



Middletown Springs Historical Society NEWSLETTER

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September 2008

Turn of the Twentieth Century Highlights of Two Decades

For History Expo 2008, Jon Mathewson researched the archives of the Poultney Journal, the Granville Sentinel and the Rutland Herald; also the Rural Record, the Pulpit Telephone, US Census records, Vermont State Health Reports, Walton's Register, A Gem in the Hills, by Frances Krouse, Town Reports, and Patent Office Records for forgotten facts and happenings in the history of Middletown Springs. This exhibit is part of the ongoing Middletown History Time Line on display in the Society museum.

1892

March: Voters decide not to build a town hall.
E. Leffingwell making and selling stoves and tinware.
Dr. Asa. A. Kinne begins practicing medicine in town.

1893

Leonidas Gray injured while sledding down Montvert Road.
Forty people from town attend the Columbian Exposition in Chicago.
H. Clay Steele, con-man and horse thief, preaches at the Baptist Church.

1894

March: Selectmen told to order new runners for the town hearse.
April 6: Hoadley child found dead in stonewall in Tinmouth. Ives Hoadley, his wife, and mother-in-law arrested for murder; later acquitted.
Montvert Hotel does not open for the season. Vegetables from the gardens sold to the townspeople.
July 13: D. A. Barker's livery stable burns down. In September, he buys and renovates Valley Hotel.

1895

Glee Club re-organizes.
Townspeople send three barrels and three boxes of aid supplies to drought victims in Nebraska.
February: Martin Dickinson and Walter Schollar are caught burglarizing Dyar Leffingwell's store.

1896

Montvert Hotel sold and renovated.
"A band of gypsies" encamps for a month a mile south of the village.
Stained glass windows installed in the Congregational Church.

1897

David O. Keefe sells store and re-opens in Rutland.
February 11: First meeting of the Fortnightly Club.
Dana Carpenter builds a printing office and photography studio.
Montvert Hotel sold to the Kneipp Cure Company.
Town Library organized.

1898

Charles P. Louis and Charles W. Stevens serve in the Spanish-American War.

1899

February 5: Daniel Cummings dies in house fire on South Street.
Many farmers do not tap trees due to the devastation wrought by "forest worms."
Civil War cannons installed on village green.
Extensive repairs on the cheese factory.
August: A traveling merry-go-round, installed near the school, draws crowds nightly for two weeks.
J.P. Hoadley receives a \$9,000 well-drilling contract for work at Fort Ethan Allen in Colchester.
August: First service in St. Margaret's Episcopal Chapel.
October: Selectmen ban bicycle riding on sidewalks.

1900

Rev. Henry Lincoln Bailey publishes the *Pulpit Telephone* (through 1901).

1901

February 18: Grange reorganized.
May 31: Baseball Team gets new uniforms.
Haynes & Carlton sell store to Frank Weller.

1902

LaRoy Southworth begins publishing *The Rural Record*.
"Lincoln Library" proposed to house town library, court records and land records.
Stone walls around Old Cemetery are taken down and hedges planted on north and east sides.
W.E. Grover and Dana Carpenter establish telephone service in town.

1903

February 2: State-wide referendum to replace alcohol prohibition with local option license system passes. Middletown Springs splits vote evenly, 87 - 87. A month later, town votes to stay dry.
November: John McGarry dies in an accident in the #16 Hughes Quarry in Granville, N.Y.

1904

Construction on a new school begins.

May 30: Soldiers Monument erected and dedicated on Town Green.

1905

February 17: New school opens.

April 27: Forest Fire on Morgan Mountain.

1906

Harvey Cairns turns old school house into apartments.

William L. Town tears down Montvert Hotel.

1907

Tradition of passing a gold-headed cane to the town's oldest resident begins. The cane goes first to Alpheus Haynes (1807 - 1907), then to Roswell Buel (1813 - 1910)

There are 860 registered automobiles in Vermont, including #796, belonging to A. A. Bizallion.

1908

Concrete steps foundation placed in front of the Congregational Church by Frank Krouse.

Maple trees planted on northern side of School Street.

1909

February 27: The Flinch Club, later The Priscillas, hold their first meeting.

April: Clyde Baker of North Bennington buys James Logan's store, and expands it with a bakery.

April: Old cheese factory torn down. Soon after, J.E. Buxton builds a new cheese factory on his farm.

June: Creamery torn down.

Town begins paving sidewalks with concrete.

E.B. Clark, A.W. Gardner, W.S. Gray and C. Gardner have houses filled with city boarders.

1910

A. W. Gray's Sons factory stops buying local lumber. Marcena Spaulding (1820-1914) receives gold-headed cane.

Cannons on Town Green given concrete foundations. Dr. Asa Kinne dies of pneumonia.

1911

Basketball and Roller Skating are popular at Barker's Hall. Both men's and women's basketball teams, the "Blues," play teams from area towns.

Boarding houses fill with summer visitors. A.W. Gardner houses 26 guests.

August: Major thunder storms in area: "A bolt struck the lightning rod on the Congregational Church, followed it to the ground, where it tore a large hole, throwing the dirt nearly to the eaves; entered Clark Gardner's house, ripped up the oil cloth, blackened the wall paper and threw a clock from the shelf and then passed out without serious damage."

Maple Festival Sweetens the Season

The 20th Annual Maple Festival, held Sunday, March 16 was fun for all and most successful financially, bringing in \$2100 under the able leadership of Annie Pepperman.

In addition to the demonstration by Fred Bradley of old-fashioned sugarmaking over an open fire, Bill Clark held forth once again on the history and technique of the maple industry, including the latest on reverse osmosis and vacuum tubing systems and the on-going threats from fraud, disease and climate change. Rosemary Moser instituted a kids' activities corner and Paul Morgan rounded up a group of local musicians to entertain. Sue Clark sold new syrup, jams & jellies and maple baked goods.

Maple cotton candy, sugar on snow and blueberry pancakes competed with an array of homemade desserts and baked goods for appetites of festival goers.

The Maple Festival Raffle with dozens of prizes proved most successful, thanks to the generous donations of prizes and purchase of tickets by Society members and friends.

Raffle prizes and baked goods were donated by the following:

Alderman's Chevrolet	Peter Huntoon
Annie's Book Store	LaValley's
Appleby's Restaurant	Original Vermont Store
Ben & Jerry's	Joel Pliner
Castleton Village Store	Porch of Locks
Clarendon Hardwood Bowls	Rising Meadow Pottery
Bill & Sue Clark	Slate Valley Museum
Lois Dansereau	Smiths Grain Store
Dietra Davis and Lady Liberty	SolarFest
Dorset Inn	Stewarts Ice Cream
Durfee's Sugar Lane Maple	Trolley Stop Restaurant
Fair Haven Inn	Twin Mountains Farm B&B
Grant's Village Store	Vermont Fitness
Green Mtn. Coffee Roasters	Vermont Sweetwater
Hannaford	Wells Country Store
Sarah Horne	

In Memoriam

JEAN F. LOFGREN, 89, died March 4, 2007 in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Jean Frances Taylor was born Feb. 19, 1918, in Tinmouth, the daughter of Edward Taylor, a State Senator, She grew up in Tinmouth and South Shaftsbury, and was valedictorian of her graduating class at Bennington High School. She attended Simmons College in Boston and graduated with a nursing degree. After college she was a public health nurse and taught nursing in Boston. She married Karl Adolf Lofgren, a surgeon at Mayo Clinic. Dr. Lofgren died January 6, 2008.

Jean is survived by a son, Karl; and a daughter, Anne Lofgren; two grandchildren; and a sister, Winifred Stevens.

The Lofgrens were Life Members of the Middletown Springs Historical Society.

Like most families, businesses and non-profit organizations, the Society faces the challenges of a rapidly escalating energy costs during 2008. In July our fuel oil supplier offered pre-buy options based on our previous year's usage. We could choose a guaranteed price of \$4.449/ gal for 995 gallons and pay \$4400 in advance. Or we could choose the Flex Plan in which we prepay the same amount and pay the posted price per gallon at the time of delivery, minus ten cents per gallon. With the current price hovering at \$4.00/ gallon, the board chose the Flex Plan option and we begin the heating season with a full tank and our fingers crossed. It's a gamble both for us and for the fuel dealer, and the consequences of a big change in a volatile market could be serious.

Fuel oil cost accounts for 32% of our 2008-2009 operating budget, (our fiscal year begins September 1) up from 28% in 2007-2008. The fuel oil budget increased from \$3300 to \$4400 in that period. Fuel oils is by far the largest item in the new budget, twice the amount anticipated for the next largest item (liability insurance). Electricity, the other energy expense, is budgeted at \$1100 for the coming year.

We have done what we reasonably can to conserve

energy. Only the rooms on the ground floor of the front of the building are heated in winter and they are well insulated for a historic structure. And only the Town Office is heated to a comfortable level most of the time. The Dining Room and Auditorium in the rear of the building are only heated when used occasionally during winter months. Our conservation consultants in the museum community reassured us in a recent mailing from Vermont Museum & Gallery Alliance that most items in the museum collection can endure reasonable extremes of temperature and humidity as long as the changes are gradual. We monitor these conditions constantly using the Box Car Pro system and download the information periodically to create an ongoing record.

Town Office rent helps us meet the financial challenge of increasing energy costs, and that income of \$4500 is about 33% of our projected income for 2008-2009. Other income derives from Fund Raising Events (\$4000), Annual Fund Donations (\$2800), and Membership Dues (\$1800). The real challenge will come some time in the not too distant future when the Town Select Board achieves its goal of acquiring or constructing a new building for a larger and more secure Town Office.

More than ever, we depend on our members and donors for their continued support.

NEWS BRIEFS

STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL 2008



Peter Huntoon led a Community Painting with more than 45 contributing artists at this year's Strawberry Festival on June 22. Threats of showers brought the festival indoors where a group of woodwind musicians led by Jen Muniyak entertained. The painting of the Elementary School is now on display at the school. Lois Dansereau led the Festival Committee.

RECENT DONATIONS & ACQUISITIONS

- Ceremonial sword of A. Y. Gray.
- Early photos from the Frost and Richardson families and a scrapbook kept by Florence R. Richardson (1867 -1962).

SILENT MOVIE NIGHTS ADD FUN TO FUND RAISING

Trustees, led by Karen Klami, inaugurated a new series of the fund raising events—Silent Movie Nights, with live accompaniment by Leslie Klami, pianist .

The first, on May 24, focused on Charlie Chaplin with a screening of *The Kid*. In addition to the feature and two Chaplin shorts, the evening highlighted an early 'Seventies home movie of the Middletown Springs Memorial Day Parade. Filmed by Del Feuerlicht, the 8mm movie was given to the Society by Kay Avery and was recently transferred to DVD. Trustees, dressed as Charlie Chaplin look-a-likes, ushered, served popcorn, and dished up refreshments during intermission. Thanks go to the Town Library Board for the loan of a DVD projector, to Williams Hardware for the popcorn machine, and, of course, to Mr. Klami for a strenuous and musically eclectic performance!

On September 6 the focus shifted to Buster Keaton's comic genius with performance of several of his best short films, including *The Electric House*, *The Playhouse*, *The Scarecrow*, and *The Balloonatic*. The trustees dressed in approximations of period costume, some including Keaton's signature pork pie hat. Leslie Klami outdid his previous performance at the keyboard with wit and style.



Membership Information

Membership dues for 2008 were due in January.
Check your mailing label for current status.

Dues (Check one):

Individual	\$10.00	Contributing	\$25.00
Family	\$15.00	Business	\$50.00

Send to: Patty Kenyon, *Treasurer*
Middletown Springs Historical Society
P.O. Box 1126
Middletown Springs, VT 05757

- Frisbie's *History of Middletown* CD-ROM or photocopy, \$20, post paid.
- Eight notecards with historic photos of Middletown Springs, \$12 postpaid.
- *Historic Architecture of Middletown Springs* pamphlet, photocopy \$1, post paid.
- *A Gem in the Hills*, by Frances Krouse, \$25, post paid.

Donations to MSHS, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, are tax deductible.

Visit our website:

www.MiddletownSpringsHistoricalSociety.org

Business Members

1885 Victorian Lady, Dietra Davis
Blue Cat Bistro, John Rehlen
Estelle Ellis, Business Image, Inc.
Friends in Adoption, Dawn Smith Pliner
Green Mountain Timber Frames, Dan McKeen
Sarah Horne Interior Design
Johnson Energy, Tom & Eileen Johnson
LaValley Building Supply
Jim Marquis, Antiques Appraiser
Montvert Real Estate, Nan Gilmour
Professional Tile Installation, Jerry Hansen
Round Barn Theatre, Karen & Leslie Klami
Stewarts Dairy
Twin Mountain Farms B&B, Annie & Walt Pepperman
Williams Hardware, Poultney, Bob Williams

The MSHS Newsletter is published twice a year for members and friends of the Society. Comments and manuscripts on subjects of interest are encouraged and should be sent c/o David Wright, editor, or e-mailed to montvert@vermontel.net.

Middletown Springs Historical Society
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Address Service Requested

Notice of Annual Meeting

The 39th Annual Meeting of the Middletown Springs Historical Society will be held on Sunday, Sept. 21, at the Historical Society Building.

Agenda

- 7:00 pm Dessert Buffet
7:15 pm Business Meeting and Election of Trustees
7:45 pm Mary Lou Willits, Executive Director of the Slate Valley Museum in Granville, N.Y., will present a talk and a 30-minute multi-media show about the slate industry, based on its current exhibition, *Heavy Lifting: A Human and Technological History of Moving Slate from Quarry to Market*.

Welcome! New Members

NEW FAMILY MEMBERSHIP

Joan & John Roche, *Suffield, Conn.*

NEW CONTRIBUTING MEMBERSHIP

Chesnut-Tangerman Family, *Middletown Springs*
Randy Kniffin, *Middletown Springs*

NEW BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS

1885 Victorian Lady, *Dietra Davis*
Middletown Springs

2008 COMING EVENTS

Sunday, September 21
Annual Meeting, 6:30 pm

Sunday, October 19
Museum Open House and
Donor Celebration, 1-4 p.m.

