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Redfield Proctor: Secretary of War 1889-1891

This 1999 quarterly discusses famous Proctorsville resident Redfield Proctor and his actions as Secretary of War under President Benjamin Harrison. Nancy Hunter Kennedy wrote this article using chapter four of Chester W. Bowies' doctoral thesis, Redfield Proctor: A Biography. The article starts with background on Proctor and then highlights how he came to his position in Harrison's administration. The four broad actions that Proctor undertook as Secretary of War include: the reorganization of the Civil War pension system, the recreation of the position of Assistant Secretary of War, the improvement of soldiers' lives, and the revamping of United States military strategy. Despite being busy with his governmental duties, Proctor did not forget his home state of Vermont as he continued to be active in Vermont social and political matters. Through his position, he was able to get President Harrison to attend the dedication of the Bennington Battlefield Monument. This issue demonstrates the importance of Redfield Proctor because, as Bowie writes, "[Proctor] proved to be an outspoken advocate of progressive policies and an effective implementer of sorely needed reforms."