



THE HISTORIAN



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Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

The Monson Historical Society's Christmas Open House on December 18th was a well attended success. Many people were excited to see the display of many of our recent acquisitions. I must admit I was down with the flu and I would like to thank the Board Members who ran the affair.

Maybe you noticed in the last newsletter that the recent acquisitions page was the same one

as the issue before; this was just a mistake and we have corrected it in this issue.

In this issue, I have asked my wife Mary to do an article about archiving and accessioning, which she is responsible for. I think you will get a much better idea of what goes into cataloging all of the items in our collection.

You will notice that some of the photographs of the acid-free boxes on shelving resemble the ones you see

on TV shows such as "History Detectives" or "Finding Your Roots". I believe that the acquisition, storage and search capabilities of Monson memorabilia is of utmost importance to the future.

Hope everyone has a nice end of winter.

Dennis

Officers:

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

Board Members:

William Dominick (2017)
Denis Duquette (2018)

Board Member Emeritus:

William Hatton
Emma Ladd Shepherd

Voting Positions:

Accessions Manager – Mary Swierad
Annual Meeting – Denis Duquette
Building Restoration – Dennis Swierad
Collections Manager – Mary Swierad
Editor/Technology – Leona Brahen
Historian – Dennis Swierad
Membership – Denis Duquette
Rental Manager – Tamara Cabey

Visit us on the web at www.monsonhistoricalsociety.org

Email us on the web at
info@monsonhistoricalsociety.comcast.biz.net

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

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.

WHAT HAPPENS TO ALL THAT MONSON STUFF?

BY MARY SWIERAD

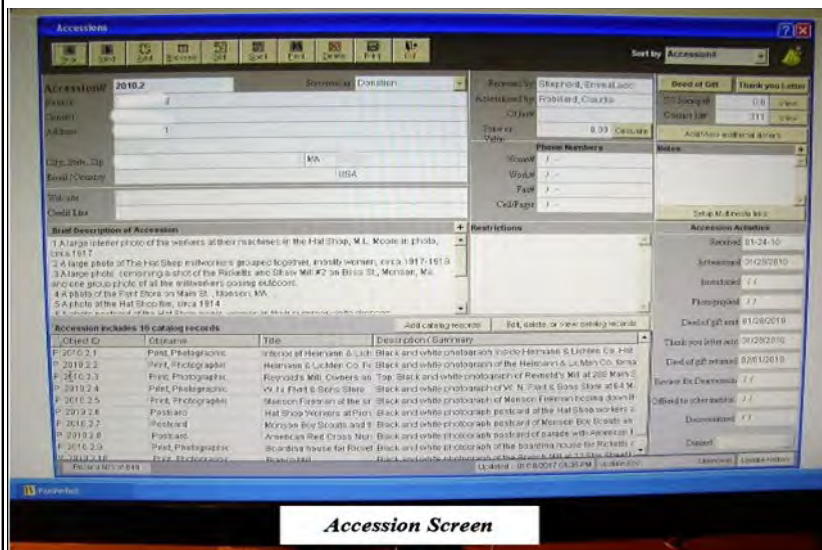
Have you ever wondered what happens when items get donated to the Historical Society? In this article, I will try to explain the process.

The Historical Society decided years ago, through the research of Grace Makepeace, that the best possible system in which to inventory our collection was through a computer software designed exclusively for museums called PastPerfect Museum Software. At present, over 10,000 museums throughout the world use this software. PastPerfect is a collection-management software; it creates a standardized database which enables a museum/historical society such as ours to inventory our collection going way beyond the standard finding aid of years past. Once an item is entered into the software, it becomes searchable on many different levels as part of a specific donation, as part of a group of like items, a period of time, a specific place in town and on and on. The item can be found from just about any angle of an inquiry we may get from the public. It is no longer lost in some box on some shelf in some room.



Home Page of PastPerfect Museum Software

We receive items through various ways. Someone knows someone who is on the Board of the Historical Society and they give them the items they want to donate. We receive a call or people mail their donation to our office on Green Street. We receive an email, or they call the Town Offices and the information is forwarded to us. Sometimes the donation consists of one item, sometimes thousands of items. No matter, everything is handled basically the same, going through the same basic steps to ensure proper archiving and storage practices.



Accession Screen

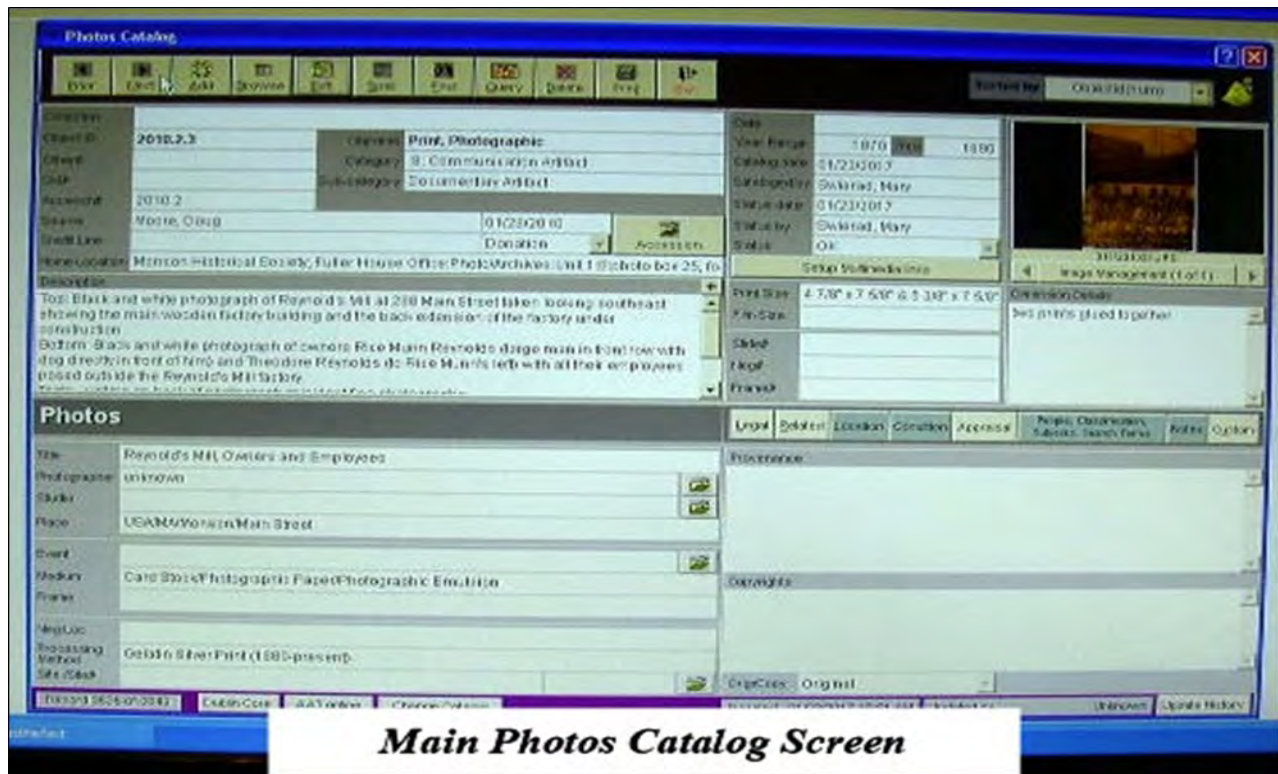
The first thing I do after receiving a donation is to enter it into PastPerfect, using what is called the Accession screen. The donation receives a unique Accession number, which consists of two parts – the year of the

donation and the order in which it was received. For example: We received a donation in 2010; this was the second donation to the Historical Society for that year so the Accession number becomes 2010.2. The donors contact information is entered along with a brief description of the donation. From this, a Thank You Letter and Deed of Gift along with our Collection Policy is generated. Two copies of the Deed of Gift are sent along with a stamped return envelope. One copy is for the donors records. We ask that the other copy be signed and returned to complete the donation. If we do not receive the copy within 90 days we assume that the donor has agreed with our terms and conditions and the items are now the property of the Historical Society.

The collection items now get sorted between four categories: photos, archives, objects or library. Today I will focus on the steps that are taken when one of the items is a photograph.



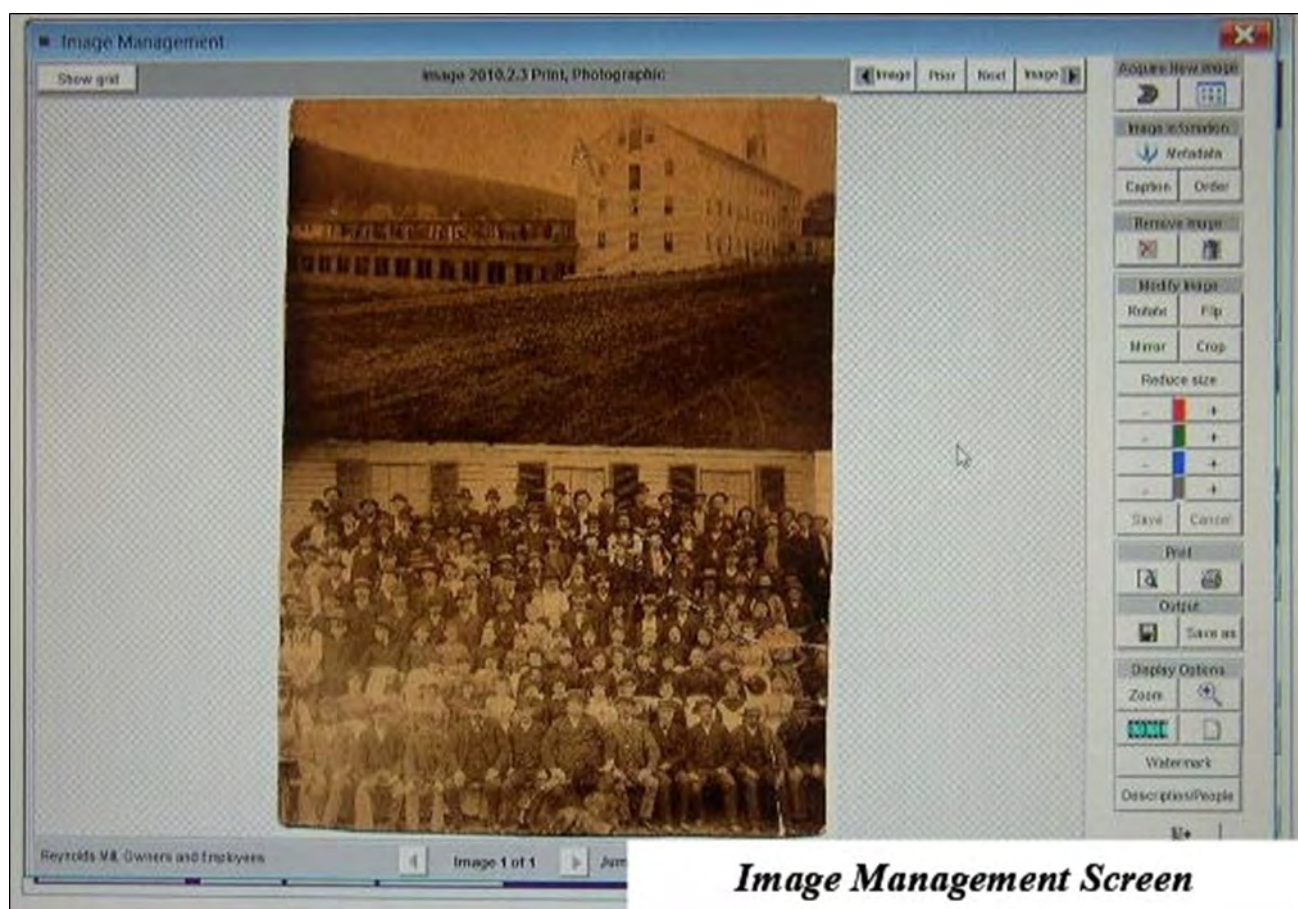
I click on the photo icon which opens the screen where I enter as much information about the photograph as possible. When doing this, I always ask myself - 'what would someone who has no knowledge of the history of Monson want to know about this photograph?', 'what would their questions be?' and I try my best to enter that information. Today's photograph is the third item in the collection and it receives it's own unique Photo ID number which is 2010.2.3. It is a photograph of the Reynolds Mill and the mill workers that was located on 288 Main Street (most recently Zero's Manufacturing). I enter either the exact date of the photograph (if known) or a range of years (which I try to contain within a 10 year period), print size, detailed description, title, photographer, studio, place, event, medium and processing method. Next is storage location consisting of building, room, wall, cabinet, shelf, drawer, container, inventory date and by whom. Next is condition report - is it in good, fair or poor condition and does it



Main Photos Catalog Screen

need to be stabilized or restored? After that, there is a tab to enter the name of any person recognized in the photograph, a classification tab, a subjects tab and a search term tab. There are also areas to enter provenance information and copyrights and any notes you may want to include. This is typically where I enter anything that is handwritten on the back of the photograph. Within some of these categories are sub-categories; for instance, if I were to enter a person's name under the people tab, that person's name goes into the people database which you can search to locate every item in our collection that is connected to that person's name. You can also click on the individual's name and read his/her biography. Biographical information can also be found when searching the known photographer of the picture and, in this particular photograph, the biography or history of Reynolds Mill. The search possibilities are many, if I have done my work properly.

After I have entered as much information as possible, the photograph gets scanned using PastPerfect's image management, which attaches an image to the catalog record. PastPerfect is equipped to attach up to 999 images per item to each record. Once the photograph is scanned in, a researcher can even zoom in on an area if need be, making it easy to see things normally too small to see.



Next, I give the photograph a light cleaning with an archival brush to remove any loose dirt or dust, write its Object ID number on the back in pencil and place it inside its assigned acid-free folder. If there are additional photographs in that folder, the photograph is interleaved with acid-free tissue. The folder is then placed in the assigned acid-free box which is placed on the assigned archival quality shelving unit within our office.



At this point, I must say, some photographs are not so easy to inventory. Some simply have a note written on back that says – Monson and some have nothing written on them at all. Some have the wrong information (which was actually the case with the photograph I just talked about, as it was identified as Ricketts & Shaw Mill #2 on Bliss St). When there is a question as to whether the photograph is of Monson or not, the investigation begins. I try to research other photographs or old maps. Many times items in the background, such as other buildings, hills in the distance or bodies of water help solve the mystery. Sometimes I need to take the photograph on a “road trip” through Monson to try to identify it. This can be a very time consuming, but at the same time, exciting part of my job as it turns into a “history detective” search to find the truth.



So far I have performed this task on 4890 photographs, 220 objects, 1054 archive items and 169 library items. Every day is a new day of discovery and my hope is that in the future the Historical Society's collection will be made available to the public, either through the internet or by computer stations at the Historical Society.



A sampling of some of the many items waiting to be inventoried.

NEW ACQUISITIONS



Postcards, Class photos, Gaouette photos, Monson High School diploma, Monson drug store bottles



Photographs of Monson Academy, World War I era observances, grade school classes, Ellis Mill, Plumley Falls and bridge (donation from Warren, MA resident)

ITEMS FOR SALE

1960 History of Monson Book CD

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:



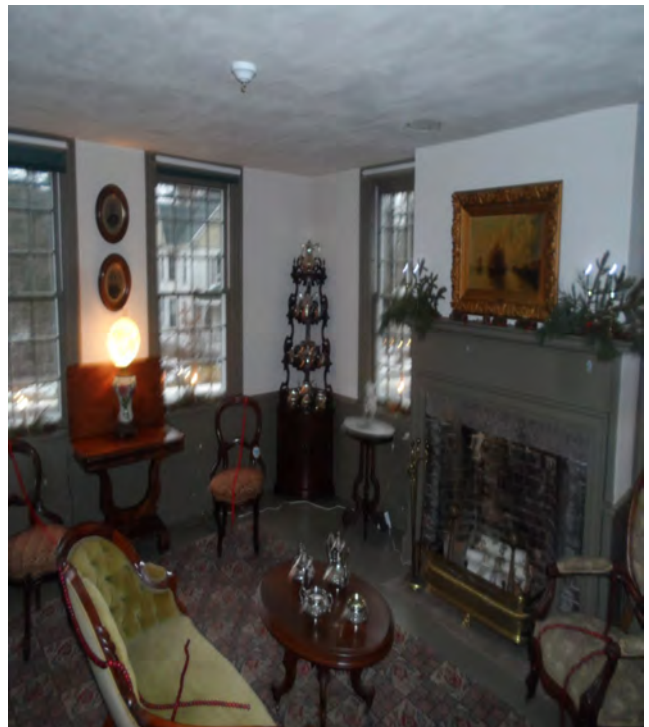
Monson History CD
Monson Historical Society, Inc.
1 Green Street, Suite 1
Monson, MA 01057

Please include your email address to receive newsletter.



Also available is the 12-page booklet about the W.N. Flynt Granite Co. Cost is \$3.00 which includes shipping.

IMAGES FROM CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE



**** ARE YOU UP TO DATE ON YOUR MEMBERSHIP DUES??****

Membership renewals occur on May 1st of each year and are good through April 30th of the following year. (For example, a “5/1/2017” membership means you have paid from 5/1/2016 through 4/30/2017). If you receive our newsletter through postal mail, please check the date on your mailing label. If your label reads **“5/1/2017 (or later)”**, your membership is **current**. If your label reads **“5/1/2016 (or earlier)”**, you need to renew your membership to be up-to-date.

If you receive your newsletter via email, please check the subject matter. If it reads **“Monson Historical Society Newsletter”**, your membership is **current**. If it reads **“Monson Historical Society Newsletter/Renewal”**, your membership has expired and you will need to update it. Please read the text in your email for renewal instructions.

Please consider taking 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.

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) _____

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 Minor** (under age 18) \$5⁰⁰ ___ **Individual Adult** (age 18 & over) \$10⁰⁰

___ **Family** \$20⁰⁰

(NEW REDUCED RATE!!) ___ **Life Membership** \$250⁰⁰ **(NEW REDUCED RATE!!)**

Return to: Membership - One Green Street, Suite One - Monson, MA 01057

******Also note that we have reduced our “Life Membership” rate in half from \$500 to \$250!******

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