



# Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

P.O. Box 47

Montgomery, VT 05470

e-mail: [pratthall@gmail.com](mailto:pratthall@gmail.com)

[www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.montgomeryhistoricalsociety.org)

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## CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: DEJA VU ALL OVER AGAIN?

Scott Perry, Chairman  
Bill McGroarty, Vice Chair  
Marijke Dollois, Secretary  
Pat Farmer, Treasurer

The MHS Board meets the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 p.m., at Pratt Hall May-Sep, and at the Public Safety Building Conference Room or on Zoom Oct – Apr

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COVID-19: A year ago I was saddened to announce the cancellation of all remaining 2020 events sponsored by the Society. This followed cancellation of all previous 2020 programs. As I write this the Delta variant numbers in Vermont continue to climb and break-through cases are substantial. The Montgomery Rec Board has canceled their annual Fall art auction fund raiser and area schools are dealing with positive cases, quarantines and selective remote learning. Montgomery's positive case rate, while low, has increased over the last two weeks. The State's estimate of Montgomery's vaccination rate is between 61 and 70%. The situation is less dire but remains serious.

The MHS Board's philosophy from the beginning was to avoid doing anything that might increase the potential for harm and we remain committed to that policy. You'll see below our plans for the remainder of this year, some modified and some canceled outright, again. Who knows what November and December will bring.

SOME GOOD NEWS: We hosted a ceremonial unveiling of the four new VT Roadside Historic Markers in September. About 30 people were in attendance including several Jewett family descendants. The two year process involved writing the draft text for the signs (by Board member Jo Anne Bennet), compiling the application and getting Selectboard approval, then shepherding it through the State's review, and arranging for installation (all by Board Member Sue Wilson). Special recognition and thanks to the Town Public Works crew, Mark Brouillette, Mark Guilmette, and Scott Ovitt. The State Division for Historic Preservation's press release is on page two.

### Montgomery History Quiz:

1. Montgomery's population grew by over 20% in each of the 2000 and 2010 censuses. What were the 2020 results?
  - a. Increase by 17%
  - b. Increase by 6%
  - c. Decrease by 2%
  - d. Decrease by 11%
2. In the Summer and Fall of 1959 18 men were charged for a "misguided raid" on a Montgomery house. Was it:
  - a. A Christian temperance vigilantes act?
  - b. A mistaken demolition address?
  - c. A wild stag party?
  - d. A graduation prank gone wrong?

Scott

## **MEMBERSHIP DRIVE STILL OPEN**

This year's membership drive remains open. Our numbers have partially rebounded, and new members are up. [You can renew / join online](#) anytime. **THANK YOU!**



## **2021 ANNUAL MEETING**

We held our Annual Meeting on a hot August evening in the Belfry tent. Forty one members and their guests attended. Society Chairman, Scott Perry, presented officer reports during the business meeting before all enjoyed a pasta buffet. Our thanks to the Belfry.

The state of the Society is strong. Scott outlined several bylaws changes, one to allow the annual meeting any time during the year or to substitute a written report, and also to make clear Zoom and other types of virtual meetings were allowed. A second more significant change allows the Board to deposit or invest Society funds in institutions or instruments other than a bank.

The latter change was in response to the Board's desire to create an endowment fund of sorts following a generous gift from the estate of Winston Lewis. The Society has invested funds in the Vermont Community Loan Fund and a Fidelity S&P indexed fund in hopes it will bolster the long term financial security of the Society. It balances risk while hoping for a better return than traditional bank accounts.

A copy of the presentation slides or minutes of the meeting are available upon request.

## **FARMERS MARKET WRAP UP**

September 11 saw the conclusion of the season's Farmers Market. We had fewer vendors than in the past but attendance was still strong and it was wonderful to see and talk to everyone in person again. Thanks to all our vendors and customers and thanks to Sue Wilson and all the volunteers.



Sue Wilson, Jack Quinn and Mark Brouillette unveil the Union Church historic marker.

## **STATE ROADSIDE MARKER PRESS RELEASE**

Montpelier, Vt. - The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation is pleased to announce the installation of four new Roadside Historic Sites Markers in Montgomery. The new markers document the history of Montgomery as the "covered bridge capital of Vermont" and the 1970s community-sponsored preservation of Pratt Hall. Markers such as these allow places to come alive, sharing the history of our Brave Little State to Vermonters and her visitors.

Vermont's distinctive green and gold markers have just been placed at the Longley Covered Bridge (1863/2017), Comstock Covered Bridge (1883), and Fuller Covered Bridge (1890/2000). Each bridge is an illustration of the Town lattice truss, one of the most significant American timber truss types of the 19th century. Savanard and Sheldon Jewett, local lumbermen and farmers, constructed the nine covered bridges that historically connected Montgomery. A fourth marker was placed to commemorate Pratt Hall, constructed in 1835 as the Episcopal Union Church.

The Vermont Roadside Historic Site Marker program was established in 1947 by the Vermont Legislature. These 3-foot signs of cast aluminum are crammed with 765 characters that outline the stories of Vermont's heritage, commemorating her people and important events. This is one of the state's smallest programs and has one of the farthest reaches with 295 markers in production or placed throughout Vermont. The Roadside Marker Program is administered by the Division for Historic Preservation.

### **BOARD CHANGES**

Over the Summer both Jo Anne Bennett and Andre Labier resigned from the MHS Board. Both cited increased craziness in the lives they felt kept them from participating as much as they wanted. (Jo Anne has been unable to get to Montgomery for two years!) Both pledged to stay in touch and pitch in however/whenever they could. We cannot thank them enough for their many years of service.

We welcomed members Roger Lichti and Mary Garceau to the Board in Late September. They will attend their first meeting in October and we look forward to working with them.

### **TRINKETS AND TREASURES**

Our first lawn sale in three years took place in late August. Our thanks to all of you who donated items to sell, and to Noela McGroarty and Marijke Dollois for organizing the items and helping everything find a good home. It's always an exhausting but worthwhile effort.

### **ARCHIVAL COLLECTION MANAGEMENT**

After the Heaton House was emptied of T&T sale items we made a concerted effort to set it up as a work site to process archival donations. We hope to settle on guidelines and procedures for managing our growing collection and reinvigorate our data base system. We will provide updates as we get better organized.

### **SANBORN MAPS**

Members Steve Hays and Scott Perry, visited the Vermont Historical Society Library in July to view Sanborn insurance maps of Montgomery. These were maps the companies used to keep track of the buildings and infrastructure in towns as part of their underwriting for fire policies. The photographed maps are now posted on our web site.

### **NEW RESEARCH TOOLS**

According to an 1896 Issue of the Enosburg Standard, The Enosburg Telephone Company had 45 subscribers and there were 7 instruments in Montgomery Village and 2 in the Center. The Vermont State Archivist has an arrangement so anyone with a myvermont.gov account can access Vermont newspapers, like the Standard, or vital records files on Newspapers.com and Ancestry.com. You can create a free account anytime.

### **EVENTS FOR REMAINDER OF 2021...**

#### **THIS IS WHAT WE'RE THINKING**

December 11th MES CRAFT SALE: The Society will have a booth at this year's show, if the school is allowed to have it.

December 18th HOLIDAY HAPPINESS: We're planning to have horse drawn wagon rides and the Hall will be open for warming but no activities (face painting, crafts, etc) will take place inside. Santa may not be able to make an indoor appearance.

December 19th CANDLES AND CAROLS: This event will likely be canceled. A packed house of people singing is probably still unwise.

We will continue to follow developments and make adjustments to our plans as practical



### **BRICKS AND MORE BRICKS**

Men With Tools installed 7 more engraved paver bricks in August. There are now about 290 bricks installed. We already have orders for three more. If you're interested in a brick please call Pat Farmer or email us.

### **LLHSM**

This year's meeting of the League of Local Historical Societies and Museums will be October 30th in Montpelier. Registration is \$10 for VHS members and \$25 for non-members.

### **PINT GLASSES FOR SALE**

Our logo pint glasses look great and benefit a great cause... us. They're available at our online store or by emailing or calling any Board member.

## THIS QUARTER IN MONTGOMERY HISTORY

October: 1958 Immunization Clinic held at Center School. Tetanus, Smallpox, and Polio available but Polio only for ages 40 and younger.

November: 1898 Post office at four corners on West Hill opened.

December: 1959 Carinthia Inn opened. Now The Inn.

## HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. c. According to the Census Bureau Montgomery's population decreased about 1.5%

2. c. Young men from St. Albans, Sheldon, and Swanton broke into a unoccupied home on Amidon Rd. during a wild stag party. Half were minors. Windows and furniture were destroyed and clapboards stripped for a bonfire. Made the papers in Boston! Source: St Albans Daily Messenger.



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