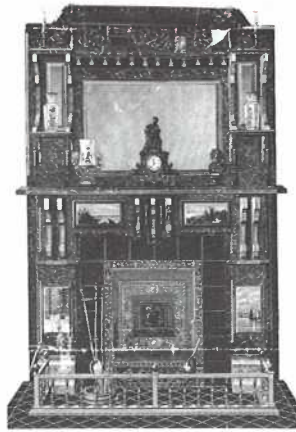


# JUST LIKE THE REAL THING! MARBLEIZED SLATE IN VERMONT

Imitations are as popular in present-day Vermont as they were when our great-great-grandparents were alive. Today, we can buy linoleum made to look like brick or stone, costume jewelry, fake furs and leathers, and vinyl siding disguised as wood. Imitations like these are usually cheaper to make and cost less to buy than the real thing. Years ago, imitation marble made of slate was an important industry in Vermont.



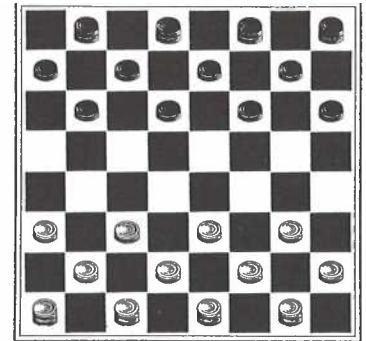
In the **Victorian Age**, Americans loved to decorate their homes with statues, plants, large dark furniture, and colored marble. The quarries at Proctor, Danby, and Swanton provided Vermont marble of several colors to make into fireplaces, tabletops, and checkerboards, which were sold across America.

People in England in the early 1800s found they could paint slate, a cheaper stone, to make it look like marble. Soon Vermont slate, too, was being **marbleized** and used to make handsome furniture for customers who wanted the beauty of marble but at a lower price. For fifty years the marbleizers of Fair Haven, Poultney, Hydeville, and Castleton were famous for making stylish objects for their customers.

To imitate marble, the marbleizers coated the slate with black paint. Then they dipped it into tubs filled with water in which oil and paint floated in swirls on the surface. The painted slate was then baked in a **kiln**

room overnight, varnished, and sold to customers.

By 1900 tastes had changed. Fireplaces and furniture built of wood in other styles became more popular than either real or imitation marble. The skilled marbleizers left their jobs and the once-busy factories closed their doors.



## VOCABULARY

**Victorian Age** — the years 1837-1901 when Victoria was Queen of England

**marbleized** — painted to look like marble

**kiln** — oven where the paint was baked onto the slate