



## The Chimney Corner, or Fireside Companion

EDITOR'S NOTE: With the spring issue of OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND we hope that the Chimney Corner will become a familiar place where chairs will be drawn up and treasured bits of local history, inherited recipes, and heirloom records of

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### OLD VERMONT ALMANACS

"Great distress! The waters troubled! The ark run aground! Striking hard pan! Holidays fast approaching!" With this vigorous heading begins an advertisement for suicide silk hats in the *Christian and Farmer's Almanack* of 1876. In the same publication the Nichols Company lauded its fire engine which could throw a stream of one and a half inches three hundred feet, and one store advertised ten good cigars for a quarter. In 1825 Anderson's Cough Drops were advertised with an entire page of testimonials citing cures

manners and customs will be swapped about in neighborly fashion.

With all articles, give name and address, authority for your statements (to be filed with the editor) and return postage.

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from asthma, colds, coughs, pain in the side, and even consumption.

An advertisement printed shortly before the centennial of American independence begins on this cheerful note: "Do you expect to see the Centennial? Friend, stop that cough! It may end in consumption and death. Reverend Down's Elixir has cured thousands and can cure you if taken freely and in season."

These are typical of advertisements to be found in Vermont almanacs published a century ago. In the field of early Vermont literature the almanac is one of the

most important classes. Often this book, together with the family Bible, comprised the entire library of a farm family and of necessity served as calendar, recipe book, and encyclopedia, complete with items of humor and historical sketches. Between the covers of such a volume might be found hints on such varied subjects as "A Cure for the Staggers," "How to Purify Rancid Butter," "A Useful Recipe for the Bite of a Mad Dog," "How to Keep off Fleas," "The Natural History of the Ox" and "Prussian Burial Places."

The lack of regular radio weather forecasts did not prevent the farmer of 1789 from knowing what the next day held. On the contrary, he could foresee conditions a year in advance with the mere turning of a page since weather prognostications were one of the almanac's main features.

Much space was always devoted to agriculture and husbandry. The cultivation of hemp was highly recommended to the farmers of Vermont in 1830. According to one article, it was necessary to do the harvesting with a heavy cradle or with a hemphook, an implement somewhat like a sickle, but heavier and shorter with a smooth, sharp edge. Always included were many articles on the proper cultivation and preservation of vegetables and items of general farm interest, such as the correct shearing of sheep or even the culture of silkworms. (*To be continued.*)

CAROL LEVARN  
Richmond, Vermont

MULLED WINE FROM BRIGHAM'S  
TAVERN, WESTBOROUGH

1 qt. boiling hot Madeira  
½ pt. boiling water  
6 eggs beaten to a froth  
Sweeten and spice (nutmeg)

*Can any reader give us further instruction or recipes concerning the following?*

USE OF THE BRICK OVEN

"When the brick oven appeared, bread was baked in loaves, within the opening. In the oven itself a fire was built of maple or birch wood—sometimes of the slow-burning beech—and before the wood had burned to ashes, when the roof was 'white hot,' the embers were taken out and put into the fireplace or into the ash oven below. This was done with a long-handled iron peel called an ash peel, or slice." . . . "After the embers had been taken out and put into the bed of the fire or into the ash oven, the oven was swept clean with a birch broom, and oak leaves or cabbage leaves were placed on the oven floor to hold the loaves of bread in lieu of a pan. A long-handled wooden shovel called a bread peel or slice was used to put the loaves into the oven."

From *The Early American House* by Mary Earle Gould, published by Medill McBride Co., 200 E. 37th Street, New York 16, New York.

Birds were cooked in these ovens by being wrapped thickly in dough or in green leaves and wet clay. A separate flue for the brick oven was not necessary when the oven opening was within the fireplace.  
*Editor.*

LICENSE GRANTED  
JUSTICE ELEAZER ARNOLD

August 14, 1710

"Whereas the Lawes do Provide that no Person Inhabiting on our Collony shall keepe any Publick house of Entertainment for strangers, Travilers or others, nor Retale Strong drinke, unless they have a licence from the Councill of ye Respective Towne whereunto they do belong; And Whereas you Justice Eliezer

Arnold Inhabitant of this Towne of Providence, in ye Colloney of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations in New England haveing desired of ye Towne Councill of sd Providence that they Would Grant unto you a licence in order to that Purpose, whereby you might be in a Capacitye to keepe a house of that Order & for that imploy: The Towne Councill of said Providence being mett, & haveing Considered your Request, and to ye end that strangers, Travilers & other Persons may be accomodated with suteable Entertainment at all times as Oca-tion Requires do by these presents Grant un to you ye abovesd Justice Eliezer Arnold licence & libertye to keepe a Publick

house of Entertainment in sd Providence Towneshipp at your dwelling, for the Entertaining of Strangers, Travilers & other Persons, both horse and foote, Carters, Drovers, &c: at all times for & duiring the full & just Terme of one yeares Time forward from ye day of the date of these presents: And that at all times duiring the said Terme of time you do (within your Prescinks) well & truely Observe, do & keepe good Orders according as ye lawes do Require Persons Who are licenced to keepe such houses to do & Performe. Dated August ye 14th: 1710."

From *Little Pilgrimages Among Old New England Inns* by M. C. Crawford, L. C. Page & Co., Boston.

