



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Chairman's Message: *We Think We Can, We Think We Can...*

Scott Perry, Chairman
John Kuryloski, Vice Chair
Marijke Dollois, Secretary
Pat Farmer, Treasurer



The Little Engine That Could, symbolizing optimism, perseverance, and the power of self-belief to overcome big challenges

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 or on Zoom Oct – Apr

History Quiz:

1. How many flags has the State of Vermont had?
a. 1 b. 3 c. 5 d. 7
2. The first Republic of Vermont Constitution, approved in 1777:
a. is the shortest of any state's
b. was drafted outside the U.S.
c. allowed men without property to vote
d. abolished slavery at 18 for women and 21 for men
3. In 1777 the Republic of Vermont had two counties Bennington and ?
a. Windsor
b. Windham
c. Unity
d. Cheshire

The front of stage area of Pratt Hall (the chancel) is packed full as it now serves as a temporary home for our collection (below). Thanks to all who helped schlep the boxes, bookshelves, and tubs across the lawn and into the building. We can still work on the data base and access items but things are tight.

Interior salvage and demolition of the Deuso Road building is underway and we received the final draft of plans for the new building in December. We are reviewing them and they will be submitted to the State for safety and fire review and permitting soon (along with an approximately \$2,500 fee).

As of this writing we've spent about \$35,000 on the project which we've paid out of previous general donations and fundraising over the past five years. Our Consulting Engineers estimate we will need \$350,000 in addition to what we have already spent and set aside.

Since January first we've received donations and pledges of about \$43,000, a great start. We've still got a ways to go but, like the "little engine that could" we are optimistic we can do this. Your support is greatly appreciated, thank you.



Chancel with archives

Scott

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN

Applications for our two annual scholarships are now available. They must be submitted by May 1st. Graduating high school seniors from Montgomery are eligible. Please email us if you have any questions.

YOUNG WRITERS

Pratt Hall hosted the Friends of the Library's "Young Writers Contest" and pizza party again in early November. Each young writer read their creations to the audience and judges, then received feedback on their creations and presentation. Congratulations to all our young authors.

MEMBERSHIP

Our 2025 numbers hit 180 but fell short of our 200 goal. You can renew / join online for 2026 anytime. **THANK YOU!**

If you have questions or concerns please drop us a line. As always, thank you for your support,

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES


The Society-sponsored "Holiday Happiness" was well attended and included puppet shows and puppet-making, horse-drawn wagon rides, and Santa. The torrential rain, then flash-frozen ice on the road kept the horses from crossing the Comstock Bridge but all had fun anyways. Thanks to the Library, cookies and cocoa abounded. Our thanks to the Library for partnering with us again and all involved.



Percherons Apollo and Minor, Santa, and friends

MHS TO PRESENT COVERED BRIDGE HISTORY TO UMATR WILD AND SCENIC COMMITTEE SEMINAR SERIES





In September 2014, the Upper Missisquoi and Trout River (UMATR) were designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers by the U.S. Congress. The MHS supported the application effort, providing descriptions of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) of the Trout River, including the covered bridges and history of mills and streams. We also hosted the initial UMATR program after the designation was approved.

**"Montgomery's Covered Bridges:
Outstandingly Remarkable Values"**

October 4, 1:00 p.m. at Pratt Hall, Montgomery Village

A short presentation on the history of Montgomery's iconic structures spanning the Trout River and other watershed streams. Materials for self guided tours and refreshments provided.

A free Wild and Scenic Rivers event co-sponsored by the Montgomery Historical Society, Covered Bridges Garden Club, Hectorville Bridge Committee, Montgomery Conservation Commission, and the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers Wild and Scenic Advisory Committee.



More info at www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org

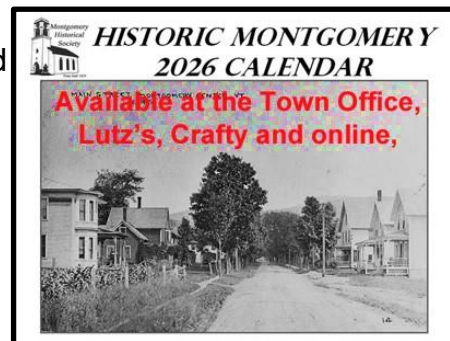
2014 MHS Flyer

In March, a little over 11 years later, we will be presenting the "History of Montgomery's Covered Bridges" as part of their Seminar Series .

The Committee works directly with member towns to fund grant programs, including community-based projects and town infrastructure projects that will benefit our river systems. The projects are sponsored through the National Park Service (NPS).

LAST CALL FOR HISTORIC MONTGOMERY 2026 CALENDARS

"Your best yet!" Just a few left. Available at Lutz's, Crafty L'il Gift Shop, the Town Office, and at our online store.



MEMORIES OF HECTORVILLE

Many fans of Montgomery came here as youngsters, visiting relatives for extended stays in the country. We count Jack Quinn, and Bill Branthoover among them.

We recently had the pleasure of meeting with Marshall Delaire who shared his memories of such visits and some family photos. We met him at Pratt Hall on a snowy Veteran's Day weekend and showed him a few of our items.

He grew up in, and lives in, Hinesburg but spent time as a boy with his grandparents, aunts and uncles, and their neighbors in Hectorville. Eva Hooper was his grandmother. He confirmed she was a woman who would tackle about anything from blacksmithing to construction. She was married four times.



Eva Hooper's home / former Hectorville Church

COVERED BRIDGES RESEARCH

In early December we received a phone call from John Miller, an award-winning documentary photographer who lives in Irasburg. He's retired from Vermont State University and more recently joined the Board of the Vermont Folklife Center.

He's been working on a covered bridges project and was hoping we could help him with any original documentation about, or photos of, our bridges and the Jewett brothers. He was particularly interested in the photo of the bridge under construction we use as a masthead on our home page.

We gave him a quick tour of Pratt Hall, showed him the photo, and gave him the link to our bridge history. He thought the reference to Ithiel Town might bear some fruit. We plan to get together again this spring when it warms up.

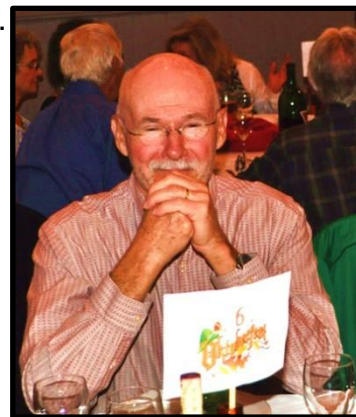
BILL MCGROARTY

It is with great sadness we report the passing of long-time MHS member and friend, Bill McGroarty. Bill and Noela joined the Society in 2003, and Bill served as Vice President and Vice Chairman for over 20 years. He had a hand in nearly every success we've achieved as an organization. He was recognized with a well-deserved League of Local Historical Societies and Museums (LLHSM) Award of Excellence in 2024. An excerpt from his nomination follows:

"As part of our leadership team he [Bill] was advisor, sounding board, and navigator. His leadership helped produced an impressive record of excellence! Some highlights include:

- Our organization, or members, received 15 LLHSM awards.
- We received 4 Historic Preservation Grants from the Preservation Trust of Vermont and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation.
- We raised over \$135,000 for a major restoration of Pratt Hall.
- We wrote and published a third edition of our Town history.
- We organized and supported the effort to add the Town's former Baptist Church and parsonage to the National Register of Historic Places.
- We successfully enrolled Pratt Hall and several Montgomery covered bridges in the State's Historic Site marker program.
- We organized and operated programs including a concert series, a farmers market, speakers, school visits, annual scholarships, Memorial Day commemorations, holiday events, oral histories, and more."

Bill was also a active member of our self-help, Men-With-Tools group, always there whether it was painting, landscaping, or shoveling pigeon poop from the belfry.



Our heartfelt love goes out to Noela. We miss Bill already and will cherish our memories. His legacy will endure in all we do.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. b. Three official flags.
2. All are true.
3. c. Unity

Source: Wikipedia

THIS QUARTER IN VERMONT & MONTGOMERY HISTORY

October: 1784 - Republic of Vermont enacts law allowing free trade with Canada.

November: 1972 - Begnoche family moves into a new home after fire.

December: 1905 - School at Four Corners on West Hill burns down.

PAT-IN-THE-HAT



Modeling archive items for data base photos!

Thank you for supporting the Montgomery Historical Society



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Thanks to the following businesses for their 2025 membership and support. Let them know you appreciate their civic mindedness by your patronage.
4c's Construction ~ Black Lantern Inn ~ Breezy Acres Farm
Community Bank N.A. ~ Community National Bank ~ Crafty Lil' Gift Shop
David Howe Memorial Library ~ Lucky Dog Maple ~ Lutz's Automotive
Manosh Properties LLC ~ N.A. Manosh Inc. ~ Phineas Swann B&B
Sherm D. Potvin Consulting ~ Sunset Motor Inn ~ The Inn ~ The Belfry