



April 2020
Number 62

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. How many
Vermonters died in the 1918
Spanish Flu Epidemic?

- a. 1,000
- b. 2,000
- c. 3,000
- d. 4,000

2. Which was not a
common treatment for the
flu?

- a. Brandy
- b. Chicken Soup
- c. Mustard Plasters
- d. Antibiotics

3. True or False? The
1918 Spanish Flu probably
originated in Kansas.

Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter
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www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org

An Account of the 1918 Spanish Flu in Montgomery

Excerpted from "Then Again: In an age before antibiotics,
a killer epidemic struck Vermont"
By Mark Bushnell, VT Digger March 8, 2020, used by permission

"In 1918, Gifford Owen was 10 years old and living in Montgomery Center when he got the flu. Owen remembered almost nothing from the first few days he was sick. "I was out, just completely out," he told an interviewer in 1998. Owen's sister Viola was the only one of the eight family members who didn't become ill even though she spent days caring for others.

While Owen lay sick, the epidemic tore through town. People did what they could to help one another. Chicken soup was the cure-all of the day. "Whether you had whooping cough or a sore foot, it didn't matter," Owens said, "that's what you got." So Emma Shover, a deaconess at the Baptist church, made a kettle of chicken soup and used a wheelbarrow to deliver it to the houses of the sick.

Elsewhere in town, Colonel Slater, vice president of Nelson & Hall Tub Mill, took an axe to the sugar and butter tubs and Victrola cabinets his company made and delivered firewood to shut-ins. In the following weeks, Owen's grandfather Eli Manosh and his great-uncle Edmond Manosh would put wood to another use. They would build 200 coffins for people who died in the area, Owen said.

Decades later, Gifford Owen recalled the day his parents allowed him to leave his sickbed and walk several blocks on an errand. Recent rains had turned the roads muddy, but the day's cold weather had formed a crust over them. "Horses' hooves left hundreds and hundreds of mirror-like holes in the road," he said. "Breaking those little ponds was such a delight. "Even the air was different. I remember breathing real hard to inhale something I hadn't felt in weeks. ... And the wonderment of being able to walk, it was as if you had come back from the grave."

Mark Bushnell is a Vermont journalist and historian. He is the author of "Hidden History of Vermont" and "It Happened in Vermont". Full article at vtidger.org

Everybody take care,



"AT THIS PLACE IN HISTORY"

TV channels 22 and 44, in partnership with the Vermont Historical Society, air weekly episodes on Vermont history called "At This Place in History". We spent about three hours with host Amanda Thibault, cameraman Steve Longchamp, and VHS Director Steve Perkins on a bright sunny day in February filming two episodes.

Episodes on Pratt Hall, and butter tubs and packing crates were aired during morning and evening newscasts later that month. They, and other episodes, are available at mychamplainvalley.com



Butter Tubs and Packing Crates Screen Shot

2020 MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVANCE

Covid-19 permitting, this year's commemoration will be on the Town Common (in the Village) at Noon on May 24th. It will include military honors by American Legion post 42, roll call, and brief remarks..

ROADSIDE HISTORIC MARKERS

We are working with the Town and State to have Roadside Historic Markers placed at our covered bridges and at Pratt Hall. The familiar green signs contain a short description of each site and its significance. This is a time consuming process so installation timing, if approved by the State, is uncertain. The State pays for the signs.



MARCH MEMBERSHIP DRIVE POSTPONED

You will be receiving our annual membership reminder letter after the Covid 19 virus events settle down, probably in late April or Early May. You can renew / join online anytime.

Revenue from membership dues is the life blood of our Society. Dues donations fund our operating costs (e.g. heat, water, power, insurance, grounds), and our programs (e.g. preservation, speakers, concerts, holiday events).

Bill Branthover was fond of telling people "we have never asked for money from the Town's tax roles except for a one time payment to help fund the publishing of the first edition of the Town History in 1976". Everything else (including two more editions) has been funded by donations, and grants.

Your membership is also an important factor which grant administrators consider when deciding whether to award us a grant. It is seen as a metric on the health of our organization, community support, and our ability to effectively spend their money. We can do more together.

THANK YOU!

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1ST

Applications for our annual Lalia Pratt Hays / Amy Booth Meyers Scholarship, and the Joe and Irene Scott Scholarship are due May 1st. All graduating Montgomery seniors going on to future education / training are eligible. This includes technical training, e.g. CDL, as well as college

2020 ANNUAL MEETING

Our by-laws require an Annual Meeting in June but we are thinking this may need to slip due to the social isolation requirements we are under. We hope to repeat our general plan to start with a short business meeting at Pratt Hall open to all members and their guests, and conclude with a sit down dinner at the Black Lantern for the first 50 to make paid reservations. We will update you via mail, email, facebook, and our websites once we have a better understanding of when this makes sense. Thanks for your understanding.

2020 FARMERS MARKET

Covid-19 permitting, year four of our Farmer's Market will begin June 20 and run through September 26th, every Saturday from 9:00 to 1:00. Plan on even more vendors, music, and goodies. If you are interested in vending please contact Sue Wilson, 326-4189 or email her at sue_wilson@fairpoint.net.

2019 TOWN REPORT INPUT

For this year's report we provided a two page article, "[A Short, Modern History of Pratt Hall](#)". It highlighted some of the major restoration work we've done since 2008, thanked the community and welcomed future support.

THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

April: 1865. Morris Braman dies, last Montgomery casualty of Civil War. Died one month after being paroled from a POW camp.

May: 1819. Episcopal congregation organizes, holds election.

June: 1957. New Jay Road opened connecting town to Jay Peak ski area.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. b. About 2,100 Vermonters died in the 1918 influenza Spanish Flu epidemic

2. d. Antibiotics had not been discovered and while ineffective for viruses, most people died from bacterial complications resulting from the virus.

3. True. "Researchers now believe the disease started at Fort Riley, Kansas, with an outbreak among soldiers in March 1918. Those soldiers carried the disease to Europe when they shipped out to fight in World War I. The virus spread quickly among the troops, who were clustered together in unsanitary conditions. Germany, England and France censored reports of the disease, for fear of hurting their war effort. Spain, as a neutral country, did not. So Spanish papers were the first to report the outbreak, and the disease became linked with Spain."

Source: "Then Again: In an age before antibiotics, a killer epidemic struck Vermont" By Mark Bushnell, VT Digger March 8, 2020

PRESERVATION TRUST OF VERMONT (PTV) VISIT AND 1772 FOUNDATION GRANT

Last newsletter we told you we hoped to apply for a grant from the 1772 Foundation to help us paint Pratt Hall. This required a screening visit by the PTV. They were impressed enough to mention us in their February 27th newsletter.

Pratt Hall, Montgomery

Do not let this town's small size fool you, this community cares about preserving their historic buildings. The Montgomery Historical Society continues to be an excellent steward of the 1835 Church located on VT-118. With a long history of fundraising, planning community activities, and preserving the c. 1870 Gothic Revival details of the iconic Pratt Hall, the Historical Society is applying for a grant funding to repaint the building.



We were one of 26 organizations, out of 46 statewide submitting Letters of Interest, who were invited to submit an application. We think about half of those will receive grants, and should hear how we fared soon. Fingers crossed.

One question the 1772 grant application includes is **"Why does this project matter?"**:

Our response in part: When this building was teetering on demolition in 1973 and the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont was considering its options, it was clear we almost lost this jewel due to the cumulative lack of normal, routine, periodic maintenance, and because there were no longer any clear local stakeholders with the power to bring resources to bear.

The community response was emotional which speaks to the building's importance to our sense of community, place, and heritage. Keeping this building in great shape and using it matters because it is a critical ingredient of who we were and who we are. It connects us to our past and to each other, and as sociologists warn this social capital and connectedness is a critical ingredient for strong communities and social networks... This grant will help us complete an overdue project and extend the legacy of those early settlers who arrived nearly 227 years ago.



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We hope this newsletter is a pleasant diversion from all the mayhem and stress visited on us all by the COVID 19 virus. As always we appreciate your support and look forward to seeing everyone at the Memorial Day Commemoration in May or Farmers Market starting in June, or sooner, as circumstances allow. Take care, Scott

Thanks for your support.