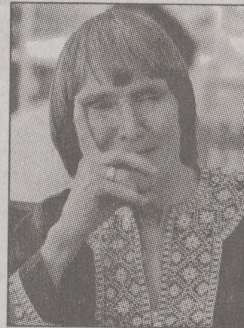


A fascinating portrait of Vermont in the mid-twentieth century

"Red Scare in the Green Mountains: Vermont in the McCarthy Era 1946-1960" by Rick Winston - Rootstock Publishing, 2018

This interesting and informative book has its roots in "Vermont in the McCarthy Era," a conference that Winston helped to organize and for which he was a researcher. A child of teachers blacklisted in the McCarthy era, Winston knows at first hand that McCarthyism damaged the US not merely politically but culturally, as blacklisting led to "films that were never made, songs that were never written, laughs that an audience never got to experience," and students who never experienced the knowledge and support of dedicated teachers. With those memories behind



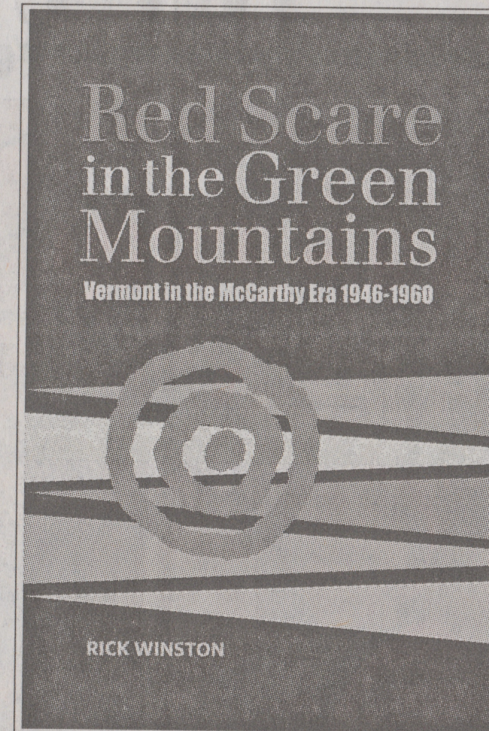
One-Minute Book Reviews

Laura Stevenson

him, Winston has returned to the headlines and photographs he uncovered in his earlier research and added to the insights of the conference. Primarily, he has sought to qualify the common image of Vermont as a state that was free of the mid-20th century anti-communism that plagued many others. That image persists partly because of Vermont's present liberalism and partly because its mid-century Republican senator, Ralph Flanders, was a leader of the movement that censured McCarthy in 1954. The nine chapters of his book, however, prove that while there were Vermonters who quietly supported left-wing neighbors like Max and Grace Granich, who ran the Higley Hill summer camp for children of blacklisted parents, there were many, many others who were deeply suspicious of "Reds" and encouraged the hounding of nonconformists in the name of patriotism.

Winston's book demon-

strates that Vermont's Red Scare lasted considerably longer than the period McCarthy's accusations were on the front page of American newspapers. The chapters are organized chronologically starting with the example of Charles Plumney, Vermont's lone congressman from 1934 to 1950, and the state's "premier anti-communist crusader" long before anybody had heard of Joe McCarthy. Famous for his anti-labor diatribes and his efforts to purge Vermont schoolchildren's textbooks from alleged communist influence, Plumney defeated his distinguished 1946 challenger, Professor Andrew Newquist, by accusing him of communist sympathies. Two years later, red-baiting harassed the Vermonters who supported Henry Wallace's Progressive presidential campaign in 1948. Then, as McCarthy came into prominence, three distinguished authors who summered in Vermont suffered accusations of forming a communistic enclave in Bethel. Winston continues his examples through Putney School's local designation as "Red Hill" in the 50s and UVM's firing of Professor Newquist in 1953. He finishes in 1960 with the defeat of



William Meyer, who in 1958 became the first Democrat to win Vermont's congressional seat in 104 years, but whose liberal views made him vulnerable to the attack of Vrest Orton (the founder of Weston Country Store) as a politician who was soft on Communism; he was defeated by a Vermont that voted enthusiastically for Richard Nixon.

Winston has enhanced his narrative with pictures of headlines from Vermont's newspapers, which give readers an invaluable sense of the press's influence during this period. His cast of characters is also enhanced by portraits and snapshots that are interesting studies of red-baiters and (more often) those who stood against them. The book

— short, well-researched, full of anecdotes — is a fascinating portrait of Vermont in a time of political and cultural division that reminds us only too strongly of our own.

Laura Stevenson lives in Wilmington and her most recent novels, "Return in Kind" and "Liar from Vermont," are both set on Boyd Hill Road.

