



THE HISTORIAN



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WINTER 2015



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

It looks as though we are in the middle of a good old fashion winter, which we can exaggerate about to our children and grandchildren for years to come. In regards to the weather, please read our article about the winter of 1920 and the problems it caused.

Work on restoring Jacob Thompson House has begun. The painting contractor has started to remove the window sashes from the inside and insulating the openings. He will be restoring each sash individually as needed and then finish painting them. By doing this in the height of winter, we will be gaining much valuable time to scrape and prepare the exterior of the house for

painting during the nice weather, which we hope will some day come.

We were just about ready to begin re-siding the garage when the multiple snow storms hit and made it all but impossible to proceed.

Progress on Memorial Hall is proceeding at a snails pace and there is no sign of when the building will ever be ready for use.

The Christmas open house on December 14th was a success. We had a good turn out and many people were interested in the Christmas card collection from the old Church Company. It brought out many stories about the old toilet seat factory. I would like to thank Bill Dominick,

Tamara Cabey and Denis Duquette for their time in preparing for the open house.

We have purchased many early photographs of Monson including several stereo views from the 1870's. Please refer to the new acquisitions article.

This installment of Monson's Civil War stories is a sad one, but I think you will find it interesting. Of seven boys from the East Hill area who went to War in 1862 as a group of friends, only one returned.

Let's hope warmer weather arrives soon!

Dennis Swierad, President



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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 on the web at
info@monsonhistoricalsociety.org

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

MONSON IN THE CIVIL WAR

BY DENNIS AND MARY SWIERAD

LETTERS HOME

This installment in our Civil War Series is, unfortunately, a tale of some Monson boys who never made it home.

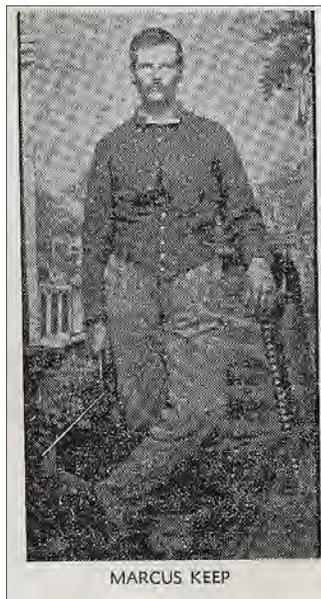
Monson held a great war rally in the Congregational Church on July 17th, 1862 which was lead by Mr. Robinson, a cashier of the Monson Bank. He was a little man, but in his excitement he swelled up to goodly proportions. Waving his arms wildly about, he exhorted to us to "Go down there and clean 'em up", asserting confidently that it would be a short job.

On that same night, two cousins from East Hill, Charles Carpenter and Marcus Keep, along with 30 other young men from Monson, signed up. Our story will focus on these two cousins and their ordeals while serving our country in the Civil War. Charles and Marcus mustered in on July 31, 1862 and both became Corporals of Company E, 36th Regiment A Mass. Volunteers, Ninth Army Corp.

The following story is gleaned from letters written home by Marcus and diary entries and letters by Charles:

We left for Camp Wool in Worcester on August 10th, to join Company E which was made up of men from Monson, Palmer and four towns in the western part of Worcester County. We left for Boston on September 2nd under the command of Col. Bowman. From Boston we

sailed on the Steamer Merrimac to Alexandria, Virginia, arriving three days later. On the 9th we moved to a Camp near the capital and marched on again on the 12th to Brookville, VA. From here, we could hear the artillery fire.



a side hill which slopes to the east. We are on the west edge of some woods and almost under us is Antietam Creek. We are only about three miles from where the last great battle took place. I went on to the battleground last Sunday, and they had not buried all the dead. There were a few of our men, but they were mostly rebs. I saw about 50 in one place carried together, and men were digging a trench to bury them in.

The battleground extended for miles around, and in some places the bodies were piled four deep. I saw any number of horses that were killed,

and a number of pairs killed at the same time that lay harnessed together. I am glad that New England is not able to furnish such a sight as I have seen since I left Washington, and I hope she never may.

I hope this war will be settled one way or the other soon. If the north is not able to show that she is victor, then I hope she will compromise the matter, for I think there have been more lives lost already than the whole Union is worth. I know that there are not many men in the north who would agree with me, but let them come here and see and hear what I have since we come and they would go home satisfied.

I do not think but that the Union Army will be victorious, but mean that things look different from the way they appeared at home. There is one thing about it; if we are called into action, and I think we shall be soon. I shall fight the best I know how.

On October 1, 1862 Marcus writes: . . . I am pretty well reduced down. I wish I had a pumpkin pie and some apples. I think I could fatten on pumpkin pie, and we are going to get through with this war so I can get home and have some before the pumpkins are rotten. Perhaps you do not believe this, but I do.

I think there is no question but that the South is getting pretty well used up, but still they are able to give us a

On September 25, 1862 Marcus Keep writes in his first letter home. .

. We are situated in Sharpsburg on

pretty hard pull as they are willing to sacrifice all their men.

Our first correspondence from Charles Carpenter came on October 5th, 1862

from Antietam. The universal wish is that the war might be closed soon and a great many are sick of

the job. General Burnside's whole Corps was reviewed last Friday by President Lincoln and Major General McClellan and I had the pleasure of seeing those three notables riding side by side. Burnside's Corps here will probably number from 20 to 30,000 men, perhaps more, but come to see them it don't look very large, after all 1,000 men can be placed on half an acre easily.



October 20, 1862 Marcus writes . . . I have not been to see the doctor, and am not going, for every man in the regiment says that he does not care whether a man lives or dies. As far as my own observation goes, it is better for a man to be well as much as possible. If a man goes to the doctor for dysentery the doctor gives him a blue pill; if constipated the doctor gives a blue pill; if rheumatism is the trouble the doctor prescribes a blue pill; if the man cuts his foot the remedy is a blue pill; if measles are around the man gets a blue pill; if symptoms of a fever the doctor offers a blue pill; if a cold is troublesome the man receives a blue pill; if he breaks his bones the remedy is a blue pill. In short, for all the diseases to which human flesh is heir in the army a blue pill is good.

I think you would laugh to see C. (Charles) and myself cooking now. We make griddle cakes mostly. We have baking soda that is tiptop to make them rise, and then we get good sirup for 25 cents a quart. I bought a spider this morning; what I

want now to make my cooking apparatus complete is an iron spoon and a case-knife. We miss our butter, but we get along without it with a pretty good grace. We calculate to keep salt, baking soda, flour, sirup and lard; our lard we fry out of the pork which we draw for our rations. So you see that we have quite a stock of things on hand, and our living is not very expensive. I think that Uncle Sam does not feed his boys any too well.

As to my washing, I do that in the brook, and with a good deal of time, soap and patience, I can get things pretty clean. But I shall be glad when I get where I can have them washed; for, to tell the truth, I do not like to wash with the conveniences we have down here.

Charles – Monday February 9, 1863 Today received a box of Xmas from home. In it was this diary and so this record commences. We are camped on the Rappahanock a mile from the river opposite Fredericksburg.

Tuesday February 10, 1863 Our brigade are many at ball playing. At noon the orders came to pack up in the p.m. We marched to the depot and on the cars to Aquia Creek on a Steamer.

Wednesday February 11, 1863 Down the Potomac River. Had a few fresh oysters today.

Thursday February 12, 1863 Steamed down the Chesapeake Bay.

Saturday 14 Our camp ground here is well arranged and pleasant. Oysters are plenty and cheap. Had to go on



picket today.

Marcus - September 1863, Crab Orchard, Kentucky – You have probably learned before this why I had not written. I have been pretty sick, and they had considerable doubt about my getting through it alive. I was about half crazy for two days but have got pretty smart now, and if I can only be still I shall get over it all right.

I wish I could be home to help father about his fall work, and to have a good appetite to eat a good old boiled dinner. I tell you that the potatoes, turnips, cabbages, beets, corned beef and pork, I think of them pretty often.

September 28, 1863 – Crab Orchard – I have some sad news to tell you; Charles Carpenter died two days ago at 10 o'clock p.m. I do not feel able to write much, as I got well worn out taking care of him for he was as crazy as he could be toward the last.

September 29, 1863 – Crab Orchard – In regards to C.'s death, I am unable to give you any very detailed account as I am not well, but I will do the best I can. I think that Quinine was the cause of his death. He had had the chills for two months or more, which reduced his strength until he was all gone. Last week Tuesday he had the last chill. Wednesday he seemed better. Thursday he seemed to be a little deranged. G. H. came into camp early Thursday morning. C. got up and looked out. He knew H.'s voice, and when the latter spoke to him, C. seemed to know what he meant. C. could not open the box which was sent him, but I opened it for him, and he just tasted the fruit. He was not entirely deranged until about Friday

noon; after that he knew nothing, and he had no strength. I took care of him Friday night, and I had to lift him so much that I was hardly able to be up at all the next day.

May 29, 1864 – The last letter home from Marcus. As you have not heard from me for some time I thought I could not do better than to forward you a line. I have to write in a rather uncomfortable position, but I am getting used to being uncomfortable. It is not very comfortable to lie on a fellows' back quite as much as I have to, especially this warm weather.

But what's the harm? It can't last; only 15 months from today, if I live and the Lord is willing, I shall be a free man again. I have found that there is nothing very funny about being shot, even if it is not very bad. I shall never forget how that ball felt when it struck me.

My leg bled very freely when I was shot; my boot was full of blood when the doctor drew it off. I should have liked a good shot at the rascals before I left, but I could not get it. There was no fighting going on the day I was shot. It was a shot from one of the reb skirmishers.

I have felt pretty well since I was wounded, but have not eaten much. I am now on milk diet, I get good milk and all I want of it. If I could only go out of doors and walk around, I should feel tip top; and I am in hopes that

in the course of a few days I shall be out on crutches.

The following excerpt was from an anonymous source. The surgeon who examined the wound at the field hospital did not regard it as very serious, pronouncing it merely a flesh wound. When Fairfax Seminary Hospital was reached, the knee was so badly swollen that its condition could not be known, but after the swelling had been reduced it was found that the bones had been shattered and that gangrene had set in. As soon as possible after this condition was known it was decided to amputate the leg, hoping thus to save his life. But the delay had been fatal and death soon followed the operations.

Letters from the chaplain spoke of the courage shown by the wounded man. When he was told that death was near, he met his fate bravely, sending farewells to the friends at home, expressing his willingness to die and his belief in a future life. Marcus Keep answered the final roll call June 9, 1864, and his body some months later was brought back to Monson, the town he loved, back to his family and back to his wife,





Adelaide King, who he married on July 27, 1862, just four short days before he left to go to War.

The records show that sixteen of our men were killed in battle or died of wounds out of 154 who signed up.

liography
History of Monson Massachusetts; Compiled by Monson Historical Society 1960
Letters by Marcus Keep 1862-1864
Diary of Charles Carpenter 1862-1863
The Illustrated History of the Civil War by Richard Humble



Bib-

Photo of Marcus Keep for whom the G.A.R. Room at Memorial Hall was named in his honor.

NEW ACQUISITIONS



Monson Milk Bottles



Monson Souvenir Mugs and Tile



Monson Photographer Gaouette Cabinet Cards



Gazebo at Flynt Park



Monson Photo Album circa 1900



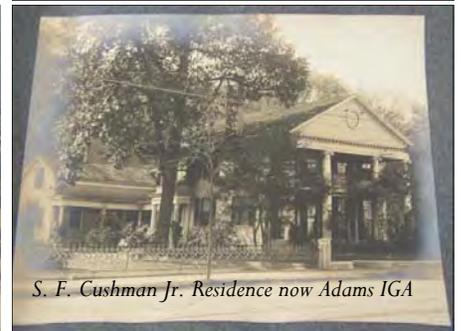
Flynt Residence now First Church parking lot



Post Office 110 Main Street



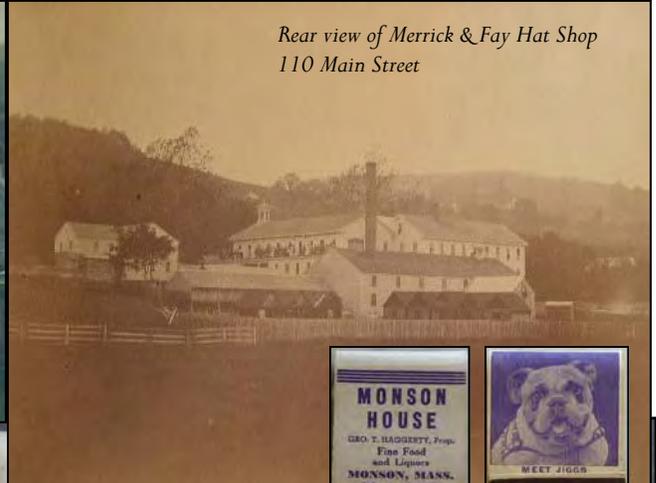
Flynt Residence High Street



S. F. Cushman Jr. Residence now Adams IGA



Fay Homestead Main Street



Rear view of Merrick & Fay Hat Shop
110 Main Street



Fay & Merrick Homes Main Street



Monson?



Unknown subjects
H.C. Cross Photographer Monson, Mass



Residence of A. W. Ellis, Monson, Mass.



1938 Flood Cushman Street



Monson?

STEREO VIEWS circa 1870's



*Gage Brothers Store Main Street currently where
Dave Grieve Park is located*

Cyrus Holmes Residence High Street



*Looking North up Main Street from Cushman
Hall. Original Monson Academy Building in
the distance.*

Flynt Residence Corner of Fountain and High Street



Birdseye view looking North



*First Congregational Church soon
after completion.*



JACOB THOMPSON HOUSE RESTORATION PROJECT

In spite of the weather, work has begun on the Jacob Thompson House Restoration Project that is being largely funded by the Monson Community Preservation Fund. The painting contractor has started working to restore the window sashes. He is removing each sash from the inside and putting up temporary insulation. Each sash is then scraped, re-glazed and repainted after which it will be installed.



Roland McCurdy an employee of Advantage Coatings, Monson, hard at work on second floor at Thompson House preparing sash for re-glazing.



First floor south room at Thompson House with sashes removed and temporary insulation installed.

OLD MAN WINTER

During this the winter of our discontent, we thought it might help to look back to a time when it was even more difficult to remove snow — a time of no snow plows or snow blowers to aid us in snow removal.



George Flynt and passenger venture out shortly after the Blizzard of 1888 in which over 30 inches of snow fell in our vicinity.



Main Street looking north up Academy Hill pre-1912 with trolley lines visible.



Rev. Hatch of the First Church shoveling snow in front of the parsonage on High Street.



Leonard Hatch son of Rev. Hatch shoveling snow on High Street. 1890's

In 1920, there were a couple of memorable snow storms to hit this region. The first occurred between February 4th and the 7th when 17" of mixed precipitation fell. It defied removal and caused the army to be called out to tackle it with flame throwers. One month later in March, another storm hit leaving 12 foot high snow drifts in it's wake. This was a time before the advent of mechanized snowplows, which didn't appear until the mid-1920's. Highway crews hand shoveled the state roads and trolley lines after a snow storm. An average winter season at this time would cost the town of Monson about \$300.00 for snow removal. The 1920 snow season cost the town \$3222.69, an astronomical amount. The following pictures taken by the Cushman family on March 10th were of that March storm clean-up.





Above: Snow removal gang heading north at 110 Main Street. Note in 1920 the lot was vacant due to the 1912 fire that burned down the Hat Shop. Below left: Snow removal gang on Main Street. Below right: Digging out the trolley lines, somewhere in Monson?



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

Make your check 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.

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.



Welcome New Members

Lisa LeDoux - Monson, MA
Jennifer & Richard Cordner - Monson, MA
Jeanne Rittlinger - Vernon, CT
Linda Pyzocha - Monson, MA

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

Membership renewals occur on May 1st of each year. If you receive our newsletter through postal mail, please check the date on your mailing label. Current memberships should read "5/1/2015" or later. If your label reads "5/1/2014", you need to renew for another year. If it reads, "5/1/2013", you need to renew for 2 years to be up-to-date.

For those who 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 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 through 5/1/2015.

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), 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) \$5⁰⁰ Individual (age 18 & over) \$10⁰⁰ Family \$20⁰⁰
- Life Membership \$500⁰⁰ Corporate Membership \$50⁰⁰

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

