

The Criminal Arts : Counterfeiting and Forgery in Vermont History

Mariessa Dobrick, Archivist II



Second Saturday Series, 2015



“Artistic criminals” in Vermont history include some interesting individual and are documented by a wide variety of public records. These included court records from all over the state, early Vermont laws, the Manuscript Vermont State Papers, prison records, reform school ledgers and investigative series.

“We have made almost everything in Vermont, from counterfeit money to clothes-pins and coffins.”

-Charles Edward Crane

Charles Edward Crane said this in his book “Let Me Show You Vermont”. Vermont was once the frontier. The Canadian border was jumped frequently by criminals with no federal and little state oversight and it was an easy place to smuggle counterfeit money from the border and on to other states.

Nora Allen
Notary Public

Forgery:

In law, the making of a false writing with the intent to defraud. The law of forgery also covers printing, engraving, and keyboarding.

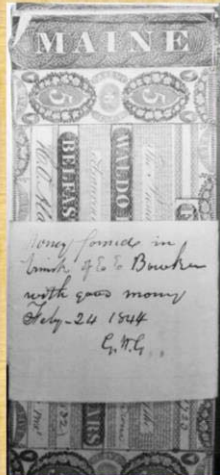
Counterfeit:

To make in exact imitation of something valuable or important with the intention to deceive or defraud. Commonly applied to the criminal imitation of money.

Charles T. Davis

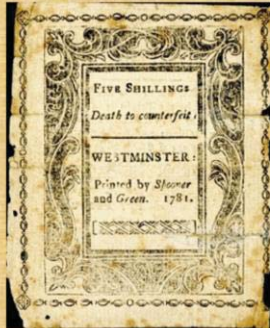
The signatures on this page are all known forgeries from the Vermont State Archives holdings.

Banknotes and Paper Money



Until 1863, state chartered private banks issued their own bank notes without government oversight. With no standard form of paper money, there was widespread counterfeiting. Sometimes engravers worked for banks and moonlighted as counterfeiters. By 1856, about ten percent of the bills in circulation were counterfeit. These are two examples from VSARA's holdings, found in case files as exhibits. Travelling across distances made it harder to know which bank bills were real and which were fake. The Maine bank bills were definitely counterfeit, but they still didn't have enough proof that Bawker knew they were when he passed them in Essex County in 1845. (ESCC-002 in ESCC-00027). The State of Vermont Bank bill was found to be counterfeit in 1808. They were created by August Bartlett (SUPR-CA-003 in SUPR-CA-00003).

Death to counterfeit



VIII. *Be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that whosoever shall be guilty of altering or counterfeiting any of said Bills, or shall be any ways concerned therein, by making Instruments for that Purpose, or be any ways aiding or assisting therein, and be thereof convicted, shall suffer Death; Any Law, Usage, or Custom to the contrary notwithstanding.*

This shilling note is not from VSARA holdings, but it is the best illustration of a 1781 law against counterfeiting. In 1781, Vermont issued bills that could be redeemed for silver, Spanish dollars or gold. Given their importance to the wartime economy, counterfeiting those specific bills called for the death penalty. This manuscript version of the February 1781 Vermont law (A-112 in A112-00001), reflects this wasn't just an empty threat. This final section specifies that "be it further enacted that whosoever shall be guilty of altering or counterfeiting any of said bills or shall be any ways concerned therein by making instruments for that purpose or be any ways aiding or assisting therein and be thereof convicted shall suffer death any law usage or custom to the contrary notwithstanding "

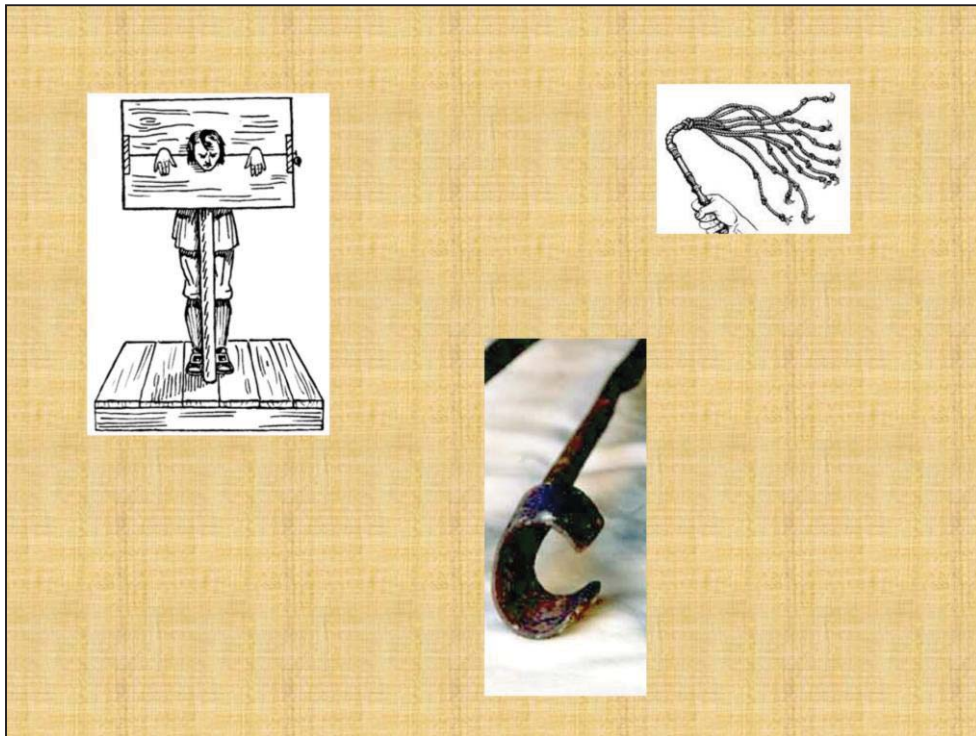
Very Harsh Penalties

AN ACT against counterfeiting bills of public credit, coins, or currencies; and emitting, and passing bills or notes on private credit; and to prevent injustice in passing counterfeit bills.

Be it enacted, &c. that whosoever shall presume to forge, counterfeit, or alter any of the bills of credit of this or the other American States, that now are, or hereafter shall be, by law emitted, and established current, either in this or any of the aforesaid States; or that shall utter or put off any such forged, counterfeit, or altered bills, or coin, knowing them to be such; or that shall counsel, advise, procure, or any ways assist in the forging, counterfeiting, imprinting, stamping, altering or signing of any false, forged, and counterfeit bill or bills, or coins, knowing them to be such; or shall engrave any plate, or make any other instrument to be used for that purpose; every person or persons, so offending, being convicted thereof before any of the superior courts in this State, shall be punished by having his right ear cut off, and shall be branded with the capital letter C, on a hot iron, and be committed to a work-house, there to be confined and kept to work, under the care of a master, and not to depart therefrom without special leave from the Assembly of this State, until the day of his death, under the penalty of being severely whipped by order of any court, assistant or justice, and thereupon to be returned

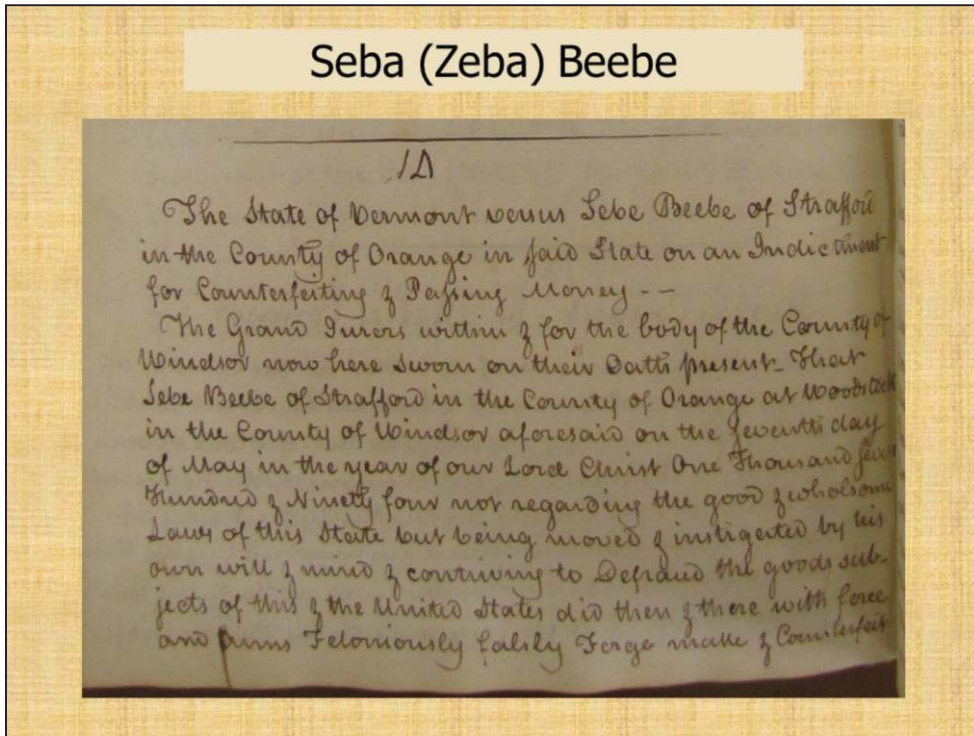
Counterfeiting not related to the wartime economy still called for extreme punishment. Penalties for counterfeiting entailed having the perpetrator's right ear cut off and the person branded with the letter "C" prior to being sent to the workhouse, the local jail, for life. If the counterfeiter ran away, he could be returned and whipped upon his return. This law predates the law on the previous page and was passed in 1779. Most of the cases of early individuals being tried for counterfeiting were under this law.

Slade, William. Vermont State Papers; Being a Collection of Records and Documents, Connected with the Assumption and Establishment of Government by the People of Vermont; Together with the Journal of the Council of Safety, the First Constitution, the Early Journals of the General Assembly, and the Laws from the Year 1779 to 1786, Inclusive. To Which Are Added the Proceedings of the First and Second Councils of Censors. Middlebury: J.W. Copeland, Printer, 1823. (333)

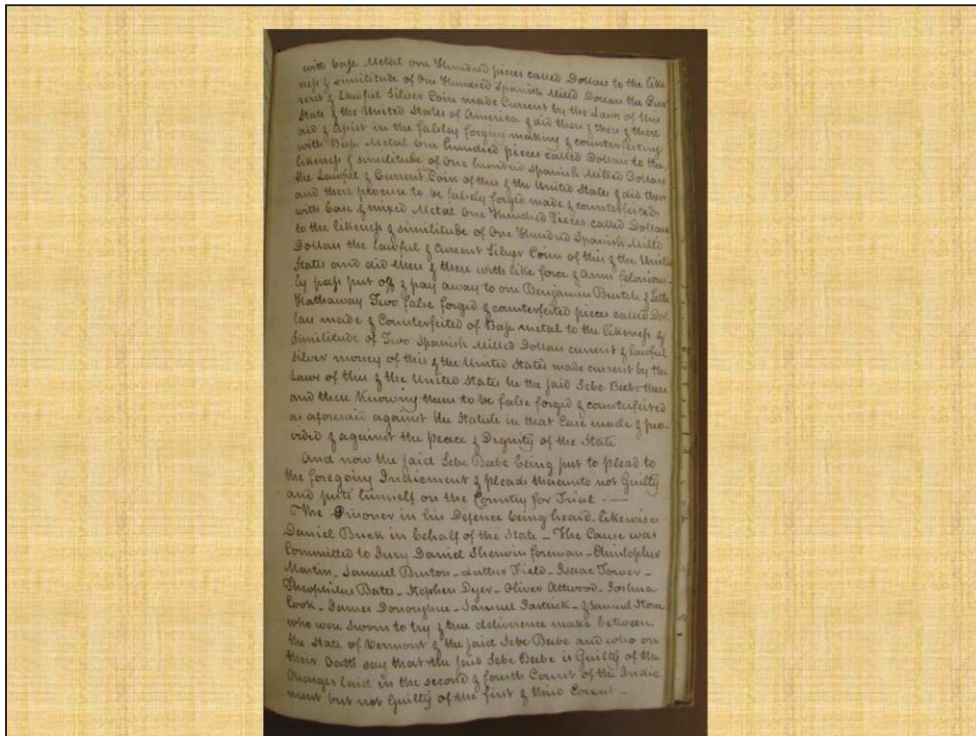


Counterfeiters were typically sentenced to whipping and pillorying, in addition to prison terms, fines, and forfeiture of their property. The penalties against forgery were not as severe. The difference in punishment reflected counterfeiting's potential to weaken faith in the currency and cause significant economic disorder. Typically, until the creation of the State Prison, jail was to hold prisoners until corporal punishment would be carried out, although habitual offenders could be placed in jail at hard labor for life. After 1808, they did away with these "sanguine" punishments and had people committed to the State Prison at Windsor instead.

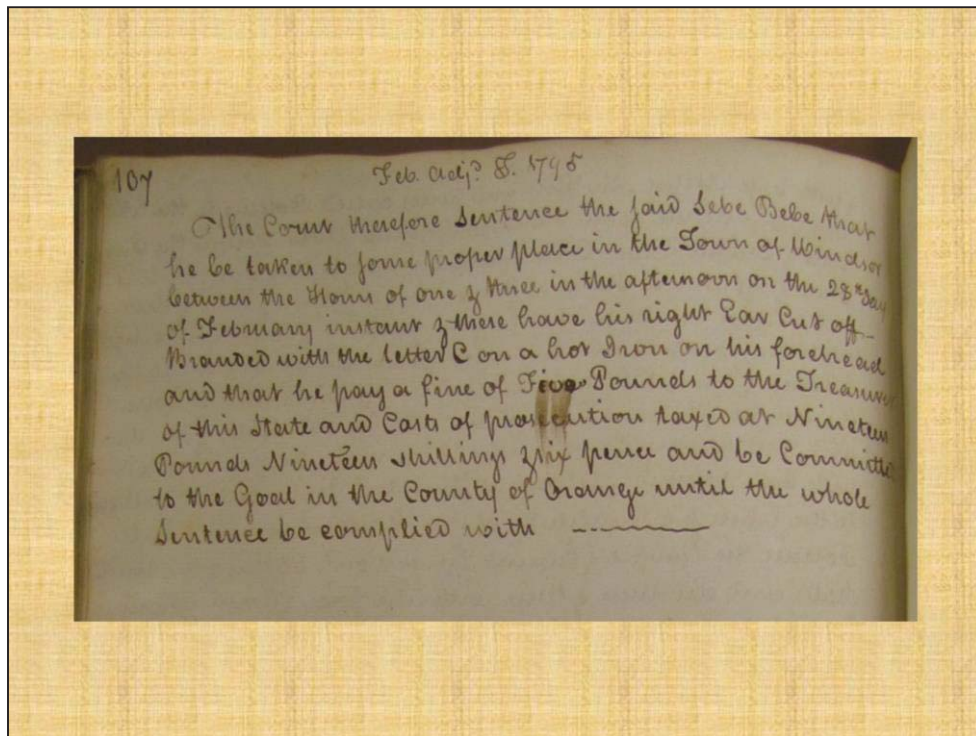
Seba (Zeba) Beebe



Seba or Zeba Beebe was a Private in the American Revolution but that didn't save him from a terrible fate for counterfeiting money.

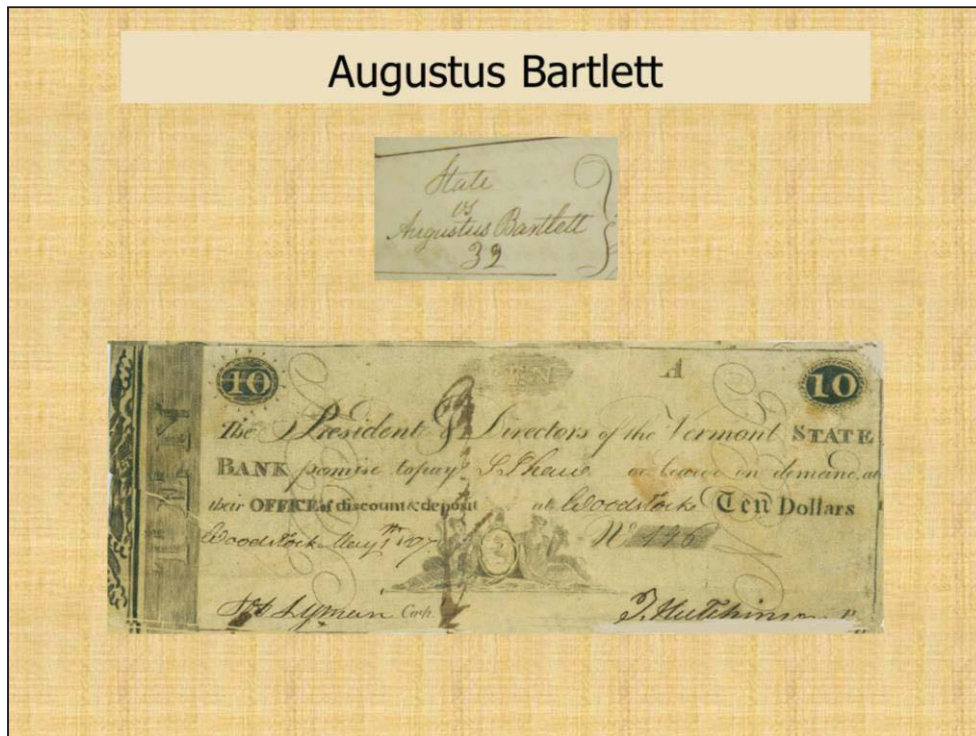


The case describes each instance of Spanish dollars counterfeited, and to whom he passed them. He was found guilty of two of the four counts.

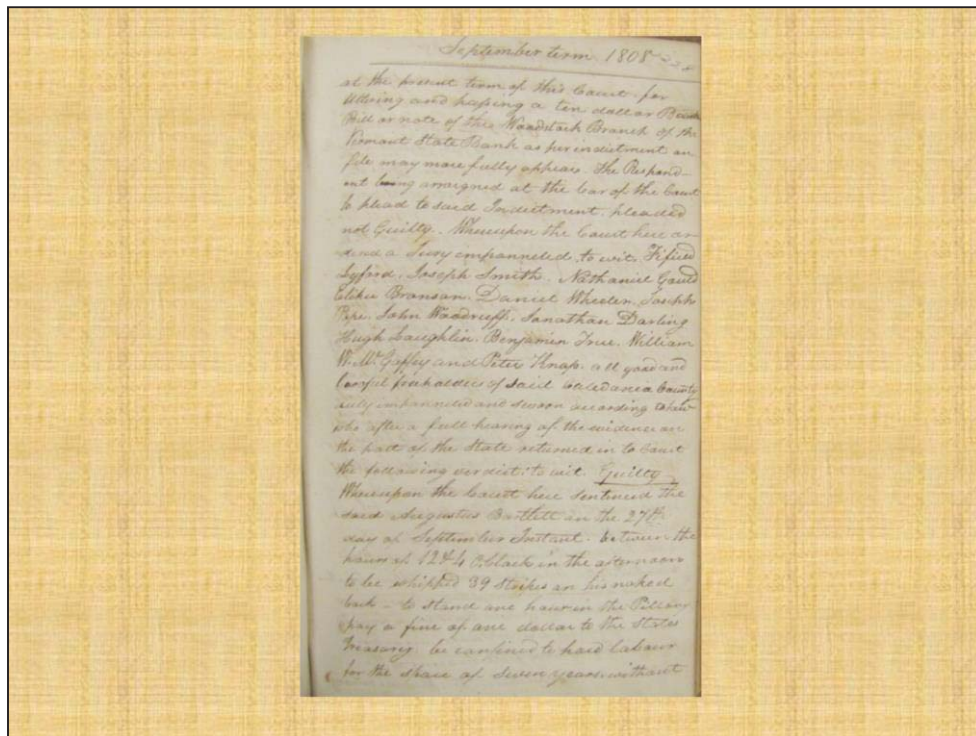


On this page, the sentence is decreed. Beebe was sentenced to have had his right ear cut off, to be branded with the letter C with a hot iron on his forehead, and to pay a fine of five pounds. The sentence was carried out on February 28. He was unable to pay the fine and was committed to the Newbury Jail. Zeba survived the brutal disfigurement and eventually died in Canada, at the Beebe Plain, an area named for him. (PRA-244 in PRA-01007, Windsor Supreme Court Volume 1)

Augustus Bartlett

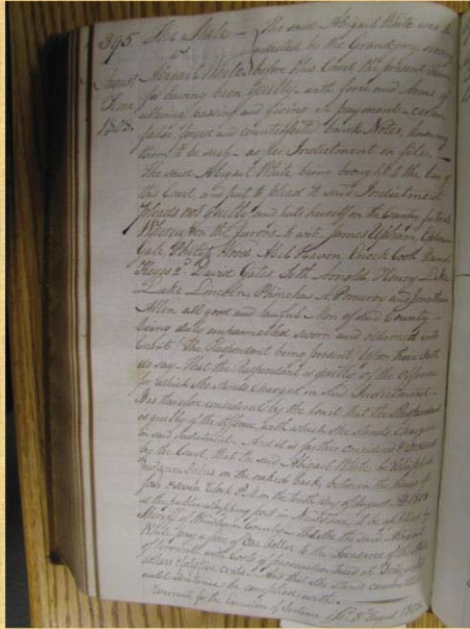


In 1808, Augustus Bartlett was found guilty of passing this counterfeit ten-dollar bank bill by the Caledonia Supreme Court. Until 1906 the Supreme Court was a circuit court and major criminal cases could be heard in the Supreme Court. Most counterfeit bills found and identified were stamped "counterfeit" when they were found. Examples taken from cases files do not have a stamp. (SUPR-CA-003 in SUPR-CA-00003)

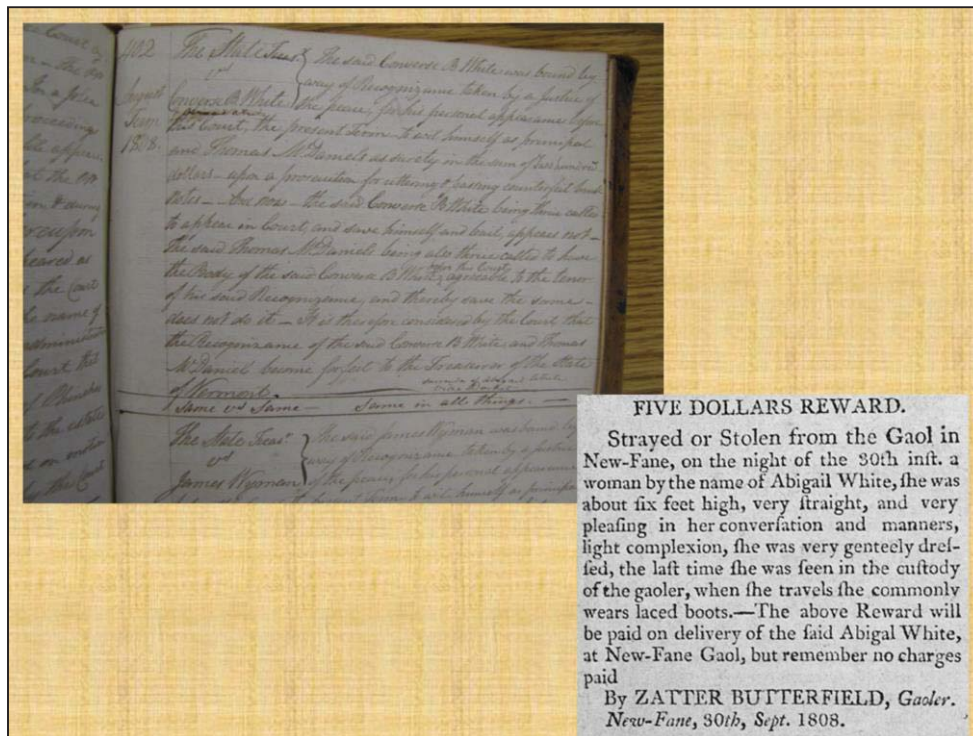


Thirteen years after Zeba Beebe was disfigured as punishment, Augustus Bartlett's penalty was still harsh but not as devastating. Bartlett was sentenced to be "whipped on the naked back 39 stripes," to stand in the pillory for an hour, to pay a one dollar fine, and to be confined to jail for seven years. (SUPR-CA-002 in SUPR-CA-00048).

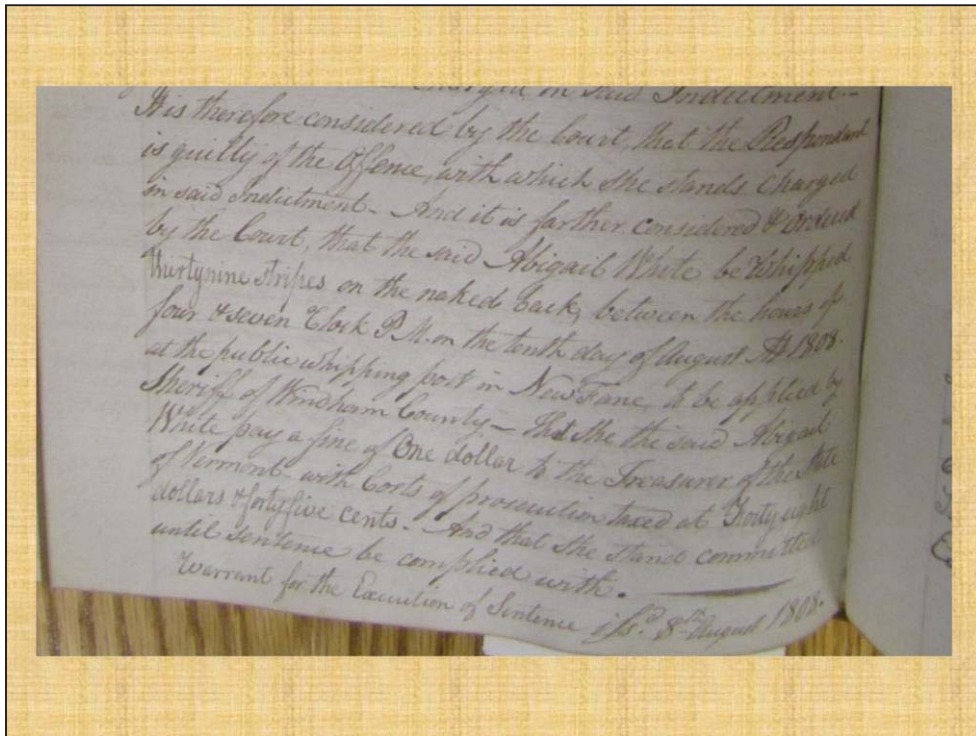
Abigail White



The same year Augusts Bartlett found himself in trouble, Abigail White, wife of Converse White of Windham also went to trial. She was sentenced to whipping and a fine for passing counterfeit bills. She is believed to be the last woman whipped by State law.
(<http://brattleborohistory.com/people/abigail-white.html>)



According to the article, she had shown up for court but ran away from the jail before the whipping could be carried out. Her husband Converse White was tried, did not appear for trial; he was only fined. Abigail was given thirty-nine stripes with the cat o' nine tails, a fine and court costs.

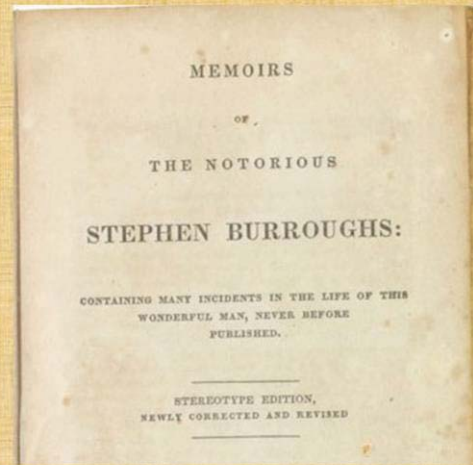


Eye-witness accounts indicate the whipping was very painful despite some of the punishment being done lightly out of sympathy for her. In 1808 the legislature did away with judicial corporal punishment in favor of confinement at the Windsor State prison. (CACC-002 in CACC-00375)

The "Notorious Stephen Burroughs"

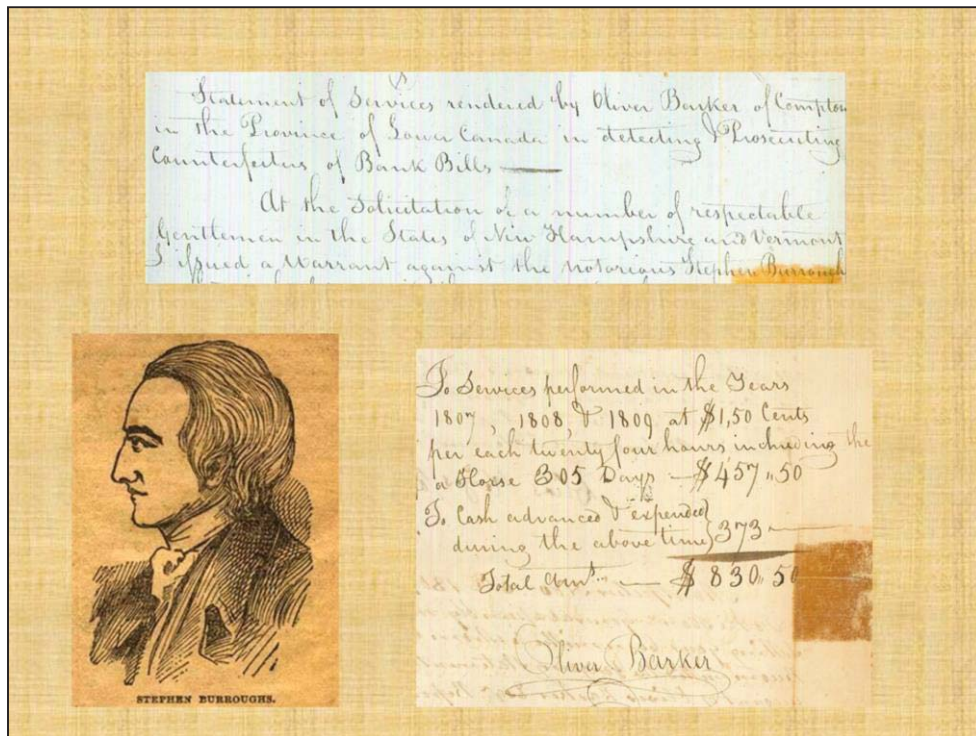


Burroughs's "Hay New German," at Rutland, Mass.



Stephen Burroughs is an individual who only passed through Vermont, but had a major effect on the Vermont economy and imagination. Burroughs was born in Coventry, New Hampshire, the son of a preacher. He was a wild adventurer with a flair for storytelling. Before turning to counterfeiting he was a privateer, tried medicine, and stole off with his father's sermons and preached despite a lack of ordination. During his first arrest for impersonating a preacher, he escaped by setting fire to the prison. "It was currently reported," Burroughs wrote, "that the devil had assisted me, in my attempts to break jail." By 1799 he fled to Canada, where just about any unattributed counterfeiting was attributed to him. The Orange County sheriff, Micah Barron, arrested Burroughs around 1805. In Burroughs' heavily embellished account, Barron crossed the border with 22 men, "seized him while he slept,"

(Burroughs, Stephen. *Memoirs of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs: Containing Many Incidents in the Life of This Wonderful Man, Never before Published*. New York: Cornish, Lamport &, Co. 1852.)



The record in the Vermont State Archives holdings is a 20-page account by a Justice of the Peace and Bounty Hunter by the name of Oliver Barker from Compton, Canada. He wrote an account to the legislature of Vermont around 1811. In the account he methodically lays out the amount of money it took to track all the counterfeiters he had been tracking. The account includes lobbying for harsher penalties for counterfeiting across the border, and he also asked for 810 dollars. (SE118-00074, page 14). He received around 400 dollars from Vermont. Barker was eventually removed from his position as Justice of the Peace in Canada. By 1812, Burroughs was sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay, Australia, for his crimes. Burroughs was reprieved and eventually died peacefully in 1813 in Canada, having reformed. (SE118-00073 in SE-118)

Windsor State Prison



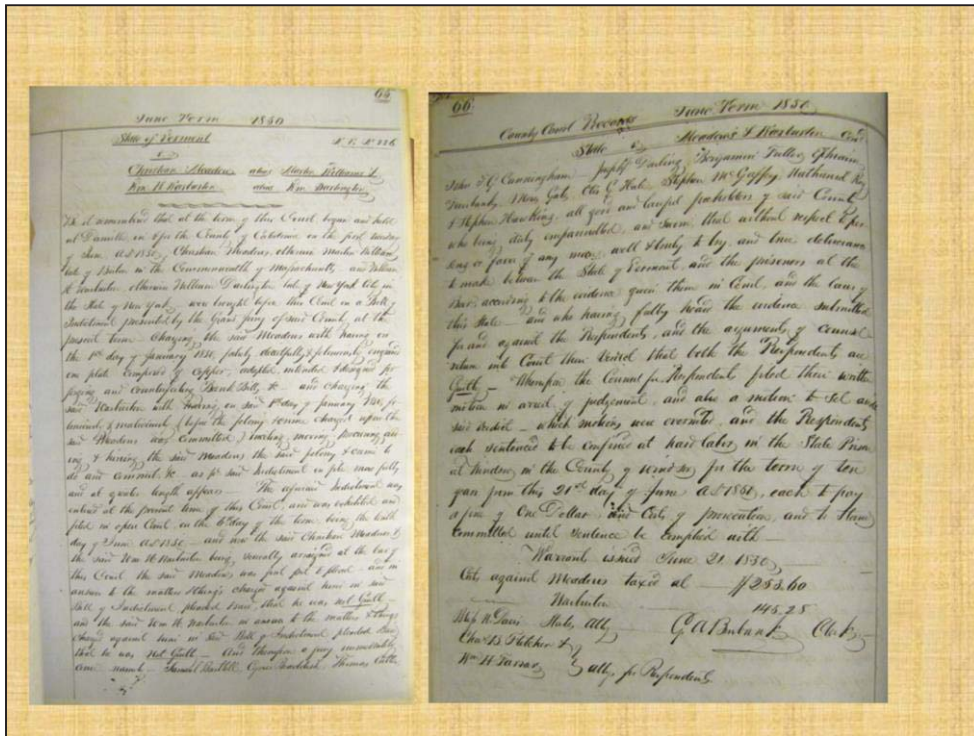
Many of the artistic criminals were confined at hard labor at Windsor State Prison. This image is from our holdings by the McAllister studios, around 1920. When the prison opened in 1809, more than half of the 24 convicts were counterfeiters. Part of their “hard labor” was to build the prison that would confine them. (A-076 in A076-00001)

Bristol Bill and Christian Meadows

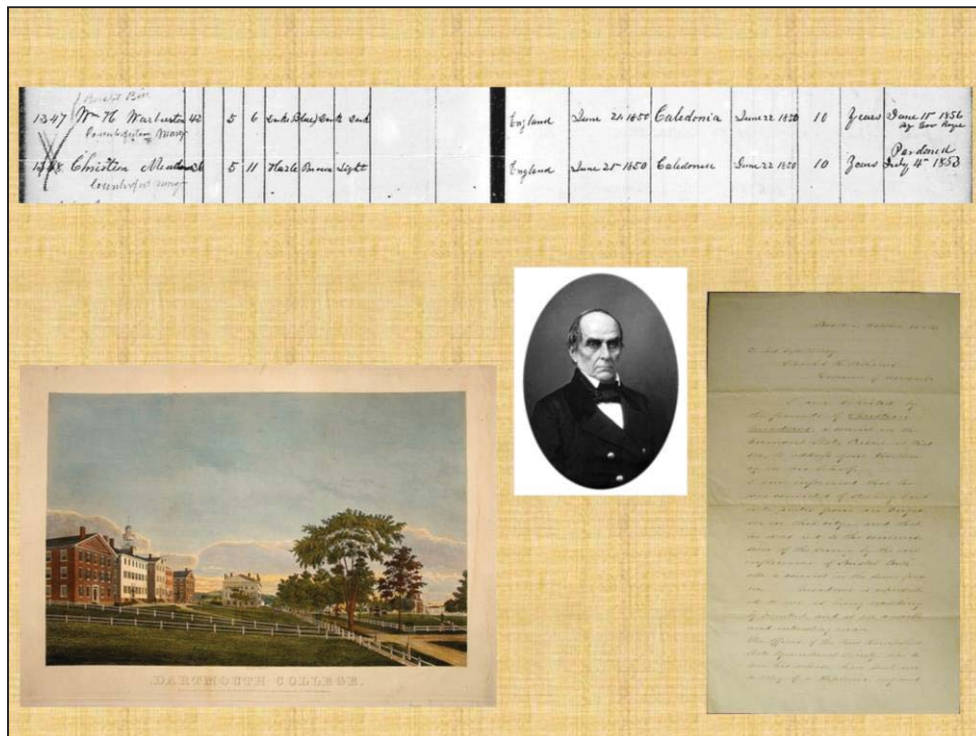


District and order of families numbered in the order of their names.	The Name of every Person whose usual place of abode on the first day of June, 1850, was in this family.	DESCRIPTION.			Profession, Occupation, or Trade of each Male Person over 15 years of age.	Place of Birth. Naming the State, Territory, or Country.	Whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.
		Age.	Sex.	Color (White, black, or other.)			
36	554 360	Wm. W. Warburton	42	W	Burglar	England	Convict
37		Christian Meadows	28	W	Emperor		

In 1849 and into 1850, Vermonters eagerly followed a true-crime story with breathless newspaper accounts; it all happened in Caledonia County. A big-city criminal named William Warburton, who went by the alias “Bristol Bill”, centered his criminal enterprise in Groton. Bill already had an extremely colorful back story and was well known in Boston. His gang committed acts of burglary and other crimes but their focus was on counterfeiting. Eventually the case narrowed in on Bristol Bill and his partner in crime, Christian Meadows. The other criminals turned state's evidence. One died in jail. Bill reveled in his criminal life, going so far as to proudly declare his occupation as “burglar” when recorded in 1850 census as a resident of the Groton Jail.



Warburton and Meadows were tried together and were given ten years in prison. At his trial, Bill snuck a knife into the courtroom and stabbed State's Attorney Bliss Davis, who survived. Bill was given another seven years for the assault. The verdict was eagerly awaited and every move was reported in the newspapers. (CACC-002 in CACC-00383)



Meadows was a skilled engraver and respectable citizen before he fell into counterfeiting. He was a model prisoner and was permitted out under guard to continue engraving. Daniel Webster, then U.S. Secretary of State, saw one engraving and applied to Governor Charles K. Williams to pardon Meadows so that his talents could be put to use engraving maps for the federal government. Governor Williams declined. Eventually, Erastus Fairbanks issued the pardon and Meadows was freed in 1853. Bristol Bill continue to be the subject of rumors while in prison, including the farfetched story that he was shot trying to escape. In actuality, he was pardoned in 1859 due to ill health. At that time there were a great deal of informal “leave the state and never return” pardons. He did promptly leave Vermont for Rhode Island, where he returned to crime, living unrepentant into his eighties. Meadows was last recorded in Toronto, Canada, in 1872, having returned to engraving. You can see more from this case on the VSARA website’s exhibit:

https://www.sec.state.vt.us/media/759948/counterfeiters_bristolbill_christianmeadows.pdf

(The Windsor Prison records are on microfilm F-05228 series STPRI-002; the pardon is SE118-00064.)

Turning Point – Secret Service



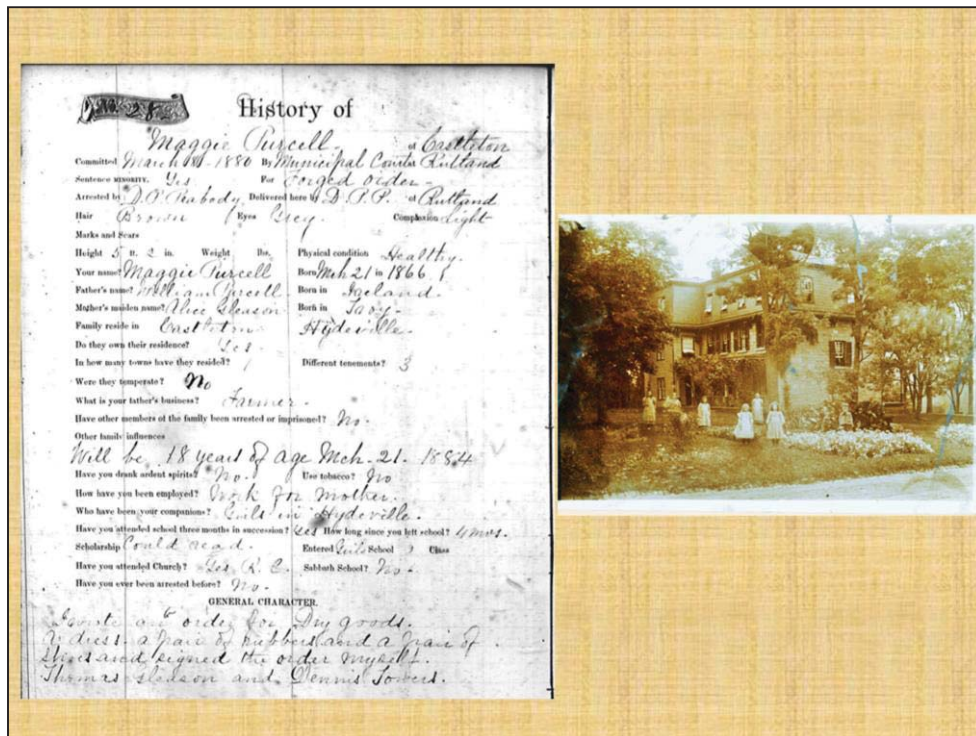
The United States Secret Service was founded in 1865 to suppress counterfeiting of currency. At that time counterfeiting began being prosecuted as a federal offense. Standardization of currency and bank regulation also contributed to the decline of counterfeiting.

Maggie Purcell

Maggie Purcell, a girl of 14 years of age, residing in Castleton, has been found guilty of forging orders on a store and sentenced to the reform school during the remainder of her minority, with the alternate sentence of one year in the House of Correction if she does not comply with the regulations of the first named institution.

542 State v. Maggie Purcell	Geo. E. Lawrence	✓ Judgment for	
Court March 5 1880. Passing forged paper Requires State atty to file information filed with court March 5 1880. Information filed March 5 1880 Plea Guilty Sentenced to reform school until 18 years of age Castleton Nt. Age 13 (March 21 1877) costs - Hospital, travel, attendance, conviction fee 50 Officer (P. 1000) attendance Court fees. Judgment 2.50 Mittimus 2.00		Damages, Costs, Writ, Service, Attendance, Court Fees,	7 2 3 6
Execution Issued, Mittimus issued March 5 1880			

Changing attitudes related to childhood and juvenile crime are reflected in some of the records related to forgery. Maggie Purcell was a girl of fourteen in 1880 when she committed forgery. By pleading guilty in the Rutland City court she avoided going to adult prison. She was committed to the Reform School, later called the Weeks School. In 1880 most sentences were for the minority of the child. (PRA-00362 is series PRA-070)



Registry entries usually looked like this. They give general information about the family, where the child lived and their origins. There was definite prejudice against non-Yankees in many records. As part of her intake, the child was given the chance to tell what happened in her own words. Maggie explained that she wrote an order for dry goods – a dress, a pair of rubbers, and a pair of shoes - and signed the order to Thomas Gleason, drawing from his account. VSARA has some photographs from the school and the case histories of the children. The records reflect a changing attitude in juvenile crime. Only twenty years earlier Maggie would have foundered herself in adult prison with an adult sentence. (see series WEEK-001)

Francis Fox

DISCHARGE RECORD

Burlington, Vermont,
March 17th, 1919

Walter F. Scott, State Treasurer,
Montpelier, Vermont.

The following answers to the questions are taken from my service record as stated on my discharge papers.

What was the date of your ENLISTMENT *March 6th 1917*

What was the date that you REPORTED FOR DUTY *March 8th 1917*

If receiving a commission, on what date did you receive such commission *Sept 5th 1918*

What was the character of your service as shown on your discharge papers *Excellent*

Copy section "Remarks" as shown on your discharge papers *None*

Have you ever received any State Pay from the State of Vermont *No*

On what date were you DISCHARGED *March 17th 1919*

I solemnly swear that the dates and other information given in answer to these questions are exactly as they appear on my discharge papers.


Harold Reynolds
(Sign here)

STATE OF VERMONT
Chittenden County, ss.

At *Burlington* on the *24th* day of *March*, 1919.

personally appeared before me *Harold Reynolds* who made oath to the above statement, by him signed, and I hereby certify that I have read his discharge papers and have compared the information contained therein with the answers given to the above questions and find the dates and other facts to be as above stated.

Rosa Allen
Notary Public



HAROLD REYNOLDS
Vermont Confectionery Co.
CONFECTIONERY AND SODA PROGRAM SPECIALTIES
OF NEW ENGLAND
Burlington, Vt., Dec. 22nd 1918

DEPT. OF JUSTICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THIS LETTER UNDER DATE OF 1918, RECEIVED AND CONTAINS DETAILS REGARDING THE CHARGES AGAINST HAROLD REYNOLDS & WHO IS ALONE THAT HE IS NOT THE SAME AS THE PARTY IN QUESTION AND ACCORDINGLY WILL SIGN THE AFFIDAVIT. THIS CASE & FULL AND AFFIDAVIT IS KEPT ON FILE & HE WILL NOT BE HELD AS GUILTY. THIS PARTY HAS TAKEN THE OATHS OF FIDELITY TO HIS COUNTRY AND HIS STATE AND HAS BEEN RE-EMPLOYED IN HIS BUSINESS SINCE THE TIME HE WAS RELEASED FROM THE PENITENTIARY. THE ABOVE WILL BE KEPT ON FILE AND WILL BE KEPT ON FILE AND WILL BE KEPT ON FILE.

Done under
Rosa Allen
Notary Public

During World War I, Vermont paid an extra ten dollars a month bonus to soldiers in addition to their federal pay. Francis E. Fox sent out applications where he forged not only the application contents but also the notary's certification and endorsement of the checks (1921). Fox was caught because he used his own handwriting in the forgeries. He pled guilty to avoid a longer sentence and was committed to the State Prison for two to five years. The records come from a entire series created by the State Treasurer to calculate the cost of the forgeries and included the documentation needed for the insurance company to pay the claim. (PRA-158). All mugshots come from the State Prison records on microfilm. (F-05234 in series STPRI-002)

Jesse Conley

State of Vermont, Franklin County Court,
 Franklin County, At the April Term, begun and holden at
 St. Albans City, within and for the County of Franklin,
 April 10th, A. D. 19 34

In presence of J. E. Webster, State's Attorney, within and
 for said county of Franklin, comes here into open Court in his proper person, and upon
 his oath of office, gives said Court to understand and be informed that Jesse Conley,
 of St. Albans, in said County of Franklin, came to wit the 19th, day of
 November, 1933, at said St. Albans, in said County of Franklin,
 did unlawfully by false tokens and with intent to defraud, convert,
 by the use of a forged check in the words and figures following, viz.,

ISSUED FROM NATION BANK NO. 104 \$46.00/100
 Pay to the order of Roy Bailey \$46.00/100
 Forty-six and 00/100 Dollars.
 (Signed) R. E. Bailey

obtain from the St. Albans Feed Store, the same being St. Albans Feed
 Co., a foreign corporation doing business under such name, certain
 money and other property and did thereby obtain from said St. Albans
 Feed Store certain money and other property, well knowing that the
 above named was not entitled to draw for the sum specified therein
 upon the aforesaid contrary to the laws, forms and effect of the statute
 in such case made and provided and against the peace and dignity of
 the state.


Comes the State's Attorney aforesaid upon his oath and in his own
 proper person as aforesaid, and further gives the Court to understand
 and be informed that the said Jesse Conley of St. Albans, at
 which in said County of Franklin, on to-wit, the 10th day of December,
 A. D. 1933 did unlawfully by false tokens and with intent to defraud,
 convert, by the use of a forged check in the words and figures follow-
 ing, to-wit:-

The Welden National Bank of St. Albans, Vt.
 Pay to the order of George Lawrence \$46.00
 Forty-six and 00/100 Dollars.
 (Signed) Charles T. Davis

obtain from Bill Lawrence Co., a corporation under the law certain
 money and other property, well knowing that the aforesaid named was
 not entitled to draw for the sum specified therein upon the aforesaid,

necessary to the form, force and effect of the Statute in such case made and provided, and against
 the peace and dignity of the State.

J. E. Webster, State's Attorney.



State's Ex. 6/4/34

THE WELDEN NATIONAL BANK NO. 506-50
 of ST. ALBANS, VT. Dec. 2 - 1933

TO THE ORDER OF *George Lawrence* \$ 46.00
Forty-six and 00/100 DOLLARS

Charles T. Davis

Jesse Conley was convicted in Franklin County in 1934 for the offense of forgery and “defrauding by the use of false tokens.” False tokens meant the use of objects in the fraud: in this case, checks. Conley forged the endorsement of Roy Bailey and took the money for himself. He appealed his case to the Vermont Supreme Court and lost.

NAME Conley, Jesse		ALIAS George Connolly RESIDENCE Glover, Vt.	
COMMITTED 5-18-34		BIRTH 5-21-01 BIRTHPLACE Westboro, Vt.	
COURT Franklin Co.		JUDGE Sherman Mt. St. Wt. 164lb Hairs Brn Eyes Blue	
SEN. MIN 9 1/2 yrs.	MAX 10 yrs.	COMPLEX Light	HABITS Temp.
FINE \$500.00 COST \$107.34		EDUCATION 9th Gr.	RELIGION Prot.
FINE AND COSTS TO BE PAID SUBSEQUENTLY WITH SENTENCE.			
OFFENSE Forgery & Defrauding by use		MARRIED Div.	
of false tokens		FAMILY 14, 10, 9 yrs.	
RECEIVED Jail, St. Albans, Rutland, New		MRS. Charles Conley, 14, 10, 9 yrs.	
Glover, Vt.; Lacosta, N.H.; Clinton Fr.		MILITARY SERVICE	
Cannemora, N.Y.; State Pr., Windsor, Vt.		LABORER	
St. Pr., Thomaston, Me.		OCCUPATION	
FINDING RELEASE 5-18-32		RETURNED	
PAROLE EXPIRES		FEDERAL HANDICAP ETC.	
		INDEXED PRINT 2 R 00 14	

Comes the State's Attorney aforesaid upon his oath and in his own proper person into open Court as aforesaid, and further gives the Court to understand and be informed that Jesse Conley of Glover aforesaid on, to-wit, the 24th day of November, A.D. 1933 at Enosburg aforesaid, did utter and publish as true a forged order drawn on a corporation for money, to-wit, an instrument in writing drawn upon the Island Pond National Bank, a banking corporation under the law, for the payment of money, commonly known as and called a check, well knowing the same to be forged, with intent to defraud the St. Albans Grain Company, a corporation under the law, doing business under the name and style of Wiltmore Feed Store, contrary to the form, force and effect of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State.

Comes the State's Attorney aforesaid upon his oath and in his own proper person into open Court as aforesaid, and further gives the Court to understand and be informed that Jesse Conley of Glover aforesaid on, to-wit, the 2nd day of December, A.D. 1933 at Swanton in said County, did utter and publish as true a forged order drawn on a corporation for money, to-wit, an instrument in writing drawn upon the Welden National Bank of St. Albans, a banking corporation under the law, for the payment of money, commonly known as and called a check, well knowing the same to be forged, with intent to defraud the Hall Hardware Company, a corporation under the law, contrary to the form, force and effect of the statute in such case made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State.

Form 201
State of Vermont,) TO ANY SHERIFF OR CONSTABLE IN THE STATE,
 Franklin County, ss.

WHEREAS Jesse Conley of Glover in the County of Windsor on the 24th day of Nov. A. D. 1934 by the commission of the offense of Forgery and Defrauding by use of false tokens was duly convicted of the crime of Forgery and Defrauding by use of false tokens and was thereupon by said Court sentenced to be confined at hard labor, to the State Prison in Windsor, Vt. in the County of Windsor for and during the term of not less than nine and one-half years more than ten years from the date of commencement of said term and also by said Court sentenced to pay to the Treasurer of the State of Vermont a fine of Five Hundred Dollars and also to pay the costs of prosecution, based on the verdict against said Conley, to-wit, the sum of One Hundred Dollars.

And it was then and there ordered by said Court that in case said fine and costs are not paid on or before the expiration of said term of not less than nine and one-half years from said date of commencement of said term, said Conley should be confined at hard labor, to the State Prison in Windsor, Vt. in the County of Windsor for the further term of 10 1/2 years to be computed from and after the expiration of said term of not less than nine and one-half years more than ten years of imprisonment. Said Court having ascertained and determined that said fine and costs amount to the sum of \$607.34 dollars.

And it was then and there ordered by said Court that in case said fine and costs representing the sum of \$607.34 dollars, should not be paid before the day of _____ A. D. _____ which is the _____ day of _____ in the County of _____, then said Conley should be confined at hard labor, for the term of three times as many days as the whole number of dollars in said fine and costs, including the costs of commitment herein. Said Court having ascertained and determined that the said sum of commitment terms will be _____ dollars and having also ascertained and determined that the equivalent of said three times said sum of commitment is _____ dollars.

Witness my hand and seal of office at the City of _____ in the State of Vermont, this _____ day of _____ A. D. 1934.

BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF VERMONT, we are hereby authorized to attach the body of the said Jesse Conley in the keeper of the State Prison in Windsor, Vt. and his mother and enjoy at hard labor, to-wit, State Prison for and during the term of not less than nine and one-half years or more than ten years to be computed from the time of his commitment.

And if said fine and costs are not paid on or before the expiration of said term of not less than nine and one-half years from said date of commencement of said term, said Conley should be confined at hard labor, to-wit, State Prison in Windsor, Vt. for the further term of 10 1/2 years to be computed from and after the expiration of said term of not less than nine and one-half years more than ten years of imprisonment.

Witness my hand and seal of office at the City of _____ in the State of Vermont, this _____ day of _____ A. D. 1934.

Franklin County, ss. 17th day of _____ A. D. 1934.

Jessie Conley

By 1934 there is an abundance of documentation on a case. Conley was sentenced to 9½ to ten years and in addition to a fine, because it was his second forgery offense. These records were in the Orleans County Court. (from SUPR-FR-00025 in FRCC-003; record book entries do not survive from those years in Franklin County).

Lawmakers Forgery

For a legislative body to function effectively and efficiently, members must be able to deal with one another with trust and good faith.

In the last few days, it appears that this basic trust and good faith has been violated by some members who may have forged another member's signature to sponsor a bill.

This will not be tolerated.

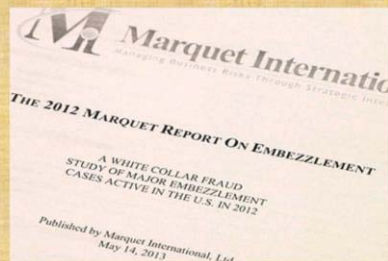
Let me remind the House that a legislative body has the constitutional power to punish its members for conduct which damages its integrity. I consider this a punishable offense.

*Approved
1/25/95
From Podium
m-10*



Not even the legislature is exempt from forgery accusations. In 1995, someone forged signatures of lawmakers co-sponsoring bills. Speaker of the House Michael Obuchowski noted this in remarks from the podium. Without proof, there could be no punishment, but he warned “that a legislative body has the constitutional power to punish its members for conduct which damages its integrity.” (A-00254 (microfilm) in A-135)

Continuing Issue



Unfortunately, the crime of forgery still has an effect on the state today. The Vermont embezzlement epidemic often involves forgery. The 2012 Marquet Report on Embezzlement reports that Vermont is at a high risk for embezzlement in the private and public sectors. Over a third of embezzlement cases typically include forgery or unauthorized use of checks. Also, In recent years, addicts seeking prescription drugs such as oxycodone have gone to great lengths to obtain prescription medication. One method is to steal a prescription pad and forge a doctor's name in order to get the medication. The State Police Drug Diversion Unit investigates these kinds of cases. Often, in lieu of harsher penalties, offenders are ordered to receive treatment for their addiction and are sentenced to probation.

Forged Maple Syrup?



In 2009, a trucker from Rhode Island sold what he marked as maple syrup online, the family that purchased it discovered that it was actually cane syrup. Bernard Coleman was charged for adulterated maple syrup and was given a fine and probation by the Federal United State District Court.

Thank You!

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Archivist II

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Counterfeiting and forgery inspired imaginations and made colorful people do interesting things. There are 235 years worth of stories available at VSARA. I uncovered a wide range across a long time; we would be happy to help you uncover the stories that are yet to be unveiled. Who knows what you could find?