



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE:

Scott Perry, Chairman

John Kuryloski, 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 or on Zoom Oct – Apr

History Quiz:

1. How many official State flags has Vermont had?

a. 3 b. 4 c. 6 d. 8

2. Which of the following is false? Calvin Coolidge was the first President:

a. on U.S. currency while still in office.
b. to speak on radio & film.
c. born on the 4th of July.
d. sworn in by a town clerk.

3. The coldest recorded temperature in VT was in 1933 in Bloomfield at minus 50. What was the coldest average yearly temperature ever in VT as measured in Burlington?

a. 38 b. 45 c. 56 d. 63

In January Sue Wilson and I attended a Selectboard meeting and asked the Selectboard to follow up on efforts that culminated over a year ago when the State's Architectural Historian determined the Montgomery Town Hall was eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). We urged the Selectboard to start the nomination process. If successful, this would show the Town is serious about preserving the former church/theater/Grange and could open up some avenues of funding for preservation related projects.

The Selectboard adopted the following resolution:

"The Town of Montgomery recognizes the significance of, and values, its heritage in many forms and appreciates efforts to designate its covered bridges and other historic structures on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. In furtherance of that end, the Town will pursue the nomination of the Montgomery Town Hall (formerly the Congregational Church, the Crescent Theater, and the Grange 548) to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places."

Selectboard Board member Emily Kimball volunteered to be the point of contact on the Board and Sue will be working with her. The Society's role will be to facilitate the process where we can, similar to what we did for the former Baptist Church. The next steps will likely involve getting an expert to research and write the nomination which is submitted to the State for approval, then to the US Park Service for final adjudication.

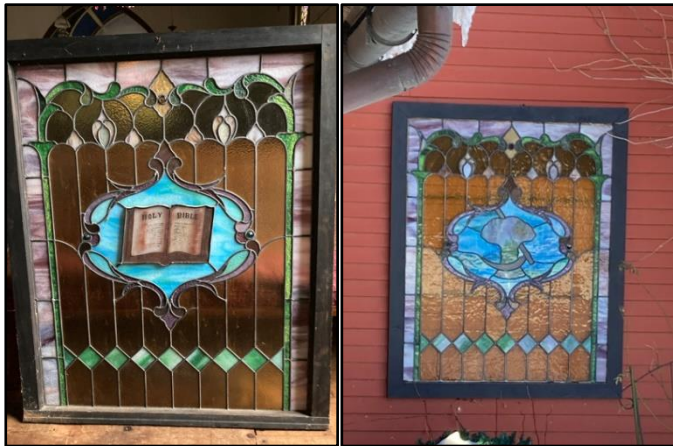
This effort will likely involve getting grant funding to pay for the expert. Once listed on the NRHP the Town should be more competitive in getting grants for building restorations and possibly even routine maintenance, like painting, windows and roofing.

While the preservation and care of Pratt Hall is a huge amount of what we do, we are more than a "preservation society". We have three other missions. Our advocacy for, and support of, preservation efforts related to Montgomery's historic structures is a natural fit and we will do what we can to help.

thanks for your support,

ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

Our thanks to all the individuals below who have shared their items and stories. They make Montgomery's history come alive.



Dave and Cheryl Wisell donated a stained glass window pane ("Holy Bible" left) that originally adorned the Montgomery Congregational Church, probably on the western facade. It had been left in their house by a previous owner. Some of you may have noticed this sister pane at The Inn (right). It has a central scythe and sheaf of wheat motif. The Inn was formerly C.T. Hall's home. C.T. bought the Church and converted it into the Crescent Theater, although the provenance of the pane remains uncertain. Notice the diamond shapes and central picture plaque on each.

Sandy Alexander called us to let us know excavation on her property south of the Center unearthed many "pump logs". This is a term for wooden logs hollowed out and tapered on one end to create pipelines from water sources to a home or cooler shed. They were used widely in the 1800s and early 1900s anywhere clay, iron, or other pipe materials were unavailable. There were several homes along the stretch of road in the area south on Route 118 in the latter 1870s. The MHS now has two of them.



Aron Garceau donated a 1920s era Victor Victrola model VV-X recently. It is a match to the packing cases produced for them in the Nelson and Hall veneer mill in Montgomery Center. The cases were used to ship them all over the world. This will give context to future exhibits and stories about this important Montgomery mill.



Periodically we receive requests for help identifying photo locations or people. Wanda Knapp, a Montgomery descendant, sent us this photo which we identified as the Hutchins mill south of the Center. It's interesting to see the variety of dress and ages of the workers and others gathered for the photo. We think it's circa 1870-80.



SMITH ORGAN RESTORATION

A former church in East Fairfield was home to a derelict organ made by Montgomery organ maker Edward Smith. We say "was" because it is now being restored and is scheduled for a free recital August 20th. The church, now known as the Meeting House on the Green, has been renovated and the organizers who bought it in 2012 connected with a pipe organ expert living in Alburgh who began repairs late last fall.

Smith was one of the brothers who owned the Black Falls Spool and Bobbin mill in Montgomery and died there in a mill accident in 1889. Smith organs are also in Bristol and Hardwick.

MEMBERSHIP 2023

Our annual membership drive went into the mail in early March. We hope you have received yours. We send it to every Montgomery property owner and past members.

Benefits of membership include our newsletters, savings on our books and gift items, and the satisfaction you are giving to a great local organization making direct contributions to our community, whether programs at Pratt Hall, scholarships, or our archives.

Our annual goal is 200 memberships but the more the better. Anyone can join or renew via our web site page if you prefer. **THANK YOU!**

2023 MHS EVENTS & PROGRAMS, SO FAR

Memorial Day Commemoration: This year's commemoration will be at the Montgomery Village Cemetery (up the hill) on May 28th. It will include military honors by American Legion post 42, roll call, and brief remarks followed by a wreath laying and refreshments at the Veteran's Memorial on the Village green.

Annual Meeting: Save the Date!! This year's meeting will also feature a 50th Anniversary celebration. It will be **June 30th** at Pratt Hall, and feature an outdoor buffet and special guest speaker, Willem Lange.

Willem is known for his Weekly Column "A Yankee Notebook", the local PBS program "Windows to the Wild," and numerous books. He is a young 87 so don't miss his wit and wisdom. His web site is <https://willemlange.com/> if you want to know more.

Invitations will be mailed to members soon. Alas, seating will be limited and we will need paid reservations in advance to plan for food. First come, first serve. Contact Sue Wilson (326-4189)

Farmers Market: Year six of our Farmer's Market will begin July 1st and run through September 16th, every Saturday from 9:30 to 1:00 pm. We've adjusted the hours based on input from vendors and customers. We can always use additional vendors so if you are interested in vending please contact Patty Perl (326-2176) or Elsie Saborowski (326-4558)

We hope to add additional events and plan to host our holiday events as before.

"HISTORY IN THE 252"

The Vermont Historical Society is assembling an exhibit based on inputs from every town in Vermont and will exhibit a sampling at the Vermont Statehouse in April. Each town was asked to provide a very brief "history nugget" accompanied by one picture. Our submission follows:



"A major part of Montgomery's past involved an explosion of timber-related development following the Civil War. Major production included spools and bobbins, plywood packing cases, and, most notably, machine-made butter tubs. The Hutchins, and Nelson and Hall mills would see their production increase to nearly 1.5 million tubs a year making Montgomery the largest producer of tubs in the country. of 3,000 tubs a day in 1905. Over 250 men were employed and numerous support services also required labor, housing, horses and teamsters, and other infrastructure (like covered bridges). Over half the buildings in town were built and owned by these mills. Workers came from throughout the area including an influx from Quebec. Montgomery's population would swell to 1,800 at the turn of the century and by 1920 it was the 5th largest town out of the 14 in Franklin county."

2022 TOWN REPORT INPUT

For this year's report we provided a two page article that discussed the State's 1983 Historic Sites and Structures Survey of Montgomery, the Society's formation 50 years ago, and our scholarship program. It included a Google Earth view of the town with the approximate boundaries of the three historic districts. As always we thanked the community and welcomed future support.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to report the passing of long-time member and supporter Don McGowan. A familiar face on Montreal TV Don loved spending time in Montgomery and did at least three stories on his travel program centered on our Town. He was an active preservationist and provided advice to us when we undertook the West Wall capital campaign in 2014. Our condolences to his family.

2023 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS

DUE MAY 1ST

Applications for our annual Dr. Winston Lewis Memorial Scholarship and the Joe and Irene Scott Memorial Scholarship are due May 1st. All graduating Montgomery seniors going on to future education or training are eligible. This includes technical training, e.g. CDL, as well as college. Applications and related information were mailed to seniors in January.

NEW BOARD MEMBER

In March, Dale Matthews was appointed to serve on the MHS Board. A self professed lover of history, she's eager to help wherever she can. Welcome aboard!

THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

April 1907: A gallon of maple syrup sold for \$.80

May 1904: Methodist Church hosts two day Women's Temperance conference. "Well Attended"

June 1956: Formal ground breaking for Montgomery to Jay Peak road.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. a. There have been 3 official Vermont flags.
2. d. Coolidge was sworn in by his father who was a Justice of the Peace, not a Town Clerk.
3. a. The coldest average yearly temperature in Burlington was 38 in 1904.

Sources: Vermont Historical Society, coolweather.net



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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

