



# THE HISTORIAN



VOLUME THREE, ISSUE FOUR

SPRING 2017



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings: you all there.

The Monson Historical Society will be having an open house at 87 Main Street on May 21<sup>st</sup> from 1 to 4 in celebration of National Preservation Month. Many of you will know this home as Holmbrook, which was built by Cyrus Holmes. You will get a chance to see the restoration work both inside and out which has taken place since the tornado.

Also, the gardens on the property at 4 Ely Road, the old First Congregational Church Parsonage, will also be available for tours. Refreshments will be served. Check out more information about this program further in this newsletter. I hope to see

It's also renewal time of the year for membership renewal. For postal patrons, check your mailing label; for email recipients, check your email message. Refer to the last page for instructions to see if you are current or need to renew.

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](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.

## WHAT USED TO BE THERE?

By Dennis and Mary Swierad

Have you ever driven by an area in town and wondered what used to be there, what the buildings looked like, or just what was the history of that area? We are going to try and give you some idea of what one area in town looked like.

The place we are going to explore is 56 Main Street. Currently this is the new building between Maria's Pizzeria & Seafood and New England Estate Pickers.

You would not know it today but at one time, this was quite a bustling place.

In 1796, William Norcross built a tavern on this site. The tavern was a stopping place for

stages running between Springfield and Worcester and horses were changed there. The stage horn was blown some miles away to announce the hour at which it would arrive, and the number of passengers who would want meals. Reuben Underwood, a stage driver, sometimes would appear at the door just before the time for starting and, with a pail of water in his hand, would jump over a span of horses. In conjunction with the hotel, there was a large livery stable, and horse and carriages were available for rent for a number of years.

William owned the tavern until 1803 or



*Green's Hotel and Livery Stable*



1804 when it was kept for upwards of forty years by his son Amos. During this time, when Monson Academy was in its infancy, boarding students lived here.

“Uncle Amos”, as he was called, was an ideal host. The story of a sleigh ride in 1830 has been told many times. It was a perfect night and the snow was well-packed. Everyone in town who could go helped to make up the party. Belchertown was the objective, but the travelers returned to partake of one of “Uncle Amos” famous suppers. Nothing was lacking, even to blackstrap. After supper came a dance in the hall which lasted nearly until daylight. One can only envision the dance party thrown by old Fezziwig, a character in Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, happening in Monson.



*Uncle Amos (Fezziwig)*

Monson had, in those days, an artillery battery of 64 men, which at the time was the oldest battery in the state. Two pieces, captured from the British, were sent to Boston after the battery disbanded in 1845. Trainings were frequent and a dinner at Uncle Amos’ was the crowning event of the day.

The hall was a gathering place for the townspeople. It was used for many functions and by many organizations, one of which was the Thomas Lodge of Masons.

After Amos Norcross, it was kept by Lucius E. Truesdell, who ran it under the name of Monson Hotel. Lucius was the village postmaster and kept the Post Office in the north corner of the building. It was also used by the temperance cause for a long time.

A stock company next operated the tavern. This company included Daniel G. Porter, William N. Flynt, Stephen Tobey and Charles B. Jones. These men hired one manager after another, the number included one Hastings, Deacon Aiken, Daniel Needham Green, Elias Paul, Amasa King and Nelson F. Rogers.





As a point of interest, after the train station was erected in 1857 on Washington Street, there was a public sidewalk developed from what would have been the rear of the Hotel down to Washington Street. This made for easy access for the guests of the Hotel. This sidewalk remains to this day.

About 1858, the property changed hands again to Harvey H. Park and John Thayer, at which time it was referred to as Park's Hotel and also had extensive alterations done.

In 1872, it came into the possession of Daniel G. Green. For two years, the hotel was used as a tenement house and Mr. Green decided to restore it to its original use. When reopened, it was known as Green's Hotel, but Mr. Green did not assume its management

until 1876. It is said that while Daniel Green was owner, no liquor was ever sold. When a person asked for a

The Century Hotel, Monson, Mass.

All Modern Improvements. + + +  
 Every Attention to the Comfort of Guests.  
**FISK ROGERS, PROPRIETOR.**



drink, Green would hand him a glass of water. In 1884, it was sold to Leonard G. Cushman and re-named Cushman's Hotel. After his death, it was managed by his son, George L. Cushman, until it was bought by Lyman & George Flynt and Ralph Clifford.

In 1896, after a thorough renovation, Mr. Clifford assumed management and it was that year



that it received the name Century Hotel. By the turn of the century, William N. Flynt Granite Co. took over ownership, with Fisk G. Rogers as manager. After several years, Lyman C. Flynt became sole owner.

In 1922 the building was purchased from Lyman by Dr. Frank G. Maguire who converted it to apartments. He later sold it to his brother Jesse, who operated it until a fire severely damaged the structure. It was razed in 1959 by Robert E. Chaffee, a local house wrecker. And so ended the life of the building which stood for so many years as a center of Monson activity.



*1959 Just before being torn down*

**Bibliography:**

History of Monson 1960—Monson Historical Society, Inc.

History of The Connecticut Valley in Massachusetts, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches of Some of Its Prominent Men and Pioneers. Complete in Two Volumes. Vol. II 1879

The Monson Directory 1897-8 A Complete Index To The Residents, Business, Streets, Etc. Of The Town With Other Useful Information.

Dorcas Dishes (Second Edition) As used in 1906 by the Women of the Congregational Church, Monson, Mass.

The Journal Register 1958

The Springfield Union News 1959

Monson Historical Society, Inc. archives - excerpt from clipping in Eudocia Jones scrapbook dated February 2, 1922

Town of Monson Map of 1855

Town of Monson Map of 1870

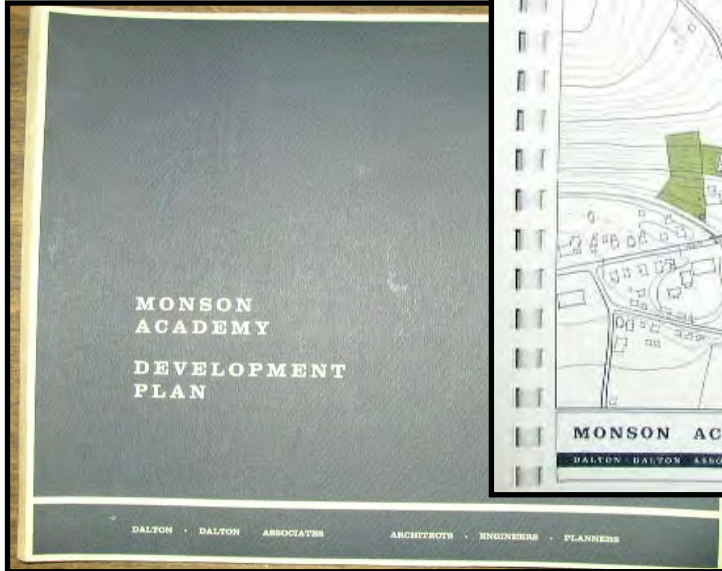
Town of Monson Map of 1894

Town of Monson Map of 1912



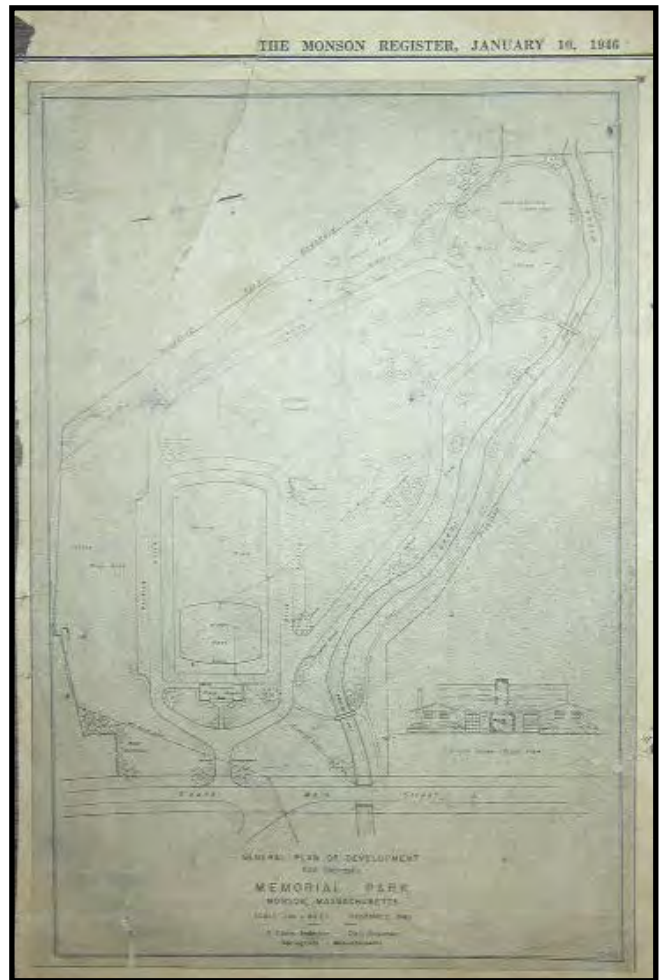
# NEW ACQUISITIONS

*Monson Academy Development Plan 1966 (donated by Monson resident)*



*right—Memorial Park Conceptual Plan December 1945 park was to be located on South Main Street across from Oak Street (donated by Monson resident)*

*below—Dan's Mobil Service Station 2 Main Street Ash-tray (purchase)*





left— Howe family ephemera  
1885—1931  
Republican Ticket, Citizens' Ticket, 1909 Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, Memorial Card for Mary E. Howe, Capital Theatre Playbill, Monson High School Class Night & Graduation Programs, Monson Academy Entrance Exams 1890, etc. (purchase)

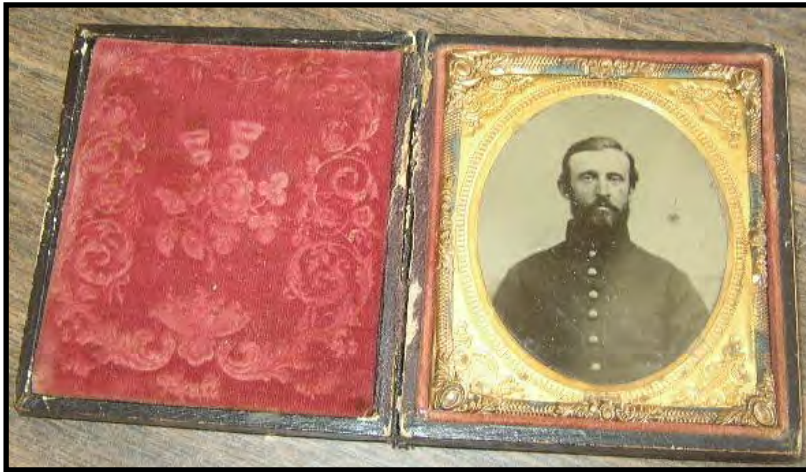
right—Monson Fire Department 13th Annual Concert & Ball Thanksgiving Night November 29, 1900 dance card

Cabinet card of Member of the Branch Mill Band taken by L.S. Squier of Monson

Postcards, clockwise, LaFond Bros., Washington Street house, South Monson Railroad Station that was located at the intersection of Elm Street & Lower Hampden Road, State Line Railroad Station at the Connecticut border on Stafford Road (purchase)







*Daguerreotype in case of Monson Civil War Soldier Orin Henry Wilson, Jr. , 46th Infantry and 2nd Heavy Artillery (purchase)*



*Youths Derby Hat sold at the E. F. Willis Store in Monson (purchase)*

*Ambrotype in case of John Caldwell, Monson State School, Monson, Massachusetts (purchase)*







Drawings by Dorothy Cantwell, 1941 Monson High School Trip to Washington D.C., Vote Monson Town Clerk Postcard, Leonard Oil Co. yardstick (notice telephone number is 38), Monson Capital Theatre Playbills 30's-40's (donated by Monson resident)

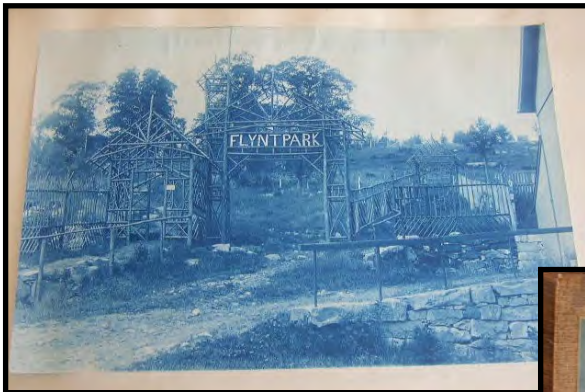


Collection of the Monson Rebekah Lodge No. 169 records and regalia from formation in early 1900's thru mid 1980's (donated by Monson resident)

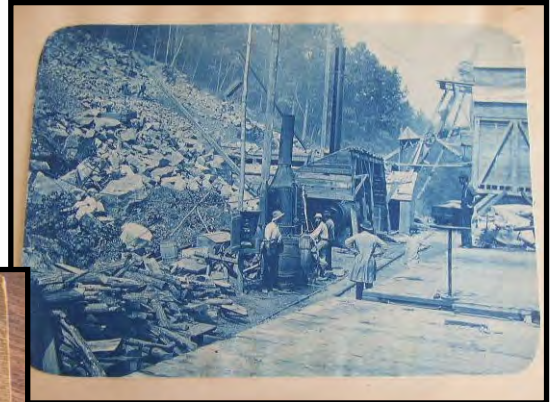




Rare Cyanotype Photograph Album containing many Monson points of interest, circa 1880-1890. Below is a sampling. (purchase—thank you to Kuenzig Books in Topsfield, MA for the generous discount. )



above—Entrance to Flynt Park



above—W. N. Flynt Granite Company Rock Crushing Plant



right—Cover of Cyanotype Album



above—Soldiers' Monument, Monson Free Library, Dr. Perlin Soule's residence, Mrs. M. A. Smith's residence, Miss Esther Holmes residence



above—Granite bridge located directly across from Flynt Avenue and leading into Hillside Cemetery



left—Tower structure in Flynt Park made of cedar from Cedar Swamp

below—Intersection of Main Street and Thompson Street, Jacob Thompson house to the left



above—Monson Free Library, Mrs. Jones residence, Bradway residence

## 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



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

## UPCOMING OPEN HOUSE

Please join the Monson Historical Society on May 21, 2017 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. as they celebrate National Preservation Month. The Open House will feature the Cyrus Holmes House at 87 Main Street and the gardens at the Frank Nelson Home at 4 Ely Road. Refreshments will be available in the gardens and a raffle of Monson memorabilia will also be held. Please stop by and visit these two beautiful homes in the center of Monson.



**\*\* 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 "5/1/2018" membership means you have paid from 5/1/2017 to 4/30/2018). If you receive our newsletter through postal mail, please check the date on your mailing label. If your label reads "**5/1/2018 (or later)**", your membership is **current**. If your label reads "**5/1/2017 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, info@monsonhistoricalsociety.comcastbiz.net, with the subject matter regarding Monson Historical Society.

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

**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** \$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!*