



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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April 2019

Number 58

Scott Perry, Chairman
Bill McGroarty, Vice Chair
Marijke Dollois, Secretary
Pat Farmer, Treasurer

The MHS Board meets
the third Thursday of the
month at 5:00 p.m., at Pratt
Hall May-Sep, and at the
Public Safety Building
Conference Room Oct – Apr

History Quiz:

1. What's the name of the statue on top of the Capitol building in Montpelier?
2. How many versions have been there since it was first installed in 1858?
A. 3 B. 5 C. 7 D. 9
3. What is this version made of?
A. Pine B. Oak
C. Maple D. Mahogany
4. What does the figure carry?
A. Clover B. Maple bough
C. Corn D. Wheat

Chairman's Message:

A Small World Makes History Personal

The other day my wife, niece and I were eating at a diner in Winooski. When we got up to leave we noticed a group of Perry cousins sitting just two booths away. Two were from New York and the others the Burlington area. Earlier the same day a cashier at the Lowes in Colchester noticed my MHS cap and asked me "Do you know the Marshalls in Montgomery?" Yes.

Then there was the time while I was still on active duty when I was introduced to a young officer preparing to do a Reserve assignment to the Ukraine. A co-worker wanted us to meet because he had Vermont connections. Turns out my wife and I had purchased our current home from his aunt. He described all the features of the property; he had slept in the bed at the top of the spiral staircase when he spent summers in Montgomery. My co-worker was incredulous and thought we had made the whole thing up.

And so it goes. In February we received an email from a woman researching a possible book about the 50 known Vermont soldiers buried in the Vermont section of the Gettysburg National Cemetery (there are 11 Unknowns). One, named William Hamilton, was born in Montgomery. She wanted to know if we had any information on him or his family.

I passed on what we had from the vermontcivilwar.org web site. William had moved with his family to the Albany, NY area when he was 5. As a young man he enlisted in a New York regiment rising to the rank of Lieutenant. He resigned his commission but re-enlisted later while visiting relatives and friends in Fair Haven, VT. My guess was that he was somehow related to Rufus Hamilton, an early Montgomery settler, but could not confirm it. I feared I wasn't much help.

Something was familiar though. Turned out William was assigned to the same unit, Company I, 14th Regiment, as my great grandfather, Hiram. Regiments normally had about 1,000 men, Companies normally had about 100 men so there's a good chance they knew each other (the 14th mustered out about 850 after Gettysburg). I had taken a photo of the 14th Regimental Colors (flag) that was on display at the Vermont Historical Society. As was the custom it was embroidered with the Gettysburg Battle details after the war. I emailed her the photo, asked her to let me know when she published, and wished her luck. I'll probably do a little research in the Town Office and see if there's anything on William there. Seems like the least I can do for a friend of my great grandfather.

• Thanks for your support.

Scott

Memorial Day Commemoration

St Isidore's Cemetery will be the venue for this year's Memorial Day commemoration which will be at noon on Sunday, May 26th. It will be the 25th commemoration organized by the Society. Our observance will include military honors by American Legion Post 42, roll call, flowers and refreshments. The wreath will be moved to the Village Green after the program. All are welcome to pay their respects.

Scholarship Applications

The deadline for applications for the MHS annual scholarships is May 1st. Applications were mailed to all eligible Montgomery high school seniors in March. It's also available on our web site.

The two scholarships are awarded to honor of the legacy of Lalia Pratt Hays, Amy Booth-Meyers, and Joe and Irene Scott, and can be used to help defray expenses for college, trade school, or other post-high school training. Applicants must provide a short essay on how growing up in Montgomery has affected their lives. Winners will be announced at our Annual Meeting in June.

Buildings and Grounds Update

The Board isn't planning any major projects on Pratt Hall but the clock is giving us problems again. We will be trouble shooting it, again, once it warms up.

Town Annual Report Article

Since 2008 the Society has been submitting historical articles for the Town's Annual Reports used for Town Meeting. They are meant to provide an educational and entertaining look at Montgomery's past, and promote greater awareness of, and involvement in, the Society.

Some of these articles are abridged versions of our exhibits or other work, some are unique to the Reports. This year's was a look back on some of Montgomery's firsts. All of these articles are on our web site.

2019 Membership Campaign Underway

You should receive a letter soon, if you haven't already, asking you to renew your membership or become a new member. Annual membership donations are used for our operating expenses and programs. You can mail us a check with the handy return card and envelope or join via our website and make your membership donation using a credit card (processed by Paypal) or a Paypal account transfer.

No matter how you do it we thank you in advance. Your support makes all the things we do possible.

2019 Annual Meeting Friday, June 21st

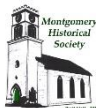
This year's MHS Annual Meeting will again be part business and part celebration. It will start with a short meeting at 6:00 p.m. at Pratt Hall and once we wrap up we will move across the street for a sit-down dinner at the historic Black Lantern Inn. Invitations will be mailed out to all members in May. There is room for 50. Paid reservations are needed by June 15th for planning purposes and can be given to any Board member, mailed in, or made in person at Lutz's with Elsie or Andrea.

MHS Farmer's Market, Year Three

Pratt Hall's side lawn will host the "Farmers Market" again beginning June 15th. Local vendors will be there every Saturday from 9:00 to 1:00 through September 21st. Look for the signs.

We are signing up vendors now. Please note space rental rates increase on May 16th. If you are interested in selling please contact Sue Wilson at 326-4189.

We plan to add entertainment once a month by local musicians this year. We are also looking for MHS member volunteers to set up, take down, and/or man the Society booth during the day. If you have a morning(s) you could lend a hand please call Sue or email us at pratthall@gmail.com.



Ave Leslie Program and Dissertation

Dr. Ave Leslie presented a reader's digest version of his 505-page doctoral dissertation on Town Meeting, based on academic research and his anthropological observations of Montgomery over nearly ten years. About 50 people turned out on March 6th for the event sponsored by the Society, the Library, and the Friends of the Library.

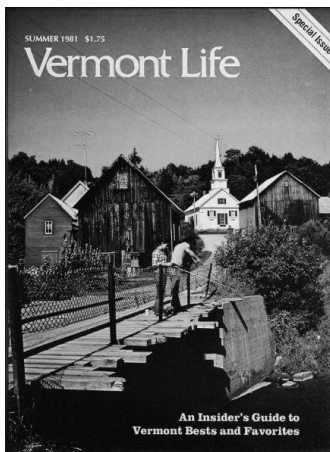
His dissertation is online at the University of Chicago: Its title is: "The New England Town Meeting as Icon and Ethnographic Object: New Perspectives on Participatory Democracy".

Rossier Family Reunion Coming in June

We received email from the Rossier family (JD Rossier) historian letting us know they will be having a family reunion this June 13-16. Clans include the Manoshs and Laplants. They would love to hear from any local descendants. Please email us if you are interested and we'll pass on your information.

"Vermont Life" Now Online

As you may be aware the State stopped publishing Vermont Life (VL) magazine last year. The Vermont State Archive and Record Administration's (VSARA) latest newsletter reports that many of the associated VL records are now part of the State archives. VSARA, in cooperation with Middlebury College, now has every issue available online.



The Summer 1981 issue (cover above) has an article on Montgomery (pg 64) and features pictures of John Witherspoon, Gaston Begnoche, and the Purrier family. Check them out.

Programs / Events

Pratt Hall will be the venue for a concert by the Northern Bronze Hand Bell Ensemble June 1st at 7:00 p.m. This group has been performing since 2002 all over the nation and region, including the VT State House. Visit Youtube for a preview.

Hand bell ringing originated in England in the late 17th century. The bells are fine tuned to one note and the clappers are hinged to limit movement to a single plane. We are excited to hear these historic music makers in the great acoustics of Pratt Hall. You won't want to miss this one!

Do you have any ideas on programs you'd like to see? Please contact us and let us know. Get the latest info by clicking the Event link on our home page.

Covered Bridges Brochures for Member Businesses

Two years ago we placed an order for 2,500 of our new Covered Bridges pamphlets. We ran out last fall and decided to order 5,000 more. We will distribute them to member businesses and others as available. They provide a short history of the bridges and a map. It's also available online along with another Google map that has GPS coordinates for each location.

Seeking Information on "Geppetto's"

We had a request for information and/or photos of the area just south of the Center that included a restaurant called Geppetto's. We have nothing, so if you can, and are willing to share let us know.

Engraved Bricks Annual Order

Our latest order of three more engraved walkway bricks will be submitted in the next few weeks and they will be installed in the walkway as soon as possible. We will be ordering once a year from now on to mitigate shipping expenses. If you would like to order one for this year please contact Pat Farmer, email us, or order on line at our History for Sale link.

HISTORY QUIZ:

1. What is the name of the statue on top of the Capitol building in Montpelier? "Agriculture" aka the Roman goddess of agriculture, Ceres.
2. How many versions have been there since it was first installed in 1859? A. 3 (1859, 1938, 2018)
3. What is the current version made of? D. Mahogany. Earlier versions were thought to be made of pine.
4. What does the figure carry? D. Wheat

Source: Vermont Historical Soc. "History Connections"
" Spring/Summer 2019, Vol 13 #2



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THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

April: 1984 Village Store burns down.

May: 1819 First Episcopal congregation organized. Second denomination in Town.

June: 1983 Montgomery FAST Squad established, precursor to Ambulance Squad.



"Agriculture"
aka Ceres III

Thanks for your support