



Middletown Springs Historical Society, Inc.

Middletown Springs, Vermont 05757

Newsletter

February - March '88

Dear Friends:

The past two months have been spent on public information meetings, collecting donated historical material, deciding how best they can be used for museum display, and making plans for a busy summer season.

The museum room was opened several times for visitors attending other events, and the successful "Meet Your Neighbors" ended with an interesting talk by Erik Golub on his participation in challenging sports for all four of the seasons.

WE'RE STILL COLLECTING

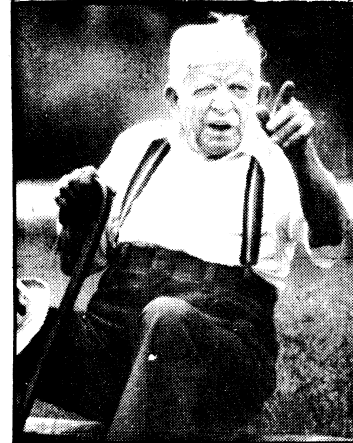
Items received for the museum have been pictures, diaries, genealogies, and early family material. Among the latter were items donated by Winona Buxton, a neighbor whose family name has been in Middletown for over a hundred years.

Also received were items from Fred A. Field that included hand-written meeting notes of the selectmen just before and after the disastrous flood of 1811; the military appointments of Jonas Clark, who built the Old Spa Shop in 1814; the letter from the Vermont Legislature to Middletown, directing them to inform the four surrounding towns that certain parts of their land had been appropriated to form the township of Middletown; and the 1810 report of town clerk Orsen Brewster, listing the eight local schools, how many in each school, the total number (465), and what the town paid that year to run the schools (\$19,944.25).

Museum committee members are Hazel Grover and Janet Webber (co-chairmen), Virginia Turnauer, Elsie Norton and Jane Purrington. Mrs. Norton will continue to handle the Museum showcase in the Library and would be glad to include rotating collections of interest to children offered by others than committee members. Call her at 235-2176.

Many friends in and out of town have helped to establish the Museum. Now, new ideas and continued assistance are urgently needed.

WILLIAM THOMAS



Middletown Springs lost its oldest citizen and ardent supporter earlier this month when William Thomas died four months before his 107th birthday in Poultney at the Traverse Community Care Home after a short illness.

Born on June 9, 1881, the son of rason and Susan Thomas, "Willy" almost didn't make it. Delivered by his grandfather, Dr. Oscar F. Thomas, then 65, the boy weighed one pound and fourteen ounces. The chances were slim, but the elderly man popped the baby into the warmed-up oven of the kitchen stove on a towel and the lad survived.

During the later years of the 1800s Middletown was a bustling place. The A.W. Gray horsepower factory was a mainstay of the town's economy. The Mineral Springs and the Montvery Hotel attracted many visitors from the New York, Boston and Philadelphia areas.

Memories of the activities during these years of his youth remained fresh in Thomas's mind right up to the end, and he willingly shared them with the many visitors who came to see him. His mother worked at the Montvert, so he spent much time there. From the hotel's flower garden he picked bouquets for the rooms of newly-arrived guests and for sale to others for five or ten cents.

OUR TOWN CHURCHES

In response to inquiries, here is a brief resume of church history in the past 200 years in Middletown Springs.

The Congregationalists began meeting in their homes about 1782. Two years later a log cabin church was built on the south-east corner of the Old Cemetery. In 1796 the present church was built on the east side of the Green about halfway up and had its first full-time pastor, Rev. Henry C. Bigelow, in 1805. The church was moved to its present site in 1849. A two-story vestibule, bell and steeple were added in 1860. In 1894 came a full-size furnace in the cellar and the six stained-glass windows in the sanctuary four years later.

The Methodist Episcopal congregation was organized in 1835 by Rev. Samuel Young and built their church on the north-east corner of the Old Cemetery in 1837 with its basement set for town use. The plan did not last, although the church was active for over 70 years. As membership became lower, the Methodists joined the Congregationalists in 1919 to form the Federated Church. Their building was dismantled sometime in the mid 1940s.

The Baptists began meeting about 1782 but were without a pastor until 1790, when they welcomed Rev. Sylvanus Haynes. When the Congregational church was built in 1796, the Baptists donated \$630. When they built their own church on North St. in 1806, their contribution was returned. The Baptists flourished for over 100 years, but they gradually lessened until 1924 when they joined with the other two to form the present Community Church. Their own building was sold locally and partially dismantled but remains as a storage place and garage.

There were a number of Roman Catholics in the early days who met in Poultney. As their number grew, they finally built their church on West St. in 1885 with the help of many other friends and guests at the Montvert Hotel.

The church burned down in 1967. While it was being rebuilt, their services were continued, first in the Community House and then in the Community Church.

The new building contains, in addition to the sanctuary, a spacious meeting room and kitchen that serves, not only the church's Sunday School, but also a number of other meetings, including the well attended and non-denomination monthly Men's Breakfast.

TIME FOR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Memberships are now open for renewal for the current year. Please use the slip on the other side of this sheet. We count on membership dues to fund our programs, exhibits, research, and running expenses.

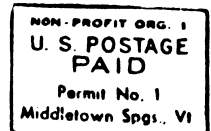
If there is an '86 after your mailing address, it means that we did not get your renewal for last year. If we have made a mistake, please tell us. We certainly want to keep you as a satisfied member.

Our very best regards for a happy Easter season!

Herbert Davison

Research Chairman

Middletown Springs Historical Society, Inc.
Middletown Springs, Vt. 05757



Mr. David Wright

Town 05757