

MOUNT HOLLY COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY TURNS 50

BY SUSAN ORZELL-RANTANEN • PHOTOS PROVIDED BY MHCHS

While the town of Mount Holly is part of the jigsaw puzzle contributing to the medley of 21st-century Vermont, it is best understood in terms of its history. The name Mount Holly is a bit of a misnomer. The township actually consists of four hamlets: Belmont, Healdville, Tarbellville, and Hortonville. Stepping up to the plate since 1968 to help people navigate through and appreciate this charming quirk is the Mount Holly Community Historical Society (MHCHS), a 501(c)3 organization celebrating its 50th year in 2018. Belmont (originally called Mechanicsville) possibly enjoys the highest profile, but MHCHS has no favorite child, presenting Mount Holly as a meshed community with a populace of 1,421.

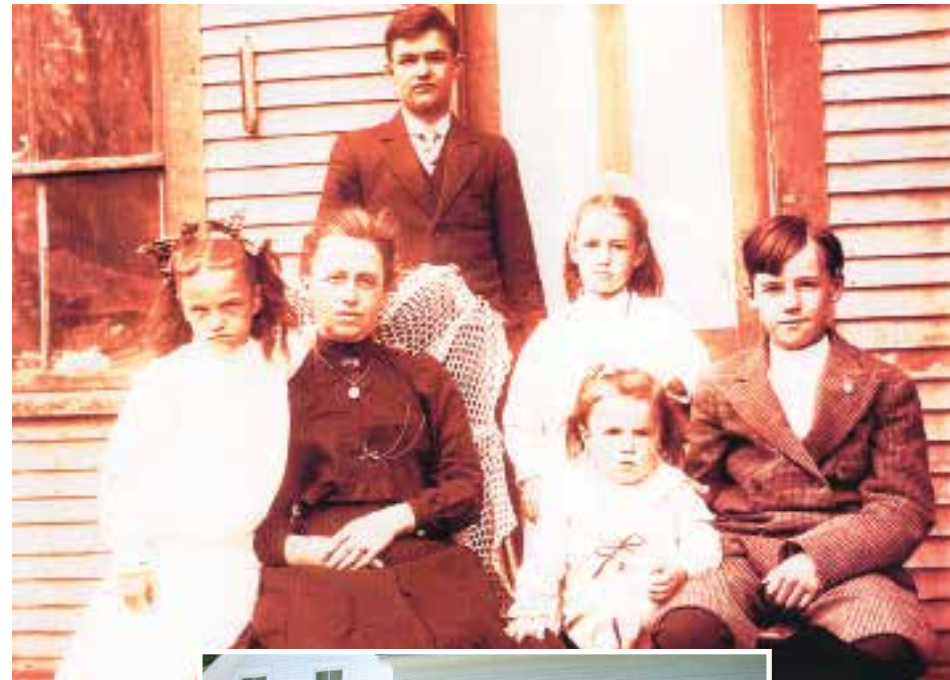
(the original name of the Mount Holly area). How proud is Devereux of that legacy? "My gravestone...I already have it...says that I am a descendant of its earliest settlers," he confesses. A member of the Vermont Legislature representing Ludlow, Mount Holly

and Shrewsbury, "town historian" Devereux has a list of community service commissions that include Treasurer of the Colfax Lodge of the International Order of Odd Fellows; cemetery commissioner; and past-president of the Crown Point Road Association to touch on a few.

Robin Eatmon has the sensitive job of curating the collections. Pulling in harness with Devereux and Eatmon on the 17-member board are Paul Nevin, vice chair; Linda Roberts, secretary; and Phil Crane, treasurer. While the MHCHS presents itself as a living entity of more than 100 members

(both in-town and from afar) two buildings hold the tangible evidence of the respect and fascination of the townsfolk for the journey of earlier residents. Most of the organization's \$10,000 yearly budget is spent on keeping the buildings and inventory in good order.

The first building purchased and repurposed (in 1969) as a museum by the MHCHS is



ABOVE The Perkins Family

BELOW The former Perkins House is one of the buildings owned by the Mount Holly Community Historical Society.

MAKE YOUR HOME.

LIVE YOUR PASSION!

True Independence in a Village Setting

Private 2 bedroom cottage with access to an entire campus of amenities:

Anytime, restaurant dining

Indoor swimming pool with exercise classes

Clubs and events for intellectual and cultural interests...and more!



350 Lodge Rd, Middlebury, VT
802-767-2079 | www.residenceottercreek.com

the Will White Blacksmith Shop Museum on the Tarbellville Road, a stone's throw from the quintessential Village Green in Belmont. Among its commercial users throughout the years was Warner Edminster. "He was a traveling druggist that made his own liniments, cooking extracts and pain-killers. We have many items in bottles with labels, and the 1870s printing press he used to make the labels in our collection there. There's an old post office. And there's a survey used to bring guests from the railroad stations to the village."

At one time the town boasted "restorative" mineral waters, marketed by the Rutland-based bottlers Francis Fenn & Co. Large rooming houses, originally built for the workers of the Chase Toy Factory in Mechanicsville, were turned into hotels for summer visitors from the city "taking the waters". This Chase Toy Factory, on Lake Street, is now the Odd Fellows Hall, the site of fund raisers for a number of organizations in Mount Holly. Other museum displays date back to the building's use as a smithy.

Devereux describes the Perkins House as the second building owned by the MHCHS. "Civil War veteran John Taylor came from Plymouth, Vermont to Mechanicsville in 1866 to work at the Chase Toy Factory. His daughter married George Perkins." Alice Perkins Bennett, George's granddaughter, and her nephew Todd McCabe, donated the house to the Society in 2004. "We immediately started fundraising and were able to replace the barn section as well as restore the original house," Devereux states, adding, "My favorite exhibit there is the Civil War collection donated by local families." Along with historical quilts and family albums from the township, and long-ago household necessities from the Perkins' family, are two most unusual items: a tusk and the cast of a tooth

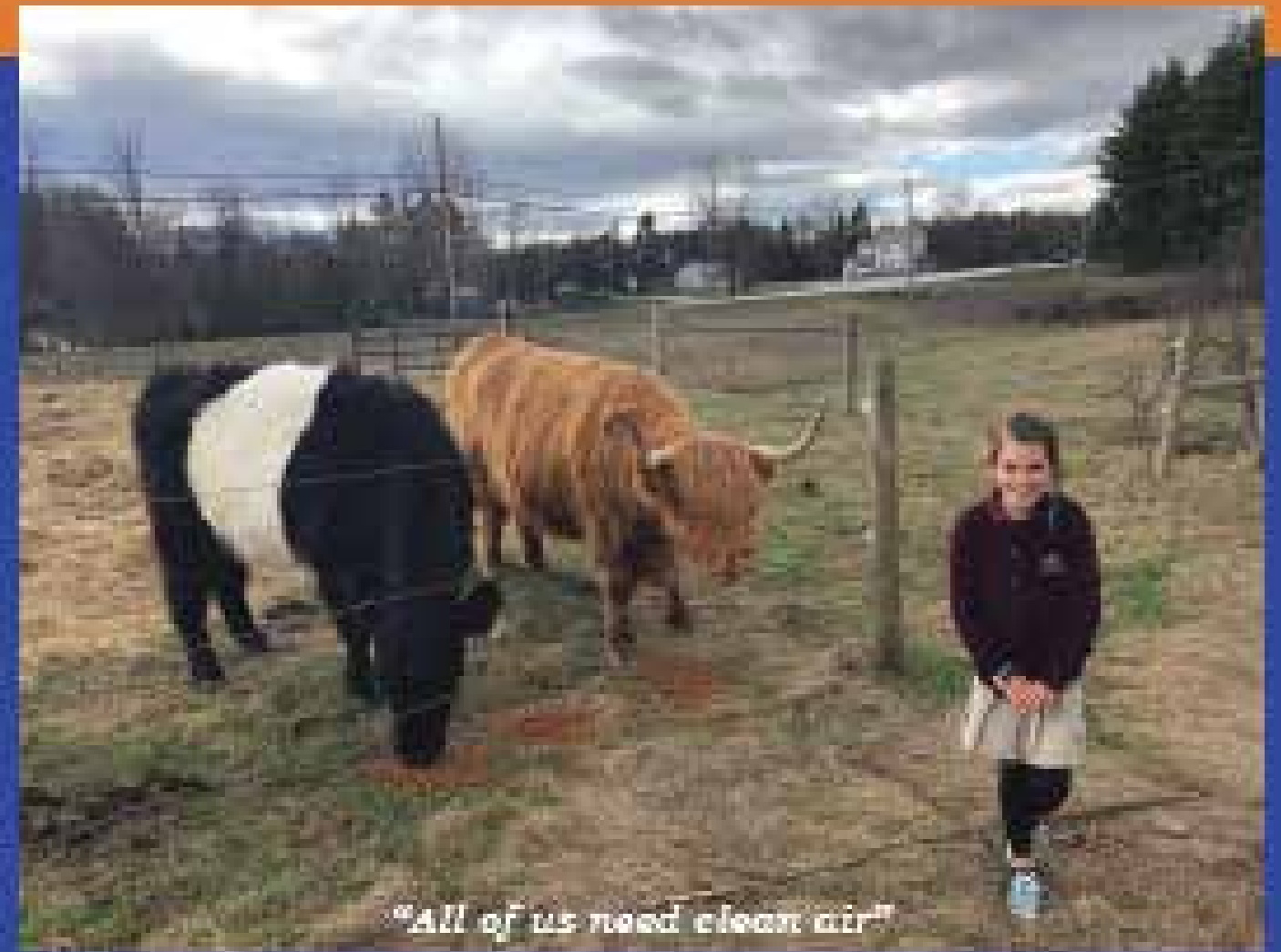


ABOVE The Sears Cottage was a favorite vacation spot for the Nadler family. PHOTO PROVIDED BY THERESA NADLER
BELOW The family donated the Sears Cottage to the Mount Holly Community Historical Society. A slice of it remains in Belmont.

from a woolly mammoth. A State Historic Site Marker was erected on Route 103 near where the fossil was discovered. This relic, belonging to a beast estimated at about 1.7 tons, is recognized by the State as the Vermont Terrestrial Fossil.

A whimsical complement to these two stolid museum buildings is quite

literally a "slice" of a "Sears Catalog kit house" donated by the Nyiri-Nadler family in 2017. Literally only the front porch and six feet of the infrastructure, including a window, remain of what was a summer cottage. It was one of more than 70,000 such homes sold as kits containing all of the components needed to build a house, and

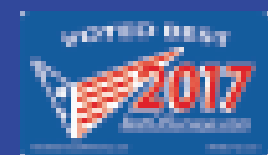


"All of us need clean air"

We at Marcell's Oil Co. provide the highest, cleanest-burning heating oil with the least amount of emissions.

*Largest Locally Owned Oil Company
In Both Rutland and Bennington Counties*

24-Hour Service 7 days a week.



Marcell's  
OIL CO
802 775.5050 802 366.1150



Supporting Our Local Community And Customers

New Patients Welcome!



Suzanne Jones, PA-C

Seth Coombs, M.D.

Bruce Bullock, M.D.

Learn more at our WEBSITE
YOUR HEALTH YOUR DOCTOR.com

Discover direct & comprehensive care for individuals who value a personal relationship with their doctor and the peace of mind that goes with it.



MARBLE VALLEY HEALTHWORKS, LLC
Incorporated Primary Care

802-770-1805
8 Commons Street
Rutland VT 05701



55+ Independent Senior Living

Spacious 1 & 2 Bedroom Apartments
Optional Dining, Living and Health Services
Vibrant Social Atmosphere

Happy, Healthy & Hassle-Free!

COMMUNITY TOUR EVERY WEDNESDAY @ 12:30PM

www.SummitSeniorLiving.net
5 General Wing Road, Rutland VT
802-776-1000




The former Will White Blacksmith Shop is now a museum.



available in about 370 designs. The Sears Company kits were discontinued in 1940, and most surviving homes are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Programs may be considered the epitome of “interactive exhibits” and are an entertaining, educational means of meeting the MHCHS mission of keeping the past palpable. Schools and other groups large and small are welcome for organized tours of the museum, and for guided, narrated walks through the village and the cemeteries. The museum holds an Artfest every other August where local artists display and sell their works, as well as an annual Festival of Lights fundraiser in early December. They also host one of the many fundraising dinners at the Odd Fellows Hall every year. “This will be my thirty-sixth year of pouring coffee at all the town fund raisers,” chuckles Devereux. In Mount Holly, even this simple, homey act is rooted in tradition.

Museum hours are from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. on Saturday and 2:00 to 4:00 on Sunday every second weekend of each month year-round. For more information, contact Dennis Devereux at (802) 259-2460.

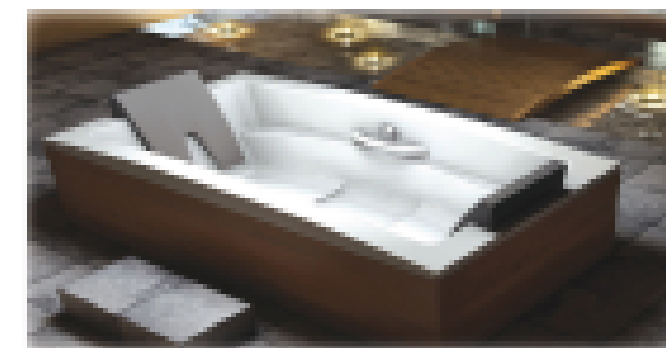



**Rutland Ultimate Bath Sales Associate
George Barlett**

Contact George today about receiving **20% OFF** your next purchase!
gbarlett@ultimatebathstore.com

UNCOVER THE POSSIBILITIES AT YOUR LOCAL ULTIMATE BATH STORE!

- Rutland, VT**
1000 Main St. Rutland, VT 05701
(802) 770-1300
- South Burlington, VT**
300 Regency Circle, Burlington, VT 05403
(802) 488-2067
- Lebanon, NH**
310 South St. Lebanon, NH 03756
(603) 448-1888



For a Complete List of our Locations Please Scan Here



ultimatebathstore.com

