



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: Happy 50th Anniversary

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

Recent History Quiz:

1. Gen. Richard Montgomery died leading the Americans at the Battle of Quebec. His second in command was Benedict Arnold. What future U.S. vice president was also part of the battle?
 - a. Samuel Adams
 - b. Alexander Hamilton
 - c. Aaron Burr
 - d. Thomas Jefferson
2. Which of the following was not a motto on the Vermont motor vehicle license plate?
 - a. Visit Vermont
 - b. See Vermont
 - c. Green Mountains
 - d. Green Mountain State

In 1973 Montgomery's Saint Bartholomew's church had deteriorated to the point there was talk the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont might tear the building down. There was no congregation and funding for upkeep wasn't there. A "foreboding" sign was nailed to the front of the building; "UNSAFE FOR VISITORS". Some thought it was best to remove the building to prevent it from becoming a public safety hazard.

A small group of people with its preservation in mind met in August and September of 1973 and decided to form our Society. The first meeting was just 5 people, Irene Scott, Margaret St. Onge, Larry Pratt, Beatrice Chaffee, and Sharon Devries according to the minutes. At a meeting at the church in early September "*no business was transacted due to small attendance and the intense cold*". They persevered, and just a few weeks later officers were elected. Bylaws were drafted and approved by the newly formed Board of Trustees by the end of October. Our first fundraising letter went out to the community in November.

In January of 1974 the Society had 124 "adult members" and 2 business members, \$502 in the bank, and purchased the building for one dollar. Members from the period describe sitting in the building during a rain storm and watching water run down the walls, and plaster bulging in places. The entire building had orange-red shag carpeting (you can still see the remnants if you open the heating vents between the pews). There was no water/plumbing, no electricity, and no heating system.

Thus began a fifty-year odyssey to restore and preserve the building, open the property to community use, begin recording the Town's history, and award small scholarships. It has been, and remains, a labor of love from everyone involved, benefiting our community and State.

We cannot begin to thank the countless individuals, businesses, and organizations that have helped with this effort, but please know we appreciate your support and remain focused on our mission. What better time to renew our commitment and help get us started on the next fifty years? Thank You.

Scott

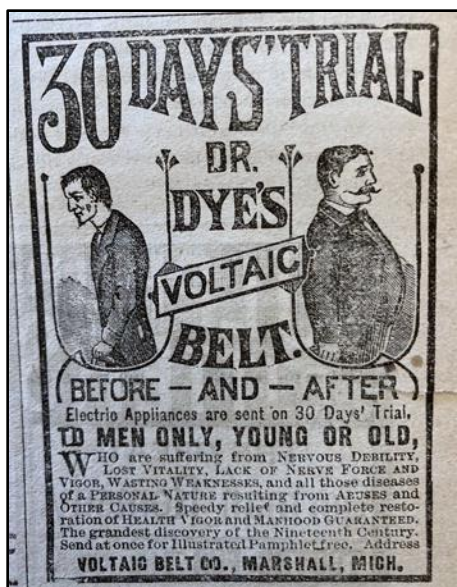
HELP US SPREAD THE WORD.
2023 SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
DUE BY MAY 1ST

Applications for our annual Winston Lewis, and Joe and Irene Scott Memorial Scholarships are due May 1st. All graduating Montgomery seniors going on to any type of future education / training are eligible. This includes technical training, such as a CDL, as well as college.

REGIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES
MEETINGS RESUME

Our friends at the Sheldon Historical Society hosted our group's periodic meeting this past fall. They included a wonderful presentation on the famous Sheldon Springs mineral waters shipped around the world, a hearty lunch, and a tour of their partially complete museum.

These meetings give attendees a chance to network and re-home de-accessioned items to other societies. Among the items we received was an 1883 newspaper article written by Montgomery tub mill owner, William Stiles, where he reflects on his long career in the butter tub industry. One point he makes is that tubs from Montgomery were better than tubs made from some other mills where the logs spent a lot of time in the water during river drives. Those logs made the butter bitter! The paper had some great ads too, many devoted to questionable period cure-alls.



Also, we met Dave Benion from Franklin and learned he is the clock guy for their town clock. We invited him for a visit to look at our clock and compare notes. We learned our clock needs a good cleaning and we think we figured out how to get the chiming mechanism working again.

2022 MEMBERSHIP WRAP UP

We set a new record for membership revenue in 2022, and it was even more impressive considering our number of memberships dipped to 170, 30 short of our annual goal. Good news: bad news - More money but from fewer people.

We strive to enlist membership support from as broad a slice of Montgomery and Montgomery enthusiasts as possible. It keeps us vital, relevant, and better able to serve our community.

Our 2023 drive, our 50th, will begin in March but you can 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. US Postal Service works too. New and re-joining former members are appreciated greatly too.

If you have a friend, or family member, you think might be interested please encourage them to consider joining, or consider giving them a gift membership. Please email us if you have any questions.

HOLIDAY HAPPINESS AND CAROLS AND CANDLES

This year's wagon rides were canceled after the large snowstorm made it unsafe to trailer the horses to Pratt Hall. We missed Misty Meadows' Chip and Dale and hope to get them back next year.

We held our first "Candles and Carols" in three years that same day despite the storm. Our thanks to Patrick Evans for filling in on very short notice for Steve Hays who had slipped on the ice at his home and was in the hospital with a concussion. Thanks also to Marlene Hambleton who read "The Night Before Christmas".

Our thanks to the Library for cookies, Marijke Dollois for cider, and Noela McGroarty and Marijke for decorating the Hall.

Joke of the night: The Black Lantern is negotiating with Elon Musk to open the first restaurants on the Moon and Mars by next Christmas. The critics are sure the food will be great but are concerned about the atmosphere.



**"WE'RE NOT FROM HERE"
PLAYS TO PACKED PRATT HALL**

The Modern Times Theater publicly premiered their latest production at Pratt Hall in late October to an enthusiastic crowd. We witnessed the evolution of man and the shifting "tectonic" plates creating the Green Mountains among other milestones in human and earth history. Rose Friedman and Justin Lander were masterful and said Pratt Hall was just the type of cozy venue the production was meant to be performed in.

**WHAT DO WE WANT FOR OUR 50TH
ANNIVERSARY? A NEW ARCHIVES BUILDING**

Since the last newsletter we've been dealing with a leaky roof in the building we use to house our archives. We re-fastened parts of the metal roof that had come loose and added some metal drip edge but that failed to solve the problem so we've covered a section of the roof with a tarp.

In November the Board decided to form a committee to start the process to build a new facility. It is headed by John Kuryloski and will involve several other Board members. Once a design can be nailed down we will undoubtedly be looking at another capital campaign and grant writing. All agreed spending any money on the existing structure would be a waste.



PRATT HALL HOSTS YOUNG WRITERS

Montgomery's young writers gathered at Pratt Hall in late October to read their creations to an audience of family, friends, and judges. The Friends of the Library organized the event which included a pizza party after the readings, and awards.



PHOTO FROM THE PAST



Do you recognize where this photo was taken? See bottom for the answer.

FULLER BRIDGE

A CBS "Sunday Morning" crew came to town as part of their story on Vermont's 251 Club. They filmed a man visiting all of Vermont's towns during bike rides and filmed him going through the Fuller Bridge. They said they wanted to come to "Vermont's Covered Bridge Capitol" for some scenic video and contacted us for assistance. (They kept asking which bridge is best? We said they're all great!).

Alas, the Montgomery and cyclist part of the the story ended up on the editing room floor and while they used a bit of Cedric Lanphear's drone video (see the Oct 2022 newsletter) it wasn't attributed to him or Montgomery.

Also, a snowy picture of the Fuller bridge was used in the Vermont Historical Society's Fall/Winter "History Connections" magazine. It sets the mood for Executive Director Steve Perkins' "Director's Notes" suggesting reading history by a warm fire might be just the thing to do on a cold Winter day.

VISITORS

We assisted two people doing family research this fall. One woman was trying to get information on a relative of the Smith family that ran the spool and bobbin mill in Black Falls. We had no information but were able to give her some leads. Another was related to the Goodspeeds and wanted to see the "Goodspeed window" in Pratt Hall. She was delighted.

ENGRAVED BRICKS

Two more bricks were installed in the front walkway at Pratt Hall in November. There is room for more. Let us know if you would like one. Order forms can be downloaded from our web store and emailed to us.

**THIS QUARTER IN
MONTGOMERY & VERMONT HISTORY**

January: 1861 - The Rev. Joel Clapp dies from a probable heart attack in Claremont, NH. Buried in Woodstock with wife Abigail Peckham.

February: 1987 - Cherry Garcia introduced by Ben and Jerry's.

March: 1993 - Montgomery students move to the newly completed elementary school.

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. c. Aaron Burr. Burr was an officer in the colonial army and reportedly tried to carry the body of Montgomery away during the retreat so it wouldn't fall into the hands of the British. The British interred Montgomery with honors and his remains would eventually be returned and re-interred in New York city.

2. a. "Visit Vermont" has never been on a Vermont License Plate.

PHOTO FROM THE PAST ANSWER

We believe the picture is taken from the Fuller Bridge looking towards the Village Green.



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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT