FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Green Mountains, Dark Tales
Joseph A. Citro
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> *Mary Mable Rogers?… Even her name is unmemorable, more readily evoking a prim spinster than a nubile femme fatale. But at the turn of the century… Mary was the last woman to be hanged in the state of Vermont. And weirder still—she was hanged twice.*

Abandoning the sodden banks of logic and reason—our last failing foothold on reality—Vermont historian and occult author Joseph Citro's latest macabre collection of legend and lore tests the dark waters of the psyche with seductive ease. Having previously penned a healthy repertoire of New England/occult themed titles and with Vermont's Public Radio airwaves regularly humming Citro's commentaries on the state's rich and curious history, it is fitting that his latest effort manifests itself similarly, loosely tethered somewhere between fact and fantasy. Like a Chamber of Commerce sideshow, Green Mountains, Dark Tales lifts the curtain on a host of regional folklore retellings as well as first-time publishings of the near-forgotten rumors, oddities and horrors Vermont has harbored and hidden with time.

This surplus of stories, gathered while researching for earlier works, comprises Green Mountains—a gallery of the absurd told as only a historian with a penchant for the paranormal and eccentric can lovingly tell. With tales worthy of Ripley lacking only a "believe it or not" disclaimer at their close, Citro writes of three frozen corpses buried in snow who knew why the meanest man in town would one day share their fate, and an elaborate headstone which marks the grave of someone (or something) buried two feet deeper than normal. All the tales, whether ultimately anchored in fact or fiction, were once taken as irrefutable truths at the time of their circulation, a point which adds to the charm of the collection and affords even the worst spoilsport skeptic an out for reading on.

A slim book in itself, with several anecdotes grouped around numerous short stories, the

book rarely stalls. Due largely to Citro's delightfully campy intros and teasing bridges, Green Mountains is an entertaining if not informative tour of regional Vermont history with obvious wide appeal. Perhaps the book would have benefited from an appendix of maps, photographs and/or illustrations, since the majority of locations are accessible to the public.

Green Mountains, Dark Tales cleverly invites itself into the reader's mind, where pale faces of the past breathe new life. The retelling of each tale warms the lifeblood of folklore while one finds, perhaps not coincidentally, ones own surprisingly chilled.

Karen Wyckoff