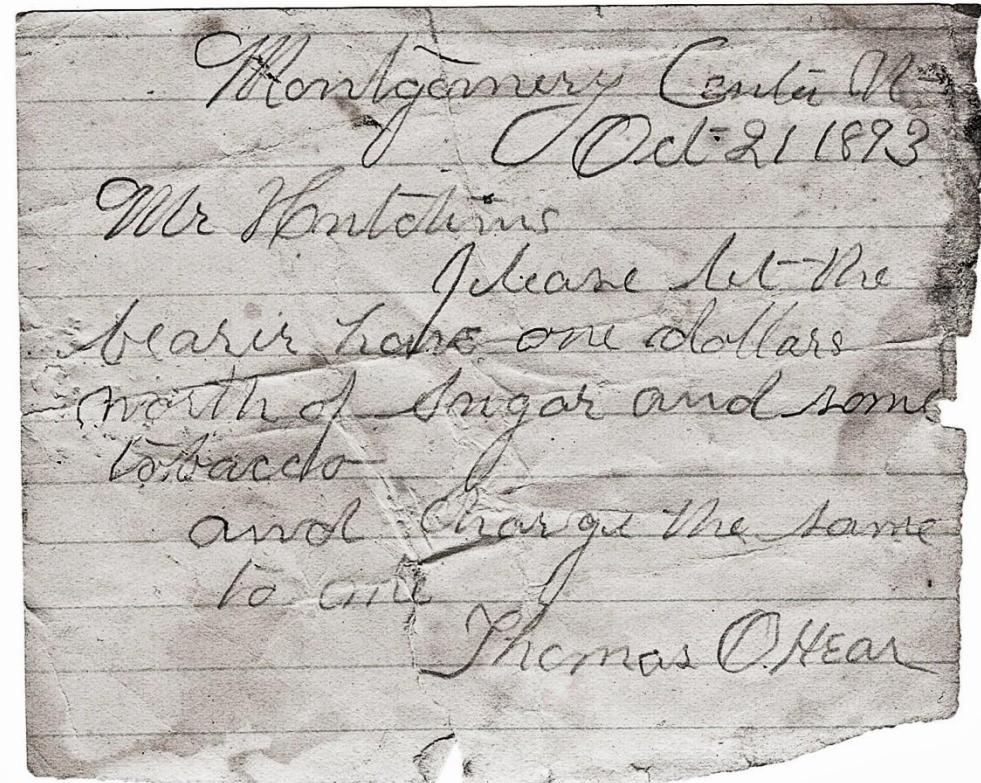




**Montgomery Historical Society**  
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### **Notes, Post Cards, and Boxcars**

Over the last year or two we've received several donations of ephemera, things like papers, never meant to last forever. They were usually discovered hidden away in an attic or closet and, in one case in the wall cavity of a home on route 242. These treasures include diaries of a 1950's Town Clerk, a short memoir of a woman who spent her early life on a Hill West farm, and just recently a shoe box with over 100 postcards, letters, and other documents found in a house once owned by J.C. Hutchins who owned the tub mill south of the Center and stores in town. What stories can they tell about life then and even ourselves today?

The Hutchins documents all date to between 1890 and 1902 and were simply addressed to "J.C. Hutchins, Montgomery Center, Vermont". They chronicle the day-to-day, often hectic, business life of a mill town.

Penny postcards were the texts and emails of the time and Hutchins was deluged by sales pitches from the entire country for goods he could sell at his stores. Axes, mohair skirts, electric motors, rubber boots, even an investment opportunity in a gold mine company! One item he chose to sell was novelty postcards ("Busy person's correspondence card")! No need to write, just check the box with the appropriate phrase.

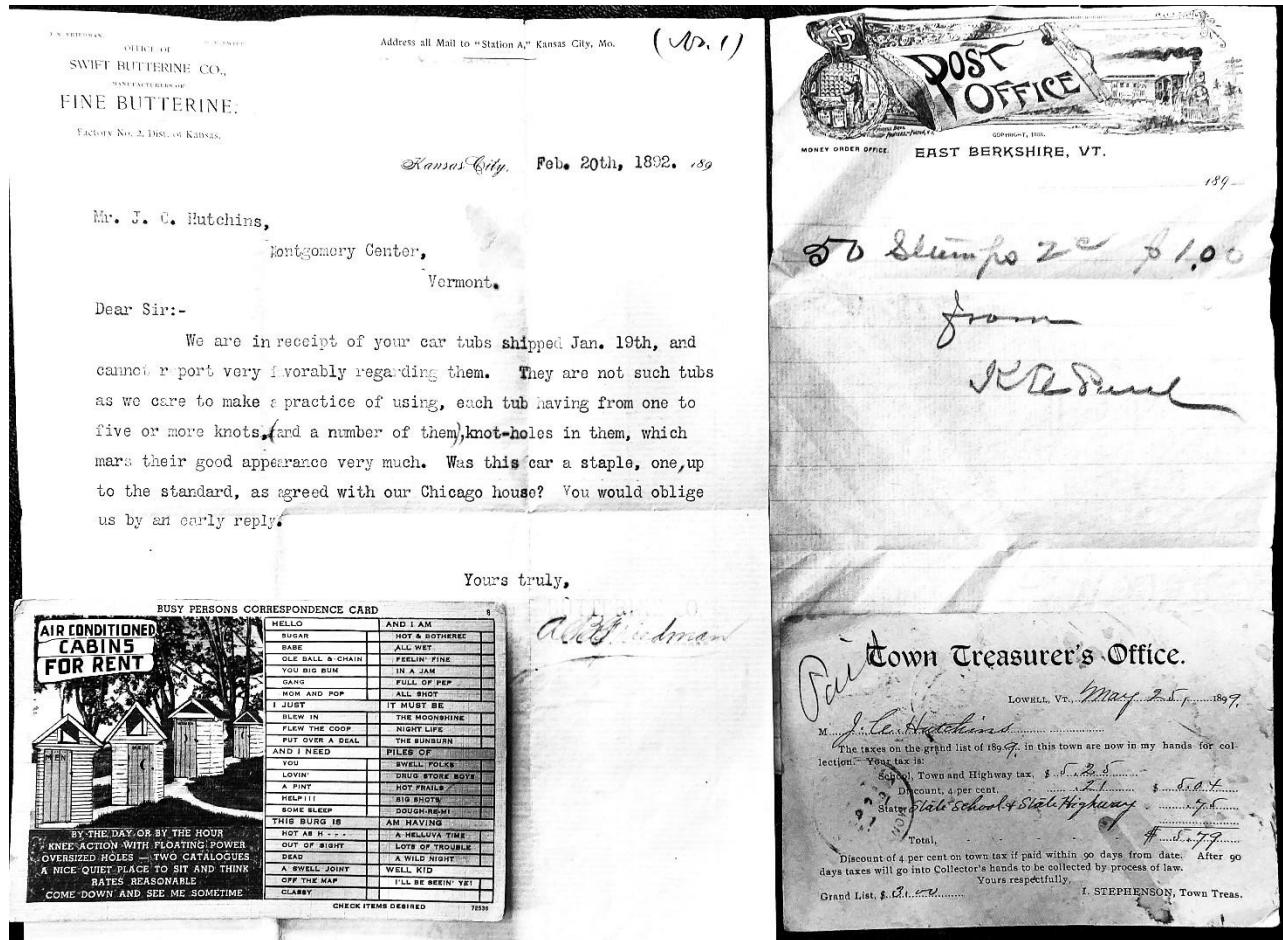
Then there was the correspondence related to the butter tubs. Many were regarding orders, usually by the box car, shipped out of East Berkshire. Where was my order? Can you expedite it? No Amazon or UPS

tracking! One unhappy 1892 customer in Kansas City, MO complained not only about the holes in some of the tubs but the knots in the staves! Was this boxcar what his agent in Chicago actually purchased?

Just a few personal letters were included. One from J.C.'s son, Fred, traveling in California reports he thought he had drummed up some customers in Pasadena.

Then there are the one-offs; an 1893 hand-written note, probably given to a child, asking them to give the bearer \$1.00 of sugar and tobacco on account, an 1890s receipt for fifty 2 cent stamps on East Berkshire Post Office stationary, and an 1899 receipt from the Town for payment of his taxes, \$5.79.

Some things never change, even when they are completely different. We collect these things because they tell the stories of our town and can even inform us about the issues we face today. We appreciate your support.



### Scholarship reminder

We have two MHS Scholarships available every year for any graduating Montgomery Senior going on to college or additional technical or professional training. Deadline is May 1st. Applications are available for download at our web site.

Your donations are always welcome.

**Not a member? Why not join us? You Can Make a Difference!**

The Montgomery Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit organization. Trustees are:

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