



THE HISTORIAN



VOLUME THREE, ISSUE ONE

SUMMER 2016



Jacob Thompson House 1811



Fuller House 1869

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings:

The open house on May 22nd went very well and we had very good attendance. Everyone had good things to say about the exterior paint job, even the brick ends painting with the white lines. They also were very impressed with the interior painting and decorating. At this time, I would like to give a special thanks from all of us to Tamara Cabey and Bill Dominick, who were instrumental in getting the interior painted, cleaned and decorated. They volunteered count-

less hours to this task. Plans are in the works for a Fall open house and also our annual Christmas open house, possibly by candlelight.

As you will notice, this issue of the Historian has an article about Masonry in Monson. We came upon this newspaper clipping while archiving at the Fuller House Office. I thought it was very interesting and showed the trials and tribulations of the Masons in most of the 19th century and beyond. From time to time, I will try and introduce different stories about some of our

holdings in the Historical Society that I think would be of interest to our readers.

Hope everyone is having a nice summer in spite of the heat. Remember, prior to electricity, there was no air-conditioning or fans and everyone was dressed in wool, if you can image that!

Dennis Swierad, President

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

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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.

EARLY HISTORY OF MASONRY IN MONSON

BY DENNIS SWIERAD

Prior to his death in January, 1906 Edward F. Morris of High Street, wrote his memories of the Masonic movement of Monson, along with other historical facts that he researched, with the caveat that it wasn't to be published until his death. The following is the story he relates about the earliest history of the Honorable Order of Masons in Monson as printed in the Register sometime in 1907. The following article is printed verbatim.

Through the courtesy of Day Spring Lodge of Masons, the Register is permitted to publish this week a communication written to the lodge by E. F. Morris previous to his death. It is interesting owing to the historical facts contained, and will be valued as an example of the clear, concise style of composition of which Mr. Morris was a master. The friends of Mr. Morris who are not Masons will appreciate the courtesy of Day Spring lodge in giving the communication to the public, and the Register wishes to express thanks for the opportunity of printing the sketch from the pen of a valued contributor:

To the W. M., Wardens and
Members of Day Spring
Lodge, F. & A. M.,
Monson, Massachusetts.

Dear Brothers: As, from time to time the members of our fraternity have met that hour which, soon or late, is to all inevitable, and have passed on before us, I have reflected how gratifying it would have been if they could have left to their survivors some word of parting, which might serve as a memento of them ever fresh in our memory.

Such a memorial, however, should be prepared in health, that it may be deliberately spoken; not the weakness of illness, or under the

stress of life's final hours.

With these considerations in mind, and in view of the fact that during recent years my attendance at your meetings has been more infrequent, I have prepared this communication, to be delivered to you after my decease. Whether it shall be for your use only, or be made to others, I leave to the determination of the lodge.

Not only because many of my ancestors, paternal and maternal, belonged to the Masonic order, but because of the high character of others who I understood were members of the institution, I early formed a favorable opinion of it. Any human association will take on its character largely from that of the persons who compose it. Only good men can make a good society, and every society must be judged by its service to the brotherhood of man. As to the members of our order known to me, with few exception, I have esteemed them as good men, good citizens, good brothers. They have exhibited faults and defects of character which I am inclined to overlook. Their virtues have been to me a constant inspiration and grateful remembrance.

Before the organization of Day Spring lodge, in 1862, all its charter members had been long and favorably known to me. Many of them had experienced that trying ordeal known as the anti-Masonic excitement, in the early part of the last century. Those were fearful times; families, churches and communities were separated by what appeared to be irreparable breaches. Of what was at that time the only church in Monson, the pastor, Rev. Alfred Ely, D. D., and about seventeen of its most influential male members, belonged to the

Masonic order, to which other church members were violently and unalterably opposed.

The community was divided into three parties, Masons, anti-Masons and "jacks;" the latter being those who maintained a neutral position. The late Deacon Andrew W. Porter once told me that he was called a "jack," and that the antis hated the "jacks" more heartily than they did the Masons. I don't suppose that Deacon Porter sympathized with the order, but he told me that he considered that Dr. Ely, who was specially the mark for attack by the antis, conducted himself with great wisdom and good sense during the time of this grievous trial. Doctor Ely, for sixty years the active and senior pastor of the church, was a man of unusual ability, marked personality, and strength of character; a learned man for his generation, who, in my judgment, by reason of his position, gifts and prolonged residence, exerted the greatest individual formative influence for good our town has yet enjoyed. His biographer, Doctor Hammond, says: "He was in his own orbit a burning and shining light, in which the people of two generations were willing to rejoice." Doctor Ely had been criticized, among other particulars, for showing more attention to Masons and their families than to others. In his address before a church conference, held in Monson April 15, 1829, quite a number of printed copies of which exist in town, he said: "I am not sensible, my brethren, that my affection for you is partial, unless it be to love those most who exhibit most of the image of Christ."

It is not my purpose to make at this time extended allusion to the persecutions of the order, for less than such they cannot be called.

The Masonic society here was named "Thomas lodge," having been founded in 1796, and its convocations for about thirty years were held in the second story of the building now known as the Century Hotel. Reference for other facts may be had to the history of Thomas lodge already published, also to a sketch of the Vestry, formerly one of our public buildings, which I prepared, and which was published in the Monson Register, in its issue of December 4, 1897. The ultimate result of the troubles was the surrender of the charter of Thomas lodge to the M. W. Grand Lodge, January 14, 1835, and for twenty-five years thereafter Masonry in Monson existed only in memory. This willingness to forego Masonic gatherings and other lodge privileges was at that time claimed to be in imitation of Pauline example, he having declared that "if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth."

On the fourteenth day of January, 1863, I was taking Dr. and Mrs. Ely out for a drive. Among other subjects discussed was that of Free-Masonry. Mrs. Ely said to her husband, alluding to the trouble he had experienced because of his connection with the order, "Mr. Ely, if you were to live your life over again, you would not join the Masons," to which he promptly replied, "I certainly should, if I was to travel much."

About twenty-seven years after the surrender of the charter of Thomas lodge, which had then been revived and re-issued to the Palmer brethren, most of the former oppo-



*Century Hotel
Location of the Masonic Hall
from 1796 to the mid-1820's*

nents having passed away, and a considerable number of residents of Monson having received the Masonic degrees at Palmer, the Masons residing here petitioned the M. W. Grand Lodge for a charter for a new lodge to be convened in Monson. This petition, signed by all the Masons in town, was destroyed by fire in the Grand Lodge Masonic apartments in Boston, April 5, 1864. The names of the Masons residing here at the time, so far as my memory serves me, were as follows:

Rev. Alfred Ely, senior pastor; Hon. Joseph L. Reynolds, manufacturer; Capt. Joel Tucker, farmer on the east hill; David B. Hannum, blacksmith at the quarry; Cyrus W. Holmes, manufacturer; Captain Lucius F. Newton, builder; Jacob Thompson, a country squire; Timothy Packard, farmer, merchant and postmaster; Joel B. Williams, bookkeeper for Merrick Fay & Co.; Otis Bradford, formerly wool sorter for the Monson Woolen Manufacturing company; Daniel D. Moody, manufacturer of spectacles; Sherman Converse, farmer; Nelson F. Rogers, manufacturer of Shaker bonnets; Elisha W. Sholes, manufacturer at the North village, who formerly practiced dentistry; Edward C. Robinson, cashier of the local bank from 1859 to 1864; Elmer B. Miles, merchant; Henry F. Miller, merchant tailor, and

John Thayer, stone cutter.

The petition for the new charter was presented to Doctor Ely for his signature by brother Nelson F. Rogers. Both Dr. and Mrs. Ely were in advanced age, and each attributed to the other some loss of mental faculties. Mrs. Ely, perceiving that her husband was desired to sign a document, said: "Mr. Ely, what is that paper you are about to sign?" to which her husband, with his great natural dignity, replied, "Mrs. Ely, you will know in due time."

As you are aware, Masonic usage is, in the case of proposed new lodges, that they work the first year under a dispensation. This was granted for Day Spring lodge March 13, 1862, W. Brother Joseph L. Reynolds, who gave this lodge its beautiful name, being W. M. The records for the first year were probably destroyed at the burning of the Barton block, which contained the Masonic rooms, in the spring of 1865. My application for the three degrees in Masonry was the first received under the dispensation, and I was the first man to be initiated, passed, and raised thereunder.

The full charter of Day Spring lodge was conferred by the Grand Lodge, March 11, 1863, and the lodge was constituted by the grand officers March 17th.

I remember that on that occasion the M. W. Grand Master publicly requested of W. Brother Reynolds his reasons for selecting for the lodge its particular name. His reply, in words deliberate and impressive, were about as follows: "It was in remembrance of words spoken by the prophet Zacharies, Luke 1, 78 and 79: 'Through the tender mercy of our God whereby the Day-Spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and

in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace.”

The first Barton block, which stood southeasterly from the Congregational church, on land now owned by Dr. P. W. Soule, and occupied by dwellings and market, destroyed as before stated, was owned by Nehemiah P. Barton, tinsmith, who occupied a shop therein. The first story had formerly been used for offices. For a considerable time before its occupancy by the lodge the second story was used for rooms for students in the academy, and was styled Union House, or Union Hall.



Central Block 1884
*Location of the Masonic Hall
Fourth Floor Rear of Building*

our own country, and far east as Jerusalem. With my brethren at home I am in sympathy and charity. I am grateful for your consideration and kindness uniformly exhibited. I regret that I have not been able to extend more efficient service to you, as it may have been needed. Our society, like others human, has been, and will continue to be, subject to variations, according to the advance of civilization, and the needs of humanity. We will expect that in future it will help, aid and assist those in any kind of need, even more efficiently than it has done in the past.

It ought especially to promote the spirit of fraternity, peace and good will, not only among its members, but throughout the universal human brotherhood.

My brothers, farewell; may one resultant of our associations be our near and strong relationship to the “Day Spring” from on high, who is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the everlasting son of the Father. He is the world's Orient, its glad sun-rising. United to Him in faith and love, let all appropriate his gracious promise, “because I live, ye shall live also. May a double portion of His spirit rest upon you, and abide with you, enabling you to erect in your hearts ?? ?? you shall forever adore him. At length, may we be permitted to behold His face in righteousness.

Fraternally yours,
Edward F. Morris.
Monson, Massachusetts



2nd Barton's Block
(two-story building in center left)

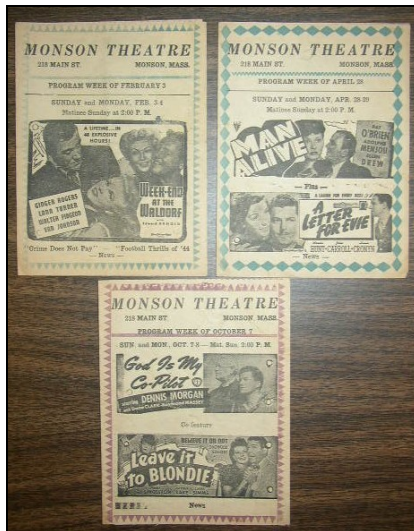
After the destruction of this building, a new and commodious block, 40 x 80, was erected on same site by Henry P. Barton of Hartford, Conn., son of the owner of the first building. The second story of this building was fitted up for the lodge, which occupied it for many years. The lodge also occupied for a time the hall in the storehouse of W. Brother Reynolds, also for five years the upper vestry, which had been fitted up for that purpose. From thence it removed to the Central block, and in 1893 to its present quarters in the bank block.

My associations with my Masonic brethren have been uniformly agreeable and profitable. I have visited lodges in various localities in

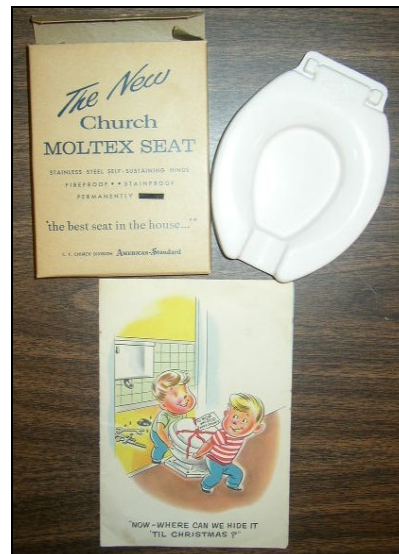


Bank Block

NEW ACQUISITIONS



*Monson Theatre
 "Upcoming Attractions"
 1940's
 (online purchase reimbursed
 through a grant from the Grace
 Makepeace Trust for Historic
 Preservation)*



*C. F. Church Company
 Toilet seat ashtray with
 original box & company
 Christmas card
 (donated by NH resident)*



*Universalist Church Invitation Postcard
 1918
 (online purchase reimbursed through a
 grant from the Grace Makepeace Trust for
 Historic Preservation)*

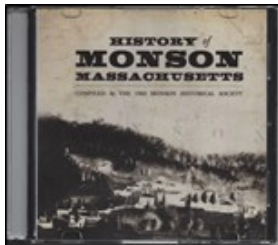
ITEMS FOR SALE

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:



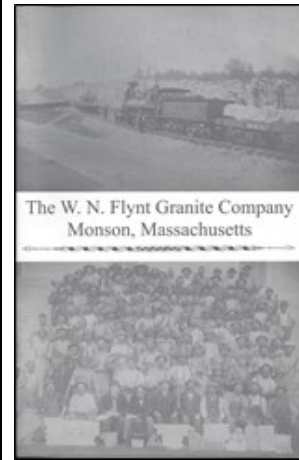
Monson History CD

Monson Historical Society, Inc.

1 Green Street, Suite 1

Monson, MA 01057

Please include your email address to receive our 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

This now completes our series on "Meet the Board of Directors". We hope that it has provided you with some background on the members of the Board of Directors of the Monson Historical Society.

Bill Dominick Member, Board of Directors

Why did you get involved with the Monson Historical Society?

As one of the longest standing members of the Society, I got involved because of my love of history and particularly Monson history.

What is your favorite aspect of serving on the Board?

My favorite aspect of serving is being involved in the restoring the Thompson House Thompson House that has recently been completed.

Tamara Cabey Vice President and Rental Manager

Why did you get involved with the Monson Historical Society?

I joined the Monson Historical Society because of my interest in Monson History.

What is your favorite aspect of serving on the Board?

I enjoy working with other members of the board to acquire and preserve Monson memorabilia for future generations.

**** 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 through **5/1/2017.**

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!