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Scenic Backroads - Bennington to Wilmington:

A Fall Tour That is a Big "W" Winner!

By Sharon O'Conner

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Get set on this round trip sixty mile tour for many W's: water, wind, wine, wide-angle 100 mile views, winding roads, Wilmington and many other wonderful W's. Count the W's!

Starting where routes 9 and 7 intersect in downtown Bennington (named after New Hampshire's Benning Wentworth who chartered this first Vermont town), go east on route 9 - "the Molly Stark trail." Molly (wife of General Stark) recruited New Hampshire colonists to help her husband and Seth Warner (of Green Mountain boys fame) beat the British/Hessians in the 1777 Battle of Bennington.



After passing the Appalachian Trail at five miles (nice stream) proceed another mile or so up route 9 to see some of the outcroppings (with chisel marks) of the Bennington Road Cut made for the 1872 Bennington-Glastenbury railroad.

Wind for another 5 miles through Woodford (highest town in Vermont) to reach a sign (on right) for the "George Aiken Wilderness" (almost no trails). George Aiken was the longtime Vermont senator who coined the phrase "Northeast Kingdom."



About two miles past the Aiken Wilderness, go right at Route 8 for about 2 miles to a cemetery on the left to see the largest wind turbine farm in the eastern US with its 130 foot diameter blades. The impressive 11 towers (located in Searsburg-population under 100) can generate enough wattage for

2000 homes.

Return to Route 9. Proceed another one mile (immediately after the second runaway truck stop) carefully look down on the right to see a massive black circular wooden aqueduct designed to take water several miles from a reservoir to our next point of interest. Proceeding from the aqueduct another one mile look for a large gray water tank straight ahead up on a hill. Then after another mile, see the gray water tank directly above a unique hydroelectric plant driven by water powerfully dropping straight down from that tank into the plant so the system doesn't rely on the flow of river water.

Past the hydroelectric plant another mile, take a right over the Woods Road bridge, bearing left for about a mile on a dirt road along the water to a beautiful little spot for a picnic on Harriman Reservoir (also known as Lake Whitingham).

Return to route 9. Proceed two miles to the Wilmington traffic light (explore Wilmington later) and then go about 4 1/2 miles (passing Wahoo's eatery and the White House inn on the left) up Hogback mountain to see a spectacular wide angle 100 mile view of Massachusetts, Vermont and New Hampshire. There is a curio shop, museum and restaurant at the viewing area.



Now go back West towards Wilmington but after about 2 1/2 miles, take route 100 south about 5 miles to North River Winery (and regular wine tasting of Vermont wines) in Jacksonville. An optional side trip is take 100 West in



Jacksonville towards Whitingham for about one mile to Goodnow road then go left less than a mile to see the large but understated monument (in the outfield of a ball field) marking the birth place of Brigham Young. (Return to route 100 for few yards; take Wilmington Cross road to pickup route 100 north again bypassing Jacksonville.

From where Wilmington Cross comes out after a mile or so on route 100 go another two miles Boyd Hill road (Look for Flame Stables sign). Go left for about a mile to a little waterside park on Harriman Reservoir (Don't turn right when Boyd Hill turns right). Returning from the park, take a left onto Boyd Hill for about 3 miles past some beautiful vistas.

At the end of Boyd Hill turn right for a mile past Ponchos Wreck Mexican restaurant to the Wilmington traffic light and continue north for a mile to Stowe Hill road where you'll take a right. After 1.2 miles, look on the right for a small picturesque (now privately owned) covered bridge (originally used for sheep to

walk across).

Returning to 100 go north 2 miles (Wheeler farm on left) then right on Higby Road for Adams Farm which has it all: hayrides, bonfires, animals, gift shop, etc.



Return south to Wilmington traffic light, explore Wilmington, then head West on 9 to Bennington. Imagine the colonists going along this route to Bennington to meet the British in Bennington!!!!

Did you count all the W's on the trip? Actually Vermont is just one big W-Wonderful.

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