



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Scott Perry, Chairman
Bill McGroarty, Vice Chair
Marijke Dollois, Secretary
Mark Baddorf, 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:

The Automobile in VT.

1. In 1905 there were 373 cars registered in VT. In Jun of 1913 there were just over 4,500 cars registered. Fords accounted for about 30%. How many different makes of cars were registered?

- a. 50 b. 75
- c. 120 d. 150

2. Three Franklin county towns had 20 or more cars registered. St Albans had 100. Enosburg and Richford had about:?

- a. 20 b. 35
- c. 50 d. 65

3. Which Franklin County Town had the highest number of cars per capita?

- a. St. Albans
- b. Enosburg
- c. Richford
- d. Montgomery

Chairman's Message:

Thirty three years ago the Society's treasurer, Tony Jones, submitted the final financial accounting of the Society's first major preservation project. The Society had successfully reconstructed the top two sections of the tower housing the clock and bell, returning the building to its post-Civil War appearance. The final cost for labor, material, and fund raising came to just over \$27,500. Almost all of the work was done by locals. This was in addition to the huge amount of donated "sweat equity", services and materials.

This figure included \$350 for a ribbon cutting celebration during the summer of 1985. There was a band. Steve Hays and Sherm Potvin were Masters of Ceremonies and welcomed a large crowd that included members of the Clapp family, Montgomery's first settlers. One of the Clapp descendants, member John L. Baker, presented a portrait of Joel Clapp, the first native Montgomerian, to the Society, and the fete culminated with Andrew Cabana ringing the bell. Andrew told stories of how he farmed to the tolls from the tower clock when he was a younger man. We just posted a video of the affair on our Youtube channel. (It had to be converted from a Sony Beta tape!)

Steve made a short speech that still rings true today. Pratt Hall was whole again and would continue to serve as an important community gathering place, as it had for most of the previous 150 years. It would be a place for all kinds of gatherings and a symbol of community. Steve would become President of the Society in 1989 and lead our "Concerts by the Common" concert series for over 25 years. He was also the songmaster at our latest Candles and Carols.



As 2018 begins we remain committed to serving our community by preserving Pratt Hall, and fostering the knowledge, and appreciation, of our shared heritage and experience. We will continue to partner with other Town organizations whenever possible. From concerts, to humanities programs, to scholarships, to summer markets, to exhibits, to holiday caroling and wagon rides, we will be making and documenting Montgomery history together.

None of this would be possible without your help. Thank you for your support. See you at the Hall.

Happy New Year!! Scott

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Titus Presler, our neighbor, added another green house on his property behind Pratt Hall and we were troubled by the risk of several large poplar (aka popple) trees on our property leaning in that direction. Two large trunk sections had already fallen during some high winds. The Board decided to preemptively avoid trouble and took measures to clear them from the old Village Store property we acquired in 2005. We will continue the work in the Spring to clear the downed trunks and eventually landscape the area.

2018 CALENDARS AVAILABLE

It's not too late to purchase our "Treasures from the Archives" 2018 calendar. They are available online, and at Lutz's while supplies last.

LLHSM MEETING AND JACK QUINN AWARD

We attended the annual League of Local Historical Societies and Museums meeting in Lyndonville in October. The VT State Archive was there giving away surplus items and we picked up copy of the 1936 Vermont Weights and Measures standards. Did you know a hogshead was two barrels, or a hairsbreadth was 1/48th of an inch?

The highlight for us was the official announcement that member Jack Quinn received a lifetime achievement award. Chairman Scott Perry received the certificate on Jack's behalf and read the following statement from Jack: "Please convey that my love for Montgomery was because of my aunt and uncle Joe and Irene Scott who I witnessed serving the town in good and hard times. They are part of the historic fabric of one of Vermont's brave and hardy communities and its people who they served in so many ways."

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1ST

2018 Applications for our annual Lalia Pratt Hays Memorial Scholarship and the new Joe and Irene Scott Scholarship are due May 1st. All graduating Montgomery seniors going on to future education / training are eligible.

TD BANK AFFINITY PROGRAM

This time of year we remind everyone about the TD Bank Affinity program. Anyone with a TD Bank account can designate the MHS as their Affinity partner and the Bank will make a donation based on the average aggregated annual balance of the participants.

Thanks to all of you that have already designated us. We can always use additional members. The more participants and the more we save, the greater the donation from TD Bank.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

2017 was another good membership year. We came up just barely short of our goal of 200 members again, but exceeded our \$10,000 goal for membership donations. These operating funds pay for upkeep of Pratt Hall, and programs like Candles and Carols, our Memorial Day commemoration, our scholarships, and more. Thank you for joining and supporting these activities.

Our 2018 drive will begin in late March but you can join, or renew, anytime online by clicking the Membership link on our home page. You can use any credit card (processed by Paypal) or your personal Paypal account by clicking the Donate button and following the prompts

OKTOBERFEST DINNER

Our second Oktoberfest dinner was a resounding success. Organized by Elsie Saborowski and Sue Wilson it was another sellout. Thanks to all the cooks, servers, food donors, and donors to the silent auction. Also, another outstanding job was done by the volunteers for set up, take down, and clean up. Prosit.

HOLIDAY WEEKEND

On December 16th Pratt Hall was host to a revived "Holiday Happiness" celebration. MHS's Sue Wilson teamed with Amanda Starr and the Northwest Counseling and Support Services - Parent and Child Center, and the Montgomery Library Board for an event that included face painting, an interactive nature display and craft with Kurt Valenta, the Richford Community Choir, cocoa and cookies and horse drawn wagon rides from the Hall to the Comstock bridge and back by Down to Earth Draft Horses. The Montgomery Fire Department delivered Santa and Mrs. Claus who listened to toy requests and handed out candy canes. Our thanks to all involved in this wonderful community celebration. (continued)



NEW HISTORY INITIATIVES FROM VERMONT HISTORICAL SOCIETY+

The Vermont Historical Society (VHS) Board announced it will no longer put on the Vermont History Expo. Once an annual affair at the Tunbridge fairgrounds, it was getting harder and harder to sustain. At the same time they announced a number of new initiatives.

1. Participation in Festivals and Pub Trivia
2. The Local History Gallery (discussed in earlier MHS newsletters)
3. Digital Vermont (www.digitalvermont.org)
4. "Before Your Time" podcasts in partnership with the Vermont Humanities Council and Vermont Digger. (I'm looking forward to these!)
5. Participation in the State's "Vermont Days" programs

DONATIONS SPOTLIGHT

We're always thrilled to receive items to add to our collection. Since the last news letter we received a trove of items from Frances Hopkins (of Hopkins Bridge fame). Most of the circa 1870-1890 postcards and ledgers related to buying butter and other products from the Hopkin's farm just across the Trout River. It also included some photos.

We assisted her with questions about the location of her relative's (Francis Hopkins) village shop which she thought might be part of the Kimball store. George Kimball operated what became the Parker Store, then Village store, just to the right of Pratt Hall. We also shared some pictures of her family's farm (Trout River Farm) donated by member Betty Stanton, who we think was related to the Hopkins via Betty's, Gates ancestors.

LOTS OF VISITORS

We also had visits/contact with other Montgomery descendants. Several Clapps stopped by to check on the Hall. They were part of the contingent that was at the 1985 fete. Relatives of the last operators of the Village store also stopped by. They were spending the day trying to find some of their old homes and haunts. We provided Jewett relatives with some of the information we had. And we assisted David Hennig, a relative of J.D. Rossier, the head of Montgomery's French Baptist Church, in his search for the church's location (which was at the intersection of West Hill and Lane Rd).

In a similar vein we provided a contractor working for the State on a video on flood planning with access to some of our Montgomery Flood information. They were interested in "the history of flooding in Montgomery" and taped a short interview.

HOLIDAY WEEKEND (Continued)

On December 17th the Society hosted it's annual Candles and Carol community sing-a-long. Past MHS president, Steve Hays led the caroling segments. His production number of the 12 days of Christmas was memorable for the five, five, five, five, five golden rings and the maids a milking. Kathleen McCloskey-Scott's Ballet Arts students performed an excerpt from the Nutcracker. Jay Farnham read "The Night Before Christmas". Christmas Joke of the night... Why did Rudolph have a bad report card? He went down in History! Ha!! Pierce Marchand won a free raffle, exclusive to the kids attending. The prize was a gingerbread house made and donated by member Parma Jewett.

Warm cider and candy canes were provided for all until supplies ran out. Our thanks to everyone who helped make this another memorable holiday evening, and special thanks to Noela McGroarty for her colorful Christmas tree, stocking, and nutcracker. Also our thanks to Maggie Elkins and Lois Lumbra for lighting the Montgomery Spruce outside the Hall.

FUTURE PROGRAMS IN THE WORKS

While still a long way off and in the planning stages, we hope to have a VT Humanities program on Vermont native Charles Ross Taggart, the Old Time Fiddler on May 6th. Taggart appeared in some of the first sound motion pictures, even before Al Jolson. Adam Boyce's portrayal of Taggart includes stories, fiddling, and more.

We also hope to have a concert by the Northern Bronze hand bell ringers in the Fall. Do you have any ideas on programs you'd like to see? Please contact us and let us know.

LONGLEY BRIDGE REHAB COMPLETE

The newly repaired Longley Bridge opened for traffic in November. Stanley and Cindy Longley were given the honor of being the first vehicle through the Bridge. Member Jaye Secor, wife of former MHS Trustee Ken Secor, was the second. Ken had a special place in his heart for the bridge and is probably somewhere in heaven saying "about time".



HISTORY QUIZ: THE AUTOMOBILE IN VT

1. In June of 1913 there were just over 4,500 cars registered in Vermont. Fords accounted for about 30%. How many different makes of cars were registered? d. there were about 150 makes registered.

2. Three Franklin county towns had 20 or more cars registered. St Albans had 100. Enosburg and Richford had about: b. about 35 each.

3. Which Franklin County Town had the highest number of cars per capita? Enosburg: 1 for every 57 people. St. Albans had 1 car for every 81 people, Richford: 1 car for every 91 people.

Source: "The Automobile in Vermont" by Dorman Kent, The Vermonter Magazine Aug/Sep 1913.

THIS QUARTER IN VERMONT AND MONTGOMERY HISTORY

January: 1794 President Geo. Washington approves adding two stars to the U.S. flag; Vermont and Kentucky.

February: 1875 Snowflake Bentley born in Jericho, VT

March: 1897 Union Church re-consecrated as St. Batholomew's. (now Pratt Hall)



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Thanks for your support

