



# THE HISTORIAN



VOLUME ONE, ISSUE FOUR

SPRING 2015



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

Spring is here, enough said. There are so many things going on I am not sure where to begin. Work on the Thompson House is progressing on schedule, more details on this project are in an article further on in this newsletter.

The Board of Directors are working on some interesting activities this year. We are working with local real estate agents and will host an historic open house tour of a couple of homes with very interesting architecture on May 31st from 1pm-4pm. This would be a chance to look inside these 2

Monson homes, which I am sure many of you have been curious about. We will also get the information in the local newspaper. Another activity, which will be planned for the fall, will be an Appraisal Day at the Jacob Thompson House.

It is Annual Meeting time again & this year we will be holding it on May 20<sup>th</sup> during our regular board meeting at Fuller House, 1 Green Street, second floor. Please feel free to attend.

It is also that time of year to renew your membership. Memberships renew every May 1st. Please review the date on your label (postal pa-

trons) or in the body of your e-mail (e-mail patrons). Refer to the last page of this newsletter.

In this newsletter, we will be winding up the Civil War stories with an article about the Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) which was the patriotic organization formed by the Veterans of the Civil War.

Just a reminder, there is still an office suite available at the Fuller House on Green Street, in case you know of someone looking for a space.

Dennis Swierad,  
President



### Officers:

President – Dennis Swierad  
Vice President – Tamara Cabey  
Secretary – Leona Brahen  
Treasurer – Kevin McNabb

### Board Members:

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.

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting will be held within the regular May Board of Directors meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the Historical

Society Office on the second floor at the Fuller House on Green Street. There are no proposed by-law changes. Officers and Directors will be voted in. All

current members are welcome to attend.



Visit us on the web at [www.monsonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.monsonhistoricalsociety.org)

Email us on the web at [info@monsonhistoricalsociety.org](mailto:info@monsonhistoricalsociety.org)

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

## MONSON AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

BY DENNIS AND MARY SWIERAD

Approximately 155 men from Monson fought in the Civil War. Of these, 16 were killed in battle or died of wounds and 13 died of disease.

In the time immediately after the Civil War, we believe men were doing their best to try to forget about the War like any other war. They tried to get back into some sense of normalcy.

The development of an organization of Union veterans was the postwar conception of Benjamin Franklin Stephenson of Springfield, Illinois, who had served a two-year enlistment period as surgeon of the Fourteenth Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. The first post, numbering twelve members, was organized and chartered in Decatur, Illinois, on April 6, 1866. By July 12, 1866, when a state convention was held to form the Department of Illinois, thirty-nine posts had been chartered. Interest spread rapidly to adjoining states. Ten states and the District of Columbia were represented at the first national encampment held at Indianapolis on November 20, 1866.

The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) quickly became the pre-eminent veterans' organiza-

tion formed at the close of the Civil War. Membership reached its peak in 1890, when over

in Masonic Hall Monson at eight o'clock p.m. Saturday May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1883. Where Dept. Inspector H.



*Marcus Keep Post, 155, G.A.R. 1885*

400,000 members were reported. By then, the GAR had well over seven thousand posts, ranging in size from fewer than two dozen members in small towns, to more than a thousand in some cities. Almost every prominent veteran was enrolled, including five presidents: Grant, Hayes, Garfield, Harrison, and McKinley.

Monson joined this movement and was chartered May 26, 1883 with 48 comrades. The following is a quote from the minutes taken at the first meeting on that day: "In obedience to special order No. 36 Department of Massachusetts G.A.R. The associates for a Charter for a Post of the G.A.R. assembled

A. Sawyer assisted by Aide De-Camp Fred L. Perry and Commander Albert A. Davis and Hubert O. Moore of Post 5." officiated.



*Original Charter of the Monson G.A.R.*



Also voted on that day, “ That this Post be named Marcus Keep in honor of Sergt. Marcus Keep of Co. E. 36 Regt. Mass. Vols, who died at Fairfax Seminary Va. June 9, 1864 of wounds received at Spotsylvania Court House Va.

frequently covering the costs of their final expenses and sometimes the needs of their spouses. On Decoration Day, which later became Memorial Day, the veterans would march in parades to the resting places of their comrades

and place wreaths and flowers at their graves.

The veterans held monthly meetings from their inception in 1883 until their last meeting on June 16, 1923 where they met with the Woman's Relief Corp (the female auxiliary to the G.A.R.) and the Son's of Veterans. At this meeting, the following was declared:

“At a social meeting of the G.A.R. W.R.C. & Son's the will of the Post was carried out according to request.

1<sup>st</sup>. All property of the Post in G.A.R. Hall is given to the W.R.C. & Son's free of all debts.

2.To the W.R.Corps is given the Post Fund of 212.19 in return for past deeds of many kinds performed by them in kindness to us during our 40 years of life.

3.To the Sons in memory of the help given the Post in the past is given our Relief Fund of 110.71



G. A. R. Hall

May 14, 1864 a brave soldier of his country and a worthy citizen of Monson.”

Just prior to this in April of 1883, Joseph L. Reynolds and his sons Rice M. and Theodore Reynolds gave \$17,000.00, including the land which was the property of R.M. Reynolds, to construct Memorial Hall as a memorial to the Civil War Veterans and a meeting hall for the newly formed G.A.R. Chapter 155.

The purpose of the G.A.R. was to promote comradeship amongst its members, to keep the memory of the war alive, to honor the dead and to also support the veterans by







G.A.R. On The March, Decoration Day, 1906

trusting that they may in the future as in the past remember the little green mounds that cover the past members of the G.A.R.

Now that the G.A.R. Post is a thing of the past and may the great help which you have given us ever be cherished as an emblem of your F. L. & C.”

F.L. & C. meant fraternity, loyalty and charity the motto for which the G.A.R. was based.

The last Civil War Veteran from Monson, Francis E. Lemon, passed away February 21, 1940 and with his passing ended Monson's chapter in the Civil War.

Bibliography  
 History of Monson, Massachusetts; Compiled by Monson Historical Society 1960  
 Dorcus Dishes 1960  
 Minutes of the Marcus Keep Post, No 155, G.A.R.  
 The Library of Congress; Main Reading Room





NEW ACQUISITIONS



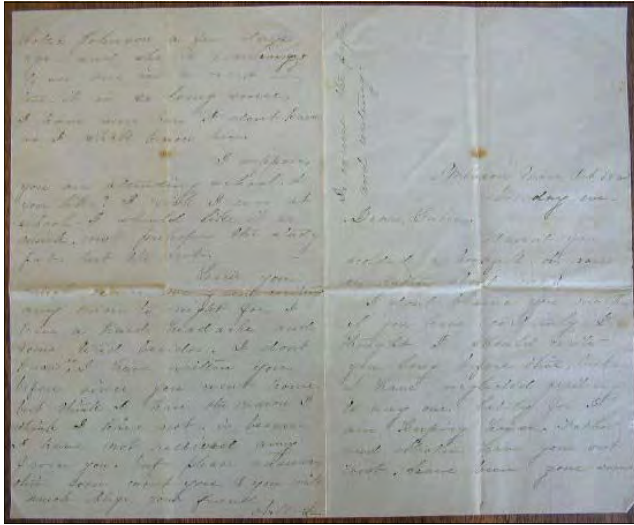
Wooden Sign from Charles Merrick Pump Organ and Sewing Machine Store



Monson Academy photos proof sheets



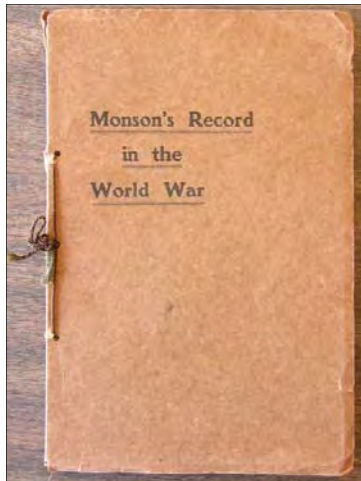
Lafond Brothers Steak House Autographed Souvenir Card



Monson Letter October 1800



Glass negatives of Monson (?)



WWI Record Book of Men who served from Monson

No New Members this quarter.



Top: Stereoview of Interior of Congregational Church; Left: Postcard of Washington Street Train Station; Middle: Menu from The Bungalow; Right: Postcard of Epileptic Hospital Monson, Mass.



## JACOB THOMPSON HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT

Since our last newsletter, work has continued on the Jacob Thompson House restoration project. The old attached garage that is located in the rear of the building and which is used by the Monson Cemetery Department has undergone a complete transformation. We covered the existing novelty siding and windows with pine ship-lap boards to create the look of a period appropriate barn. We will not be painting the barn because, during the early 1800's, barns were rarely if ever painted. The boards will be allowed to age naturally.



The painters have been hard at work scraping the old siding on the house and preparing it for painting. They have also begun to strip the paint off of

the brick ends. The carpenter has begun working on doors and will begin repairing trim and siding as needed.

The project is coming along nicely and we can't wait for the finished product, keep an eye on it, as there just might be some surprises in store for you.





## ITEMS FOR SALE



### 1960 History of Monson Book

1) 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.*

2) 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.





## **MAY IS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!**

Membership renewals occur on May 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. If you receive our newsletter through postal mail, please check your mailing label. Current memberships should read **“5/1/2016” or later**. If your label reads “5/1/2015”, you need to renew for one year. If it reads, “5/1/2014”, you need to renew for 2 years to be up-to-date.

If you 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 will need to update your membership. Please read the text in your e-mail to see if you need to renew for 1 or 2 years.

**We ask that you take the time today to complete the membership form and mail it back, along with your check, to the address listed on the form. Your membership will be updated through 5/1/2016.**

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](mailto: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) \_\_\_\_\_

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) \$5<sup>00</sup>     Individual (age 18 & over) \$10<sup>00</sup>     Family \$20<sup>00</sup>

Life Membership \$500<sup>00</sup>     Corporate Membership \$50<sup>00</sup>

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.

---