



# Vermonters Remember:

## SMUGGLING

“Well, I had a lot of narrow escapes. You know the Colchester Light, the lighthouse at the reef off Colchester? Well, you know south of that are the ledges. One night I was coming through. It was about two o’clock in the morning. The lake was just as calm, and I had a hunch. I had a load on, you see, and then I seen them. I said to myself, “That’s the patrol.” So I go down to the ledges, I takes my sounding pipe, and I go feeling away, going real slow, testing for the rocks, and I made it. But they come on running, the patrol boat ran right into the rocks. They never slowed for the ledges, they just come on running. They take the shaft, ripped the whole darn bottom up. And I just kept on going. Oh my, the stories we can tell on the lake.” \*



“I was brought up in Belvidere, Vermont, but I had a great uncle that smuggled with a horse and buggy for years, his booze from Canada. He was chased a good many times, but there was no cars, so nobody caught his horse, cause he had a real racer, and sometimes he said he wouldn’t get twenty miles from the line and he’d have to go back and load up again. He’d sell out. He was noted from all over the state, and the last he ever smuggled, he was eighty years old. He lived in Cambridge Junction, and the water and ice was going out in the spring, and the covered bridge heading to Waterville from Cambridge Junction, they blockaded it and he tried the river with the high banks full of ice going out. He lost his horse and buggy. They got him, and that was the end of his smuggling and he told my dad on his deathbed, “Fred,” he said, “your Uncle Jimmy never was broke and you know that,” and dad said, “Yes.” “Well,” he said, “go to smuggling.” \*\*

## MAKING MOONSHINE AND HOMEBREW

“I saw my aunt one time, she knew the revenuers were coming. She had a speakeasy in New York at the time, and she had an infant in the baby carriage, you know in the dining room. A knock came to the door, I was only a kid, but I was there. She grabbed the baby out of the carriage, stuck in the half dozen gallon jugs in the carriage, you know, and put the kid back in. The guy came in, searched the apartment and never found the hooch.” \*\*\*

“I had one experience myself, making homebrew. . . This particular time, that I remember very well, I had capped the beer and . . . along the stairway going into the cellar was all shelves. So after I had capped the beer I used to take it and put it in the cellar, so it would be nice and damp and cool. Well, this particular time, I put all the beer alongside the stairway and it usually set and it worked pretty good. This particular day the gas man came in and he went down to collect the money, and Lord and behold, he came up out of there, and he didn’t no more than close the kitchen door, and all those bottles started to pop. If he had have been down there, I wouldn’t be here. I’d be twenty years in jail.” \*\*\*\*



\* Story told by Pete Hanlon during an interview with folklorist Eleanor Ott.

\*\* Clyde Burns of Johnson, \*\*\* Hannah Reen of Hyde Park, and

\*\*\*\* Frank Johnson of Newport told these tales for the publication, *Shunpike Folk*.