

The C.C. Putnam & Son sawmill in the late 1800s.

It's time for history

After 13 years of work, authors publish book about Middlesex

By J.C. Myers
TIMES ARGUS STAFF

MIDDLESEX - At the town meeting in 1870, voters didn't have to face increasing school tax rates because of rising property values, but they did vote "to allocate 50 cents on the dollar of the Grand List" to raise \$3,000 dollars to fix roads and bridges that had washed out in a flood of 1869.



That story and many others are contained in a new history of the town of Middlesex that is fresh from the printers - just in time for this year's

Town Meeting Day.

"The town is 243 years old and has never had its history written. It was time," said co-author Sarah Seidman.

After 13 years of research and writing, Seidman and her co-author Patricia Wiley are seeing their thousands of hours of labor come to fruition in their book, "Middlesex in the Making," printed by L. Brown and Sons of Barre. The 254-page volume, which has more than 200 photographs from the small town, is a combination of well-documented historical narrative, and a record of the reminiscences of more than 70 long-time Middlesex residents.

"This is a lively document with many wonderful, interesting stories," said Seidman. Far from being a dry historical text, they filled the book with amusing anecdotes, quirky facts, and the fascinating memories of old-time Vermonters, all in a visually interesting format where the main narrative is interspersed with photos, maps and side-bars.

Here, readers learn how Mt. Hunger got its name, where the main center of Middlesex village used to be before the 1927



Callista Newhall, above, looks at the construction of Interstate 89, which destroyed much of her family's farmland. For years she refused to cash her payment from the government to ensure they couldn't "close the books" on this chapter of her life. Left, Ephraim "Eph" Hill at his home near Putnamville in the early 1930s.

flood, what happened to the village of Wrightsville, and why Interstate 89 changed Middlesex forever.

One account describes "Crazy" Chase, the dance-hall musician who could play any song ever written after hearing it just

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The Middlesex Historical Society has no space that they can call their own.

They need space for the exhibits and storage of historical artifacts that they have been collecting, and work space dedicated for historical society materials.

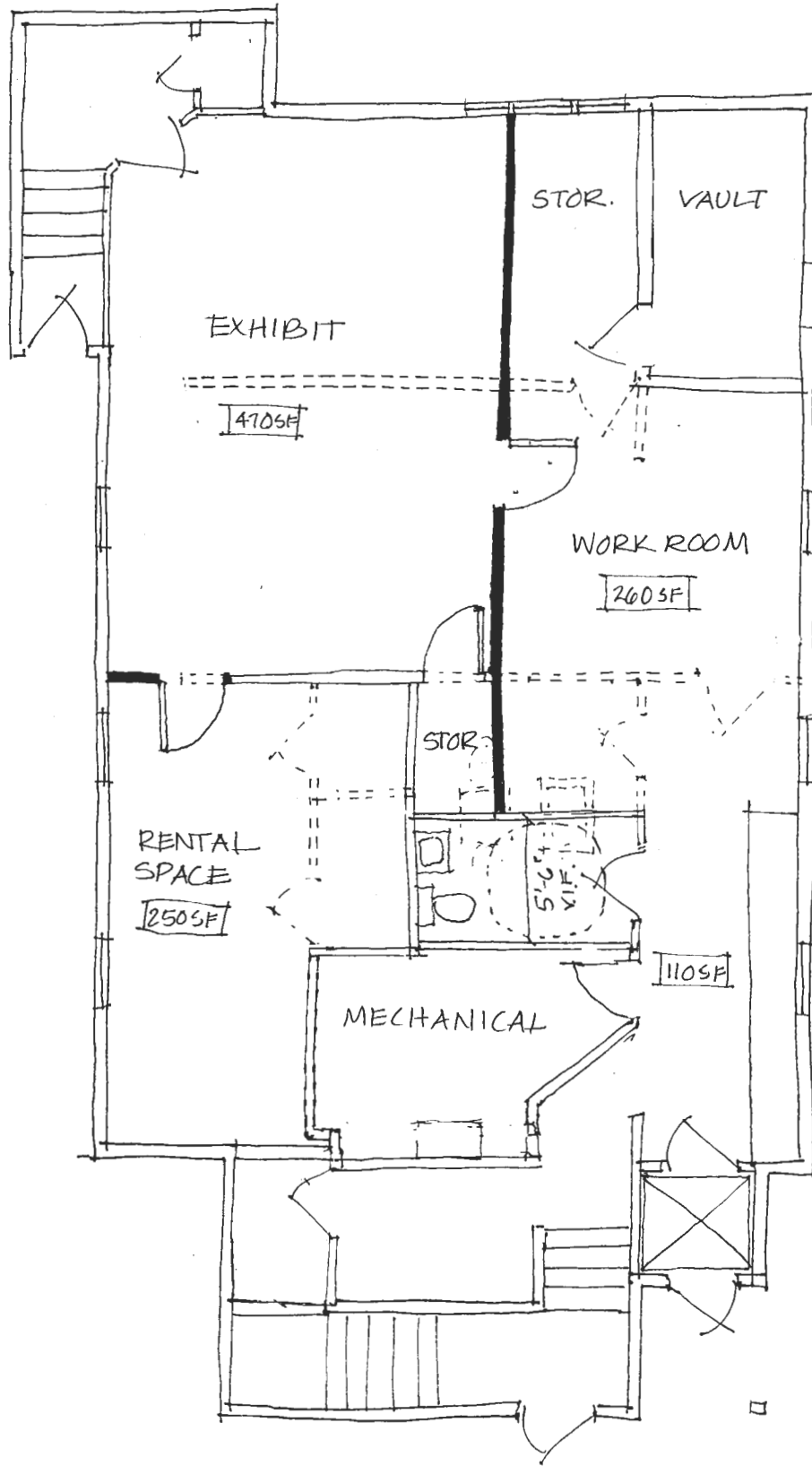
Ideally these spaces would be environmentally controlled, so that these materials and artifacts are in archival space, to insure that they will be around years from now.

Options explored:

1. New Building (no site selected)
2. Purchasing and renovation the railroad station in the village
3. Moving into Town Hall, when or if the Town Meeting Space or Town Offices move to a new location

The Middlesex Historical Society explored the option of fixing up the Railroad Station. Costs were in the range of \$300,000. It needs lots and lots of work and has some challenges that may be difficult to solve; septic, ownership, etc.





LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

DATE 6.7.2006

SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

REV.

MIDDLESEX TOWN HALL
MIDDLESEX, VT

2A. SITE ANALYSIS

1. LOCATION

The site is very prominent for its small size, located on the outside of a curve in Rte. 2 Middlesex Village to the north of Route 2. It was constructed in 1918 after the original station burned in 1917. The old station was located on the other side of the tracks.

2. POSSIBLE SITE CONSTRAINTS

Parking will be a potential problem due to the small site. It is not too far from Bridge St., however, so there is overflow parking within walking distance.

Wastewater disposal will potentially be a hurdle as well, although preliminary indications from Dexter Lefavour, Civil Engineer, point to the potential to grandfather the existing system, assuming limited use of the building.

3. ACCESSIBILITY

Making buildings accessible to the handicapped is almost always a requirement of any renovation. The lowering of the East end of the building creates a step in floor level. Therefore a ramp (or raising of the floor to its original level and a raising of the grade on the exterior) will almost certainly be necessary.



View traveling west on route 2



Small area for parking



East end where new loading door has been added

