 1870 oil painting, *Cathedral Rock, Yosemite,* helped convince Congress to establish a reserve at Yosemite—a radical concept at the time.

Frederick Billings put conservation theories into practice.

From the perspective of Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, it is fitting to reflect back on the dreams of [George Perkins] Marsh and [Frederick Law] Olmsted. Twin sparks of light in the long night of civil war, they were embarking upon what Olmsted described as "a refinement of the republic"— that in time illuminated our re-born democracy in such profound ways.

—Rolf Diamant, *Towards a More Perfect Union*, 2003

NPS (all)

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A lifetime of experience has been crowded into this fierce term of war. If I was asked "how it seemed" to be a free citizen once more, I should say it seemed as if I had been through a long dark tunnel, and had just got into daylight once more.

—Pvt. Wilbur Fisk
Second Regiment of the Vermont Brigade, 1865
From the book *Hard Marching Every Day, the Civil War Letters of Private Wilbur Fisk, 1861-1865*

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National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller
National Historical Park

Though it was hundreds of miles from the battles that raged during the Civil War, the town of Woodstock, Vermont (shown here in 1880), illustrates the challenges of life on the home front.

WOODSTOCK HISTORICAL SOCIETY