



# THE HISTORIAN



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Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

We received some good news from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. After a couple of years and much research and correspondence with John Clemson, Preservation Consultant, they have decided the Jacob Thompson House qualifies for individual listing with a local level of significance under National Register Criteria A and C. What this means is, the State of Massachusetts has given us their blessing and we are now able to apply for National Register status. We are now in the process of doing just that.

National Register listing would be very prestigious for the Jacob Thompson House and would

also be a reward for the Historical Society's efforts to preserve this very important building. It would underscore all of our efforts and truly make them all worthwhile. I am not sure how long it will take to get over this last hurdle. I will keep you informed of the progress.

Again, I hope to see you all at the spring open house, Sunday, May 22 from 1 to 4. There will be light refreshments.

Also, it is membership renewal time! Please see the last page for instructions. We value your membership and are grateful for your support of the M.H.S!

Dennis Swierad, President

### Officers:

President – Dennis Swierad  
Vice President – Tamara Cabey  
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Denis Duquette (2018)

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Building Restoration – Dennis Swierad  
Collections Manager – Mary Swierad  
Editor/Website – Leona Brahen  
Historian – Dennis Swierad  
Membership – Denis Duquette  
Rental Manager – Tamara Cabey

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

Email us on the web at  
[info@monsonhistoricalsociety.comcast.biz.net](mailto: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.

## JACOB THOMPSON HOUSE

BY DENNIS SWIERAD

For thirty years now, the Monson Historical Society has been the conservator of the Jacob Thompson House at 7 Main Street. It seems like only yesterday when Grace Makepeace and myself toured the house at the behest of the Cemetery Commission with an eye on acquiring it for the Society. The house had become too much of a burden of both time and

money for the Commission. The last tenants were still living in the house and we had to overlook the 20<sup>th</sup> century decorations to appreciate the actual attributes of the place. Upon our arrival, we were pleasantly surprised by the overall condition of the original interior due to years of preservation by neglect. By this I mean, due to budget constraints, the Cemetery Commission was unable to remodel the place in whatever was most popular at the time, which meant no paneling, no dropped ceilings, no tile floors, no removal of original woodwork or trim either inside or out. The original front door (1811) was still hanging, not replaced by some Home Depot glitzy Victorian or Craftsman style plastic replacement. We were amazed that all of the original fireplaces and their surrounds were intact and open as if they were just used the previous winter.

This being said, there were some modernizations that had to be addressed. The kitchen was sort



*Jacob Thompson House circa 1986*

of updated in the 50's or 60's, but only to the extent of cabinets and a sink and linoleum on the floor. Over the life of the home, all of the original window sash were replaced haphazardly and by this I mean I have never seen so many different configurations of windows. There were 1 over 1, 2 over 1 or 2, 4 over 4 and some 6 panes thrown in. A Victorian porch in total disrepair had been put on the front in the 1870's or



*Original Front Door and Surround*

80's. The back ell sills were rotted and sagging.

After much discussion, the Board of Directors of the Historical Society decided to accept the town's offer and entered into an agreement to lease the home at no financial consideration, but still let the Cemetery Department use the garage and a room in the rear for an office.

After signing the lease we set about restoring what we could. The decision was made to remove the porch and bring the facade back to what it was when the home was built. After some research, all of the sash were replaced with reproduction 12 over 12 panes. The rear ell foundation was repaired about this time. We removed the upstairs bathroom and the downstairs tub. We removed the kitchen sink and cabinets, hot water heater and linoleum. Luckily, we were able to procure a slate sink on iron legs for the kitchen. The Society owned the Glenwood range that is there now and we built a new chimney for it. We replaced the antiquated furnace with a new one. We upgraded wiring and plumbing whenever possible. We painted the exterior of the building a typical color of the period and replaced the roof..

During this time, we repaired all of the plaster and painted the interior. The front hall is an interesting story. While the

workman was removing the multitude of layers of wall-paper, I could see the slight impression of a stenciled pattern directly on the plaster. We had the stenciling reproduced from the original and left a sample of the original in the front corner under a removable panel for future reference. We also installed central air-conditioning with a grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

The exterior of the home has some interesting features also. The most obvious are the brick ends which is very uncommon in this area and I believe they were used as a sort of heat storage in the winter. With a fire in every fireplace, the bulk of the wall behind would radiate heat long after the fires died down. Another heat saving device which we only discovered when removing some of the clapboards for the front porch project was the presence of long strips of birch bark tacked over the spaces in the sheathing to stop air infiltration, a sort of early American house wrap. The fan light window in the attic on the southern side of the house is totally fake and only there for appearance, but the one on the northern side is interesting in that it has a small portion of glass in the corner actually letting light



*North end showing partial glass fan light window*



*South brick end*



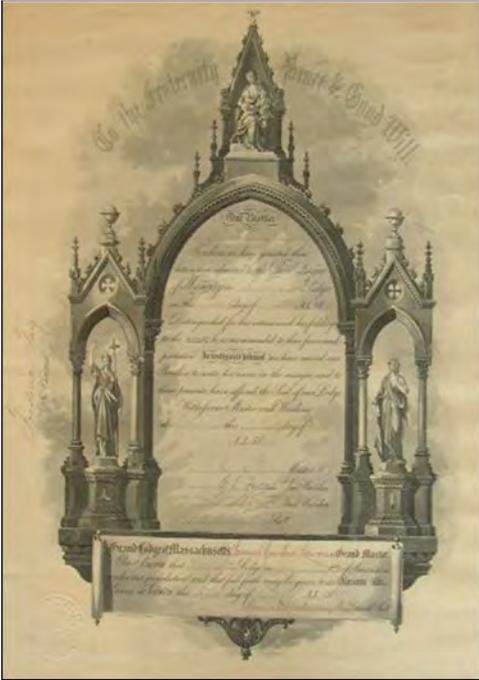
*Jacob Thompson House 2016*

into the otherwise pitch black attic space. Both of these windows are directly in front of the chimneys.

When the time came to think about a new paint job, it was decided that we would have a paint analysis done by a professional, so we hired Preservation Consultant Sara B. Chase of Lexington, MA to do the work. Before beginning, we agreed that no matter what the outcome of the analysis, we would comply with the surface treatment as discovered in the study. It was a good decision because the discovery that the brick ends were painted brick red and the mortar joints bright white raised more than a few eyebrows. We applied to the Community Preservation Committee and received a grant to restore the Thompson house exterior, which consisted of completely repairing the exterior woodwork, preparing the walls, re-glazing all of the windows and painting the exterior of the building, including the brick ends in their original fashion. At this time, we added storm windows to protect the restored sash from deterioration which also improved on heating and cooling.

I am sure that Jacob Thompson, even in his wildest dreams, would have never imagined what was to become of his house after 200 years

NEW ACQUISITIONS



*Day Spring Lodge Third Degree of  
Masonry Certificate 1883  
(donated by Wilbraham resident)*



*Memorial Hall Souvenir  
Dish sold through the W. N.  
Flynt & Sons Store  
(donated by Wilbraham resi-  
dent)*



*Mechanic Street School  
6<sup>th</sup> Grade School Pa-  
pers and Report Card  
around 1933  
(donated by Wilbraham  
resident)*



*Crewel Embroidery  
Needlework by Ma-  
bel Watson Moulton  
(donated by Wilbraham  
resident)*



*Monson Bicentennial Pennants  
(donated by Monson 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:



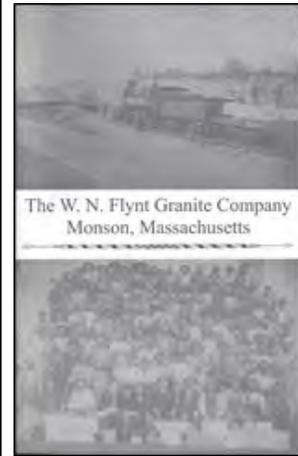
Monson History CD

Monson Historical Society, Inc.

1 Green Street, Suite 1

Monson, MA 01057

Please include your email address to receive the newsletter.



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

## MEET THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



### Denis Duquette Membership/Annual Meeting

I am 53 years old and was born and raised in Holyoke, MA. I graduated from Porter & Chester Institute in Enfield, CT in architectural design. I have been employed with Titan Roofing of Springfield, MA for the past 32 years as an estimator/project coordinator.

I relocated to Monson in 1985 and immediately fell in love with the town's bucolic atmosphere and its granite structures. The history here is fascinating, and that is what drew me to join the Historical Society, where I have been a member since 1998. Many of our board members are extremely knowledgeable about our town's history, and I enjoy learning something new from

them at every meeting.

Aside from being MHS' membership chair, I have volunteered for the Monson LEPD, Tourism Committee, Monson High School Music Boosters, Monson Garden Club, Senior Center and tornado relief efforts in town. I am a member for The Trustees of Reservations since 1999 and I chair the Peaked Mountain Property Committee. I'm also a member of the Quaboag Hills Photo Club.

I enjoy travelling, gardening, photography, stamp collecting, exercising and most anything outdoors (particularly hiking National Parks). I have four adult children and am relishing the time spent with my 3-year old grandson (with a 2<sup>nd</sup> on the way)!

**\*\*\* IT IS TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL \*\*\***

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 to 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 then be updated.**

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

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 Minor** (under age 18) \$5<sup>00</sup>    \_\_\_ **Individual Adult** (age 18 & over) \$10<sup>00</sup>

\_\_\_ **Family** \$20<sup>00</sup>

**(NEW REDUCED RATE!!)** \_\_\_ **Life Membership** \$250<sup>00</sup> **(NEW REDUCED RATE!!)**

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

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