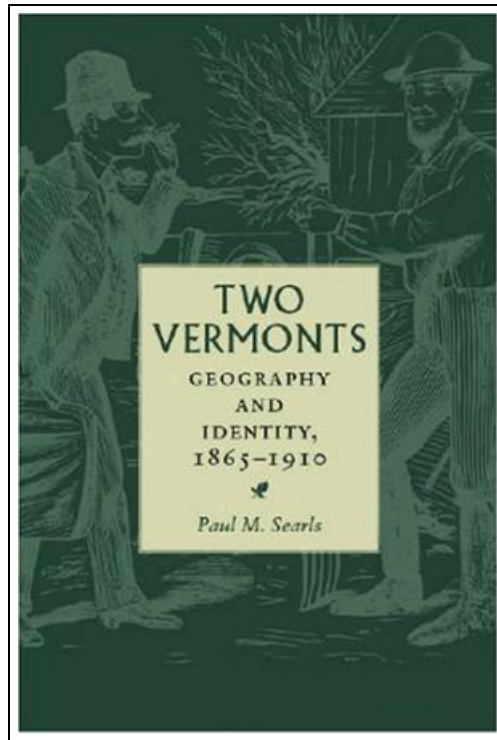


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niversity of Vermont Press / University Press of New England, 2006. Softcover. Condition: New. 272 pages. Softcover. New book. VERMONT. A piercing new look at nineteenth-century Vermont politics and society, and the evolution of a people. Two Vermonts establishes a little-known fact about Vermont: that the state's fascination with tourism as a savior for a suffering economy is more than a century old, and that this interest in tourism has always been dogged by controversy. Through this lens, the book is poised to take its place as the standard work on Vermont in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era. Searls examines the origins of Vermont's contemporary identity and some reasons why that identity ("Who is a Vermonter?") is to this day so hotly contested. Searls divides nineteenth-century Vermonters into conceptually "uphill," or rural/parochial, and "downhill," or urban/cosmopolitan, elements. These two groups, he says, negotiated modernity in distinct and contrary ways. The dissonance between their opposing tactical approaches to progress and change belied the pastoral ideal that contemporary urban Americans had come to associate with the romantic notion of "Vermont." Downhill Vermonters, espousing a vision of a mutually reinforcing relationship between tradition and progress, unilaterally endeavored to foster the pastoral ideal as a means of stimulating economic development. The hostile uphill resistance to this strategy engendered intense social conflict over issues including education, religion, and prohibition in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The story of Vermont's vigorous nineteenth-century quest for a unified identity bears witness to the stirring and convoluted forging of today's "Vermont." Searls's engaging exploration of this period of Vermont's history advances our understanding of the political, economic, and cultural transformation of all of rural America as industrial capitalism and modernity revolutionized the United States between 1865 and 1910. By the late Progressive Era, Vermont's reputation...

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