



Artifacts and Fiction

The Montgomery Historical Society Quarterly Newsletter

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Scott Perry, Chairman
Bill McGroarty, 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. True or False? Ethan Allen was jailed for getting a smallpox inoculation.

2. The procedure of inoculation in America originated in:

- a. Africa b. China
c. India d. Peru

3. True or false? The first smallpox vaccine was developed from a cow?

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: **THE JOB'S NOT BEGUN** **UNTIL THE PAPERWORK IS DONE**

In 1973 when the Society organized and incorporated we registered with the State of Vermont. This gave us several legal authorities and protections. To officially register our name and operate legally we had to file Articles of Association, (now called Articles of Incorporation), and Bylaws with the Secretary of State's office. Our Bylaws had to have the offices of President, Secretary and Treasurer. We re-register every two years which is called a Biennial Report. Our Articles of Association are now posted to our web site on a page with our current Bylaws.

One best practice is to periodically review the Bylaws. Ours are normally reviewed about once a year and have been revised ten times since 1973, most recently in February. The latest changes now allow the Treasurer to invest Society funds in an institution or instrument other than a bank **with Board approval**. This is in anticipation of creating an endowment of sorts to try to ensure the longer term financial viability of the Society and our programs.

Other changes now explicitly allow the Board to hold the Annual Meeting anytime in the calendar year, not just June, or mail a written Annual Report in lieu of the meeting. They also explicitly allow meetings of any type by electronic means. These changes were in direct response to the Covid-19 rules from the State and the development of virtual tools.

Take care everyone,

Scott

NELSON & HALL PACKING CASE LEGENDS

Many of you will remember our stories of people who own these cases contacting the Society for information (see the July 2016 MHS news). The cases were printed usually with the RCA Victor logo and a small Nelson and Hall Montgomery Center, VT mark. The company offered custom printing on the cases and said they were so sturdy they would often be re-used thus providing enduring advertising.



Most recently we received this picture of a rocking chair with a sewing drawer built into the side of the seat. The owner said it was built by Nelson and Hall Co. and wanted to know if we had any information.

We had not heard that the mill, which sat at the bottom of Hazen's Notch Road, had ever made or sold furniture. Turns out the genesis of her question was from the bottom of the drawer which had the familiar Nelson and Hall mark. We surmise a case panel was used to repair the rocker drawer and directed her to our slide show on the Nelson and Hall packing cases.

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 seniors in March and are also available from our web site.

FLASHBACK: MONTGOMERY CTR SCHOOL



The State Architectural Historian recently reached out to us. He had found a 1990 draft nomination to put the Montgomery Center School on the National Register of Historic Places. It had been written by a graduate student at the University of Vermont and he wondered whatever had become of it.

The effort was part of a State initiative to identify and list as many of the State's historic schools as possible. Unfortunately this came at a time when the Town was struggling with what to do. There were at least five bond votes from 1989 to 1992, some passing and some failing, which eventually led to the construction of the current Montgomery Elementary School.

I told him the Town had apparently decided not to submit it and the old school was burned down after the new school was built to make room for a new Public Safety Building /Library.

MARVELOUS MAN IN MITTENS SAYS MHS MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!



You will be receiving our annual membership reminder letter soon if you haven't already. Revenue from membership dues is the life blood of our Society. Dues fund our operating costs (e.g. heat, water, power, insurance, grounds), and our programs (e.g. preservation, speakers, concerts, holiday events).

Your membership is also an important factor which grant administrators consider when deciding whether to award us a grant. It is seen as a metric on the health of our organization, community support, and our ability to effectively spend their money.

2020 TOWN REPORT INPUT

For this year's report we provided a three page article, "A Short History of Montgomery Town Meeting Venues". It tracked the annual meeting from the "Town House" to its present day Town Hall. It seemed even more appropriate since this year's "meeting" was totally by Australian ballot. As always we thanked the community and welcomed future support.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS (WSR) MILLS HISTORY

We were contacted by the Lowell Historical Society recently. They are working on a historical booklet on the mills along the Upper Missisquoi and Trout Rivers as part of a grant from the WSR management committee to document the rivers' historic and cultural resources. We will be meeting with them in May to see how we may be able to assist them.

The MHS supported the work that led to the national designation of the Trout River and Upper Missisquoi as Wild and Scenic in 2014 and hosted one of their first events after the designation where we provided a presentation on Covered Bridges.

IN MEMORIAM

We are sad to report the death of member Doug Devries, who passed recently after a long battle with cancer. Doug was a MHS founder and drafted our original Articles of Association and Bylaws, officially establishing the Society in 1973. He and Sharon were the first couple to get married in what would become Pratt Hall after it was purchased by the Society. Sharon was one of three original Directors.

A lawyer and a Marine, he once spoke at our annual Memorial Day commemoration wearing his camouflage cover (Marinespeak for hat) and became overcome with emotion at one point as he honored Montgomery's fallen. He regained his composure and carried on. Everyone there was moved. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Sharon, his daughters, and his entire family.

We're also saddened by the passing of long time members Suzanne Whedon (18 years) and June Horak Rosenberg (28 years). We pass on heartfelt condolences to Tony and Lenny and their entire families.

2021 MHS EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Last year at this time we were just beginning to see the impact Covid -19 would have on our activities. We thought we might be able to pull some off. We modified our Memorial Day commemoration but ended up canceling all of our other programs and events.

As of now we're not sure what we will be able to do and when, in part because we rely on others, like the Black Lantern, Post 42, and the Farmers Market vendors to make things work. Here's what we are thinking now:

Memorial Day Commemoration: Covid-19 developments permitting, this year's commemoration will be at the Clapp Cemetery on May 30th or 31st. We hope to include military honors by American Legion post 42, roll call, and brief remarks. We will update you via email, facebook and our websites of the exact date and time.

Annual Meeting: We are thinking about doing a catered outside event in late August. We will update you via mail, email, facebook, and our websites once we have more details.

Trinkets and Treasures: Our popular lawn sale will also be in late August. More details will follow.

Farmers and Crafters Market: We need vendors! If we can get enough, year four of our Farmer's Market will begin June 26 and run through September 11th, every Saturday from 9:00 to 1:00. Masks and other Covid mitigation procedures will likely still be required. If you are interested in vending please contact Sue Wilson, 326-4189 or email her at sue_wilson@fairpoint.net.



TRINITY WINDOW LIGHT

We are leaving the lights in Pratt Hall's Trinity window on at night as a beacon of hope during the pandemic.

ROADSIDE HISTORIC MARKERS

The signs are coming, the signs are coming. Look for them at Pratt Hall and several covered bridges starting this Spring.

THIS QUARTER IN HISTORY

April: 1982 – Flooding again

May: 1803 - Clapp Cemetery established, first in Town.

June: 1787 - Name changes from "New Connecticut" to "Vermont"

HISTORY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. True. In 1764 in Shrewsbury, CT.
2. A. Africa. The procedure was related by a slave to Cotton Mather in Boston in 1721.
3. True. A small pox vaccine was developed from the cow pox in England by Dr. Edward Jenner.

Source: Last year at this time we started the newsletter with excerpts from an article by Mark Bushnell published in VT Digger on the Spanish Flu virus of 1918. He had interviewed a Montgomery survivor named Gifford Owen who recollected the community's experience.

Recently VT Digger published another piece by Bushnell on the birth of vaccines in the U.S. which was the source for the quiz. We recommend the whole article. It's a good read.



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THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN THESE TRYING TIMES