



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

One of the things I really enjoy is receiving calls from people interested in donating items to our archives. Sometimes they are at wits end. Three recent donations are highlighted in this newsletter.

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

One gem among them was a group of diaries written by William Ariel from 1950 to 1957 while he was our Town Clerk. He records the weather, road conditions, wedding licenses, vehicle purchases, and an occasional character gaming the rules. In one case he suspected a citizen might be claiming more bounties than he was entitled to.

History Quiz:

This month begins the 51st year our Society has been working to preserve our shared heritage, everything from buildings to toys to bridges to tubs to plywood packing cases. These things give us insight into what life was like back then, and informs us about what it might be. It's hard to avoid the problems of the past without knowing something about the past. Things that worked in the past might work in the future too.

All of this work is made possible by our volunteers and your generous support and involvement in our programs. We're looking forward to the future. Thank you and Happy New Year!

1. How many "Notable People" are listed on the Wikipedia Montgomery, Vermont page?

a. 1 b. 2

c. 3 d. 4

2. Homer Wheeler was one. What was Homer Wheeler noteworthy for?

A handwritten signature in cursive that reads "Scott".

P.S. Applications for our annual scholarships are due May 1st. 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" in late October. The theme was "Everything was going so well today until..." Each young writer read their creations to the audience and judges. The 6-8th grade winner's was a chilling Halloween Cabbage Night adventure with a surprise ending. Congratulations to all.

MEMBERSHIP

Our numbers have partially rebounded, and new members are up. You can renew / join online 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 a festive weekend in December consisting of "Holiday Happiness" and "Candles and Carols"

"Holiday Happiness" included a puppet show and puppet making, horse drawn wagon rides, and Santa arriving on the Montgomery Fire Department's pumper truck. Candy canes, cookies, and cocoa abounded. Our thanks to Sue Wilson and all involved.



Apollo and Minor Load Up

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES CONTINUED

Our singing during "Candles and Carols" was led masterfully by Steve Hays once again. The "Twelve Days of Christmas" was a tour de force!

Marlene Hambleton read "The Night Before Christmas". The jury is still out on the jokes. Again our thanks to all involved, including Master Elf, Noela McGroarty for the wonderful decorations.



REGIONAL MEETINGS

We attended a regional societies meeting in Fairfield in October. Beside the exchange of items and networking we were treated to a presentation on "Breeding Radicals in Early Vermont". The next meeting will be hosted by the Georgia Historical Society in October.

BITS AND PIECES...

The clock is acting up again. We are working on it!

Board member Dale Matthews set up a holder for our Covered Bridge Pamphlets and a donation box at the Comstock Bridge. It's been popular!

A crew from VT Public Media (VT PBS and VPR) did drone filming this fall and included Pratt Hall and some of our neighboring communities.

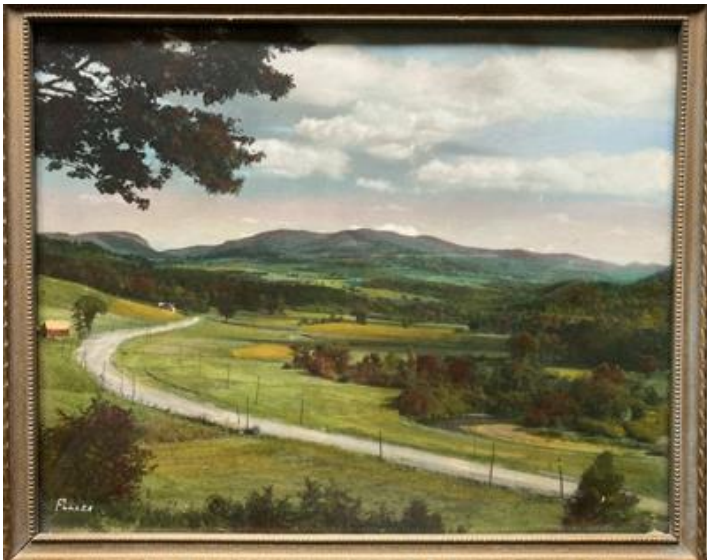
DONATIONS / ACQUISITIONS

We've received three wonderful donations since the last newsletter.

Randy Colomb, a descendant of William and Roseanne Ariel, donated diaries, photos and ephemera. William, his grandfather, was Montgomery's Town Clerk from 1948 to 1956, and Roseanne took over after his death, becoming Montgomery's first woman Town Clerk. She served for two years. They lived on Main Street in the Center.



The Colomb donation also included two hand colored photo enlargements made by Clayton Fuller. One, pictured below, is a hand colored enlargement of a black and white Fuller photo postcard of Montgomery looking east toward Hazen's Notch.



DONATIONS / ACQUISITIONS CONTINUED

Louise Celentano donated a rare collage of Montgomery Covered Bridges painted by Bobby Anderson.

Carolyn Babcock donated a painting by her husband, the Reverend Harold Babcock, titled "Nunc Dimittis". The painting shows the pastor and altar boys posing for a photograph after evening prayers.



"Nunc Dimittis" is sometimes called the "Song of Simeon", a prayer often recited as part of evening prayers, and refers to Simeon's recognition of the baby Jesus as the Savior, and son of god. This story of Simeon is depicted in one of the Hall's stained glass windows (below) and was familiar to Harold and his ancestors, one of whom served here.



Our thanks to Randy, Louise, and Carolyn for these treasures!

THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

January 1866: Montgomery votes to join Bakersfield Poor Farm.

February 1979: Montgomery Historical Society granted federal tax exempt status.

March 1909: Independent Phone Company organized serving Montgomery, Richford and East Berkshire.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. d. 4. Homer W. Wheeler, Dana Reed Bailey, Percival L. Shangraw, Elle Purrier St. Pierre

2. Homer Wheeler was born in Montgomery and moved out west where he was commissioned an officer in the Army. He was known as an Indian fighter and wrote two books on living on the Western frontier. We have a copy of "Buffalo Days" signed and inscribed to his sister who lived in Montgomery, in our archives. He died while living in California.



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