



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Number 82

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. According to the Jay Peak website this season's snowfall ranks second most in the last 21 years (so far). What was the least amount in a season?
a. 187" b. 205"
c. 265" d. 307"
2. Montgomery's census decreased 8 times census-to-census since 1900. How many times has Franklin County's decreased?
a. 0 b. 2
c. 4 d. 6
3. Where was Bright Hollow Village?
a. Black Falls
b. Avery's Gore
c. West Hill
d. East Hill

Chairman's Message: *Stuff In A Wall*

One of the things we are sometimes accused of is not being critical enough about our own history; that we don't acknowledge the good old days weren't always that good, or really that long ago. Guilty. It's hard to capture how challenging life was in the "old days", or imagine how some might have been eager to escape their lives in Montgomery, whether it was farming, working in the mills or the asbestos mine, or raising a large family.

This point was driven home recently with the find of a 1915 letter from a Canadian Immigration and Land Agent in Boston to a Montgomery farmer name George Pease. The 20-year-old Pease had inquired about a Canadian program offering free or subsidized land to anyone willing to move to their western provinces; in some cases they would also help pay for transportation for the whole family. The Boston-based agent advised Pease to communicate with the Winnipeg, Manitoba Commissioner of Immigration to get the on-the-ground details he needed to make his decision.

The letter also acknowledged the Canada West program was in flux. Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated six months earlier and World War I was underway. There were delays processing applications, and there was some speculation resources to fund the program might need to be redirected to the war effort. There were also concerns about a draft by Great Britain on both its Canadian subjects and those who immigrated under the program.

For whatever reasons George decided not to pursue immigration. He would marry Frances Comings two months later and move to her family's farm in Berkshire. According to U.S. draft records he and his wife were living in Berkshire in 1917, but by the 1930 census they were living in California. George died there in 1968.

The letter was found in the wall of what we believe was a home George lived in on East Hill, what is now Route 242. It, and several old newsprint periodicals, were discovered during renovations. We added them to our collection because they tell a story with insights into early 20th century life in Montgomery. Our thanks to "Sam" Thompson for reaching out to us with the donation.

We invite you to do the same and, as always, appreciate your membership and support.

Scott

Sources Include: The Family Search website, <https://www.familysearch.org/>; "Selling The Prairie Good Life" by Graham Chandler, 2016 Canada's History magazine.

2025 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 1ST

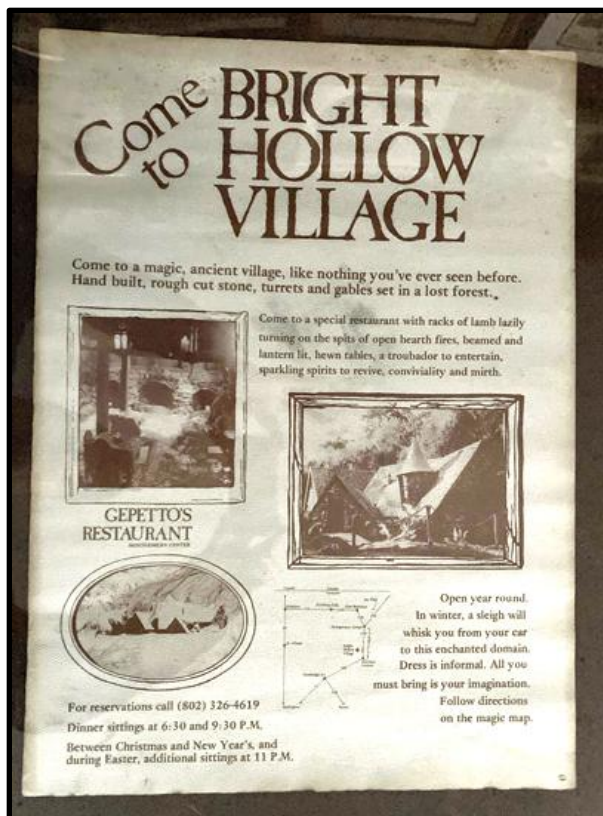
Applications for our annual Dr. Winston Lewis Memorial Scholarship and the Joe and Irene Scott Memorial Scholarship are due May 1st. All graduating Montgomery seniors going on to future education or training are eligible. This includes technical training, e.g. CDL, as well as college. Applications and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

2024 TOWN REPORT INPUT

For this year's report we expanded on last quarter's newsletter blurb and provided an article on the Eden and Lowell asbestos mine, a major employer for Montgomery. It included a history of the mine and some more contemporary news.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

An anonymous donor sent us two circa 1972 posters advertising "Bright Hollow Village", a development in Avery's Gore... It was "*a magic, ancient village, like nothing you've ever seen before. Hand built, rough cut stone, turrets and gables set in a lost forest*". It was home to Gepetto's restaurant.



MEMBERSHIP 2025

Our annual membership drive went into the mail in early March. We send it to every Montgomery property owner and past members, and friends, close to 500 letters.

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.

Wide participation is vital. Our annual goal is 200 memberships but the more the better. Anyone can join or renew via our web site page if you prefer it over mail.

LEAGUE OF LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES AND MUSEUMS (LLHSM) AWARD

We just received word that our own Pat Farmer will be recognized with an LLHSM award of excellence for his longtime support to the MHS as a Man-With-Tools, Treasurer and financial planner, and archival database software developer. The award will be presented at this year's annual conference in May.

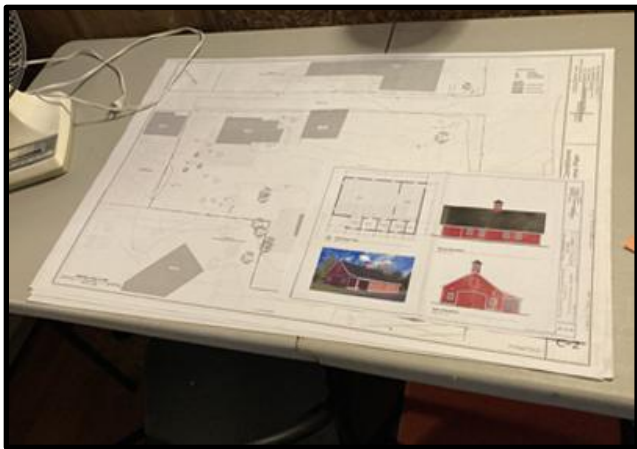


NEW EXHIBIT AT VHS LOCAL HISTORY SPACE

"Rockingham's Acropolis" interprets the social and cultural contexts of the Rockingham Meeting House (site of the Westminster Massacre and VT Republic Declaration of Independence), showcasing its artifacts and the elements that bring its rich history to life.

Vermont History Museum is located at the Pavilion Office Building, 109 State St. Montpelier.

NEW ARCHIVE BUILDING GETS GREEN LIGHT FROM THE TOWN



We are making progress!! We officially presented our plans to the Town Development Review Board (DRB) at a hearing in late January. The DRB reviewed our plans to ensure compliance with the Town's Zoning regulations and Flood Hazard Planning and approved our application. We are gearing up for a major fund raising campaign, which we will kick off this Summer, and the next phase of planning.

THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

April 1829: Rufus Hamilton Quit Claims the land for the Episcopal Church, now known as Pratt Hall.

May 1958: Town votes to remain "wet". 98-29 in favor for beer and wine. 98-54 in favor for liquor.

June 1903: Orleans County Historical Society places stone marker in Hazen's Notch commemorating 1779 Terminus of the Hazen Road. At least 800 attend the unveiling!



2025 MHS EVENTS AND PROGRAMS, SO FAR

"Zack Night" at the Inn: April 19th. We are working on a small exhibit of our Zack holdings for display at the Inn on April 19th. Details are still under development.

LLHSM Annual Conference: May 9th in Middlebury. Awards and workshops sponsored by the Vermont Historical Society.

Memorial Day Commemoration: We are still trying to arrange this. **TENTATIVELY** Sunday, May 25th at noon at the Hill West Cemetery (on West Hill Rd!!) We will email you updates.

Farmers Market: Year eight of our Farmer's Market will begin June 28th and run through October 11th every Saturday from 9:30 to 1:00 pm. We've adjusted the dates 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).

Annual Meeting: June 29, 2:00 pm at Pratt Hall. For members and guests. Champagne and desserts. Kevin Graffagnino (Ira Allen and Vermontania) guest speaker.

VT Covered Bridges Week: Farmers Market August 2nd and 9th. Help us celebrate Vermont Covered Bridge Week. A short presentation on the history of Montgomery's covered bridges and why we're the Covered Bridge Town. Free pamphlets with maps provided. Vermont Covered Bridge Society booth too.

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

LAST MONTH'S "WHERE IS IT?"



Tony Jones believes this picture shows an intersection near today's Routes 101 and 100, or 242 and 100. Remember 242 didn't exist at the time of the picture and you had to travel through Canada to get from Richford to Troy or go by way of Montgomery and Hazen's Notch Rd or Rte 118.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. a. 205". The lowest seasonal snowfall was in 2015-2016
2. c. Franklin County's census decreased 4 times census-to-census since 1900.
3. b. Avery's Gore. Bright Hollow Village was the name of the area in Avery's Gore where guitarist Charlie Trois built stone buildings in the early 1970s. It was home to Gepetto's restaurant.

MORE FROM OUR ARCHIVES...

Also found in the wall were several issues of the "Girls' Companion" and "Youth's Companion", periodicals widely subscribed to before the Internet, radio and TV! The Youth's Companion's publisher was Perry Mason. Young subscriber, and future author, Earl Stanley Gardner would later name his fictional attorney the same!



Thank you for supporting the Montgomery Historical Society



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Thanks to the following businesses for their 2024 membership and support. Let them know you appreciate their civic mindedness by your patronage.
Black Lantern Inn ~ Community Bank N.A. ~ David Howe Memorial Library
Ficoceillo Real Estate ~ 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