



THE HISTORIAN



VOLUME FIVE, ISSUE TWO

FALL 2018



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

The Open House on September 23rd was a success. We had a steady flow of people from 1:00 to 4:00. The World War I display was well received and brought about many questions about the participation in and the effect of the war in Monson. The large crowd kept us busy answering questions about the display and the contents of the house. The display was so well received that we decided that we would run it through the Christmas Open House, which will be taking place on December 9th from 1 to 4. If you missed the display, you have one more chance to see it.

This month you will notice in the acquisitions two wonderful items: a horse drawn sleigh and a carriage. Both of these items have resided in a barn in Monson since they were purchased new in the 19th century. It is very hard to find such original pieces of horse drawn transportation still in the hands of

the descendants of the original owners.

In case you haven't noticed, we have a new board member, Paul DeMaio, who has already proven to be a great asset to the Historical Society.

Dennis



*Please join us for our
Christmas Open
House
Sunday, December 9
from
1:00 to 4:00 p.m.*

Officers:

President – Dennis Swierad
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Building Restoration – Paul DeMaio
Collections Manager – Mary Swierad
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Historian – Dennis Swierad
Membership – 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 at
monsonhistoricalsocietyinc@gmail.com

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



MONSON IN THE GREAT WAR 1917-1918 PART TWO



By Dennis & Mary Swierad

In our last newsletter, we wrote about the men and women of Monson who served our country in the World War. In this edition, we are going to explore what our townspeople did for the war effort.

Even before the United States entered into the war, the people of Monson were contributing to the cause. It began in the fall of 1914, when Mrs. Arthur D. Ellis was appointed Vice Chairman by the Springfield Association of the American Red Cross to provide workers for Belgian Relief. The first meeting was held at Mrs. Ellis' home at which 25 were present. After that, meetings were held at the Bungalow and continued there until March of 1919. Much was accomplished. In addition to the Belgian Relief work, garments and surgical dressings were furnished to meet the needs of the soldiers in foreign countries. In November of 1917, the Monson Branch of the Hampden County Chapter of the American Red Cross was officially formed with 945 members. By 1918, the Branch consisted of 1,450 members.



The Branch consistently filled all the regular quotas and many times were able to exceed them. Over 3,000 pounds of used clothing was donated and sent to Belgium. Their knitting drive produced 1,200 pairs of stockings, exceeding the quota by 50%. They were knitted by 505 persons and, in addition, a large number of helmets, mufflers, and sweaters were turned in. A "linen shower" was held and exceeded the amount called for by a



large margin.

The Branch also raised the sum of \$579.00 from a card party, a tea and lecture, and a "White Elephant" sale.

There were many other civilian activities and groups in connection with the war. Many of these groups made their headquarters in a vacant store in the Post Office block, the use of which was donated by Mrs. A. D. Norcross, with furnishings donated by R. F. Bradway.



One of the largest was the Liberty Loan, or Liberty Bond drive, started by the United States Treasury Department and was the most highly propagandized campaign to date. It was advertised that if you purchased bonds you would help win the war. It was your patriotic duty to do so.



"You should buy Liberty Bonds - Because: Your Government needs money to equip and maintain an army and navy to protect you, your family, your property and your work from the military government of Germany which seeks to control the world.

Your Country is in this war, and will fight it to a victorious finish. The money to pay the cost of

preserving human liberty will be furnished by you and all Americans, either through taxation, which gives no money back, or Liberty Bonds which pay it all back with interest.

Your unselfish thrift will supply the money to win this war.

Help the boys at the front by saving for war bonds and buying more bonds.

Do Your Part Today

Go to your employer, or to any Bank or Bond Dealer, buy all you can for cash or installments. BUT DO IT TO-DAY!

BUY A BOND AND GET A BUTTON" [1]



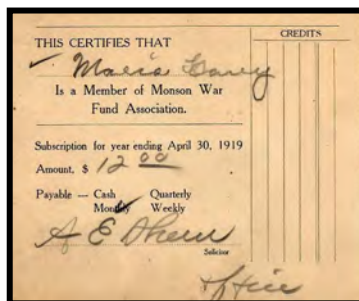
The citizens of Monson did their part and contributed through five drives a total of \$1,240,000.00.

The first drive for funds for the American Red Cross was in June of 1917 with 1,194 subscribers donating \$11,023.05.

During the week of November 12-19, 1917, the Monson Y.M.C.A., or Red Triangle, spearheaded a drive which resulted in 949 individuals donating \$5000.00 to the cause.

The Monson Knights of Columbus, Committee on War Activities collected \$3,015.00.

The Monson War Fund Association was organized on May 11, 1918. It was decided that the target amount to solicit would be \$25,000. Ten teams were formed to canvass the town.



As noted in a local newspaper, this campaign was of great success. *"All the workers were much impressed with the reception accorded them by the public. They were usually met at the door and invited right in. The person solicited then began to figure how much could possibly be spared. It was not a question of how little, but how much. Monson is pretty nearly a hundred percent town.*

The spirit that animated Monson is the same that is rampant all over the country and it means that the war is going to be won." [2]

Mr. R. S. Hughes brought in a picture of the Monson War Chest at a meeting of the Association. The picture showed the chest so full that the cover would not go on and money was bursting out of every corner.



The results of the campaign, \$33,583.54.

These various campaigns were not always easy for the people of Monson. Factory workers were assigned to solicit their fellow workers and one mill employee would not even try stating, *"I will give any amount of money I can, but I cannot ask anyone else to give."*

Aside from the activities in connection with raising of money for the support of the war, there were many other ways Monson showed its support.

Miss May Needham would use her father's automobile, known as the "Overland", one of the best cars in town, to take service men to Ware to board the train for Camp Devens.

When the first group of men were drafted, a parade and supper was given to honor the group. Dances were given to raise money to buy "smokes" to send to the boys. Through the efforts of Mrs. A. L. Noyes, Patriotic Instructor of the W.R.C., money was raised for a new town flag.

In the winter of 1918, Monson, along with the rest of the country, observed a five-day shut down of all burning of fuel in manufacturing plants and also on each and every Monday, from January 28th through March 25th.



Individuals were encouraged to, "save that shovelful of coal a day for Uncle Sam". And in

Monson, the Fuel Committee had to obtain a householder's proof of the quantity of coal he possessed.

Food rationing was being encouraged with posters urging citizens to reduce their personal consumption of meat, wheat, fats and sugar. Slogans such as "Food will win the war" compelled people to avoid wasting precious groceries and encouraged them to eat a multitude of fresh fruits and vegetables, which were too difficult to transport overseas. Likewise, promotions such as "Meatless Tuesdays" and "Wheatless Wednesdays" implored Americans to voluntarily modify their eating habits in order to increase shipments to the valiant soldiers defending our freedom.



In April of 1918, a picture of an Honor Roll, soon to be dedicated in Suffield, Conn., appeared in the Springfield Republican. This gave Mr. Henry S. Packard of Monson an idea that a home-made one of simple construction could be erected at small cost and would stand for a few years. "His findings were presented to men at heads of departments believed to be in a position to carry out some plan

before Memorial Day. But after waiting until August he organized a committee with the idea in mind of having the honor roll erected by local carpenters, painted and lettered by local men. Mr. Richard S. Hughes became interested and agreed to do the lettering even if it became necessary to do it on Sunday.

The first meeting of the committee was held in the selectmen's room. Mrs. David B. Needham was elected chairman and Andrew R. Brown secretary and treasurer. Mr. Packard declining to serve as chairman from fear that his position as a mill finishing room hand might lessen the chances of success. Yet it was through his efforts, with the help of the chairman and Mr. Hughes, that the details were completed. Previous to this meeting he had visited towns and cities in Mass. and Conn. Where honor rolls had been erected. He had also interviewed men doing such work and brought a design from Charles E. Burger of Springfield.

It became the sentiment of the meeting to erect as nice a board as possible (the bill-board type being the only kind known to them), and it was decided to try for four hundred dollars in an immediate drive which was between the War Chest and fourth Liberty Loan drives.

Mr. Hughes made several "posters" asking people to give, which were placed in stores and factories. The town and committee was divided for soliciting as follows: Fred Sherman, the Branch mill; Clarence A. Cady, Ellis No. 1 mill; Howard King, Ellis No. 3 mill; Henry S. Packard, Ricketts & Shaw mill; Arthur Anderson, hat shop. These men were employed in the place assigned to them. Andrew R. Brown and Richard S. Hughes canvassed the merchants and business men; Mrs. David B. Needham, Mrs. Frank J. Entwistle, Mrs. Mildred Holloway and Mrs. Charles Aldrich, resident sections not reached by the other members.

The amount of money was over subscribed

as on all other occasions. Ricketts & Shaw mill taking the lead of the factories, \$52.00 being collect from 76 persons out of 83 employees. A few had already given to the women, leaving only three or four who gave nothing.

At the committee's second meeting, Mr. Burger was present, also selectmen Anderson and Sutcliffe. After measurements were presented, the selectmen refused to allow a float board to be placed in front of the hall. Undoubtedly, its large size would have caused it to become objectionable to the towns' people as soon as interest began to wane.

All agreed that the Honor Roll should be near the flag pole and should conform so far as practicable to the artistic features of the hall.

Mr. Burger and Mr. Hughes worked out the idea of the octagon which was adopted with the approval of the selectmen.

The Honor Roll was put in place and dedicated at the finish of the big parade, Rev. Abram Conklin, who was in town for the day, was induced to make a few appropriate remarks and Miss Johanna Cantwell lead the large crowd in whole hearted community singing.

When at Christmas time it was learned that there was to be no municipal tree the Honor Roll was wired, various colored bulbs placed and lighted each evening from Christmas eve to New Years.

The public was so well pleased that the practice was continued for three years. During this time, and for so long afterwards as it remained standing, it was lighted on patriotic and a few

other occasions. For a time on these occasions red, white and blue colored bulbs were used but during the last few years only clear glass ones were had.

The Central Mass. Electric Co. furnished free power at all times.

In the latter part of June 1919 more names were added and William Pease gave a potted hedge. In September, the final arrangements were made and Mr. Pease planted a privet. In all the panel contained one hundred and ninety-eight names, nine being gold stars and two Red Cross nurses. At the annual town meeting in 1920 the town voted to care for the Honor Roll until a permanent memorial should be provided. Some time later the few dollars in the committees treasury was given to the American Legion building fund.

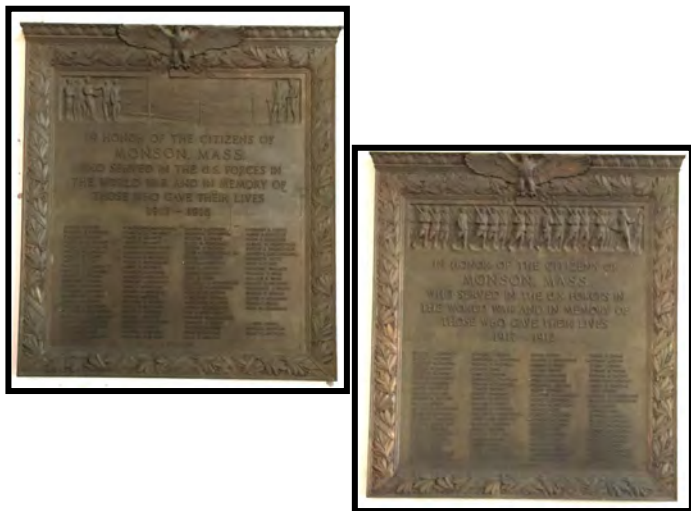
The Legion draped the Honor Roll in black on the death of a buddy and hung a wreath over its gold stars on Memorial Days in memory of those whose graves were unknown.

For nine years it stood as about the only visible reminder of public appreciation of those who answered their countries call to arms."^[3]



At the Annual Town Meeting held on February 7, 1927 a committee was appointed to erect permanent bronze Memorial Tablets in our Memorial Town Hall. The Gorham Company of New York was contracted to furnish and erect on the walls of Memorial Town Hall two Cast Bronze Honor Roll Tablets, 5'3" x 5'9", made according to designs which have been approved by the committee; one tablet to have sculptured panel representing army, the other the navy. With work to be com-

pleted by November 1, 1927. The total cost of the tablets was \$2000.00.



Not everything went smoothly or in a timely fashion when it came to commemorating the World War. One example is that of the 250-mm. Minnewerfer that now stands on the grounds in front of Memorial Town Hall. It was purchased by the town in 1925 as a German War Trophy for \$15.00 from the State Arsenal in Framingham, Mass. It was transported by the Boston & Albany Railroad and was stored at the Ricketts & Shaw Factory, where it awaited its final resting place. Apparently, not everyone was pleased by the speed in which this was occurring and a story appeared in the Springfield Republican on February 1, 1926.

“Trophy Is Still Resting In Storehouse”

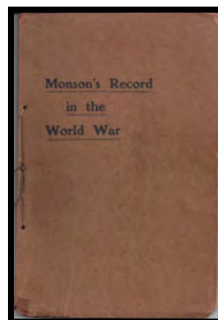
“The captured German minnewerfer, which the government consigned to Monson as a trophy of the World war, has apparently become a white elephant on the hands of the town. There seems to be considerable hesitancy on the part of local officials to take steps to have the gun mounted in some central portion of the town. In the meantime the can- non which boomed its message of death across No Man’s land in 1914 is resting somewhat ingloriously in the storehouse of Ricketts & Shaw,

awaiting the day when it will be set up as a memorial, a day that is as far off as ever. An effort will be made to have action taken on the proposed memorial at the annual town meeting.” [4]

The very same day that this article appeared in the paper, the Annual Town Meeting was held and a committee was appointed to find a suitable base on the Memorial Town Hall grounds to place the Minnewerfer. It was decided to place the Minnewerfer to the left in front of Memorial Town Hall, it remains there today.*



At the Annual Town Meeting held on February 2, 1920, sentiment was high that the service of these brave men and women should not be forgotten and it was voted to appoint a committee to compile the records of the Monson men and women who served in the World War. The committee developed a World War Service form which was mailed to each service man and woman. They were mailed back to the committee, some typewritten, most handwritten, some were scantily filled out,



either because they could not remember or because they did not want to remember. Some were returned with attached pages of detailed memories. As a result, in December of 1921 the book titled “Monson’s Record in the World War” was published.

In 1919, the American Legion was founded and Monson named there post after Private Daniel Joseph Purcell because he was the only native of the town whose entire life had been spent here to be killed in battle. It was deemed, but fitting that the honor should be accorded him.

“Soon after two o’clock on the afternoon of November 7, 1918 all the whistles in town were

blown and the bells rung in response to the false report of an armistice and in the evening a parade went through the streets which served as a rehearsal for the more elaborate one on the afternoon of November 11, when everyone took a holiday after the early morning notification, by bells and whistles, of the signing of the armistice. In connection with the celebration the Town Honor Roll was dedicated at which Miss J. W. Cantwell, as at other community sings, directed the singing and Rev. Abram Conklin delivered the address. As the boys began to come home the Welcome Home Committee, as soon as a group had arrived, tendered a dance and supper for them.

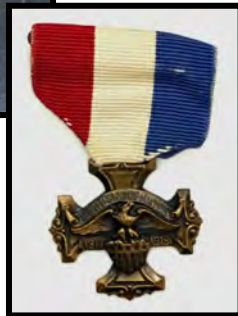
The Community spirit which had grown all through the war reached it's peak in the Welcome Home Celebration July 4, 1919. In the morning came the finest parade that the town had ever seen with nearly 100 of "our boys" in the place of honor and every manufactory and organization in town

represented by a float or marchers or both.





At conclusion of the parade in front of the Memorial Town Hall, medals were presented to the service men, in behalf of the Town, by Selectman W. H. Anderson.



In the afternoon, exercises were held in Memorial Hall, consisting of singing and an address by Capt. Hartwell of Springfield, followed by athletic sports and a ball game on Cushman Field.



A fine display of fireworks on this field in the evening and a Community dance in Memorial Hall filled out a perfect day.” [3]



“Armistice Day is commemorated every year on November 11 to mark the armistice signed between the Allies of World War I and Germany at Compiègne, France, for the cessation of hostilities on the Western Front of World War I, which took effect at eleven o’clock in the morning - the **“eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month”** of 1918.” [5] As an acknowledgement of the 100th anniversary of the armistice, the church bells of Monson will ring at eleven o’clock in the morning, eleven times on Sunday, November 11th. Please take a moment to listen and honor the brave men and women who served our country.

Bibliography

- [1] Leaflet from the Treasury Department, Bureau of Publicity, Boston Division
- [2] Local newspaper clipping from May 31, 1918
- [3] Handwritten account by Henry S. Packard, Monson, Mass.
- [4] Springfield Republican, February 1, 1926
- [5] Wikipedia - Armistice Day

*The Minniwerfer and it’s base has recently undergone restoration/preservation and will soon be back at it’s original place as a reminder of the World War.

Additional sources: Monson’s Record in the World War, Annual Town of Monson Reports, donated Scrapbooks

NEW ACQUISITIONS



*Horse drawn sleigh, buggy,
top hat with original box,
three men's waist coats from
family members of the
Fercroft Farm in Monson*



*Scrapbook from Monson
teacher Miss Elsie Gunn
1910's, framed service
star, 1823 letter written by
William Holbrook
purchases*



*left: Misc. items for the Fa-
gan family of Monson
right: Monson Academy
Spirit Newspapers 1936 &
1937*

Donations from Monson residents



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 one year free membership and our quarterly newsletter *The Historian*. Shipping costs for the CD are included in the fee.



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

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

Please include your email address to receive the newsletter. Make your checks payable to

Monson Historical Society, Inc.



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

WHERE IS THIS?

***Answer to Last Month's
 "Where Was This?"***

The Cushman Fountain was originally located in the center of Cushman Street where it meets Main Street. Since then it has been moved twice.



***This Month's
 "Where Was This?"***

Where was this gazebo located in the 1870s?



***** MEMBERSHIP *****

Membership Renewals occur on May 1st of each year and are good through April 30th of the following year. (For example, a "5/1/2019" membership means you are a paid member from 5/1/2018 to 4/30/2019).

For Postal Mail Recipients of Newsletter

Check the date on your mailing label. If it reads "**5/1/2019**" (or a later date), your membership is **current**. If it reads "**5/1/2018**" (or an earlier date), it is time for you to renew.

For Email Recipients of Newsletter

Check the "Subject" line in the email. 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.

NOTE

Until we get set up on the Historical Society's email account, please be aware that the newsletters will be sent from this email address: DCDuquette@msn.com (Denis Duquette).

Check your "Junk" email folder, in case it gets sent there.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please take the time today to complete the membership form and mail it back to the address listed on the form, along with your check.

Your membership will be updated.

MONSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC. MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address _____ Town _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address (for newsletter) _____

(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY!)

Indicate a membership category and enclose a check made out to:
"Monson Historical Society, Inc."

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

_____ Individual \$10⁰⁰ _____ Family \$20⁰⁰

_____ Life Membership \$250⁰⁰

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

Any information you provide us will be kept in strict confidence and will NEVER be given out or sold at any time.

And as always, we **THANK YOU** for your continued support of the Monson Historical Society, Inc.!