



THE HISTORIAN



VOLUME ONE, ISSUE TWO

AUTUMN 2014



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

First of all, I would like to apologize for the lateness of this newsletter, due to some unforeseen circumstances .

Happy Holidays. Many things are happening at the Historical Society. One of our biggest projects to date, the restoration of the exterior of the Jacob Thompson House, is on track. Denis Duquette and myself created specs for the work to be done on the building, which will include stripping the old paint from the brick ends, making all carpentry repairs, scraping and priming the entire house, repainting in the original colors, reglazing the original windows, installing non-intrusive storm windows and creating two new

period appropriate storm doors. Also, we will be residing the garage area in ship-lap pine leaving it to weather naturally. The total cost of this work added up to \$53,156.00 and the CPA portion came to \$43,156.00. The Historical Society will be contributing our own \$10,000.00 to the project. I would specifically like to thank Denis for all his work in the preparation of the CPC grant application. The grant was moved forward by the Community Preservation Committee and the Townspeople voted unanimously at town meeting to fund this project. Thank you all for your support.

We have rented the last garage unit at Green Street, but there is still a business rental vacancy in

Suite 2 at Fuller House.

In the ongoing saga of the Memorial Hall Code Safety Compliance Project, three bids have been approved — one for electrical, one for fire detection and alarm systems and another to reconstruct the handicap ramp area. All three of these are proceeding. The two other projects needing to be re-bid are sheet-rocking/painting the rear stage area and the front door restoration/side door replacement. The sole bid for the sheetrock came in way over budget, so that project has been halted. They are now going out to bid on the door project, again. There is obviously not going to be enough money to complete all these projects, even with the second infusion of

Officers:

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Vice President – Tamara Cabey
Secretary – Leona Brahen
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Denis Duquette 2015
Lynn Russell 2015
William Dominick 2017

Board Member Emeritus:

William Hatton

Voting Positions:

Accessions Manager – Mary Swierad
Collections Manager – Mary Swierad
Building & Restoration – Dennis Swierad
Historian – Dennis Swierad
Membership – Denis Duquette
Annual Meeting – Denis Duquette
Rental Manager – Tamara Cabey

Mission Statement

To obtain and preserve historical data and articles pertaining to the town of Monson, Massachusetts, and to encourage and develop the pursuit and expression of such interests in all suitable ways.

Visit us on the web at
www.monsonhistoricalsociety.org

Email us on the web at
info@monsonhistoricalsociety.org

Do you need information about the history of Monson? Write, call or email us. We may be able to help.

money from CPA. As to what is going to happen to the stage fire curtain, there are still no answers.

The open house that was held on August 10th was very successful. We had many people interested in Monson's part in the Civil War and everyone enjoyed viewing Captain Howe's sword and the many recent donations to the Society.

Our next open house will take place on December 14th from 2 to 5pm at the Jacob Thompson House. This will feature the Historical Societies collection of Christmas cards that cover the 1930's to the 1960's and made specially for the Church

Company. Each one references some Christmas theme, Santa, etc. and includes a toilet seat! Some are very comical and a few are not very politically correct. There will be Christmas postcards from my personal collection and include many beautiful, late Victorian-era through WWII-era cards. Please come and join us for a little Christmas cheer. All are welcome.

I would like to welcome our new Secretary, Leona Brahen, who has replaced Tamara Cabey for this position. Tamara had been doing double duty holding down two officer positions, that of Vice-President and Secretary, not to mention

Rental Manager. Thank you Tamara and Leona.

This month's Civil War story is about our own Dr. Fuller, for whom Fuller House on Green Street is named.

Hope you are enjoying the new newsletter format, as it is still a work in progress.

Dennis Swierad, President



MONSON IN THE CIVIL WAR

BY DENNIS AND MARY SWIERAD

DR. GEORGE E. FULLER



George E. Fuller
Hospital Steward 27th Mass.

Next in our series of stories about Monson in the Civil War, we would like to introduce Dr. George E. Fuller.

George was an orphan at an early age and was cared for by his older brother during his childhood. At twelve, he went to a boarding school in Norwich, CT; at thirteen he entered Monson Academy and at fourteen entered Wilbraham Academy. After one term there, he returned to the Norwich school. In 1854, he became a clerk in a drug store in Palmer, acquiring a knowledge of drugs and studying medicine

with the proprietor, Dr. William Holbrook. In 1856, he entered Williston Seminary, graduating in 1859. He also entered Amherst College that same year. In 1861, he left college to join the army in response to Gov. John A. Andrew's call to raise a regiment in the four Western Counties of Massachusetts.

The following quotes are from a speech written by George and given to an assembly of students at Monson Academy, his Alma Mater:

"An opportunity was not long lacking. A few days later, I met a school fel-

low, H. A. Hubbard of Ludlow, who told me Col. H. C. Lee had a commission from Gov. John A. Andrew to raise a regiment in the four Western Counties of Massachusetts and that he could have a commission as Captain if he could raise a company in Eastern Hampden."

"He said he was about to open a recruiting office in Ludlow and wished me to open one in Palmer. He also said that if I could enlist thirty men, I could have a commission as Lieutenant. I promised to open the office, endeavor to enlist the men and, if success-

ful, hoped, later, to exchange from the line to the Hospital Department, so as to be in training for my profession. The office was opened, notices put in the papers and, in short time, thirty-three men were enrolled, mostly as cooks, blacksmiths and teamsters. I could doubtless have enlisted a regiment of Generals."

"Our camp at Springfield (MA) was named Camp Reed. It was the universal custom to name the place of encampment, even if it were but for a single night. It was hard for the boys to come down at once from feather beds to a blanket and straw, and from the delicacies of home to hard tack and soup and "Salt horse," as the soldiers called corned beef. Hence, they naturally and eagerly sought and patronized the numerous pie vendors until they became more noted for the pie-eat-y than discretion. The result was numerous cases of colic and numberless calls upon the Hospital department for relief. While at Camp Reed, I was the only medical officer on the ground and used to be ousted from my bunk several times a night."

"Our route to the seat of war was via B&A R.R. to Pittsfield, thence to and down the Hudson, arriving at Jersey City about noon the next day. Towards evening, we were en route for Philadelphia via the Penn. R.R. Late at night we re-embarked, but we did not reach Baltimore until the middle of the afternoon. Our hospital car was drawn across the city by horses and, at evening, we were again en route for Annapolis where we arrived about 10 p.m. Our car was side tracked at some distance from the city, and I was directed to go with an orderly to see what Hospital accommodations could be obtained for our sick, of whom we

now had nearly a dozen, exceedingly tired and jaded. I found the 21st Mass. Quartered in one of the buildings of the Naval Academy and there met Dr. Cutter of Warren, also Capt. Walker, now Gen. Walker of the Mass. Institute of Technology and Adj. Starnes, son of Pres. Starnes, both of whom I had known at Amherst. Young Starnes, brave to a fault, was wounded several times at Roanoke Island and was killed at the battle of New Berne."

George's regiment boarded the Gunboat "Ranger" and traveled their way, mostly under violent storms to their destination of Roanoke Island. At arrival, the danger came not from the weather but from the Rebels. "The shot from the Rebel guns were largely solid and would often strike the water, ricocheting and skipping along the surface, occasionally one vaulted over a gun boat. Cannon answered to cannon, flash to flash and shot to shot. The clouds of smoke often entirely obscured the combatants and the guns seemed to fairly spit out fire and the reverberations were incessant."

Having lived through that battle, weather conditions again plagued the 27th this time on land. "As soon as possible after the landing, the line of march was taken up for New Berne. The rain dish which had been falling all night, still continued and the country being level, the roads were one continuous pool, ankle deep of mud and water." Then the rain stopped and the fighting continued.

"We soon saw two men helping to the rear Young Cushman of Amherst, who had lost an arm. Dr. Otis, our

surgeon in chief, thought to amputate by the road side, but a shell soon struck a stump before the case of instruments could be opened, and covering us with the debris. We went a little further to the rear to two small huts, negro quarters, and there established our field hospital. The wounded poured in rapidly and so did the shot, several of which penetrated the building in which we were operating. This hospital, not more than 30 rods in the rear of the line of battle, was also in the line of fire from our gun boats—the line heavy shot and shell from which went screeching over our heads. It was not well chosen since the danger was scarcely less than at the battle front as was shown by the fact that several were injured in the yard; but we were so busy, ampu-



tating the mangled limbs and dressing the ghastly shell wounds, that we forgot our danger and the din of battle and thought of nothing save our pressing duties. From 9 o'clock in the morning until 3 the next morning, we worked with might and main without stopping a mo-

ment for food or drink.”

“At Goldsboro, on the Wilmington & Weldon R.R. the long bridge was burned after a severe engagement, in which both infantry and artillery participated. The Rebels made a desperate but unsuccessful effort to save the bridge. General Foster, now learning that Gen. Burnside had been unsuccessful at Fredericksburg, ordered a return to New Berne.

In the farm house which had been taken for a hospital, there was a member of the 27th mortally wounded, who could not well be removed and who begged us not to allow him to fall into the hands of the enemy. The other wounded were all loaded and started to the rear; while I, with an orderly, kept vigil with the dying comrade, expecting his death every moment. Here we watched and waited. The troops were recalled and marched away. Soon came the rear guard and night; the guard delayed for a time, but they, too, had to go.

I said to the captain that I would stay a while and when our duty was ended or the Rebels came too near, endeavor to join him. I watched the dying comrade and the orderly watched for the Rebels, until the lonely vigil ended by the patriot's death. We place him in the grave, which had been prepared in the garden, threw some dirt over the body, mounted our horses and, at a lively run, set out to rejoin the troops. We were warned as we were leaving of the enemy's proximity by an occasional shot, as they felt their way along in pursuit.

Soon we entered the turpentine forest which was all ablaze on both sides of the road; the angry flames, vaulting up the pitchy scorings of the southern pines, fired the dry bark of the trunks, up which the flames still coursed till they crackled among the pine needles of the topmost branches, more than 100 feet from the ground.

I was very much afraid our retreat would be cut off by some of the giant trees falling across and blocking the road, but fortunately we found only one such. This we easily went around and after a half hour were safe within our lines.”

After a particularly gruesome battle around Fort Washington, a Cincinnati paper said of this siege: “The boldness and courage of the 27th Mass. has yet to be equaled; it finds no parallel in the rebellion. A handful of men, besieged by more than 10 times their number, cut off from all communication, yet would not receive the suggestion of surrender.”

“During the siege the “Commodore Hull” was struck 109 times by cannon shot. Fortunately, we had only 7 killed and 23 wounded during the 18 days. During the siege, I had a hen sitting on about the usual number of eggs; she was not especially disturbed by the bombardment and just after its close, marched about triumphantly with two chicks.”

“Sept. 20th 1864 the original period of enlistment of the 27th Mass. expired, and with it my connection with the volunteer service. The records show that all told there were connected with this regiment: 1595 persons, officers

and men, of whom 390 died in the service or about 25 percent. Of these, 127 were killed in battle or died of wounds; the total number of wounded being 357. 127 died in rebel prisons



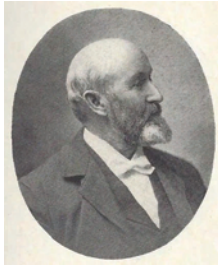
and 136 died of disease.”

After George Fullers enlistment ended, “I was assigned to the Army Medical Museum at Washington D.C., where I was when the rebellion collapsed amid unparalleled national rejoicings, so soon to be clouded by the dastardly assassinations of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward. Later, I witnessed the hanging of the five conspirators at the Navy yard and finally the grand review, which was for two days passing



in company front, down Pennsylvania Avenue at the National Capitol.”

In 1868, George moved to Monson and took up practice and became well known as a physician of high standing. He practiced up until 1913.



Never forgetting his time in the War, he helped establish the Grand Army of the Republic in Monson and was its commander in 1895.

Welcome New Members:

Leona Brahen – Monson, MA
 Brandy & Eric Madison – Monson, MA
 Prof. Ying-yue Yung – Tokyo, Japan
 Shigekazu Yoshihara – Tokyo, Japan
 Tetsuya Fuseda – Fuki, Japan
 Tomoe Murai Scanlan – Chicago, IL
 Torraine Weaver – Victorville, CA
 Robert Petty – Lompoc, CA

JACOB THOMPSON HOUSE - QUEST FOR NATIONAL TRUST LISTING

Since our last newsletter, progress has been made on our application for National Register status. John Clemson put the finishing touches on the State Listing Sheet with a cover letter to the Massachusetts Historical Commission. In doing so, he uncovered quite a bit of information about Jacob Thompson that we previously did not know about. The following is John's Historical Narrative of the Thompson family:

Originally from Holland, Massachusetts, but born in Brimfield, Jacob Thompson (Jul. 12, 1772 – Jan. 3, 1863) moved to Monson between the births of his fourth and fifth of ten children, according to a published genealogy, between 1811 and 1813. This is, therefore, a likely date for the construction of the subject building. Records suggest that Thompson was a fairly prosperous businessman while living in Holland, where he owned a relatively substantial one-story house of 1,064 square feet valued at \$360 in 1798. The fact that the house was twice the size and value of most of its neighbors attests to the degree of Thompson's prosperity. He also owned and operated a powder mill with partners Alfred Lyon and Timothy Anderson of Holland and Joseph Browning and Thomas Bliss of Brimfield, but only owned 40 perches of land (less than an acre), suggesting the mill was his principal business. Thompson had bought out all of his partners by 1802 and sold the mill in 1818 for \$150. The product of a powder mill was gunpowder.

Jacob Thompson was especially prominent in town affairs [Holland], being representative to General Court in 1809 [state legislature]; Selectman 1803-04-05-09; Moderator of the annual town meetings for 1803-04-05-09 and of special town meetings for 1802-03-04-05-06-08-09-10.

Thompson's reasons for relocating to Monson are unclear. According to previous research, the town was becoming prosperous at the time, based both upon its location on a major north-south transportation rout and its proximity to water power; by 1809 local granite quarries were producing "high-quality" foundation stone for the United States Armory building in Springfield. This is no doubt the source of the veneer stones for the foundation of the subject building as well. There is no record of Thompson's involvement in local industrial development, however. Census records indicate only that he was active as a farmer. The reason might also be as simple as his first marriage to a Monson native, Hadassah Stone (1783 – Mar. 4, 1835) on Nov. 27, 1800.

Thompson "lived to a great age, was a man of great vigor, a man of business and of great moral worth." According to the 1850 Federal Census (non-population schedule 4: Productions of Agriculture), the farm appears to have been fairly prosperous and valuable. Consisting of a total of 195 acres, 60 of which were improved and in active production, its value was assessed at \$4,000, a substantial sum for the time. The farm produced 65 bushels of rye, 100 bushels of Indian corn, 12 bushels of oats and 20 tons of hay; 9 sheep produced 25 lbs. of wool and 4 milk cows produced 300 lbs. of butter. Other products of the farm included peas, potatoes, buckwheat, bacon and an excess of \$30 worth of home manufactures and \$45 worth of meat for the market. By this time, Thompson had taken on his third son, Addison (Oct. 22, 1806 – Apr. 25, 1884) as a partner on the farm. Thompson married

a second time to Eliza Convers of Monson on Nov. 8, 1836. There were no children. Regarding his career as a lawyer, the following evidence was presented in Lovering's History of Holland:

Jacob Thompson finally left town [Holland] and removed to Monson. His tastes were such as would lead him to the practice of law and we judge that he became counselor-at-law, for we note that Jacob Thompson, Esq., of Monson is consulted about a legacy left to Ruth Swinnerton. It proves the confidence in which he was held by the town officers.

He also served as a Justice of the Peace during the 1850s, and was a charter member of the Dayspring Masonic Lodge in 1863.

After Thompson's death, his son Addison, who never married, resided in the house with his widowed sister, Haddassah Thompson Dewey (b. 1806) and niece Mary E. Dewey (1833-1867) until his death. The property continued to operate as a farm, but at a diminished capacity. The 1880 Federal Agricultural Census valued the property at \$4,000, but its production of grains and potatoes had shrunk by more than half. The family began to sell portions of the property to the town to serve as a cemetery as early as 1842, when three acres "west of Jacob Thompson's house and adjoining J.F. Convers's land...one half to be sold in lots." The same source identifies the first interment to have been Benjamin Fuller. Previous research on the history of the cemetery confirms that it expanded to approximately ten acres of land through subsequent expansions in 1863, 1874 and 1902 and that the house was tenanted by cemetery commissioners. The most recent deed conveying the property from the Town of Monson to the Monson Historical Society in 1998, consisting of 11,275 square feet and the Jacob Thompson House, suggests the cemetery eventually acquired the entire property at the end of its ownership by the Thompson family.

**Come Join Us for
Christmas Cheer at the
Jacob Thompson
House, 7 Main Street in
Monson on December
14th from 2 to 5 p.m.**



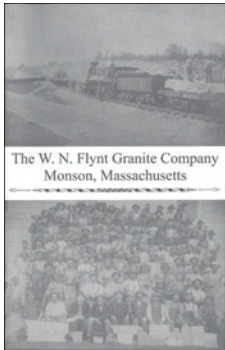
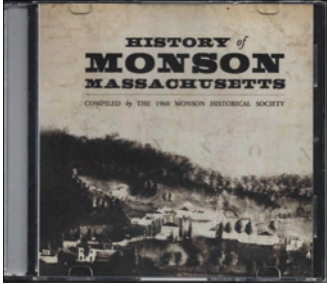
**On Display will be Vintage C.F.
Church Company Christmas
Cards and Victorian Christmas
Post Cards from Days Gone By**



**Refreshments will be
served, including Martha
Washington's original
Christmas punch.
All Are Welcome.**



ITEMS FOR SALE



1960 History of Monson Book

The history of Monson, written in 1960 for the Bicentennial of the formation of the town is now available in PDF format on a CD.

- If you are currently a member of the Monson Historical Society, the fee to obtain the CD is \$15.00
- For non-members, the fee is \$20.00 which includes, 1 year free membership and our quarterly newsletter "The Historian".
- Shipping costs for the CD are included in the fee.

Please indicate whether you are a member or not and mail your request to:

Monson History CD
 Monson Historical Society, Inc.
 1 Green Street, Suite 1
 Monson, MA 01057

Please include your email address.

Make your check payable to: *Monson Historical Society, Inc.*

Also available is the 12 page booklet titled "The W. N. Flynt Granite Company Monson, Massachusetts" which gives the history of Mr. Flynt and the Quarry. Cost \$3.00; which includes shipping.

OFFICE SPACE AVAILABLE

Suite 2 in our Beautiful Historic Fuller House on 1 Green Street is available for immediate professional business rental. The Suite, which is conveniently located on the first floor, includes three spacious rooms with approximately 425 sq. ft of area. The front room could be easily used as an office/reception area, with the interior room used as the main office workspace. The back room contains a kitchenette with a bathroom just off the main office space. The historic quality of the building is retained with a wonderful oak fireplace mantle surrounded by Minton tiles and hardwood flooring in the main office room and the original woodwork throughout, while still having all the modern amenities to accommodate any electronic/professional need of your modern business. Rent is reasonably priced at \$450 per month. If you know of anyone, or if you are interested yourself, please contact Tamara Cabey at 413-267-5244 to arrange a tour. You would be getting a great place to work while at the same time supporting the Historical Society.





Thank you Tamara for
 keeping the Fuller House
 urn so beautiful year after
 year!

Membership renewals occur on May 1st of each year. If you receive our newsletter through postal mail, please check your mailing label. Current memberships should read "5/1/2015" or later. If your label reads "5/1/2014", you need to renew for another year. If it reads, "5/1/2013", you need to renew for 2 years to be up-to-date.

For those who receive our newsletter via e-mail, please check the subject matter. If it reads "Monson Historical Society Newsletter", your membership is current. If it reads "Monson Historical Society Newsletter & Renewal", you need to update your membership. To 5/1/2015. Please read the text in the body of the e-mail for further instructions.

Please take the time today to complete the membership form below and mail it back, along with your check, to the address listed on the form. Your membership will be updated through 5/1/2015.

And as always, we **Thank You** for your continued support of the Monson Historical Society!

If you receive the newsletter via e-mail, please be aware that all newsletters will be forwarded from this e-mail address (DCDuquette@msn.com), with the subject matter regarding Monson Historical Society.

MONSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

E-mail Address (for newsletter only) _____

Please indicate a membership category & enclose a check made out to "Monson Historical Society, Inc."

(Note: Membership renewal is May 1st of each year)

- Individual (under age 18) \$5⁰⁰ Individual (age 18 & over) \$10⁰⁰ Family \$20⁰⁰
 Life Membership \$500⁰⁰ Corporate Membership \$50⁰⁰

Return to - Membership, One Green St., Suite One, Monson, MA 01057

Any information you provide us will be kept in strict confidence & would never be given out or sold at any time