Local 'antique dealer' linked to silver thefts

by Independent Staff

Vermont and New Hampshire police have implicated an unnamed 'St. Johnsbury antique dealer' in a series of household silver thefts in New Hampshire and Vermont. Another St. Johnsbury man has been convicted and sentenced, for some of the thefts, which netted thieves more than a half million dollars worth of silver.

Police Captain Bill Moore of Hanover, New Hampshire, who finally made the arrest, referred to the thefts as "the second biggest investigation in dollars and cents value" that he had been associated with. And while the convicted thief languishes behind bars, his partner-in-crime, the "antique dealer" remains at large, presumably in St. Johnsbury.

The 39-year-old local man, who is in jail, was convicted two weeks ago on several counts of burglary in connection with thefts of silver in Hanover. Clinton Libby of Mountain View Estates pleaded guilty to the thefts and has been sentenced to one year in prison, five years probation, psychiatric counselling for seven felony-burglary convictions.

According to Vermont authorities, Libby cooperated fully in their investigations, and implicated "a St. Johnsbury antique dealer" as his fence, the man to whom he sold the silver.

Since the arrest of Libby on January 17th, however, no arrests have been made of the dealer, and local police and the state's attorney refused to comment to The Independent on the current status of the investigation of the alleged receiver of the stolen goods.

Police in St. Johnsbury, Hanover, Blenheimford and the Vermont State Police, in an interview with The Independent...

Danville weighs state's Route 2 plans

by Dan Swankbank

Danville residents met state officials at the Danville Town Hall Tuesday night, which marks the official start of the process of acting on the state's plans for improving Route Two east and west of Danville village.

Approximately 60 residents, most of them landowners affected by the state's plans, heard reports from seven officials of the Vermont Agency of Transportation, who outlined the state's appraisal of Route Two as it is, the schedule of steps to be followed in the coming months and years, the process of land acquisition, and plans for the new route.

Arthur Aldrich of the state agency, moderator of the hearing, began with a review of the plans to date, and a description of the steps that would be taken over the next four years to survey the land, complete necessary applications, acquire the necessary land and start construction.

Aldrich also gave the state's rating of the present road, explaining the state's rating scale and discussing the present route's history of accidents. Route Two has an accident rate slightly higher than average.

Aldrich also discussed the problem of replacing Danville's water main east of the town, a project estimated at $14,800.

Smith Edwards of the agency's right-of-way division explained that process, and Engineer Margaret Jennings reviewed the actual road plans.

In a question and answer period, following the agency's presentations, Danville residents, most of them landowners affected by the project, raised many of the issues that have surrounded the project in recent months.

Paul Chouinard, who has led the opposition to the proposed route, spoke against it Tuesday night on the grounds that it is not needed, would be expensive, especially in replacing of the water main, and because he felt the route would be dangerous.

Other issues raised in early questioning, just before The Independent went to press, was the availability of funds for the project, the desirability of the route selected, and the uncertainty for landowners over how much of their land would be taken by the project.

Agency officials stressed that the large map that they brought with them to the hearing was a "concept map" and that the eventual route would be determined in detail in the months to come.

According to Rep. John Zampieri of Ryegate, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Route Two, from St. Johnsbury to Montpelier, and Route Seven on the western side of the state have priority in the use of state highway funds.

The state's construction program has been reduced in scope by about 50 percent due to inflation, but these two projects, if approved by area residents, will be fully funded.

With regard to the state's sensitivity to local opinions, in various parts of the state, the highway issues, Zampieri sees an attitude of openness. "The agency has been stung by criticism in the past," he said, and has responded. "You're always going to have a group that opposes a project for a variety of reasons," he said, "but do you always go along with a minority?"

Route 2 debate has long history

by Dan Swankbank

Tuesday night's Route Two hearing was the latest in a long series of meetings, hearings and sometimes heated discussions of the Route Two project.

Discussion of improving Route Two began with the completion of the Interstate clover-leaf, which included a wide two-lane stretch planned as the beginning of a new route for Route Two. Objections to that project included concerns for All Right Springs on the present North Danville Road.

Two years ago, Danville residents appointed a Route Two Committee, chaired by Angelo Ingrati, to work with the state Highway Department to develop plans for the...

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Thresher's Mill
Ben Thresher's mill to be reconstructed at Bannet Site

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Li. Loses Heartbreaker
Brian Nelson of Li. gained 169 yards in a disappointing loss
Russell from page 1

In 1893, he watched his father's 16 horses pull the Ile family monument out of the Railroad yard on its way to Mt. Pleasant Cemetery. The special wagon came with the thirty-six-ton monument on the train. His father, Marcus, was the Superintendent of Streets for thirty-five years in St. Johnsbury, and the horses were his, not the town's.

Perley attended St. Johnsbury schools, beginning in first grade where the American Legion is now. After two years at the Academy, Perley left school to take a job with Frank Scott's Grocery (where the Star theater is now). He made deliveries, and took care of the horses, usually working until nine p.m. "Job work" is a term he uses in recalling some of the jobs he did with his horses. Not only did he haul brick for Brightlook Hospital, but also for the Armory on Main Street. The difference being, that for the armory, the brick came in on the train. He also used to cart flour for Cross Bakery when it was located where the Main Street Catholic Church is now. The flour arrived in barrels by rail. There were 100 barrels in a car and Perley could carry sixteen at a time on his wagon—two barrels wide, eight barrels tall.

Trains and horses fill the stories of Perley's job work. A theatre used to occupy the site where the colonial apartments are now and was used to come in on the train. According to Perley, there were about three loads of scenery for the plays, anywhere from fourteen to fifteen feet long and four feet wide plus assorted trunks.

Perley tells about the outcome to one job: "They put the telephone wires under the ground and they had all this extra dirt, and I had to draw it away. They paid me for drawing it away. I give it to a fellow down here, and, oh, I probably—well, I dunno how many loads—but it's the first house below Bagley Street, and the lawn was certainly raised up four feet right across. And, when I got it all done, he gave me a five cent cigar. Probably saved him 200 dollars anyway, and he gave me a five cent cigar, and I don't smoke.

Asked what the pay was like, Perley tells of working almost as a whole winter in a logging camp at Jay. He kept the books, measured the logs, and ran a small store. For all of this (not limited to eight hour days) he received a dollar a day, plus board. He remembers that he did have time enough to get pretty good on his one runner snowboard on the logging road.

Another Winter was spent drawing logs across Stiles Pond, down to a sawmill located where Aime's Restaurant and Motel are now. Perley worked for the Idle Co., drawing coal with his teams. "They (Idle's) had two one-horse wagons," he said. "They gave them all the short hauls, and I'd have to haul all the coal up on the Main Street for the same price, but they wouldn't let me draw any down below. They'd do that with the one-horse. I got four dollars a day for a pair of horses—for me and a pair of horses!"

Perley Russell was married to Maude Smith on his 21st birthday. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. Edward Fairbanks. Two years later, he bought Mark Hoyle's ice business, which operated on the river at the bottom of Hastings Hill, where Wayne Ford is located now. A large brick house stood in the same vicinity as the garage. There was a large icehouse where Burndy is. There were two other icehouses: one up the river, where Twin State Electric is located and another at Gilman Pond (Waterman Circle). Ice was cut on the river with a horse drawn plow.

"One time, we was cutting second crop," he recalls. "We didn't have enough the first crop. After it froze over again we went to cutting again, and we had a horse on the ice. After we got two strips, we come down and the horse had to be on that strip, and it was so near sawed off the horse went right through it. We, hitched a chain around his neck and pulled him out."

"We had another ice house up the river," he said, "and we was on there scraping the snow one time and four horses all went in. They walked right out."

The blocks were 24 inches by 24 inches and according to Perley, about 14 inches thick. These were put onto a skid that went right into the water, and were pulled into the ice house. There were about 20 layers of ice with sawdust on the top. Perley had four ice wagons—a couple of two horse wagons, and a couple of one horse wagons. With these, he peddled ice to the residents on Saturdays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Tuesday and Fridays were spent delivering to the meat markets. The ice sold for 40 cents per 100 pounds and the average price was 10 cents. "One year, the river froze so early we had the ice all put up January first. Generally, it

Perley Russell, third from left, poses with other drivers for George H. Cross, Inc.

Perley Russell with his team in the coal yard of the E. T. & H. K. Ile Co.

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was way in the last of January," according to Perley.
Perley helped to put the foundation in for the Greensboro schoolhouse, and he recalls that they used to heat the sand at night: "We had a big long pipe about a foot and a half through, and built a fire in there to heat the sand, and we'd leave it with a good fire in there, and put sand all over it. I put my overalls over on top of the sand, and the next morning they were burnt up."
From 1926 to 1952, Perley worked at the Cross Bakery. The location had changed from Main Street to Railroad Street the present Ben Franklin location. He spent most of those years on a delivery truck leaving for work between five and six a.m. and not returning home until eight or nine p.m. At the last of his working there he was earning 40 dollars a week.
But one paid less for a loaf of bread: "When it went up to 12 cents they kicked on it like the dickens."
Perley has four loves. He plays solitaire on a board used to pull the loaves of bread out at the old Cross Bakery. He is an avid baseball fan—the strike did not please him—and really enjoys watching the telecast games.
His children all live nearby. He lives with his daughter Jean Rippy. Daughters Marion Sparrow and Dorothy Dawson also live in St. Johnsbury. His sons, Raymond, and Hazen, live in Lyndonville. A son Reginald passed away last year.
His other love is a cabin he built in Victory in 1936. He yarded the logs on Christmas day, 1936, and the cabin was ready for the 1937 hunting season. If you don’t find Perley at home in St. Johnsbury, there is a good chance you’ll find him in Victory.

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