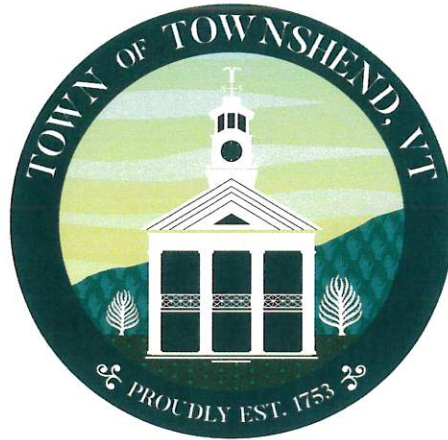


WORKING DRAFT ONLY
LAST UPDATE: AUGUST 19, 2024



The History of the **Townshend Town Hall and Opera House**

Compiled by Judge Cory J. Ciklin with editorial assistance from Robert DiServo,
Andrew Snelling and Charles Marchant.

Sources: *A Stitch in Time: 1753-2003*
The Townshend Historical Society
The Townshend Planning Commission
The Vermont Phoenix
The Brattleboro Reformer

IMPORTANT BACKGROUND: Currently, the Townshend Planning Commission and the Townshend Select Board are contemplating an overall plan and POSSIBLE PROPOSAL to historically renovate the historic *Townshend Town Hall and Opera House* **using primarily government and private grants**. Even though minimal Townshend tax dollars are envisioned, this will still require vast citizen input and it is in that spirit that this history of the existing structure (and the important historical figures associated with the building) is presently being written. CITIZEN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE HISTORICAL ACCURACY

1. From the “meetinghouse” of 1791 to The Townshend Town Hall and Opera House of 1921.

Townshend Receives its Charter, 1753.

The original "proprietors" of Townshend obtained title from the Crown through the Colonial Governor and Council of New Hampshire. The instrument of conveyance ("the Town Charter") was dated June 20, 1753.

Townshend Churches and the Town Share Space and Expenses, 1753-1912.

Two church organizations predominated Townshend in the early days of its existence including a Congregational Church and a Baptist church. In 1790, the Townshend meetinghouse was constructed, and the two churches (and other smaller societies) shared the meetinghouse space with the governing body of elected Townshend office holders such as the Select Board and Town clerk. According to tax statistics from the year 1788, a vote was taken to build the meetinghouse and to “raise 100 pounds for this purpose.” The building was to be 50 feet x 40 feet.

That portion of the structure utilized by the Town of Townshend also served as a location to conduct other Town business including court proceedings. Maintenance funds needed for the Town portion of the meetinghouse were annually raised as part of the Townshend property tax.

As early as 1801, taxpayers could be exempted from the meetinghouse portion of their tax bills by signing an oath that stated: "I do not agree in religious opinion with the majority of the inhabitants of the town." In 1807, public support for the shared expense meetinghouse concept ended and church members and the Town were thereafter financially responsible for their own individual space needs although as late as the 1830's, they not only continued to share “meetinghouse” space (or the “old meeting house” as it was also known) but expanded the structure upward and then divided it horizontally. The church used the upper floor, and the lower floor became the Townshend Town Hall.

Townshend Citizens Vote to Sell “meetinghouse” Interests to the Church, 1908

From the *Vermont Phoenix*:

"Many citizens had come to feel that the town could afford to have a building all its own to use for any and all purposes for which a public building stands in the

community. Therefore, after much agitation and no little discussion, the town voted in its annual meeting in March, 1908 to relinquish its interests in the old meeting house for \$1000 to the First Congressional society."

Townshend Citizens Vote to Tax Itself for Townshend's First Town Hall, 1910

At the Town annual meeting on March 20, 1910, Town citizens voted to build a Town Hall at a cost not to exceed \$5,500. This represented the first standalone Town Hall for Townshend since its founding in 1753, having shared space with various Town churches for the previous 159 years. The Town's prepares to move its daily operations from the shared old meeting house space on the Common to a new Town Hall structure in the East Village.

The new East Village Town Hall building was designed by M. R. Drew, a Greenville, Massachusetts architect. The structure was 40 x 60 feet with 20-foot 6-inch posts and a portico that was 8 feet x 16 feet surrounded by heavy columns. Unforeseen cost overruns occurred which added thousands in extra costs.

Townshend's First Town Hall Completed, in the East Village. Dedication Soon, 1911.

From the *Brattleboro Reformer* of Friday, December 29, 1911:

"The crowning work of the year and that which has attracted the most attention is the building of the new town hall..." The first floor comprises the audience room, the stage with its dressing rooms, the main entrance and two anti-rooms. A large gallery situated in the front part of the hall which together with the main hall furnishes seating capacity for 300. The interior of the walls is plastered. It has a steel ceiling and a maple floor the interior woodwork consists of Georgia Pine.

Mrs. Kate C. Dutton Donates Clock and Bell to New Town Hall in Memory of Her Parents, August, 1912

From the *Vermont Phoenix* of August 2, 1912:

"A much-appreciated gift has come to the people of Townshend in the form of a new town clock which is being installed this week in the new town hall building. It is presented by Mrs. Kate C. Dutton, wife of Col. H. F. Dutton."

"The towns-people always give Col. and Mrs. Dutton a hearty welcome when they arrive and are always sorry when they go away in the fall. Mrs. Dutton is a lover of nature and never tires of the scenes of her childhood or the picturesque mountains and the invigorating climate of Vermont."

"The clock was made by the E. Howard clock company of Boston in New York and was furnished by Vaughn and Burnett of Brattleboro. The bell which is a fine bell metal, was cast by the Meneely Bell Metal Company of West Troy, N. Y. It weighs 600 pounds."

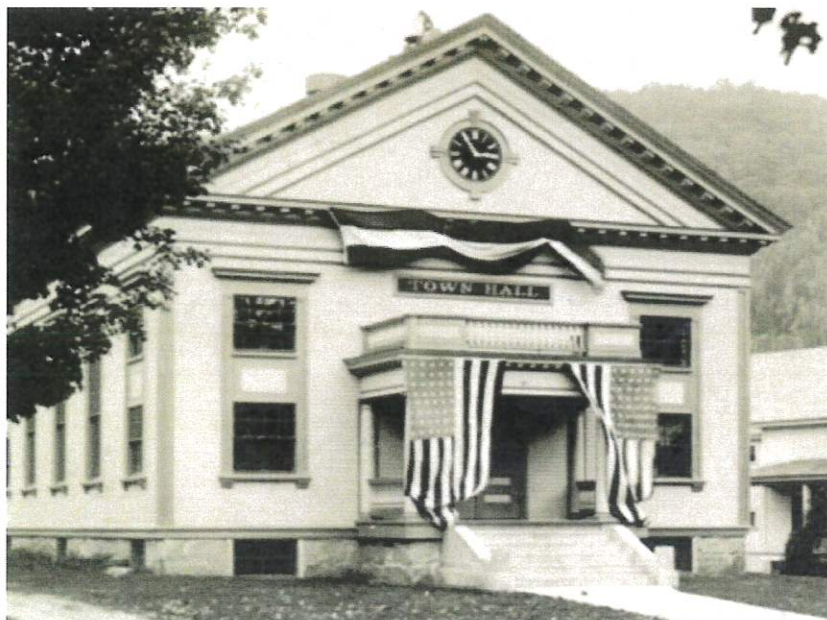
The inscription on the bell is "Presented by Mrs. Kate C. Dutton in memory of L. H. Cathan, his wife and daughter, Marion, July 1912." [sic]

"The dial is in place of the round window in the gable of the west end of the building and can be seen from the centre of the village. The bell for striking the hours is on the ridge and can be heard, no doubt, in clear weather several miles around. The town is to be congratulated on this handsome and useful as well as 'striking' gift. We hear very appreciative words spoken of Mrs. Dutton on every hand."

Townshend's First Town Hall Dedicated, 1912.

On Thursday, August 15, 1912, Townshend conducted its annual Old Home Day and combined it with the dedication of the new Town Hall. According to the *Vermont Phoenix*, Brattleboro, of Friday, August 16, 1912:

"As early as 9 o'clock people began to gather on the common and around town the younger people enjoyed games of tennis, croquet and the like, while the older residents and visitors gathered in many groups and renewed old acquaintances. By 11 o'clock many people had gathered on the common, and all enjoyed the band concert which was given by the Seminary band."

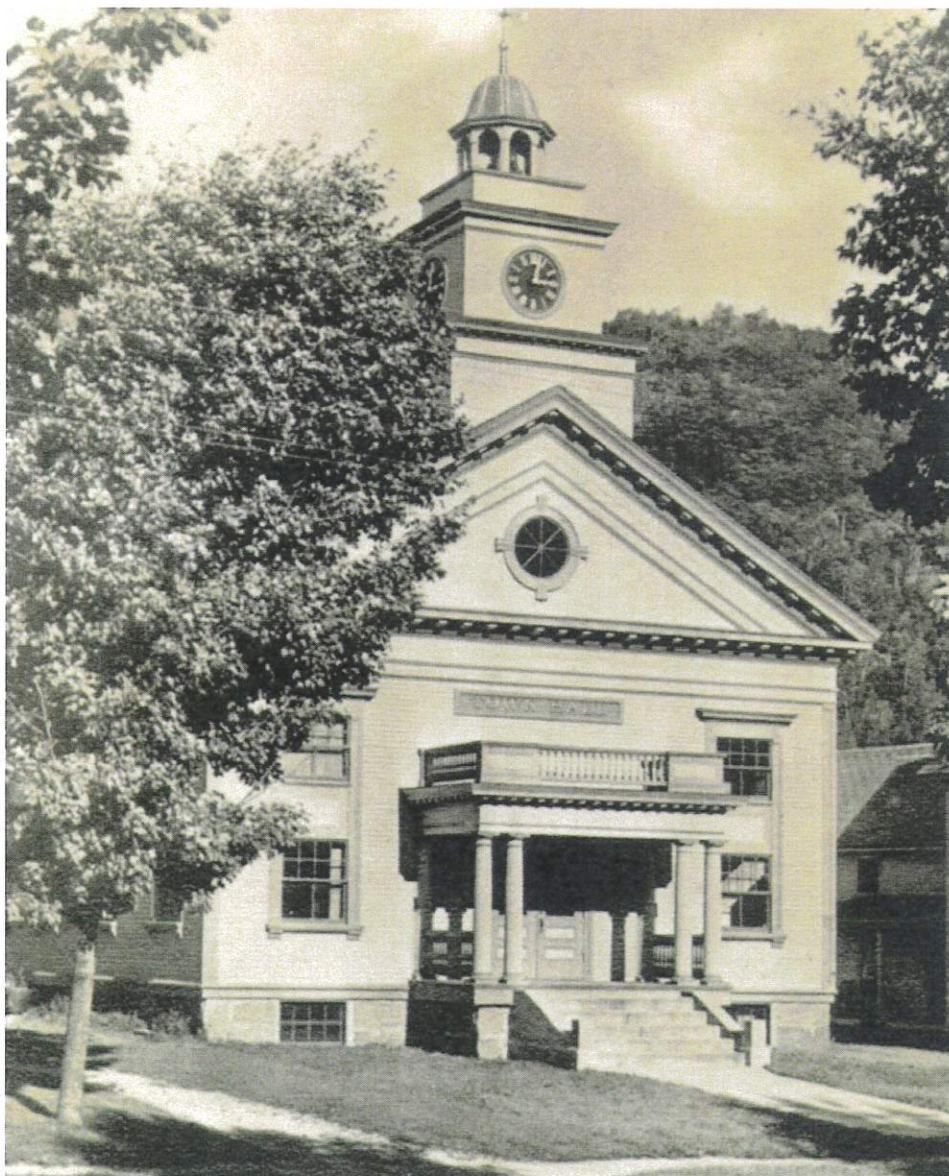


The new Townshend Town Hall was dedicated on August 15, 1912 at Old Home Day.

"Tables and chairs were set up on the common, and at noon all gather to enjoy their lunches and the beautiful open air. After a social hour the people, led by the band, went to the town hall (for the full program)."

H. F. Dutton Dies at Age 79 and his widow, Kate C. Dutton, Adds on New Cupola to Town Hall Building as a Memorial Donation, 1917

Shortly after Colonel Henry Dutton's death in March of 1916, his widow, Kate Dutton, with approval of Town officials, designed, bought, and installed a new cupola in memory of her late husband, Col. H. F. Dutton.



The Townshend Town Hall shown with Mrs. Dutton's 1917 gift of a new cupola, in memory of her husband.

The New Town Hall Burns to the Ground in "Great Fire of 1918."

Before the completion of the Townshend's first Town Hall in the East Village in 1912, Townshend had three previous calamitous East Village fires—in 1886, 1894, and 1896.

On May 4, 1918—just six years after it was originally built in the East Village and only two years after it underwent Mrs. Dutton's substantial memorial renovation to add a cupola, the Townshend Town Hall burned to the ground in the last of "Townshend's great fires."

This 1918 fire started in the billiard room of the Townsend Inn and completely destroyed the structure, spreading to and destroying the newly refurbished Town Hall, a dentist's office and a home between them. Seven guests at the Townshend Inn were trapped on the upper floor and had to be rescued from the porch roof with ladders. While the new Town Hall clock was destroyed in the fire, the bell purchased and installed by Mrs. Dutton in 1916 was salvaged.



Four major fires have visited Townshend's East Village in 1886, 1894 [shown here], 1896, and 1918. The last of Townshend's great fires, on May 4, 1918, covered some of the same ground as the 1894 blaze destroying the recently renovated Town Hall. [The still-standing congregational church, located on the Common, is shown in the background].

From the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer*, Saturday evening, May 4, 1918:

"Three buildings in the heart of the village of Townshend were wiped out by fire early this morning together with their contents, causing a loss of \$35,000 to \$40,000."

"Although not so many buildings were destroyed as in some previous fires in

Townshend the money loss is the largest the town ever sustained. It is not known at present what will be done in the way of rebuilding. It is a staggering blow and the entire county unites in the hope that there will be a quick recovery from it."

"While the people were being rescued the house which is connected with the water tank on the top of the hotel was brought into action and the chemical fire extinguishers which were kept in the Inn were used but the flames had gotten so great a start that efforts to extinguish them had no approachable result. The tank had a capacity of about 30 barrels."

"An alarm was given by telephone and the church bells were rung, and people began arriving soon afterwards, but it was sometime before a large number were on hand. They formed a bucket brigade and brought water from the fountain in the park and from nearby buildings. They did valiant work and to them is due the fact that not more than three buildings were destroyed."

"About 30 feet from the [local dentist Dr. D. L.] Parker residence the town hall was located. It was impossible to stop the flames at the Parker residence, although a strenuous effort was made to do so, and in a comparatively brief time it was seen that that building was doomed. The chairs and movable objects were taken from the hall."

"Soon after the fire started and it became apparent that it would be serious, W. M. Sparks telephoned to Brattleboro for assistance, but it was considered unsafe to send up the automobile truck, lest it be needed here, and to have secured a freight car and loaded on a steamer probably would have consumed so much time that it would have been of no avail when it reached the scene of the fire." [sic]

"The town Hall building was erected in 1911 and was dedicated Aug. 15, 1916 in connection with the Old Home day festivities."

A cupola was added a year or two ago at a cost of about \$1000 in which was placed a large clock previously given by Col. H. F. Dutton of Gainesville Fla., now deceased."

Burned down along with the Town Hall, the Townsend Inn was built following the fire of April 26, 1891 by the Townshend Hotel Company. In 1912, Guy W. Powers, then principal of Leland and Gray Seminary, purchased it. In 1916, Sherman Willard, a former Townsend resident became what would be the final proprietor. He installed an electric lighting plant at the Inn.

Mrs. Dutton's Only Son Unexpectedly Dies at Age 38. Mrs. Kate C. Dutton Makes a Memorial Donation of a New Townshend Town Hall and Opera House, 1918

In September 1918—just four months after the Town Hall bearing her husband's name was destroyed by fire—the Dutton's son, Henry Dutton Jr. died unexpectedly from pneumonia after taking an automobile trip to New York City at age 38.

Incredibly, in July 1919, Kate Dutton dutifully stepped up again and offered to build, as an outright gift to the people of Townshend, a new Townshend Town Hall and Opera House to be named after her late husband and her recently deceased son.

Indeed, within a year of her son's shocking death, Mrs. Dutton offered to pay for a completely new Town Hall and Opera House. The only provision made by Mrs. Dutton was that the Town would be required to provide the site and that it would be "sufficient to allow the construction of a town building with ample open space around it to eliminate as far as possible, from another fire."

Mrs. Dutton to Townshend: I Will Gift a New Town Hall and Opera House if Land Provided.

From the Brattleboro Daily Reformer of July 29, 1919:

The Brattleboro Daily Reformer
VOL. 7, NO. 128. BRATTLEBORO, VERMONT, WEDNESDAY EVENING, JULY 30, 1919.

TO INVESTIGATE WAR INSURANCE

Congressman Dale Heads House Committee to Conduct the Inquiry

SENATOR DILLINGHAM AT WHITE HOUSE

Associated at Close of Conference With the President That the War Treaty With Germany—Also Discussed

WASHINGTON, July 29.—Four Republican senators led today their committee to investigate the war insurance business. The committee, headed by Senator Dillingham of Vermont, and consisting of Senators Dillingham, Borah, Capper, and Smith, left for Washington today to meet with the president and his cabinet.

Senator Dillingham announced on leaving the White House that he expected to see the treaty with Germany. He said he was "satisfied and delighted" with the treaty, and that he was "satisfied and delighted" with the treaty, and that he was "satisfied and delighted" with the treaty.

BANK TWO MILLION SHORT, CASHIER FLEED

More Arrows Expected in Philadelphia—Crisis—Bookkeeper Tells Amazing Story of Fugitive Account

PHILADELPHIA, July 29.—The bank examiner's report on the Philadelphia National Bank, which was made public today, revealed a shortage of two million dollars. The bookkeeper, who was found to be a fugitive, had fled with the money.

FIGHTING IN ALL PARTS OF CHICAGO

Most Serious Casualties of the Race Riots Reported Last Night

8,000 ARMED MEN READY FOR SERVICE

CHICAGO, July 29.—Rioting broke out in all parts of Chicago last night, and the situation is very serious. The police are on high alert, and 8,000 armed men are ready for service.

OPPOSITION PLANS

French Treaty Is an Alliance and Unconstitutional

WASHINGTON, July 29.—Informed disclosure among senators today disclosed that opposition to the French treaty will be organized. The opposition is based on the grounds that the treaty is an alliance and is unconstitutional.

SUIT BROUGHT TO RECOVER \$70,000

Flynt Granite Co. of Mon. vs. Lyons Granite Co.

WEST DUMMERSTON QUARRY ATTACHED

PHILADELPHIA, July 29.—A suit was brought today in the federal court at Philadelphia to recover \$70,000. The suit is between the Flynt Granite Co. of Montana and the Lyons Granite Co. of Montana. The West Dummerston quarry is attached to the suit.

WANTS \$1,000 FOR DAMAGES TO HORSES

Three Horses Killed by Car

PHILADELPHIA, July 29.—A man who was driving a car through the city of Philadelphia today was stopped by the police. He was charged with the death of three horses. He wants \$1,000 for damages to the horses.

OFFER OF MODERN TOWN HALL MADE

Mrs. Kate C. Dutton Asks Town of Townshend to Furnish Site

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING CALLED

Townshend, Vt., July 29.—Through the generosity of Mrs. Kate C. Dutton of Brattleboro, the town of Townshend will soon have a new town hall. Mrs. Dutton has offered to build a modern town hall and opera house on the site of the old town hall. The town has called a special meeting to consider the offer.

BURNED AIRPLANES

Value of Airplanes Lost in Fire

NEW YORK, July 29.—The airplane which was burned in the fire at the New York airport today was valued at \$10,000. The fire was caused by a gas leak.

AUTO ACCIDENT

RESULTS IN SUIT

PHILADELPHIA, July 29.—A suit was brought today in the federal court at Philadelphia to recover damages for an auto accident. The suit is between the driver of the car and the owner of the car.

DAUGHTERS OF 1812 ELECT OFFICERS

Annual Meeting Held in Home of Mrs. F. R. Dyer—Mrs. C. L. Latham

PHILADELPHIA, July 29.—The daughters of 1812 held their annual meeting today in the home of Mrs. F. R. Dyer. Mrs. C. L. Latham was elected president.

CHICAGO STRIKERS ASK REFERRENDUM

No Attraction to Run Cars With Strikers

CHICAGO, July 29.—The Chicago strikers today asked for a referendum on the question of whether or not to allow cars to be driven by strikers. They want to know what the people think.

SUBMARINE RANK WITH OPEN HATCHES

Two Members of Crew Drowned—But War Department Wins

NEW YORK, July 29.—Two members of the crew of a submarine were drowned today. The submarine was on a mission in the Atlantic Ocean. The war department has won the case.

Town of Townshend Immediately Snaps Up Mrs. Dutton's Generous Offer.

From the *Vermont Phoenix*, Friday, August 15, 1919:

"Through the action of the voters of the town of Townsend in a special meeting in the schoolhouse Tuesday afternoon...a new town hall [was] assured as a gift from Mrs. Kate C. Dutton of Gainesville Florida..."

K. BRATTLEBORO, FRI

TOWNSHEND

LARGER TOWN HALL SITE.

Town Votes in Favor of Mrs. Dutton's Generous Offer—Also Buys Land for Playground.

Through the action of the voters of the town of Townsend in special meeting in the schoolhouse Tuesday afternoon not only is a new town hall assured as a gift from Mrs. Kate C. Dutton of Gainesville, Fla., but provision was made for a public playground, which was not in contemplation when Mrs. Dutton offered to give a modern town hall to replace the one burned last year if the town would furnish an enlarged site.

Much interest has been manifested in Mrs. Dutton's proposition, and appreciation of her generosity was shown by a large attendance at the special town meeting, the schoolroom being filled. W. M. Sparks was chosen moderator in the absence of the regular moderator, and C. W. Cutler was clerk.

The first article was to see if the town would vote to buy a piece of land to enlarge the town hall lot. Before action was taken there were brief remarks by Charles S. Mills, chairman of the finance committee, who stated that Mrs. Dutton's intention was to have the exterior of the building fire proof, and by John H. Ware, chairman of the building committee, who told of the engagement of M. R. Drew, a Greenfield, Mass., architect, to confer with Mrs. Dutton as to plans for the new building.

"Much interest has been manifested in Mrs. Dutton's proposition, and appreciation of her generosity was shown by a large attendance at the special Town meeting, the schoolroom being filled."

"Under article I it was voted to buy the Dr. Leland J. Parker lot next north of the town hall lot, and a sum not to exceed \$1000 was appropriated for that purpose. The residence on the Parker lot was burned at the time of the town hall fire. Connected with this lot is five or six acres of land which is included in the purchase, and the price of the whole is \$1000. The vote to make the purchase was unanimous."

Mrs. Dutton's intentions were that the exterior of the new building be "fire proof."

Townshend Town Hall and Opera House Off to Fast Start with Expected Completion by Mid-1920, October, 1919

At Mrs. Dutton's request, the original architect of the 1911 building, M. R. Drew of Greenfield Massachusetts, was once again retained and in late October, 1919, William Cushman of Brattleboro began the project with an expected completion date of April 1, 1920.

Town Citizens Float Fourth of July, 1920 Celebration to be at New Town Hall, March, 1920

On March 18, 1920, with expectations that the Town Hall will quickly be underway and completed by mid-year, Town citizens threw out the idea of celebrating the Fourth of July, 1920, in the new building.

As urged: "Since the old town hall was burned in the spring of 1918 there have been no suitable facilities for a dramatic entertainment in this town and there has been very little going on to amuse and interest young or old outside the seminary activities."

With the structure fully underway, it was suggested that "in no way could the appreciation of the people here be more truly shown for this magnificent gift than by its use for the betterment of the social life of the place."

"Why not have a Fourth of July celebration here this summer?" We could sure use "the public spirit and get-together feeling engineered by good old-fashioned July 4 celebration."

E BRATTLEBORO DAILY**TOWNSHEND.****WHAT ABOUT JULY 4?****Why Not a Celebration to Help Equip****New Town Hall?**

As the beautiful and commodious **new town hall** nears completion with the plans for an ample dining room, convenient stage and large audience hall, where a perfect dancing floor will be laid, the remark is heard in various sections of the village, "Why not have a Fourth of July celebration here this summer?" The last celebration held here was six years ago and was a success in spite of the pouring rain in the morning. Since the old town hall was burned in the spring of 1918 there have been no suitable facilities for dramatic entertainments in this town and there has been very little going on to amuse and interest young or old outside the seminary activities.

The new town hall has been generously given by Mrs. H. F. Dutton and in no way could the appreciation of the people here be more truly shown for this magnificent gift than by its use for the betterment of the social life of the place.

The new kitchen will need a range, dishes and other utensils. The stage will need furniture and scenery and the funds for these could easily be raised and the whole town be bettered for the public spirit and get-together feeling engendered by a good old-fashioned July 4 celebration. The Parker lot, which was bought last year by the town for a playground and on which work was begun last fall, probably will be just in good shape for a ball field this spring and is in an ideal location for public games, and Townshend has never been lacking for players. Why not talk this over throughout the village and if thought best have a mass meeting called to make plans for the day.

Grip colds continue prevalent.

Mrs. Lucy Franklin is at H. O. Gale's for a few weeks' stay.

Theodore Osborn, who has been ill

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A Major Slow-Down Takes Shape, First Quarter, 1920.

By May 1, 1920 after serious delays and stoppages because of a lack of building supplies, the Town would soon realize that it would be many, many months before the project would be completed hoping then to at least finish by December of 1920.

Substantial Delays Attributable to the aftermath of World War I Slow New Town Hall, Including a "Glass Famine." 1919-1921

After World War I ended, the global economy began to decline and become unpredictable in 1919. In 1920 and 1921, a more severe recession hit the United States when the global economy fell very sharply—having a direct impact on the construction of the new Town Hall and Opera House.

United States railroads faced increased problems because of increased labor unrest, growing competition from highway traffic and the enactment of the Jones Act in 1920 meant to boost the US economy by restricting port access to American shipyards to only domestically made ships.

From the *Vermont Journal*, May 1, 1920:

"Weather, railroad and industrial conditions throughout the winter and spring, combined with a present freight embargo as a climax, have put a big handicap upon the completion of the new town hall which as first contracted was to have been finished April 1, an extension of time being afterward allowed. Although the hall has reached a point where the beauty of its architectural lines and convenient arrangement of the rooms and stage can be appreciated, yet it is still far from completion."

"The massive wooden columns for the double piazza, ordered last December, have never been received, nor is it possible to secure them. In their place columns will be built upon the ground by local workmen and covered with stucco to match the building. A glass famine through the country has caused delay in the windows, but these are now being built at Randolph."

"The tower is as nearly completed as possible until the long-delayed clock arrives. The dome is finished and covered with copper."

"Partitions inside the building are all set, and the outside is covered with steel lath ready for the stucco finish."

"Difficulty is [being] experienced in getting the material for the plaster, for which the rooms are practically ready. The steel ceilings will be brought from New York by auto trucks."

The New Seth Thomas Clock Has Arrived and the Bell Installed, June, 1920

From the *Brattleboro Reformer* of June 17, 1920:

"The clock has arrived for the new town hall and the bell already has been placed in the tower."

Delays Continue But The Place Looks and Sounds Great and the Eagle Has Landed, July, 1920

From July 24, 1920, *Brattleboro Reformer*:

"Even though the new town hall is still unfinished, the difficulty in obtaining material keeping the work dragging and date of completion doubtful, the residents are already getting much satisfaction from the site and sound of the three-faced clock which has been placed in the tower. The bell has a clear tone, easily heard on the farms a mile or two from the village. A handsome weathervane of gold in the shape of a flying eagle has been placed on the top of the tower the past week and adds greatly to the beauty of the building."

Final Approval from The Builder and Architect, December, 1920.

From the *Brattleboro Reformer* of Friday, December 24, 1920:

"Architect W. R. Drew of Greenville Massachusetts and contractor William Cushman of Brattleboro met with the members of the building committee of the town hall Monday afternoon. The hall was pronounced finished in a satisfactory manner and was accepted by Mr. Drew and the key turned over by Mr. Cushman."

New Opera House Chairs on the Way. Those Salvaged During the 1918 Fire Have Been Sanded and Revarnished.

Soon after the the disastrous May 4, 1918 early Saturday morning fire began, it became apparent to those attempting to assist that the town hall could not be saved and was "doomed." At that point, many rushed to save "the chairs and moveable objects."

From the *Brattleboro Reformer* of Friday, December 24, 1920:

Chairs for the main hall have been ordered this week by the building committee from the Readsboro chair factory whose representative was in town. The seats ordered are folding chairs similar to those used in the old town hall. The old seats, which have been stored since the burning of the former hall will be varnished and used also."

The Townshend Town Hall and Opera House Has Officially Been Completed and Is a Beautiful Gift From Kate C. Dutton, February 26, 1921.

From the *Brattleboro Daily Reformer* of February 26, 1921:

"The new town hall, work on which was begun by the contractor, William Cushman of Brattleboro, late in October 1919, and was completed early in October, 1920 is of colonial design, is two stories high and has a cupola in which is a three-dial illuminated clock with bronze bell. The cupola is surrounded by a bronze weather vane of the spread-eagle design which weighs from 25 to 30 pounds and is 80 feet from the ground. The building has four large, round, solid cement pillars in front. It is 72 feet deep and 45 feet wide. The first story is 10 1/2 feet high while the second is 20 feet high. There is an upper and lower veranda. The outside of the building is a white stucco finish and the roof is slighted. The main entrance to the building is in the center front. There are also rear entrances to the kitchen and basement and exit from the second floor at the rear."

"Five upper and five lower windows on either side, with four in the rear and three large windows in the upper front and two in the lower front of affords an abundance of daylight. The building is wired for electricity as there is talk of forming a local company to bring electricity to the village [sic] it is expected that the new town hall will soon have modern lighting facilities which also will enable the clock to be seen plainly at night as well as in the daytime."

"The clock, which is of Seth Thomas make, is set in the second section of the cupola. It is an eight-day timepiece with one-half hour strike, the bell being hung in the open section of the cupola. The clock has three opaque glass dials 5 feet in diameter. It also has high-grade movement and is capable of keeping accurate time. The bell is a 500 pound Meneely made at Watervliet, N. Y. The clock and bell were installed by Vaughn and Barnett of Brattleboro and Cost approximately \$1300."

"The bronze tablet on the wall of the opera hall in memory of Mrs. Dutton's husband and son is 17 inches tall by 30 inches wide, was made by Gorham Manufacturing Co. of Providence, R. I., and was put in place by Vaughn and Burnett. It cost about \$150."

"On the first floor of the building there is a dining hall 45 feet wide by 25 feet long, which will seat about 150 persons. Necessary kitchen arrangements also have been provided. There are ladies' and men's cloak rooms and toilets, and an office which the donor hopes may be used for the postoffice [sic]. There is also a fireproof vault between the office room and the dining hall."

"An auditorium on the upper floor, with an up-to-date stage which has an opening 12' x 24 feet, affords ample opportunity for indoor programs and entertainment. The stage is about 24 ft square. Dressing rooms, etc. adjoining the stage. The opera hall or auditorium is about 45 feet wide by 47 feet deep and has a balcony across one end 16 feet deep with slanting floor. This room, with balcony, will see

approximately 500%. It is arranged in such a way that for dancing purposes or special occasions when the weather would permit the windows may be opened to the veranda 45 by 15 feet on the same level and in the same finish."

"Plain oak, with oak floors, was used throughout for the interior finish. The sidewalks are of plaster painted light brown and decorated. The ceilings are of steel and are painted brown also."

"The basement room is devoted to the heating plant, which, consists of two large hot-air furnaces which may be used separately or in unison, and for the storage of fuel, etc. The building also has an up-to-date ventilating system. The heating and ventilating system were installed by the Fitch Plumbing and Heating Co. of Brattleboro."

"Orders have been placed for stage equipment to come from New York, but this has not arrived, although it is expected within a short time. Additional chairs of the same style as those in the former Hall, all of which were saved, have been received from Readsboro. The work of grading was done by the town and the town provided for the sidewalks."

"Those familiar with the building conditions and the difficulties connected with a construction of the new town hall state that the work of the contractor was carried on with special interest and fidelity and in a way which has been well pleasing to the building committee and the townspeople in general.

Mrs. Dutton: Start Using your Town Hall and Opera House Now. We will Celebrate Later! 1921.

Even though the Town Hall and Opera House was not to be formally dedicated until June of 1921, Mrs. Dutton implored that it be used "as soon as possible" with a formal dedication to be held later.

Annual Town Meeting to Meet in New Town Hall and Opera House, March 1, 1921.

Although not as yet formally dedicated but consistent with Mrs. Dutton's urging, the Town of Townshend will hold its annual Town Meeting on March 1, 1921, which will meet in the new Town Hall. Because of "local questions of unusual interest," a "record attendance" is expected.

THE BRATTLEBORO

TOWNSHEND.

To Use New Hall Tuesday.

The annual town meeting next Tuesday will be the first public meeting to be held in the new town hall. This fact, added to the number of local questions of unusual interest which are on the warrant to be discussed, gives promise of a record attendance.

In regard to the question of using one room of the town hall for the postoffice it is understood here that it is the special request of the donor, Mrs. H. F. Dutton, that the postoffice be moved there and the room in question was especially planned by her for that purpose. The room used at present for the postoffice is a considerable distance from the village center and inconvenient in many ways.

Mrs. John Bratton, who has been ill, is still under the doctor's care.

Elder Hale of Concord, N. H., was a visitor a few days last week at R. G. Cutts's.

Elder H. Litchfield of Saxtons River has been a guest a few days at A. F. Cheney's.

Edwin Parker of Brattleboro spent the week end with his parents. He and

Amie Times. He is active and alert, and day at his store. Mr. Marlboro. Most of spent in Newfane. farm now owned by moved to Iowa, and Louisiana to live.

The day of prayer served last Friday a in union with the B. Dummerston. Rev. of the Methodist chu also was present w ple and took a part evening was divided the first being a pray with Rev. F. K. Ha was followed by a n They Only Knew, p of the Christian End Woman's Mission ci followed. During t ning nearly 500 Chi were distributed by Bible school, making \$20 which the church far to China fami exercises were ende were served. Betw present.

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Premier Live Performance on the New Stage at the Town Hall and Opera House, Goes to 4 AM, March, 1921.

Thus on March 14, 1921, the Opera House portion of the building had its very first live performance. In recognition of this, the Brattleboro Chamber of Commerce sent a "handsome basket of tulips" with with a note saying that "we are thinking of you and every resident of Brattleboro rejoices in the completion of your magnificent hall."

From the Brattleboro Daily Reformer:

"A good time for everybody, a crowded house, and a perfect success in every way was the result of the opening entertainment Friday evening at the Newtown hall which is a town hall, a theater, and a banquet hall combined."

"Tickets for the 415 reserve seats were sold out by Wednesday and rush seats placed in the hall or feel early in the evening, making an audience of about 500, coming from Brattleboro, Jamaica and all surrounding towns. This in spite of the fact that the unusually bad condition of the roads kept numbers from attending."

"The three-act drama, The Vagabonds, was well presented by a good cast and was well received."

"The whole drama was smoothly given and the plot well worked out."

"Directly after the play and oyster supper was served in the commodious dining hall. Contributions of cakes and pies given generously from the whole village combined with bowls of hot oyster stew insured a delicious and substantial feast."

"Mrs. L. J. Parker had charge of the dining room and Mrs. Alma Cummings of the kitchen and cooking of the oysters. Both were able assisted by a corps of willing helpers."

"Music for dancing was furnished by Snow's Orchestra of six pieces. The ball opened with a grand march and circle."

"A very program of dances followed, terminating at 4 a. m."

"Townshend feels proud to open such a hall, complete and always, to her neighbors of the valley and also feels a debt of gratitude to the donor, Mrs. Kate C. Dutton for the thoughtfulness and magnificence of her gift. The early opening of the hall was in accordance with Mrs. Dutton's wish to have it in use as soon as possible."

June 17, 1921. Townshend Town Hall and Opera House DEDICATION DAY!

From the *Vermont Journal*, Windsor:

"On Friday, June 17, 1921, an estimated 2000 persons gathered for the dedication of the new Townshend Town Hall and Opera House."

WINDSOR, VT., JUNE 17, 1921.

TOWNSHEND'S NEW HALL DEDICATED

**Cost Over \$35,000—Gift of Mrs. Kate
C. Dutton in Memory of
Husband and Son.**

Townshend in particular and Windham county in general did honor Friday to Townshend's greatest benefactor, Mrs. Kate C. Dutton of Gainesville, Fla., by dedicating to the public use the new town hall erected in Townshend through the generosity of Mrs. Dutton and presented by her to the town as a memorial to her husband, the late Lieut. Col. Henry F. Dutton, and to her son, the late Henry F. Dutton, Jr.

Favored by ideal weather conditions, visitors came from every town in the county and from many beyond the county borders, more than 2,000 persons assembling in the village. The four sides of the village common were packed with automobiles. The morning program was given in the new hall, which was seen for the first time by hundreds of visitors, who expressed their admiration of its handsome lines and substantial construction. The afternoon exercises were held on the common.

"Townshend in particular and Windham County in general did honor Friday to Townshend's greatest benefactor, Mrs. Kate C. Dutton of Gainesville, Fla. by dedicating to the public use the new town hall erected in Townshend through the generosity of Mrs. Dutton and presented by her to the town as a memorial to her husband, the late Lieut. Col. Henry F. Dutton and her son, the late Henry F. Dutton, jr."

"It was a day of much significance to one of the finest towns in the county, and it will remain a day of pleasant and joyful memories to all present. Mrs. Dutton was not present, having deferred her visit to later in the month. Every detail connected with the dedicatory program revealed efficient management and was carried out promptly according to plans."

Favored by ideal weather conditions, visitors came from every town in the county and from many beyond the county borders, more than 2000 persons assembling in the village. The four sides of the village common were packed with automobiles. The morning program was given in the new hall, which was seen for the first time by hundreds of visitors, who expressed their admiration of its handsome lines and substantial construction. The afternoon exercises were held in the common."

The Vermont Phoenix, Brattleboro, Friday, June 17, 1921:

Detailed the magnificent new Town Hall and Opera House structure:

The new Town Hall and Opera House "stands on the east side of Main street partly on the side of the former town hall which was burned the night of May 3, 1918 and partly on the site of the Dr. L. J. Parker house which was burned at the same time. The Townshend Inn was also destroyed at the time.

The only provision made by Mrs. Dutton was that the Town should provide the site and that it should be "sufficient size to allow the erection of a town building with ample open space round about to eliminate as far as possible danger from further fire."

The lot contains one-half acre. The hall destroyed was a modern building built in 1910 at an approximate cost of \$8000.

William Cushman from Brattleboro was the contractor and began construction of the building in 1919 from plans by architect. M. R. Drew of Greenfield, Massachusetts. Mr. Drew had drawn up the plans of the original 1910 building (as then modified by Mrs. Dutton in 1916) and as such, Mrs. Dutton requested that his services be engaged again.

The building "is of colonial design, is two stories high, and has a cupola in which is a three-dial illuminated clock with bronze bell.

"On the first floor is a dining hall which will seat about 150 persons, and various other rooms, while upstairs is an auditorium, stage, dressing with balcony seats about 500 persons . A veranda on the second floor level is 45 x 15 feet. The heating plant, including two hot air furnaces, is in the basement."

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Townshend Town Hall and Opera House

Dedication Day Program

June 17, 1921

10:00 AM

I. Brattleboro Military Band Welcoming Concert and Invocation.

At 10:00 am, the Brattleboro Military Band of 30 pieces, Alan J. Dugan, leader, "began a delightful concert on the town hall balcony" and "a few minutes later a flag was swung from the building by C. H. Willard of the dedication committee and Rev. C. Walter Bishop of the Townshend Baptist church spoke briefly of the flag as a glowing symbol of the lives of men and women who have been builders..."

II. The Star-Spangled Banner

The Brattleboro Military Band Play the Star-Spangled Banner from the second-floor balcony.

III. Welcoming by Building Committee Chair

John H. Ware, chairman of the building committee and chairman of the dedication committee, presided at the dedicatory exercises and welcomed the visitors.

IV. Reading of Deed and Accompanying Correspondence from Mrs. Dutton

An official Deed of conveyance of the hall from Mrs. Dutton to the Town was read by Town Hall and Opera House financial committee chairman C. S. Mills. Mr. Mills gave a financial statement showing the total cost of the structure to be \$35,593.32.

V. Acceptance of Deed by the Town

Mr. Ware presented the deed to Townshend's three selectmen, E. H. Allbee, F. W. Watson and D. H. Sprague. Select Board chair Allbee "made brief appreciative remarks, expressing the hope that the destructive element of fire which lost to Townshend several town halls, would pass this one by."

VI. Presentation of Resolutions

Rev. W. F. Bissell of the West Townsend Baptist Church read resolutions drawn up by the resolutions committee expressing the Town's deep sense of appreciation.

VII. Reading of letter from Mrs. Dutton

Mr. Ware then read a letter from Mrs. Dutton in which she expressed "the hope that the people would receive as much pleasure from the use of the building as she had experienced in presenting it."

VIII. Prayer of Dedication

Reverend R. H. Bosworth of the Townshend Congressional Church offered a prayer of dedication.

IX. Musical Interlude, Miss Esther Dale

Miss Esther Dale, "Townshend's widely known and much loved soprano soloist, who is living and singing in New York" received a hearty welcome. She then, accompanied on the piano by Miss Jessie L. Hawley of Brattleboro, "rendered in her usual superb style an aria, Here, Ye Israel, from The Elijah."

X. First Speaker, Judge E. L. Waterman

The first speaker of the day was Judge E. L. Waterman of Brattleboro who offered remarks of Colonel and Mrs. Dutton. The planning committee determined that Judge Waterman was "the only person living in this part of the country who knew Col. Dutton in the days when he first came to Townshend from Ludlow" to become an assistant principal at Leland and Gray seminary.

XI. Musical Interlude, Brattleboro Military Band

Following Judge Waterman's remarks, the Brattleboro Military Band played a selection from their vantage point on the second-floor balcony.

XII. Second Speaker, Judge Warner A. Graham

Following the selection by the band, Judge Warner A. Graham of Bellows Falls provided remarks. Judge Graham said that in the past five years, through regular visits on official duties, he had "kept in close contact with the affairs of Townshend and her people and was there when the joyous news of the gift of Mrs. Dutton was received." Judge Graham said that "while he fittingly recalled the generosity of those responsible for the town hall he spoke especially of the larger significance of the building in the life of the community and dwelt upon the importance of the institutions of civilization represented by the building."

XIII. Musical Interlude, Miss Esther Dale

Judge Graham's address was "followed by a group of three songs by Miss Dale, Oh No, John, No (old English), The Plague of Love (old English), and The World in June, by Spross.

XIV. Lunch with Musical Accompaniment by Brattleboro Military Band

As reported, "This concluded the forenoon program and from 12 to 2 o'clock a delicious chicken-pie dinner was served in the banquet hall of the town hall and in the Congregational church. During a part of that time a concert was given by the band."

XV. Third Speaker, Captain E. W. Gibson

Following lunch, at 2 pm, Captain E. W. Gibson of Brattleboro spoke of the dedication as linking the present with a great past. He stated: "Our forbears were men of great courage and resolution, which were qualities required in coming to this section and clearing forest lands. They helped to give the world a new idea of government as embodied in the Declaration of Independence." He urged the soldiers present and the soldiers to come "to be loyal to a country made possible by sacrifice without which no country can live."

XVI. Musical Interlude, Soloist Sewell Morse

Captain Gibson's address was followed by a cornet solo by Sewell Morse.

XVII. Fourth Speaker, John Barrett

The final speaker of the day was John Barrett of Washington DC, a native of the Town of Grafton and former United States minister in Asia and South America. Mr. Barrett "emphasized and pictured the unique and notable part which the town hall plays in Vermont and New England life."

Mr. Barrett referred to the fact that Vermont was facing the most critical period of our history, "that she is losing population and must become anemic unless the situation and condition soon can be radically changed."

Mr. Barrett called on "all loyal Vermonters...whether living in or out of the state must realize that it is imperative for them to plan and carry out without delay cooperation in the improvement of agricultural, industrial, cultural, and general economic and social conditions. The sons and daughters of Vermont living outside the state must invest money in the reclaiming and betterment of the deserted farms, in restoring or repairing and visiting old homes, in starting small industries, in harnessing water powers, in contributing to the support of local institutions, good roads, churches, schools, and well for organizations, and in making benefactions in the form of playgrounds, community and club houses, hotels, permanent bridges and better and more attractive town halls like this ideal and practical structure in Townshend erected through the splendid generosity and noble town loyalty of Mrs. Dutton."

He concluded by saying: "May you live, Town Hall, long as exist the green valleys, hills and mountains that form your noble environment."

XIX. Concluding Music Performance, Brattleboro Military Band

Following the remarks by Mr. Barrett, the Brattleboro Military Band played once again and "the crowd repaired to the community ball ground to attend a ballgame between Saxton's River and Townshend."

XX. Baseball Game Between Saxton's River v. Townshend

From the *Vermont Journal*:

"The ball game between Saxtons River and Townshend on the community ball ground was one of the big attractions of the day and was called at 3:15 PM. The game was a snappy one and well worth seeing and the final score of 10 to 9 in favor of the locals made Townshendites [sic] feel this was surely their day."

XXI. Buffet Lunch

From the *Vermont Phoenix*, Brattleboro,

"In place of supper a buffet lunch was on sale at the town hall from 4 to 7, including sandwiches, pie donuts, cookies and ice cream. Lunch was also sold after the evening entertainment and during the dance."

"Mrs. W. M. Sparks had charge of the dining room at the town hall and Mrs. O. W. Follett of the cCongregational vestry dining hall. No decorations of bunting or other material were used in the town hall save bouquets of roses and ferns as the committee felt that all guests would prefer to see the rooms in their natural appearance and could gain in this way a better impression of the beauty of the whole structure."

XXII. Live Stage Performance in the Opera House

From the *Vermont Phoenix*, Brattleboro,

"At 8 pm, a four-act comedy drama, Nan, the Mascot, "was presented by the Community club to a packed house. Besides the 521 reserved seats which were sold out before the opening, about 140 rush seats were sold and many more unable to gain admission. The play was well received and given hearty applause."

XXIII. Dancing into the Evening by the Sounds of the Snow Orchestra

From the *Vermont Phoenix*, Brattleboro,

"Music was furnished between the acts by Snow Orchestra of six pieces, who also furnished music for dancing after the entertainment."

Historical Footnote: Kate C. Dutton Able to Visit the New Building in July, 1921 but Then Passes Just 7 Months After Dedication.

Mrs. Dutton was unable to attend the dedication ceremony on June 17, 1921, sending word that transportation from Gainesville to Townshend was difficult at best. She would next return to the Town Hall and Opera House on July 17, 1921 and then next again for her own funeral service. Kate Dutton died on February 15, 1922, at the age of 74.

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The Brattleboro Reformer
Fri, Feb 17, 1922 · Page 1

sition, and is a diplomat in handling the public. He is married and has one child. Here's a happy New Year and many more to you Ralph."

BENEFactor OF TOWNSHEND DIES

Mrs. Kate C. Dutton, Who Gave **New Town Hall**, Dead in Florida—
Funeral to Be in Townshend.

(Special to The Reformer.)

TOWNSHEND, Feb. 17

A telegram received yesterday by F. T. Randall, who has for years been caretaker of the Dutton homestead, announced the death of Mrs. Kate C. Dutton, widow of Col. Henry F. Dutton, Wednesday evening at her home in Gainesville, Fla. The telegram was sent by Mrs. Dutton's private secretary, J. D. Adamson, who stated that he would start north with the body Thursday morning, probably reaching New York Saturday.

It is expected that the funeral will be held in Townshend Sunday afternoon, although the exact hour cannot be announced until it is known when the body will arrive. The funeral will be held in the **new town hall**, which was given by Mrs. Dutton as a memorial to her husband and son, and which will be held by the townspeople as a memorial to her own generosity and thoughtfulness as long as the building shall stand.

Mrs. Dutton was about 75 years of age. She was born in the Cathan house in Harmonyville, the only daughter of Lucius and Marcia (Wheelock) Cathan. She married Col. Henry F. Dutton of Company H, 8th Vermont Volunteers, May 22, 1864. Two children were born to them, one daughter who died in infancy, and a son, Henry, jr., who died about four years ago. Col. Dutton died in 1915. She leaves one grandchild, Catherine Dutton of Gainesville, and one cousin, Lucius Wheelock of Springfield, Mass.

3. Townshend's Gratitude to the Duttons

Without Col. Henry F. and Kate C. Dutton, there would be no existing Townshend Town Hall and Opera House as it exists today. In fact, before 1912, Townshend did not have a standalone Town Hall structure. It was not until 1911 that Town citizens voted to tax themselves to build a separate Town Hall structure and even with that building, the Duttons contributed and purchased the addition of a new clock and bell for the handsome new building in memory of Kate's parents, the Cathans, Emery and Marion. Emery owned the Harmonyville General merchandise store from before the Civil War.

In 1916, just two years before it would burn to the ground, Mrs. Dutton once again made a contribution to the 1912 Town Hall structure in memory of her recently deceased husband, Col. Henry F. Dutton by designing and paying for the construction of an addition of a new cupola on the building.

Then, after the devastating 1918 East Village which destroyed virtually everything in the existing structure, Mrs. Dutton once again came to the Town's rescue and rebuilt the entire structure creating the new Townshend Town Hall and Opera House which opened in 1921.

Thus, with respect to every standalone Town Hall structure that Townshend has ever known, the Dutton's have been financially instrumental in making that a reality.

Henry Forrest Dutton

March 16, 1837

Born, Ludlow, Windsor County, Vermont, USA.

1859

Age, 22, **moves from Ludlow, Vermont to Townshend to be assistant principal of Leland Seminary.**

April 12, 1861

Age, 25, Civil War begins.

January 1862

Age, 25, appointed to head recruitment of volunteers for Company H of the 8th Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The regiment was quartered at Camp Holbrook in Brattleboro.

January 16, 1862

Age 25, **officially enters the Civil War as a US Army captain**. He is quickly promoted to lieutenant colonel.

March 4, 1862

Age 25, Company H with Henry as his captain and Alvin B. Franklin as its first lieutenant, leave the State of Vermont for active service.

January 15, 1863

Age, 26, is **put in command of 60 volunteer sharpshooters to pick off gunners on the Confederate steamboat Cotton**. This enabled the attacking regimen to scuttle the ship. Seeing no way to save the ship, her Confederate crew set the ship ablaze to potentially serve as a blockade. Henry is recognized for his "valiant service."

Spring/Summer, 1863

Age, 26, is part of the Union force that takes Port Hudson, Louisiana from the Confederate army. Promoted to major.

December 28, 1863

Age, 26, Henry is again promoted and attains the rank of lieutenant colonel. In a battlefield wartime newspaper story about the Vermont 8th Regiment, it was written that **Henry "was one of the most efficient and popular officers" within the regimen** with "an active, well-disciplined mind" and "made himself master of the situation and was equal to any emergency whether in camp or under fire."

May 16, 1864

Age, 27, **while on furlough, Married Kate May Cathan** in Townshend, Vermont.

September 19, 1864

Age, 27, in one of the **largest, bloodiest, and most important battles in the Shenandoah Valley**, he is severely injured when a lead ball breaks his arm at the Battle of Opequon near Winchester, Virginia. Among the 5000 Union casualties were one general killed and three wounded. The casualty rate for the Confederates was high as well and two Confederate generals were killed and four were wounded.

November 16, 1864

Age, 27, **honorably discharged from Union Army**.

April 9, 1865

Age, 28, Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox.

February 1, 1867

Age, 30, **leaves Townshend moves with Kate to Kate's birthplace, Beaufort, South Carolina** and purchases a successful cotton buying business with business partner John G. Nichols. The business is known as John G. Nichols and Company

which enters into plow-sharing agreements, including free room and board, with former slaves who worked on the land they purchased.

June 8, 1874

Age, 37, **welcomes birth of first child**, May Livingston Dutton, who passes 4 months later. May's middle name ("Livingston") was Kate's mother's maiden name.

September 30, 1874

Age, 37, **May Livingston Dutton passes away at four months old**. May is returned to and buried in Townshend.

May 12, 1875

Age, 38, **Henry's sister, Jane M. Dutton dies** in Ludlow at age 43.

1877

Age, 40, Family **moves to Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**. He establishes his own mercantile firm, H. F. Dutton Company.

April 1, 1880

Age, 43, **welcomes birth to second child**, Henry Forrest Jr. in Gainesville, Florida.

1882

Age, 45, with two partners, former South Carolina partner John G. Nichols (who closes down his South Carolina business) and Walter Robinson (from Rhode Island who will run the company's cotton department), he purchases an existing cotton gin for \$40 at an auction conducted in front of the new courthouse in Gainesville. They open shop on S. Main St. in Gainesville where he establishes a cotton ginning business and for several years becomes the **largest dealer in Sea Island Cotton in the South**, employing more than 125 people and 20 cotton gins during harvesting seasoning turning out thousands of bales of high-quality cotton. [Sea Island Cotton or long-staple cotton was considered a stronger cotton than its counterpart, short-staple cotton].

May 22, 1882

Age, 45, purchases his private residence in Gainesville on W. University Ave. (Liberty St.) and Pleasant Street, **building one of the most prestigious homes in Gainesville**. The Dutton home was eloquently described in Carl Webber's *Eden of the South*: The handsomest resident is that of [the Duttons] ...and has the most beautiful garden with lawns and walks about it, and fountains playing from an artesian well."

1883

Age, 46, the Dutton cotton business in Gainesville thrives. Before the Dutton company formed, cotton growers in a Alachua county would trade their cotton for dry goods, groceries, and hardware. Dutton, however, began to pay premium prices in gold, and **Dutton's cotton became to be considered the best in the market**

even receiving awards at the Paris Exposition of 1878. **The company becomes one of the largest cotton shipping stations in the state of Florida.**

1884

Age, 47, to facilitate his businesses, **Henry establishes Dutton Bank in downtown Gainesville** which is one of only three banks in the state of Florida. It is Gainesville's third bank and ultimately merges with Gainesville National Bank.

1891

Age, 54, **incorporates Dutton Phosphate Company in Alachua County** Florida and establishes several mines in the area, employing thousands of workers at its peak. Dutton Phosphate Mine, which operated for over three decades, was one of the largest mines in the region shipping more than half of the state's phosphate production with much of it going overseas to be processed for commercial fertilizer. The company operates five mines in Alachua County alone.

1900

Age, 63, the business of mining was incorporated under the new name of Dutton Phosphate Company.

1901

Age, 64, **Henry is considered one of Gainesville's leading and highly respected businessmen.**

1903

Age, 66, the Dutton cotton business in downtown Gainesville became the largest buyers of Sea Island cotton in the world and **virtually controlled all Sea Island cotton output in Florida** having a capacity of 30 cotton bales an hour with each bail averaging 400 pounds.

1903

Age, 66, Dutton Phosphate Company purchases the Ford and Hiller Phosphate company of Ocala, in Marion County, Florida **making the Dutton Phosphate Company the largest phosphate operator in the world.** It operates throughout the United States and Europe with most of the rock being shipped to Germany for commercial use. Henry crosses the Atlantic, numerous times, throughout any given year for business purposes.

1904

Age, 67, Dutton Phosphate Company had mines from Ft. White, Florida to Dunnellon, Florida--over 70 miles running from north to south next to Gainesville. Communities sprang up around the company mines and many were connected by a railroad owned by the company.

June 4, 1907

Age 70, Henry escorts Kate to Townshend for her annual summer stay. He returns to Gainesville, Florida to tend to his cotton, phosphate, and banking ventures.

1907

Age 70, **Dutton and Company sells cotton operation.**

1907

Age 70, **because of "advancing age," sells Dutton Bank of Gainesville.**

1910

Age 73, boll weevil infestation has ravaged cotton production in the south resulting in massive loss and wiping out the industry.

April 14, 1911

Age, 74, Henry, Henry, Jr. and Kate travel to New York City where father and son will then take a ship to Europe. Kate will return to Townshend for the summer.

Summer of 1915

Age 78, despite the fact that when he was not traveling, Henry made an effort to be at the Cathan summer Harmonyville home, **Henry does not make the trip this year to Townshend because of "ill-health" and "feebleness."**

November 17, 1915

Age, 78, handwrites last will and testament, with a specific bequest of the Liberty Street property to Kate with the remainder being divided equally between Kate and Henry, Jr.

March 13, 1916

Age, 79, **Henry Dies**, Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida, USA.

March 24, 1916

Age, 78, **Henry's body is returned to and buried in Townshend.**

March 25, 1916

Henry's body is placed in a tomb to await burial in the spring.

September 13, 1918

Henry Forrest Jr. dies unexpectedly after taking an automobile trip to the Vanderbilt Hotel in Manhattan, NY at age 38 from pneumonia. Henry Forst Jr. had attended Yale University and after his graduation made a trip around the world. Following that excursion, he received his law degree from the University of Virginia. He had friends scattered throughout the United States, Great Britain and France and frequently traveled himself including to Matanzas, Cuba where he stayed for some 18 months. While traveling frequently, he studies English and French literature.

Kate May Cathan [a/k/a Kate C. Dutton]

May 21, 1845

Born, Beaufort, Beaufort County, South Carolina, USA. Lives and grows up in her family home purchased by her father in 1837 in Harmonyville, Vermont. Her father, Emery Cathan, was the Harmonyville storekeeper and one of the leading men of the Harmonyville Village.

January, 1862

Age, 17, Henry (then 25) appointed to head recruitment of volunteers for Company H of the 8th Vermont Volunteer Infantry Regiment. He enters the Civil War this year as a US Army captain. I told the war is

March 4, 1862

Age 17, Company H with Henry as his captain and Alvin B. Franklin as its first lieutenant, leave the State of Vermont for active service. He is quickly promoted to lieutenant colonel.

January 15, 1863

Age, 18, Henry is put in command of 60 volunteer sharpshooters to pick off gunners on the Confederate steamboat Cotton. This enabled the attacking regiment to scuttle the ship. Henry is recognized for his "valiant service."

Spring/Summer, 1863

Age, 18, Henry is part of the Union force that takes Port Hudson, Louisiana from the Confederate army. Promoted to major.

May 16, 1864

Age, 19, while on military furlough back in Vermont, **Married Kate May Cathan** in Townshend, Vermont. Kate remains living with her parents in Harmonyville.

August, 1864

Age, 20, Henry **severely injured in the arm in a battle near Winchester, Virginia.**

January, 1865

Age, 20, **Henry honorably discharged** from Union Army.

April 9, 1865

Age, 20, Robert E. Lee surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox.

February 1, 1867

Age, 22, **Henry and Kate move from Townshend to Kate's birthplace, Beaufort, South Carolina** and they purchase a successful cotton buying business. Enters into plow sharing agreement, including free room and board, with former slaves who worked on the land he purchased

June 8, 1874

Age, 29, **welcomes birth of first child**, May Livingston Dutton, who passes 4 months later. May's middle name ("Livingston") was Kate's mother's maiden name.

September 30, 1874

Age, 29, **May Livingston Dutton passes away at 4 months old**. May is returned to and buried in Townshend.

1877

Age, 32, **Family moves to Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida**, USA where the family makes vast amounts of money operating the H.F. Dutton Company a mercantile selling upscale cotton fabric and the Dutton Phosphate Company which became one of the largest phosphate operations in the southeast. The company stayed in business for 30 years

April 1, 1880

Age, 35, **gives birth to second child**, Henry Forrest Jr. in Gainesville, Florida.

June 4, 1907

Age 62, Henry escorts Kate to Townshend for her annual summer stay. He returns to Gainesville, Florida to tend to his cotton, phosphate, and banking ventures.

April 1, 1910

Age 65, decides to forego annual summer trip to Harmonyville (Townshend) this year to accompany her husband, Henry, to Europe.

April 14, 1911

Age, 66, Henry, Henry, Jr. and Kate travel to New York City where father and son will then take a ship to Europe. Kate will return to Townshend for the summer.

August 2, 1912

Age, 67, **Kate makes a substantial gift** to the people of Townshend **in the form of a new clock and bell to be installed in the newly constructed Town Hall building**. It is presented by "Mrs. Kate C. Dutton, wife of Col. H. F. Dutton," in memory of Kates's parents, longtime residents of Harmonyville. The clock was made by the E. Howard clock company of Boston in New York and the "fine metal" bell was cast by the Meneely Bell Metal Company of West Troy, N. Y., weighing 600 pounds. The inscription on the bell is "Presented by Mrs. Kate C. Dutton in memory of L. H. Cathan, his wife and daughter, Marion, July 1912." [sic]

Summer of 1915

Age 78, despite the fact that when he was not traveling, Henry made an effort to be at the Cathan summer Harmonyville home, **Henry does not make the trip this year because of "ill-health" and "feebleness."**

March 13, 1916

Age, 71, **Henry dies** in Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida, USA, at age 79.

March 24, 1916

Age, 71, **Henry's body, 79, is returned to Townshend.**

March 25, 1916

Age, 71, Henry's body, 79, is placed in a tomb to await burial in the spring.

Summer, 1916

Age, 72, Shortly after Colonel Henry Dutton's death in March, **Kate makes another substantial gift** by offering the people of Townshend the opportunity to construct the addition of a new cupola to the existing Town Hall building. Kate offers the donation in memory of Colonel Dutton. Town officials gratefully accept Kate's donation.

May 4, 1918

Age, 73, **Townshend Town Hall burns to ground.**

September 13, 1918

Age 74, **Henry Forrest Jr., 38, dies unexpectedly** after taking an automobile trip to the Vanderbilt Hotel in Manhattan, NY. The cause of death is pneumonia. Henry Forst Jr. had attended Yale University and after his graduation made a trip around the world. Following that excursion, he received his law degree from the University of Virginia. He had friends scattered throughout the United States, Great Britain and France and frequently traveled himself including to Matanzas, Cuba where he stayed for some 18 months. While traveling frequently, he studies English and French literature.

June, 1919

Age, 75, Travels to Townshend to **plan possibility of donating a new Town Hall and Opera House** which she plans build **in memory of her deceased husband and son.**

July 29, 1919

Age 75, After inspecting the site of the burnt-out Town Hall structure in the East Village, **Kate formally offers still another substantial gift** to the people of Townshend, this time offering to rebuild and pay for the construction of the new Town hall and Opera House, in its entirety. She offers to provide the building if Townshend will provide the land large enough to offer a separation between buildings in the East Village to minimize the spread of still another fire.

December 24, 1920

Age, 75, New Townshend Town Hall and Opera House completed, and **Kate pays full cost of construction in the amount of \$35,593.32. In 2024 dollars,**

adjusted for cost-of-living and other inflationary factors, Kate remitted \$624,511.

June, 17, 1921

Age 76, **2000 people attend the dedication of new Town Hall and Opera House.**

Kate unable to attend because of unavailability of reliable rail transportation in the aftermath of World War I. Kate does not make her annual summer trip from Gainesville to Townshend.

November 1, 1921

Age, 76, executes last will and testament leaving nine specific bequests including the Liberty Street Gainesville property ("my bungalow") to Annie Shelton and Nora Norton; \$50,000 to her "granddaughter," Katherine Dutton (\$872,000 in 2024 dollars) and "my home in [Townshend]" to which Katherine would not be entitled unless she had reached the age of 25 except for educational purposes. If she became married and was at least 21, she would receive the bequest. If Katherine predeceased Kate, the money would go to her nearest relative "or relatives on her father's side of the family." She further directed that the sum of \$500 (\$8724 in 2024 dollars) be placed in the bank of Newfane and that "the interest derived from the sum annually [shall be used] for the care and maintenance of the cemetery lots...of my husband the late Col. H.F. Dutton and L.H. Cathan."

1922

Age 77, Kate **makes a substantial gift** by donating **six William R. Stuart hand-painted stage scenery curtains to the people of Townshend for use on the Opera House stage.** Stuart is a well-known Brattleboro artist known for his scenic panels. The choice of scenes each panel reflects the sophisticated taste of an educated and well-traveled individual. The "streetcar scene" it said to be one of the most unusual of the 140 curtains thus far discovered in Vermont because of the professionalism of the artistic detail and celebration of 1920s modern day technology.

February 15, 1922

Age, 77, **Kate Dies**, Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida, USA. Survivors listed were Katherine Dutton from Gainesville, Alachua County and "a cousin from Townshend." Kate is returned to and buried in Townshend.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

After Colonel H. F. Dutton recovered from his serious Civil War injuries, he and Kate C. Dutton moved from Townshend and eventually settled in Gainesville, Florida where he established the firm of H. F. Dutton and company.

Possessed of shrewd business insight, the firm specialized in Sea Cotton linens, banking ("Dutton Bank" which Mr. Dutton established to facilitate his own

business), and in the 1890's, the mining of rock phosphate under the name of Dutton Phosphate Company.

Colonel Dutton became one of the largest dealers of Sea Island cotton in the state of Florida, his business extending all over North Florida and into the Sea Island districts of Georgia. The company supplied the great Willimantic Spool Thread Company all the cotton used by that large corporation for many years. Most of the phosphate rock was shipped to Germany to be processed for commercial use.

As a result of his extensive business holdings, the Dutton's became extremely wealthy individuals. Even though Col. Dutton traveled extensively for business including visits to Europe at least annually, he, or Henry Dutton Jr.--or both—annually escorted Mrs. Dutton to and from Gainesville to Townshend where Mrs. Dutton (and Henry, Jr.) would join her parents for the summer months.

Mrs. Dutton's father, Emery Cathan, was the Harmonyville storekeeper for many years.

4. A Beautiful Fate: The Connections of the Dutton's, Townshend and a runaway Slave, Age 9, named Winfield Scott Montgomery

The unique story of the Duttons, Winfield Scott Montgomery and the people of Townshend is awe-inspiring.

In 1853, Winfield Scott Montgomery was born into slavery to Frank Montgomery and Celestine Britton on the plantation of Frank Hook, located near Fort Adams, a small town on the Mississippi in the vicinity of New Orleans.

While on an errand, from another plantation where he and his parents served in Algiers, Louisiana, the young boy, as a 10-year-old observed: "I saw the boys in blue and dimly divined that their presence meant good to me."

In a sheer act of moral courage, Col. Dutton, after being severely wounded in a 44 day battle at Opequon Creek near Winchester, Virginia—and thus honorably discharged—received permission from his commanders to return to Townshend and take young Winfield Montgomery with him.

Young Winfield grew up in predominantly white Townshend, making home with Kate's parents, the Cathans in Harmonyville. He attended Leland and Gray Seminary and grew up amongst his newly found friends in Townshend, baking young Winfield a popular local son. He continued to live in Townshend for almost 9 years after the Civil War ended, entering Dartmouth College in 1873 and graduating with high honors from the class of 1878.

From *The Howard University Record*, Vol. 18 (1923):

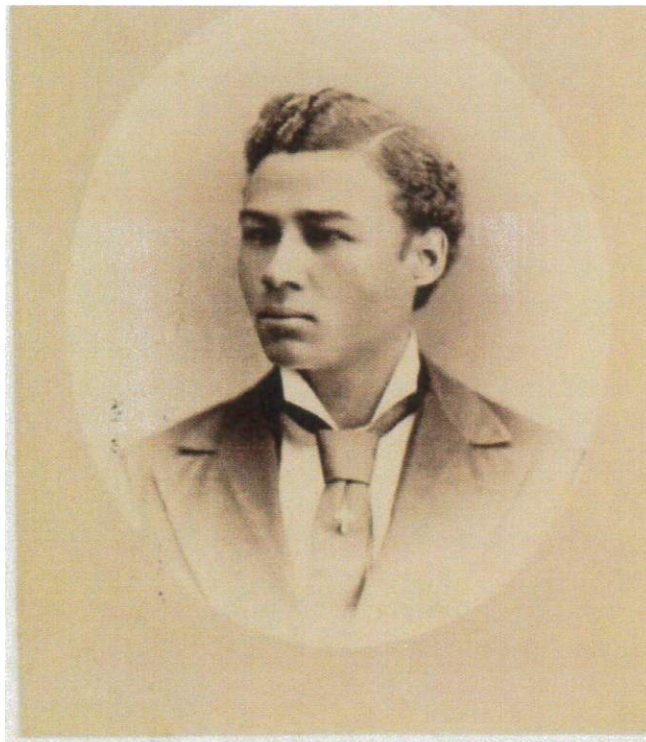
"The boy became enchanted and ran away to be among the soldiers who had told him that they came to free the slaves. No persuasion could induce him to return to his home.

Here [in a conflict in the valley of the Shenandoah] another incident of far-reaching effect in his life occurred for upon his arrival in the Shenandoah his lot was cast with a colonel of the regiment, Henry F. Dutton, from whom he received the kindest treatment. The colonel, seriously wounded in the battle of Winchester, was ordered home to Vermont by the army surgeon and Dr. Montgomery was permitted to accompany the colonel North.

Under these favorable conditions he grew up from boyhood to youth, imbibing fully the influences and teachings which fortune had cast his way."

Said Mr. Montgomery: "The winds of destiny blew me into the home of the wife of Colonel Dutton where through months of pain, loving hearts nursed the soldier [Col. Dutton] until the danger point was past. Excepted as a member of the family, I grew up with the boys and girls, who accorded me full companionship."

In 1873, Dr. Montgomery graduated from Dartmouth College in a class numbering over 100 men. He graduated with Phi Beta Kappa rank. In addition to his degree from Dartmouth College, he also has his medical degree from Howard University and an honorary M.A. from Dartmouth College as well.



In 1873, at age 20, Winfield Scott Montgomery graduated from Dartmouth College with Phi Beta Kappa rank.

Mr. Montgomery was a professor of languages for three years at Alcorn University. Then for 42 years, he was principal, supervising principal, assistant superintendent in charge of "colored schools" in Washington D.C.

While dedicating himself to his professional educational duties, Mr. Montgomery also studied medicine and attained his M.D degree from Howard university in 1888.

Dr. Montgomery devoting himself to education, was largely instrumental in securing equality of opportunity for children of color. He established, according to Dartmouth College, the "direction of manual training schools, fresh air schools, vacation schools, night schools, classes for the incorrigible, the atypical, the blind, for speech correction, and for visual education."

At age 70, August 1922—two years before he would retire from his long service in the public schools of Washington—Dr. Montgomery came home to Townshend and as the keynote speaker for the event, delivered heart-felt remarks.



Dr. Winfield Scott Montgomery, age 70, in 1922.

From the *Brattleboro Reformer*, Thursday, August 24, 1922.

Townshend's Old Home Day included a parade of 42 decorated vehicles, "all without exception being deserving of praise." The line was at least half a mile long.

"The speaker whom all had looked forward to with interest was Winfield Scott Montgomery of Washington DC. Mr. Montgomery came to this village with Col. Henry Dutton [then] a little colored boy of nine years. He attended the graded school and afterward the seminary making his home with Mrs. Dutton's mother, Mrs. Cathan. He worked his way through Dartmouth college, then went to Washington, where he at first taught in the graded school, then was made principal and for 40 years has been superintendent of all the colored schools in the city. His last visit to this village was an Old Home gathering 20 years ago. Mr. Montgomery is a man of attractive manner and appearance who carries his 70 years [well]."

These are Mr. Scott's August 24, 1922 remarks printed, verbatim, in the *Brattleboro Reformer*.

Mr. Chairman and friends:

Standing in this presence on this notable occasion, my first duty is to express thanks and appreciation for the honor and privilege of joining with you and celebrating Old Home Day. In all the years of the separation from the scenes and friends of early life, my thoughts have often reverted to dear old Townshend. Recollections rush into the mind; all the burial places of memory give up their dead; the present becomes the past and I again become a boy.

One of the accepted privileges of the old is to reminisce, therefore you will please pardon me a running reference to my past, not in the spirit of conceit but to bring before you the salient facts of my life. Celebration of Old Home Day home commends itself to all, unless we forget the fundamental facts which have shaped our character and destiny.

Some of us recall the time when men parted the garments of the country and cast lots over the vesture of the government. Still vivid in our minds is the picture of that magnificent host of young men from the North with swords wreathed in the beauty of the lilies as they went forth to save the Union. Vermont of her bravest and best freely gave.

Friends, my purpose is simply to portray my connection with the Green Mountain Boys in that tremendous conflict.

The opening thunders of the Civil War were heard while I stood a little slave boy on the banks of the Mississippi River. A short distance from my home, the 8th Vermont Regiment was encamped at Algiers, opposite New Orleans. Almost daily, I saw soldiers go through their maneuvers, saw the glittering guns and bayonets, the flashing swords, heard the rolling drums and the inspiring music of the band.

Boy-like, I was charmed with a spectacle and an irresistible impulse seized

me to be with the soldiers. I ran away from home. That was my first connection with the Regiment. They did not call me a mascot--the word was not then current--but as a matter of fact, I was. Two splendid officers were especially kind to me: Lieutenant S. E. Howard of Jamaica and Captain H.F. Dutton of Ludlow. With the Regiment, I made the campaign in Louisiana and eventually reached Port Hudson where for 44 days, the gallant 8th engaged in the siege of that impregnable stronghold.

The investment of this Gibraltar of the Confederacy was costly in the death of many men of the Regiment. I have a ghastly picture of the dead as they were being buried in narrow shallow trenches. At last, Fort Hudson fell and we were at once ordered to the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, for service under General Phil Sheridan, the brilliant cavalry officer. Here occurred the battle of Winchester, Virginia and Col. Dutton while leading the Regiment into battle, had his arm shattered and was borne to the rear with hundreds of others whose bleeding forms have never faded from my eyes.

Colonel Dutton was sent to Townshend, and I accompanied him. Through many weary months of suffering, he was nursed by his devoted wife and Mrs. Cathan and under their skillful and loving care he passed the danger point.

I was accepted as a member of the Cathan household and accorded the kindest consideration and treatment by all. The God-fearing men and women of the town extended to me a warm and hardy welcome; the young people--the boys and girls--made me a companion and I forgot that I had a dark face.

Over the graves of the noble fathers and mothers of that time, the grasses of many years have been waving. If I forget them, let my right hand forget her cunning; let my tongue cleave to the roof of my youth if I remember them not.

I will ever cherish and hold them in enduring and honoring memory. All that I am; all that I have achieved in life, I owe to the good people of Townshend, and it is with a sense of profound gratitude that I hear and now declare the debt. In this presence on Old Home Day, may I ask you to accept this humble tribute from one cast by the red tide of war into your midst, one who has tried to maintain in his life and work, the sacred traditions and ideals of Vermont.

Living during the impressionable period of my career among the Christian people of the Town, I early chose that good part to which I have clung through all of the vicissitudes of life: and as a man who sands of life are running low, who has given thought to life and its problems, I make bold to say to the young people before me that religion is a good thing to live by and a great cloud of witnesses through all the ages have declared it a better thing to die by.

Cursorily, briefly, brokenly, I have rehearsed the outstanding events which

linked my life with the people of Townsend. I cannot express the emotions of gratitude that spring up in my heart when I recall what I was and what I am, I cannot forget the men whose valor snatched me from bondage who rest 'Under the sod and the dew, Waiting the Judgment Day.'

Winfield Scott Montgomery died at his home in Washington D.C. on September 11, 1928

November 1928

DARTMOUTH ALUMNI MAGAZINE

CLASS OF 1878

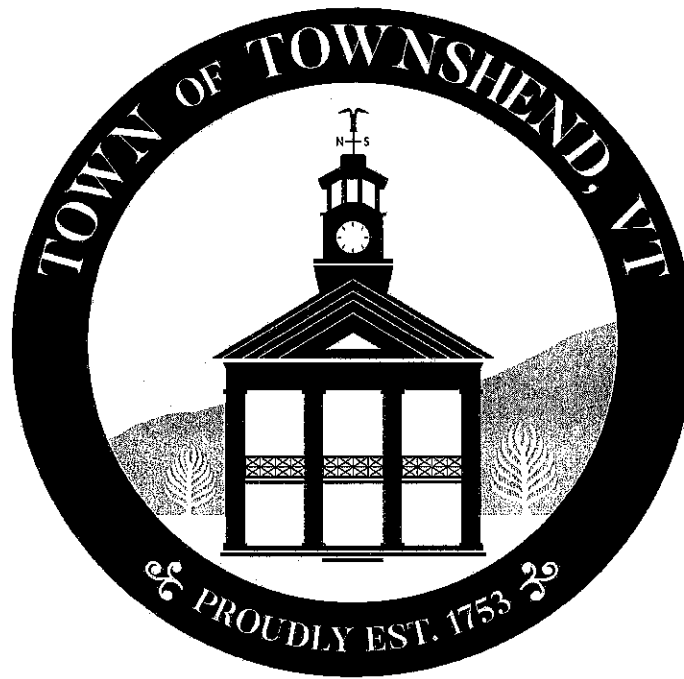
DR. WINFIELD SCOTT MONTGOMERY passed away very quietly at his home in Washington on the eleventh of September. He had been in failing health for some time, but was able to be present at the reunion of his class in June and to enjoy the occasion at the time and in retrospect since. He was born at Fort Adams, Miss., May 15, 1853, son of Frank Montgomery and Celestine Britton, and lived in New Orleans until he was ten years of age, when life took a new turn for him. The scenes shifted. He ran away to follow the Federal troops, was befriended by a Vermont officer, fitted for college at Leland and Gray Seminary, Townshend, Vt., taught school in that town during his college course, the first two years of which were with the class of '77. At the end of that time he left to spend a year teaching in a temporary position in the Washington city schools. At the end of the year he returned to college and finished his course, graduating with the class of '78. Soon after graduation he became professor of ancient and modern languages at Alcorn University, Rodney, Miss., continuing until 1882, when he was called back to Washington to begin his notable career in the schools of that city. He is survived by his widow, Emma R. (Wilder), whom he married in 1883, and by their son, Wilder P. ('06), now teacher of biology at Dunbar High School in Washington, and four daughters: Mrs. Marcia Cook of Chicago, Mrs. Marie Smith of New York, Mrs. Lydia Hillman, Miss Scottrossa, Montgomery, and several grandchildren.

Dr. Montgomery was the first member of his class to send a grandson to Dartmouth, and that grandson was reported in June to be leading his class in scholarship, much to his grandfather's delight.

In speaking of Dr. Montgomery's unique career one of the Washington papers says: "To him as to no other man in the last half-century was given the opportunity of supervising and directing the public education of his race on all levels of instruction in a public school system. His chief contribution is the inspiration to pupils, teachers, and parents of the public schools of the District of Columbia derived from his noble character and noteworthy career." The secretary of the city board of education is quoted as saying that "his monograph in the report of the board for 1904-5 is a panoramic recital of the triumphant emergence of the race from serfdom."

His retirement in January, 1924, after his long service in the public schools of Washington, was made the occasion in November of that year of a notable public testimonial, with music by the glee clubs and orchestras

of two high schools and addresses by Superintendent Ballou and other prominent educators. Flowers were sent in the name of '78, and letters were read from several of the class. But the most striking feature of the program was the review by one of the speakers of Montgomery's extraordinary career. It is a thrilling story. Born a slave, familiar with the overseer's whip and with fetters of limb and spirit, aroused by the sight of Northern troops, running away and attaching himself to the Union army, befriended by Vermont volunteers, brought North for a glimpse of opportunity, taken back to follow Sheridan in the Shenandoah Valley, attached to a wounded officer and brought once more to Vermont, sent to school, thence to college, graduated with Phi Beta Kappa rank, later honored (in 1906) by his alma mater with the degree of M. A., three years professor of languages in Alcorn University, then for forty-two years principal, supervising principal, assistant superintendent in charge of colored schools, in the capital city, pursuing meantime the study of medicine and attaining an M. D. degree (Howard University, 1888) as an anchor to windward, but devoting himself wholeheartedly to education, largely instrumental in securing for colored children equality of opportunity under the organic law of the city, in the establishment and direction of manual training schools, fresh air schools, vacation schools, night schools, classes for the incorrigible, the atypical, the blind, for speech correction and for visual education, and finally retired with such high honors—did not the man span centuries of human progress!



How Can I Help Now?

Help us by further discovering the rich history of the *Townshend Town Hall and Opera House*—our magnificent structure that has stood the test of time, embodying the essence of our community's past. As we continue to memorialize and document our storied past, we are reminded of the importance of preserving our heritage and honoring the legacy of those who came before us.

So as we continue to capture the details of our important history, we encourage our citizens to assist us with editorial and historical additions to this historical document.

In the event that the people of Townshend decide to embark on a journey to renovate our historical gem, we will have the potential opportunity to not only restore a piece of our Town's history but also revitalize an important space that will serve as the hub of official government and community activity including new and regular social and cultural events: Truly a beacon of inspiration and unity for generations to come.

But first and foremost, it is essential that we generate strong community support by preliminarily preparing our myriad requests for public foundation grant requests, private donations, government historical initiatives outlays and an overall fundraising strategy. **In virtually every situation in which the Town seeks**

private or public grant opportunities, a rendition of Townshend's rich historical information will be required. In some situations, various grant sources want significant historical information and inspirational intricacies.

And Townshend has quite a few to share!

Please submit any suggested revisions, additions, deletions, to any or all of the following Townshend residents:

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