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## Montgomery's Town Commons or Greens

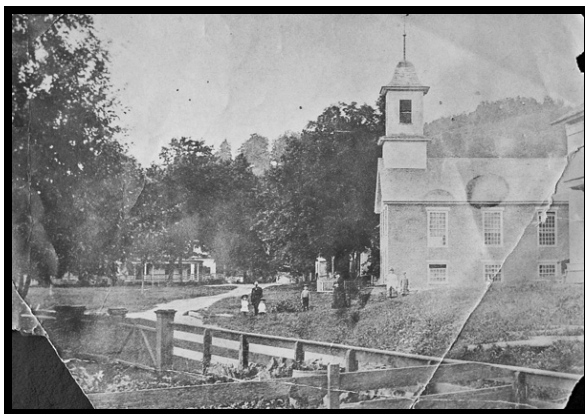
The Town common, or green, dates to the middle ages Europe. It was generally common land in a central location used for grazing animals and for community gatherings or events, including stocks and pillory, and signposts for public announcements (hence posting the Warning). Most in the United States are found in New England and many became the sites of veteran memorials in the wake of the horrific casualties of the Civil War. Montgomery's Town charter and lotting map did not set out any common lands, although land was reserved for the benefit of the clergy, and county and town schools.



Montgomery had at least two of these greens or commons, one in the Village and the other in the Center, both defined by road intersections. The small Center common was located at the east end of today's Main Street just to the North of the Baptist Church (at the bottom of Route 242). It probably included part of the lot where Sylvester's Market is now located. Its predominant feature was probably a platform or gazebo (shown on the right edge of the photo) which the roads passed on all sides. This common was eventually eaten up by the expanded need for road space. The increasing ease of traveling between the Village and the Center also eventually made it redundant.



The triangular Village common (right) was also defined by the main road and side streets. A photo from about the 1870s (left) shows a treeless area. But by the turn of the century trees were maturing and it was seeing use for recreation (croquet, baseball, tennis) and as a place for gatherings. Memorial Day parades regularly originated from each common and proceeded to local cemeteries.



Village Green on left c1890



Village Green looking toward Pratt Hall



Village Green on right from Fuller Bridge



Croquet Players on Village Green



Civil War, Spanish American War, and WWI vets on Village Green in circa 1918



Winter circa 1920



On Nov 11<sup>th</sup> 1990 a triangular veteran's memorial was erected on the Village Green. The effort was organized by Lois Lumbra with help from Arthur St Onge and Melvin Chaffee.



In 2005 the Covered Bridges Garden Club's Historic Garden Project, led by Alison Osbourne added garden and landscape features. The Project was designed to enhance the fact that the Village Green is triangles within triangles, within triangles. To emphasize symmetry, five flower beds were located around the elms, crabapples and maple trees. A sixth bed which surrounds the memorial is in the shape of a triangle and has brightly colored shrubs. Lighting was also added for the large maples, monument, and flag.

The lone, large maple tree remaining on the Village Common (shown on the right before the other tree blew down) was in danger of splitting and blowing down so Master Gardener Carol McGregor, aka the Tree Warden, and Barry East, VT Tree Steward in training, won a Community Foundation of Vermont grant, to have preventative work done on the tree. Gregg and Jake Campbell from Richford, DBA Franklin Forests Inc., were hired to cable the branches high up in the tree, to help balance it and to remove some dead branches.



The Covered Bridges Garden Club and the Montgomery Historical Society helped support this effort. The work was done on Dec 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012. The tree was probably planted after the Civil War.

Compiled from:

History of Town Commons – Wikipedia

Montgomery, Vermont: A History of A Town” by William Branthoover and Sara Taylor

Covered Bridges Garden Club website, Historic Garden Project

Montgomery Historical Society Archives & Town Records/Lotting Map