

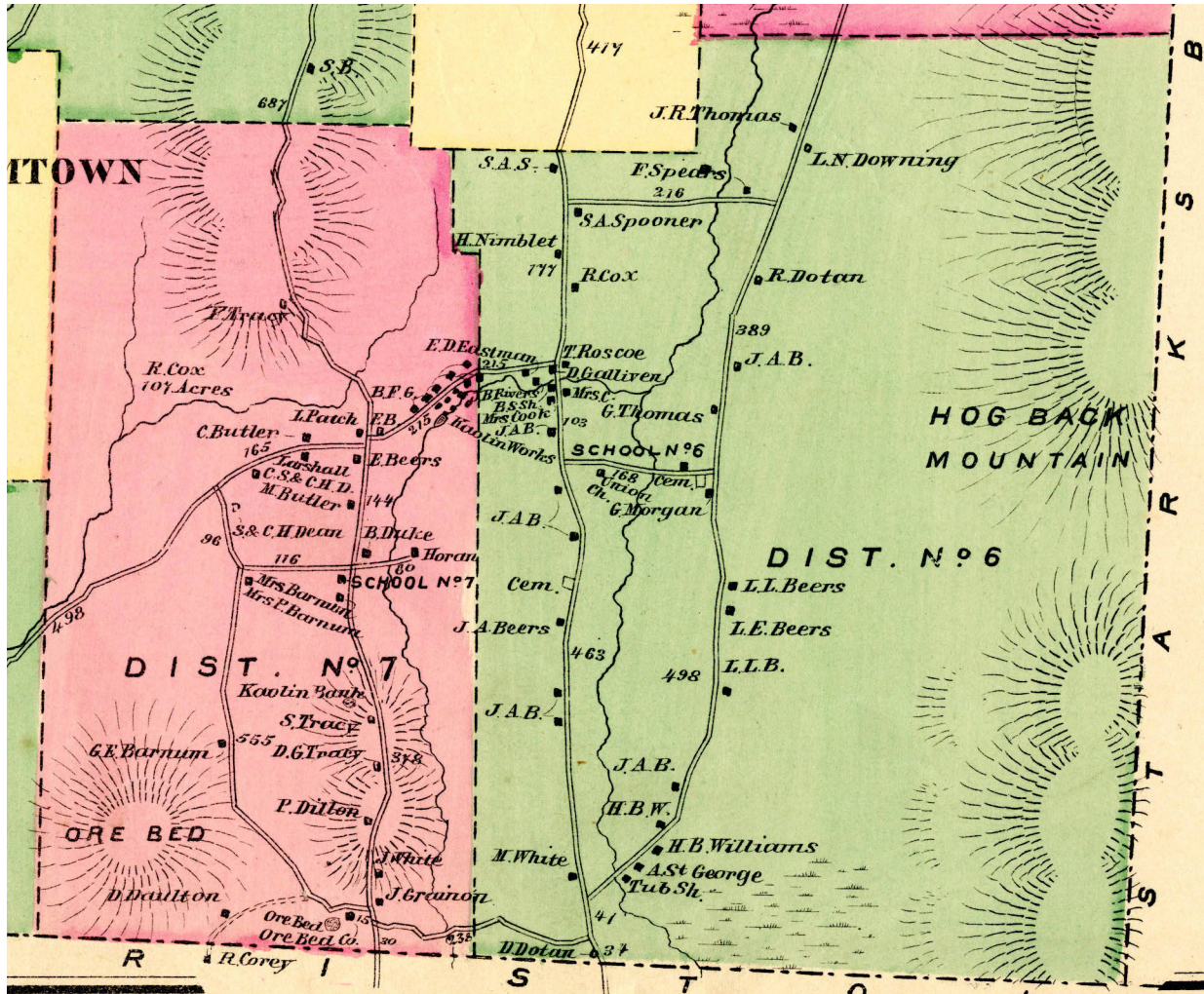


East Monkton, Vermont

A History of its Land and People

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Atlas of Addison County, Vermont. (New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1871)

Lauren Parren, Candace Layn Polzella and Cynthia Walcott
Monkton Museum and Historical Society
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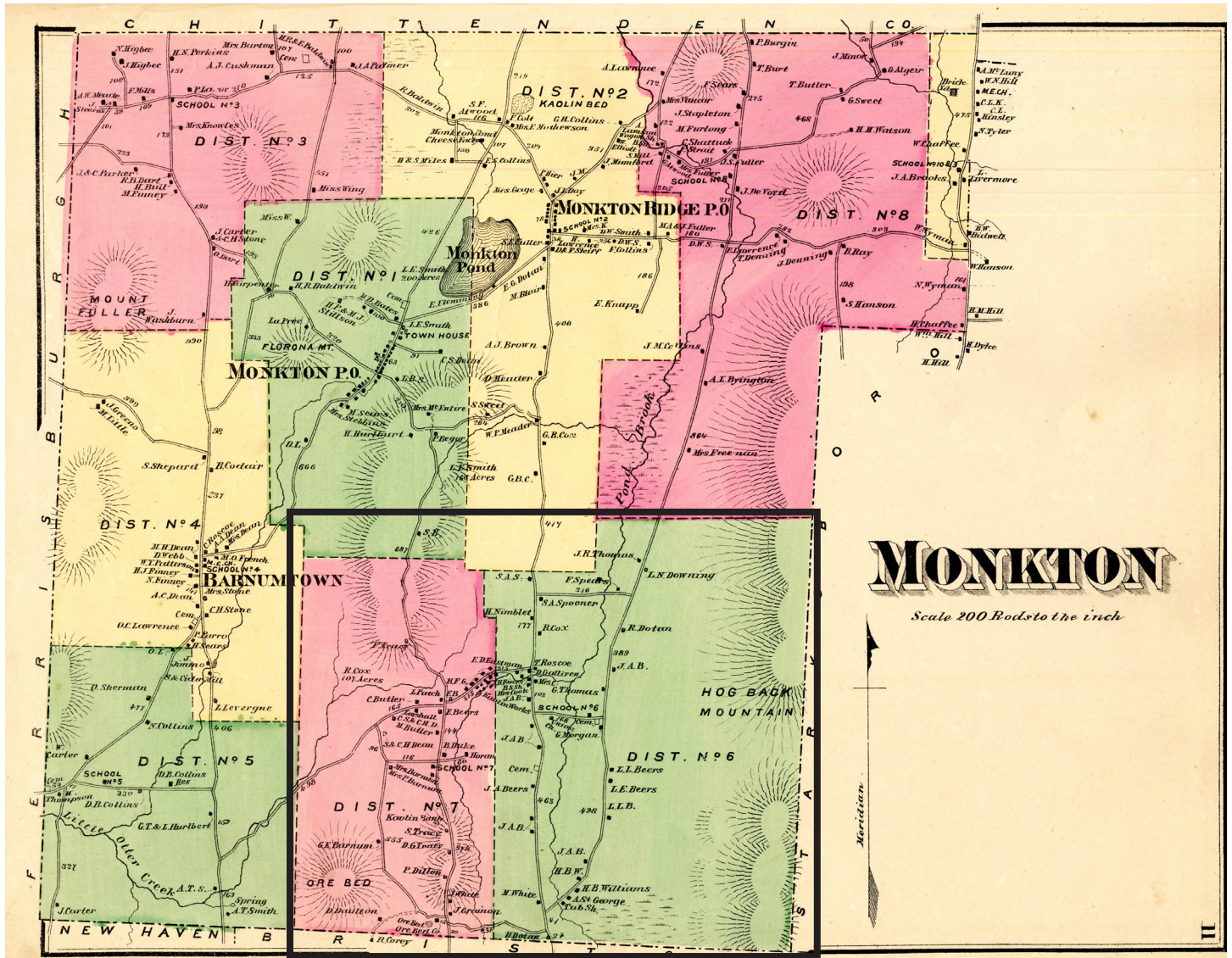
Cover photo of East Monkton Church by Barbara Bosworth

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Introduction

In the town of Monkton, Vermont, there are four hamlets: Barnumtown, East Monkton, Monkton Boro (“the Boro”) and Monkton Ridge (“the Ridge”). The hamlet of East Monkton consists roughly of School District No. 6 and 7, outlined in black on the 1871 “Beers Atlas”¹ map below.



Atlas of Addison County, Vermont. (New York: F. W. Beers & Co., 1871)

Although in recent decades, roads were built to accommodate new housing, the primary roads in East Monkton have remained the same since at least the mid-1800s:

- Barnum Road
- Bristol Road
- Church Road
- Hardscrabble Road
- Mountain Road

East Monkton in Context

Before Written History

Long ago, the land that is now Monkton was covered in thick ice sheets. When the last of successive glaciers here melted rather suddenly, salt water from the Atlantic Ocean flooded in, forming the Champlain Sea.² Geological and fossil evidence of this can be found at the Goodsell Ridge Preserve in Isle La Motte, VT.³

About 12,500 years ago, when the land was largely tundra, people known as Paleoindians migrated here.⁴ Almost certainly, they subsisted on fish and aquatic animals in the Champlain Sea, and large game.⁵

Over time, the Champlain Sea shrank and trees grew, requiring people to adapt. They hunted smaller animals in forests and streams, cultivated land and incorporated plants into their medicines and diet. Settlements grew along waterways.⁶ These people continued to live here until increasing European settlement forced most of them northward into what is now Canada.

We acknowledge the native protectors of these beautiful fields, woods, and waters and the role of present-day farmers, hunters, and homeowners to nurture this land for future generations.⁷

Early Settlement of Vermont by People of European Descent

By the mid-1700s, migration northward from the southern New England colonies began, largely driven by poor agricultural practices causing soil depletion. Farmers struggled to support their families at a time when few alternative occupations existed.

Families tended to move together to provide companionship and mutual aid.⁸ Many who settled in Monkton were from Litchfield County, CT. They took advantage of the Crown Point Road built by the British Army and militia forces in 1759-60 to connect important military forts.⁹

Life was complicated because both New Hampshire and New York colonies claimed the land that became Vermont. This resulted in multiple grants of the same land, and much dispute.¹⁰

Monkton Charter and Early Settlement by Europeans

Governor Benning Wentworth of New Hampshire chartered Monkton in 1762. The town consisted of 24,000 acres, divided into 70 lots in ignorance of the local geography. A few lots were set aside for specific purposes, such as churches and schools. A group of “proprietors”, who pooled their funds together, purchased the remaining lots. Many were land speculators who never settled in town.

In 1763, after the land was surveyed, smaller lots of 200 acres each were laid out. Proprietors drew straws to determine the lots each would get. During the next two decades, little happened to further settlement, aside from a few meetings held in New York or Connecticut.

In 1775, the proprietors held a meeting at the home of Barnabus Barnum in Monkton.¹¹ The meeting was probably the first held in town, indicating that some families had settled here.

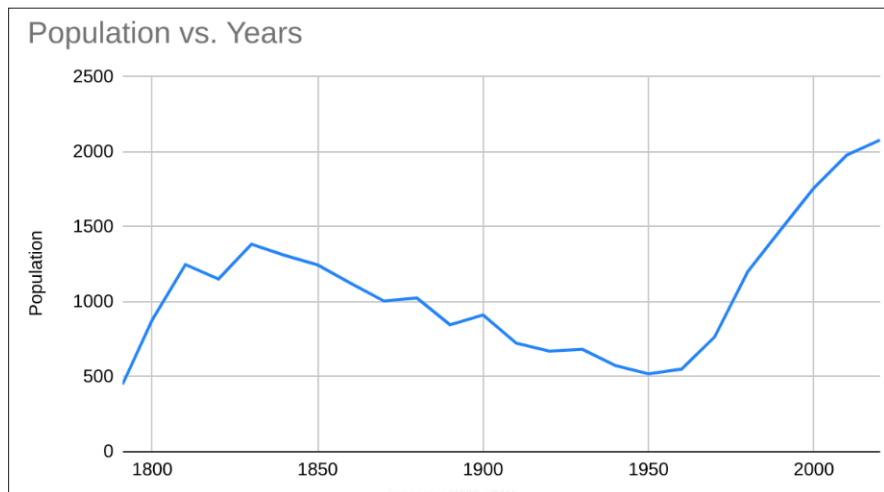
During the American Revolution, most of these early settlers left Monkton, at least for a few years. Life became too dangerous due to activities of the British and their Native American allies in the territory, including the

taking of captives. After the war concluded, families began to return.

Monkton's first town meeting and election of officers occurred on March 28, 1786, in the home of Richard Barnum. That year, the first two roads were laid out, one from north to south and the other from north to west.¹² Over time, the original 200-acre lots were further divided, resulting in smaller and smaller lots.

Rise and Fall of Monkton's Population

Monkton grew rapidly in the early decades of the 1800s. By 1840, a decline in population began that would continue until 1950.



Population trends in Monkton mirrored those in Vermont. The year 1836 was record-breaking for out-migration from Vermont. Many factors drove this migration: depletion of land and forests, an increase in crop pests, much improved transportation to the states and territories to the west, including canals.

Lastly, "sheep fever" hit Vermont. Sheep farmers bought many smaller farms, consolidating land for grazing, causing many former residents to move west. Vermont was almost completely deforested during this period.¹³

It is ironic that poor agricultural practices caused people to move to Vermont in the 1780s and then caused their departure in the 1830s.

Beginning in the 1950's, the population of Monkton began to climb due to improved economic conditions, increased industry in the area and better roads.¹⁴ This was also the period of "back to the land" living. People were now moving into Vermont.¹⁵

The Natural Environment



View of Hogback Mountain from Mount Florona by John Van Hoesen
https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/geo/OpenFile/VanHoesen2016_Monkton.pdf

Mountains

Hogback Mountain is the highest point in Monkton, running along most of the town's eastern boundary. The parallel, smaller north-south ridge further to the west is called Little Hogback Mountain.

Johnson Finney [1775-1859], a farmer and sawyer in Monkton with a keen interest in the early history of the town, compiled a manuscript on Monkton's history about 1856.¹⁶ He describes Hogback Mountain as originally heavily treed by beech and maple trees, with some groves of pine, hemlock, and red cedar on the highest slopes. The hills provided habitat for wolves, bears, wildcats, panthers as well as beaver, otter, minks, and raccoons. Early settlers cut timber for building materials and fencing, and to provide grazing land for sheep. Long after Mr. Finney's time, timber on and around Hogback Mountain was harvested for profit.

For further information about the trees and plants growing on Hogback Mountain and in the Pond Brook Watershed, see [Key Species of Monkton](#) written by Lyra Brennan in 2017.

Water

Bristol Pond, also known as Winona Lake, is just southeast of Monkton. It feeds the meandering Pond Brook, which drains into Lewis Creek. The pond and surrounding wetlands are rich in biodiversity. The pond has been important hunting and fishing grounds for at least 12,500 years.¹⁷

See Lyra Bennett's [An Ecological Inventory and Assessment of the Pond Brook Region in Monkton, Vermont](#) for more information on the Pond Brook watershed, its geology, plant and animal life. It contains aerial photos from the 1942 and 2014, showing interesting changes in the landscape.

Weather and Natural Disasters

Throughout history, weather has been a daily concern, especially for farmers. Heat, cold, lack of rain, too much rain: all affect the planting, growing and harvesting of crops and the health and safety of livestock.

The Hurricane of 1950 affected Monkton dramatically. This vast storm struck the New England states on November 25, 1950, causing damage throughout Vermont, especially west of the Green Mountains. During this event, 75 mph winds resulted in many collapsed houses and barns. Much of the state was without electricity or telephone service for an extended period.¹⁸



Layn Barn at 3204 Bristol Road, 1950. Photo courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

Farmers in Addison County alone lost 1,000 cows, many of them being crushed when haylofts collapsed on them. The hurricane flattened a barn owned by Wright Layn at 3204 Bristol Road.

Farmers' Loss, Heavy

Farmers of the state lost heavily, reports from rural areas made apparent. Sidney Clafin, jr., who operates a 70-head dairy farm in North Ferrisburg is reported to have lost 55 head; John Provoncha of Monkton lost his barn and cows while his home was made uninhabitable. A new barn in Monkton was blown down with loss of livestock. Hundreds of dairy livestock were crushed under collapsing barns in the state.

Wright Layn of Monkton lost "only about 14 head of cattle and one barn—that's all."
He has more than 100 head of cattle and a big barn left, while across the valley his Monkton Ridge neighbors lost most of their cows and the majority of their buildings.

Rutland Herald, 30 Nov 1950, page 12

The Barre Daily Times, 27 Nov 1950, page 1

Fires were also common. Local newspapers report numerous stories about fires that caused destruction to homes, barns and other buildings. In early days, landowners and neighbors fought these fires. Later, fire departments from nearby towns, including Bristol, Hinesburg and Ferrisburgh responded. In 1967, Monkton organized its own volunteer department.

Forest fires have occurred sporadically on Hogback Mountain, typically caused by lightning. Given the lack of roads, fighting fires on the mountain has always been a challenge.

Fire at East Monkton Friday Night.

The residence of J. A. and C. L. Beers in East Monkton was destroyed by fire Friday night. The fire was discovered about 10 o'clock: the family had retired and J. A. Beers and wife barely escaped with their lives. Everything in the line of crockery, provisions, etc., was destroyed. The loss will reach fully \$4000 with an insurance of about \$1000. Little or nothing was saved. The loss falls heavily on the Messrs. Beers, who were left nearly destitute of clothing, while in the line of catables, furniture and crockery they are entirely destitute. Previous to the fire the family had dishes sufficient to set a table for 100 guests and the insurance will not pay for more than two-thirds of the household goods.

The Burlington Free Press, 11 Feb 1889, page 1

The forest fire on Hogback Mountain which required the services of volunteers from all over the county as well as firemen pointed up the need for towns to have trained men and equipment for this type of fire fighting. The blaze sporadically broke out from last Tuesday until Sunday and even after the long hours of rain Monday still simmered in places. Fighting a fire that is spread out along a long line extending up a mountain calls for men with experience and training.

Addison County Independent, 16 May 1952, page 2

Community Life

Since the early days, East Monkton has been a close-knit community. Johnson Finney, mentioned previously, noted “The first settlers were noted for their friendly social feeling towards each other and familiar friendly visit [sic] with their neighbors which included all within 12 or 15 miles and was better acquainted with all of the circumstances of those within that distance than they did in aftertimes of those within a stone’s throw of their dwellings. . .”¹⁹

Families pitched in to help each other where needed – every day, and in times of joy or sorrow. Local newspapers in Bristol, Vergennes and Middlebury had East Monkton correspondents for many decades in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Their columns contained news of births, deaths and marriages, who was “on the sick list”, and many items about social events taking place at schools, or more often in people’s homes.

Dances, card parties, fundraising events, picnics, birthday and anniversary parties were all held. East Monkton folk got together regularly, and in large numbers.

The dancing wave has struck town. The people have assembled in surprise parties of several descriptions—where they were needed, and where they were not needed. They are cultivating sociability to quite an extent, and the complaint that the farmers’ life was altogether too isolated, seems to be done away with, for the present at least. Church donation parties, social parties and candy pulls, will not quite answer, and nothing will express the irrepressible hilarity but shaking the fantastic toe. Several homes that have not been opened for years, and some that have never before given social dancing parties, have been the scene of much conviviality.

Enterprise and Vermonter, 23 Feb 1883, page 3

Schools

The Vermont Constitution, written in 1779, required each town to have at least one school. By 1788, there were already two schools in Monkton. Two more school districts were created that year.^{20, 21}

A Monkton resident who attended Monkton schools in the 1950s recalls piles of worksheets to keep everyone busy, which she dutifully worked through.

She loved listening to the older students when they were working on the blackboards. When they were diagramming sentences, she couldn’t wait to learn about that because it looked like they were drawing spaceships!

She recalls the need for someone to bring fresh water to school each day, usually one of the closer neighbors.

(Oral History, Marlene French Russell, January 29, 2023. Interviewer Lauren Parren)

By 1880, there were nine one-room schools in Monkton,²² including the Morgan and Kaolin Hill Schools in East Monkton. Children from nearby families attended these schools for primary grades. Many ended their schooling with grade 8. High school students traveled to a nearby town, some boarding with a local family during the week.

In one-room schoolhouses, a single teacher was responsible for providing the curriculum for eight grades, including spelling, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, history of the United States Constitution, good behavior, physiology . . . citizenship and free hand drawing.²³

According to Monkton annual reports, most teachers were women. This was true across Vermont.²⁴ A rural teacher was typically a young woman of about twenty-three with minimal training. She lived in the same town as the school and walked or drove from one to five miles to get to school.²⁵

Teacher salaries were “so meager they often boarded with families whose children attended their school.”²⁶ Teachers apparently moved from family to family throughout the year

with little say in where they lived.²⁷ Many teachers were paid a small amount to be the janitor of the school and other odd jobs. In 1904, Mary Dalton not only taught full time but also was paid to be the superintendent of schools, janitor, and purchaser of supplies.²⁸

Superintendents' reports often mentioned the challenges of being a teacher, suggesting a respect and appreciation not reflected in their salaries. "The greatest factor in schools is the teacher. She surpasses in importance the building, equipment, superintendent, books, supplies, and all else, and Monkton has applied its effort to this factor in a commendable degree."²⁹

Many community activities were school-related. Newspaper articles reported that families gathered at schools to celebrate various holidays. On Memorial Day, students decorated the graves of veterans in nearby cemeteries. Dances, card parties, and other gatherings were held in schools, providing entertainment for families in this small community. The East Monkton Church was also a focal point for the community, both for worship and social gatherings.

By 1956, with transportation more readily available, students attended school with their classmates as follows:

Grades 1 through 3 - Morgan or Ridge Schools

Grades 4 and 5 - Barnumtown

Grade 6 - Boro (although a few sixth graders attended Morgan School)

Grades 7 and 8 - Boro

As soon as 1958, the superintendent reported that student achievement was improving with fewer grades per teacher.³⁰ With minor adjustments, this arrangement of grades continued until the new Monkton Central School opened in 1960.

Kaolin Hill School



Kaolin Hill School, circa 1923. Courtesy of Monkton Museum and Historical Society

The Kaolin Hill School, in School District No. 7, was also known as the school on “Tommy Town Hill”, for reasons not yet known. Its use as a school is evident in its architecture, including the bell tower. It is now a private home.

Maps show a school at this location as early as 1857.³¹ In the 1860s, new houses built on Hardscrabble Road for workers at the kaolin works added a considerable number of children needing schooling here. The current structure was built in 1889.^{32, 33}

From the early 1900s, the community held dances and “sociables” in area homes to raise funds to buy items for the school, including a Victrola, records, and a clock.

In 1928, sixty people attended a picnic sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association. “Dinner was served by the ladies at noon. Fishing and sports were enjoyed by the pupils.”³⁴ That year, fundraisers were held to enable the school to become a “standard school.”³⁵ In 1931, these requirements were met; a plaque was proudly placed on the wall.³⁶

No doubt there was much excitement when electric lights were installed in 1939. Various small improvements were made in following years.³⁷ Dances and holiday parties continued with great regularity.

In hindsight, superintendent’s reports suggest the end was in sight for this school, important as it had been to the community. In 1947, the six schools in Monkton had a total student population of 101.³⁸ Only 10 students attended Kaolin Hill School.

By 1948, the superintendent expressed concern about the number of students in some Monkton schools: “No teacher can be expected to do a satisfactory job with 35 or more pupils in 8 grades.”³⁹ New ways of combining students had to be considered.

Kaolin Hill School finally closed in 1951. In 1961, following the opening of the Monkton Central School, it was put up for sale.

The school house on Tommy Town Hill is completed. It is the first school house that has been built in town in many years and is worthy of note. It is well constructed, high between floors, has a large new stove, a good register in the wall over head for ventilation, seated with double independent seats purchased at Rocky Dale in Bristol, where they are manufactured. Good cloak rooms for the convenience of the teacher and scholars. The grounds have been graded around the house and the play ground is neat and attractive. Much credit should be given to the building committee for the work they have done to make a warm, pleasant building for the children of the coming generation to enjoy, and a bell will soon be placed in the belfry built for the purpose.

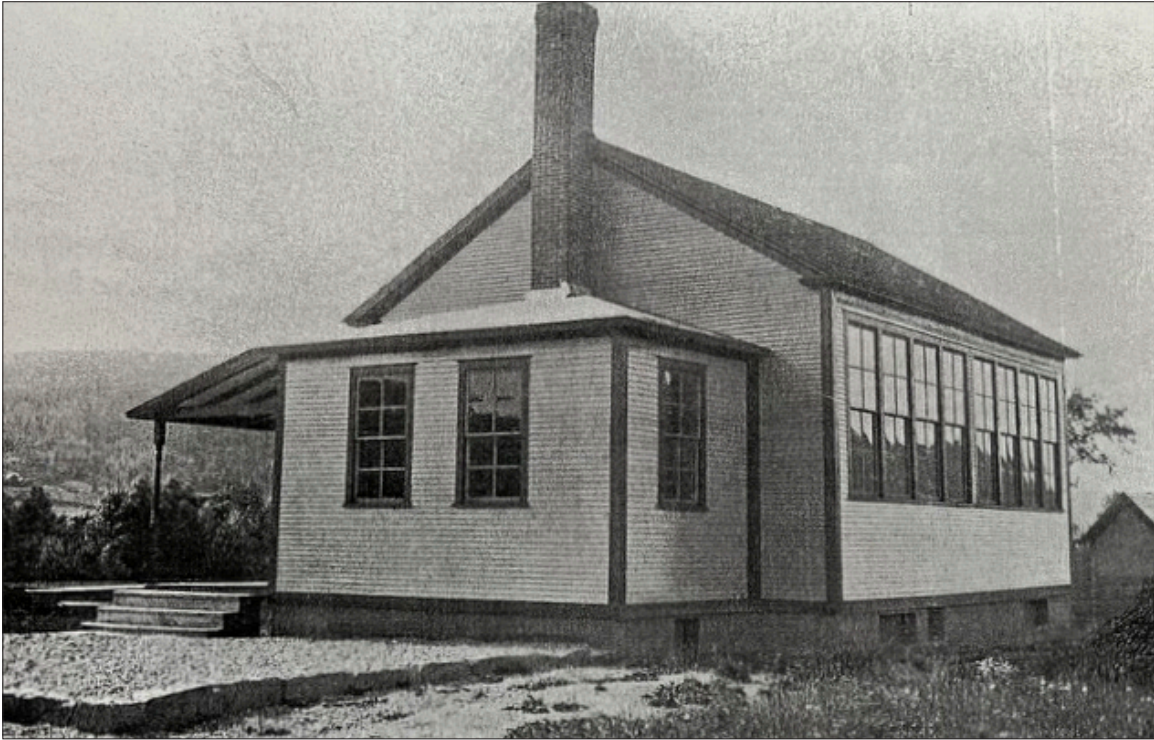
The Enterprise and Vermonter, 4 Oct 1889, page 2

Current students might find it hard to imagine listening to lessons for students in other grades all day.

Viola Brace, who attended Kaolin Hill School for eight years in the late 1940s-1951, recalled that school was fun for the most part, but having to wait for the painfully slow beginner readers drove her crazy! Schools became a tight knit community with the children helping each other, and the teacher, as needed. Viola was often enlisted to help with the younger ones to practice times tables or spelling words. Someone had to get the fire started in the morning, usually one of the boys who lived closest to the school. If it wasn’t warm enough when school started, they turned on the Victrola and square danced to keep warm.

(Oral History, Viola Brace,
May 19, 2023. Interviewer
Lauren Parren)

Morgan School



Newly Renovated Morgan School. Vermont School Report 1913-1914

The Morgan School, in School District #6, was on the north side of Church Road where the house at 134 Church Road now stands. First built in 1833 on land leased to the town by John Thomas,⁴⁰ the school changed over time, but always faced west and “could be reached from either the west or east side of the hill by a dirt road which curved past the south end of the building.”⁴¹

In 1913-14, the Morgan School became somewhat famous in Vermont for its modern new building construction: “The East Monkton building is a new venture in rural school building and, consequently, is much discussed. It represents the last word in country school construction and will long serve as a model. The State Board of Education are [sic] pleased with it and will have a picture of the building produced and published in the book that is sent to all parts of the state.”⁴² The town spent \$1,925.87 (roughly \$57,000 in 2023 dollars) for this major upgrade.

At the new school, the entrance door opened to a small cloakroom. In the classroom, slate blackboards covered most of the walls. A round stove in the back of the room heated the classroom. Two doors on the back wall led to parallel halls to the outhouses. One was for the boys and one for the girls.

The 1920s movement to standardize schools in Vermont set requirements for location of windows, lighting, heating, ventilation, sanitation, school supplies and other aspects of education. Teachers were required to have 24 weeks teaching experience before her school could be rated “Superior.”⁴³ It was a matter of some pride when in 1930 the Morgan School earned the distinction of becoming a Standard School, receiving a plaque to post outside the school.



The Superintendent urged wider use of this school, where old and young could meet to “renew the old habit of sociability.”⁴⁴

Until 1937, the school operated without electricity, so those big schoolhouse windows were important. Disaster struck with a hurricane in 1950, blowing the roof completely off. For a short period, students attended school at the Kaolin Hill School. “Two teachers and 30 students made a go of it there.”⁴⁵ Then, the Shattuck School was re-opened to house the Morgan School students pending repair of the roof. At that time, the roof was replaced by asphalt shingles. The bell tower was not replaced.

In 1959, the decision to create a new Monkton Central School made the Morgan School obsolete. The building was torn down in 1962, after about 125 years as a school and community hub.⁴⁶

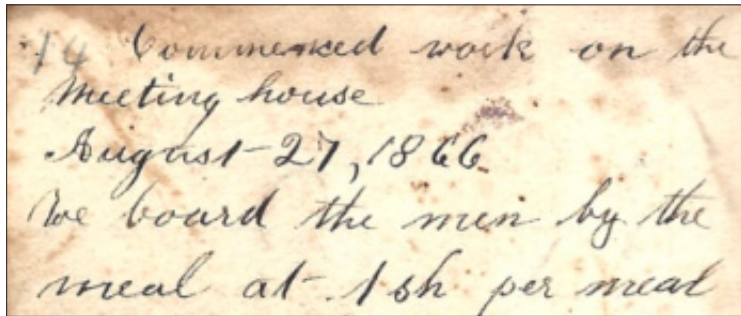
East Monkton Church



East Monkton Church. Courtesy Barbara Bosworth

Early in Monkton's history, religious services and prayer meetings were held in private homes, schools and the town hall. In 1811, the first church was built in Barnumtown.

In the 1860s, East Monkton experienced an increase in population due to the kaolin industry. The community began to envision its own church. John A. Beers, a local farmer, sold the land to the church stewards for one dollar.⁴⁷ Construction began in August 1866. Workers boarded with George and Evalyne Morgan, around the corner on Mountain Road, for \$1 per meal. The family turned the board money back into the building fund.⁴⁸



Commenced work on the
Meeting house
August-27, 1866.
We board the men by the
meal at 1 sh per meal

*Account Book of George and Evalyne (Rutherford) Morgan.
Courtesy Mark Burritt*

The church was dedicated as a Methodist Episcopal church six months later, on February 21, 1867.⁴⁹ At the same time, a double wedding ceremony took place. The completed church cost \$2,000 and accommodated 250 people.⁵⁰

Located on the top of a knoll, the church is visible from all directions. It is a "fine example of late Greek Revival architecture. . . representative of the type of building erected throughout New England by religious societies, of all types."⁵¹ In 1881, sheds were built on the west side of the property to shelter horses from winter winds.⁵²

One pastor served this church and the two other Methodist Episcopal churches in town. Sunday worship services and Sabbath School (Sunday School), baptisms, weddings, and, in later years, funerals were held in the church.

As the largest gathering place in East Monkton, the church became a hub for both community and religious events. Children from Monkton's schools gathered here to observe various holidays. There were often speeches and music provided by the town band.⁵³

The community held picnics, socials and suppers.⁵⁴ Concerts, sometimes combined with box sociables,⁵⁵ featured the pupils of a singing instructor or "some of the ablest singers in town".⁵⁶ Lyceums⁵⁷ featuring debates, recitations and speeches were popular for a number of years.⁵⁸ Community organizations, such as the Happy Sisters Sunshine Club⁵⁹ and the East Monkton Cemetery Association,⁶⁰ used the space for their activities.

Church members raised funds, and organized work parties to maintain the church. In 1891, while repairs were made to damage caused by high winds, services were held in the nearby Morgan School.⁶¹

In 1918, the women of the church organized as the Loyal Workers.⁶² They oversaw the creation of kitchen and dining space in 1920. These were "much appreciated by the community as there has been no convenient place to hold social gatherings."⁶³



Services were held Sunday in the church, the first for several weeks. It has been repaired on the inside, which was injured a few years ago by a severe wind. It has been much improved, as it is ceiled and painted overhead. The side walls are papered, new carpeting around the altar and in the pulpit. Much credit is due to those who so earnestly engaged and assisted in the work.

Bristol Herald, 27 Aug 1891, page 2

By the 1930s, worship services and other activities were held at the church on only an irregular basis. In 1944, the realities of World War II meant that many men and women were at war or working in defense industries.

A request was made to “all men available” to meet at Little’s store in Monkton Ridge to participate in a “bee to cut wood” to heat the churches at the Ridge and East Monkton.”⁶⁴

Interest in maintaining the building waxed and waned over the years.

1952 – The church was decorated and rededicated.

1966 – A church service celebrated the centennial of the start of church construction.

1976 – At the time of the United States Bicentennial, the church was painted, a new roof added, and front steps and railing installed.

2003 – Volunteers resumed work to preserve the church.

2005 – The East Monkton Church Association incorporated.

2020 – The Association purchased the building.

Today, the building is not affiliated with any denomination. The Association, supported by private donations, continues to work on preservation of the building and oversees its use by the community.

Of the two churches in town built for Methodist Episcopal congregations, only the East Monkton Church still stands. The church has maintained its historic integrity over time. In 2023, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.⁶⁵

East Monkton Post Office and Stores



Sign from the East Monkton Post Office. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

During the 1800s, people went to post offices to pick up their mail. East Monkton residents traveled to their designated post office at Monkton Boro, Monkton Ridge or Bristol.

In the spring of 1891, East Monkton residents successfully petitioned for their own post office. It opened in July 1891 in the home of Carter L. Beers.⁶⁶ About one hundred people gathered to celebrate the arrival of the first mail.⁶⁷

A stagecoach delivered mail daily to the post office. Patrons still went to the post office to pick up their mail, but now it was closer.



Postmark of East Monkton Post Office, 1893. Courtesy Larry Zeno

In 1892, Carter L. Beers added a store to the premises, selling a little of everything.

In 1893, Congress established Rural Free Delivery (RFD), with a goal to provide free mail delivery to people living in rural areas across the country. The first RFD was established in Vermont in 1896. On 25 October 1, 1901, RFD reached East Monkton.⁶⁸ The same year, the East Monkton post office closed.

The Beers store had previously closed in 1896.

East Monkton would have only one more store in the hamlet. In 1919, Alexander Bown opened a store in his home on Bristol Road.⁶⁹ The exact location is unknown. In 1922, Bown bought the Roscoe farm on the corner on Hardscrabble and Bristol Roads, at 3091 Bristol Road, operating the store at that location at least through 1929.⁷⁰

Roads and Transportation

As noted on page 6, the first two roads were laid out in Monkton in 1786, at a time when few settlers lived here. It is hard to imagine the challenge of constructing roads through forested land. Some were wide enough only for pedestrians, horses and perhaps oxen. Others may have been wide enough for a wagon. During this early period, planks were sometimes laid down on the road (like a boardwalk) to make travel easier through muddy terrain.

Out of necessity, most local roads avoided Hogback Mountain. Apparently, at one time there was a road over the mountain between Monkton and Starksboro, called Stagecoach road.⁷¹

Originally, Monkton included land east of Hogback Mountain. Residents living there had great difficulty traveling to the center of Monkton to attend town meetings, pay taxes, etc. For this reason and others, this section of town was ceded to Starksboro in 1797.⁷²

In 1779, Vermont passed a law imposing a tax on every male age 16 – 60, in the form of labor. The law required each man to work four days annually on local roads, with a compensation of 18 shillings per day. Neglecting this duty could result in a fine of 30 shillings per day.

Towns could appoint one or more surveyors of highways to oversee citizens working off the tax. Towns were also required to survey their highways, and keep good records. Selectmen had the authority to lay out public and private roads within their town. In 1792, the law was amended to allow road surveyors to order residents to clear snow from the roads, and to assist with emergency repairs to roads and bridges.

JUST STOP
AND SEE WHAT
YOU CAN BUY
AT THE
East Monkton Store.

Flour by the barrel or sack, buck-wheat flour, graham, rolled oats, Indian table meal, home grown pork, home tried lard, cottclene, fish, salmon, cod and ciscoes, herring and halibut, tripe.

Pie Timber.
Mince, apple and berry. Lemons oranges, pine apples, cocoanuts, candy, nuts of all kinds, stationery, pens, pencils and ink. Patent medicines.

Soaps.
Babbit's, Star, Lenox, Dingmans, Rival, Castile, Shaving, White Cloud, Sapolio.

Spices, pine tar, carpet tacks, can goods, sardines, yeast, stove blacking, rising sun and enamaline, baking powder, thread, tobacco, kerosene, salt, brooms, mopsticks, crackers, Chase & Sanborn's celebrated teas and coffee, sugar and soda, carpenters chalk, boots and shoes, overalls, socks, frocks, paris green and helibore, garden seeds and cigars. Smith Bros cough drops, Rubbers for the small ones and the large ones, saltpetre and allum, lantern globes and chimneys, clothes pins, fishing tackle, blacking brushes and blueing paddles, whetstones, beans, porus plasters, Kent's condition powders.

Bristol Herald, 9 Nov 1893, page 8

The store and post office are booming, both doing a good business. East Monkton is having a boom, a daily mail, a grocery and provision store, a feed store, blacksmith shop, M E church, school house, kaolin works, wheelwright shop and creamery.

Bristol Herald, 13 Oct 1892, page 5

This law, with variations on the number of days, and rate of compensation, remained in effect until 1892 when a money tax was established statewide.⁷³

In the first half of the 1800s, major roads needed to accommodate stagecoaches, the primary vehicle for the transportation of people, smaller goods and especially information. Even so, roads were much narrower than today's roads. Two-lane roads were uncommon.

According to Monkton Town Reports, the town first acquired a snow plow in 1928. Before this the snow on roads was packed down with a roller pulled by horses or oxen.

Roads in Monkton were primarily dirt into the 1960s. Mud season was a perpetual challenge. In 1945, with state financial support, Monkton began a slow process of "hard surfacing" (paving) its main roads. By 1961, the road through Monkton between Hinesburg and Bristol had been paved, but the road between Vergennes and Monkton Ridge was only partially paved.⁷⁴

Ralph, the little son of Frank Meader, while crossing the road that leads to the Borough, sank in the mud up to his arms. His cries for help brought assistance and with much difficulty he was extricated. His overalls and boots were taken out later. The road commissioner has since fenced up that piece of road.

Middlebury Register, 27 Mar 1903, page 7

Wiring East Monkton: Telephones and Electricity

The earliest telephone lines in East Monkton were laid out in 1892, directly connecting from Vergennes to the kaolin works (see page 23 for more information about kaolin mining). In 1895, Bristol and East Monkton households could communicate by telephone. By 1897, East Monkton and Monkton Ridge were connected.

Although Vermont's population centers began to have electricity by 1900, it would be a long time before rural areas saw electricity. It was just too expensive to generate and run lines to these areas. In addition, it was necessary to wire each building, a cost paid by the property owner. In 1930, only 13% of Vermont farms had electricity. By 1946, 90% of farms were electrified.⁷⁵ Likely, East Monkton got electricity sometime in the late 1930s.

Industries in East Monkton

Farms and Farming

Until fairly recently, East Monkton was primarily a farming community. In the 1800s, farms were small and family run, the goal being to meet the family's needs. People and their teams of horses or oxen did all tasks. Blocks of ice harvested from nearby bodies of water provided refrigeration. Farm families developed useful skills, such as blacksmithing, tub making, spinning and weaving, for their own survival as well as to barter in the community.⁷⁶

When sheep were introduced to Vermont about 1811, they became the predominant farm animal. During this period, farms became larger, and more specialized. By the 1840s, competition from the Midwest led to a decline in this industry. By 1860, farmers were transitioning to dairy farming.⁷⁷

Farming was a family affair. All family members, including children of all ages, were responsible for chores. Tasks included milking cows, cleaning the barn and outhouse, splitting firewood, washing clothes, tending fields for crop production and home gardening for fresh food and preservation.

Before the 1920s, farmers used horses, mules or oxen to pull rudimentary plows and other machinery. People harvested crops by hand. During the 1920s, tractors began to be available, lightening the work dramatically. At first, tractors had all metal wheels; about 1930, they began to have rubber tires. Wright Layn's McCormick-Deering 10-20 was the first such tractor in Addison County.⁷⁸

In the late 1930s, when electricity finally became available in East Monkton, running water in homes and barns, indoor plumbing, refrigeration, and centralized heating systems made life easier for farm families. Milking machines came into use during this period. Refrigeration made it possible for farms to store milk in bulk tanks on site, eliminating the need to deliver milk daily to local creameries.

World War II dominated the 1940s. Everywhere in the U. S., young men became soldiers, causing a shortage of farm workers when millions of soldiers and civilians, at home and in allied countries, needed feeding. Food was rationed. Farmers were pressured to step up production even in the face of a shortage of farm equipment, parts, and gas. The shortages sparked innovations. During this period, lighter weight, more powerful tractors became available. With better equipment, farm production greatly increased.⁷⁹

The farms in East Monkton continued to be primarily dairy farms into the latter half of the 20th century. According to the 1950 census, of the 105 households in Monkton, 69% of the heads of household were farmers or farm workers.⁸⁰

During the 1950s and 1960s, financial pressures to increase production contributed to East Monkton farmers adding acreage to their farms. By the 1970s, farmers began to sell building lots to family members and others. Since that time, the number of farms in East Monkton has greatly decreased. Many new homes have been built in East Monkton on land once used for farming.

My father, Bernard Bushey, born in 1926, attended the Kaolin School. . . .

They lived probably not even a quarter mile from the school. Dad said he had to get up early to help milk the cows, and by the time the milking was done, and the mucking out of stalls, and feeding the cows, there wasn't much time left before he went back into the house for a quick bowl of oatmeal before running off to school.

From Brenda Bushey Tierney, personal communication to Lauren Parren
March 11, 2023.



Edward and "Jackie" Barnum on the Barnum Farm, East Monkton. Year unknown. Courtesy Tom Kenyon

In the 21st century, many changes have come to farming. Milk prices have declined to the point where it is difficult to break even. Much greater awareness of the impact of pesticides, farm runoff, etc. on the environment, and consequently on people, has led to changed practices. In recent decades, farmers have necessarily moved into new areas of farming, with more of a focus on organic methods and diversification of farm products.

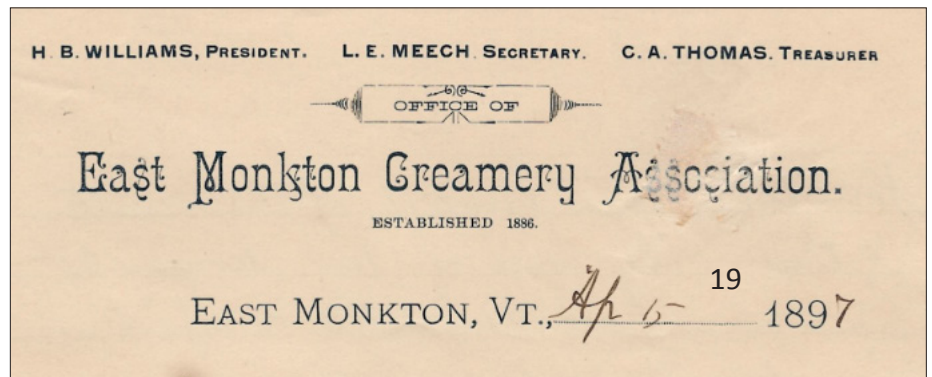
One organization, the Grange, had a long history of supporting farm families in Monkton. Founded in 1867 as The National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, the Grange is an organization promoting the wellbeing of families,

particularly farm families. For many decades, the Monkton's Florona Grange No. 540 held regular meetings at its hall in Monkton Boro.

Creameries

In the 1800s, local farmers had small herds of cows, producing milk primarily for their own consumption. As farmers began to have larger herds, it was necessary to quickly convert milk to more the shelf stable products of butter or cheese. This required equipment such as holding vats, separators to separate cream from milk, and churns. Farmers transported their extra milk by horse and wagon to the nearest creamery. Creameries operated seasonally, beginning in the spring when milk became available from cows who had just calved.

In Monkton alone, there were several creameries. The Thomas Brothers of Mountain Road began operation in 1886 as the East Monkton Creamery Association. They moved their large milk house near the creek to serve as the creamery.⁸¹ The following year, they added a second separator to accommodate the large amount of milk received.⁸² Two years later, they located a third separator in Monkton Boro. Eventually, the Donahue Creamery would operate at this site.⁸³



Courtesy Mark Burritt

The East Monkton Creamery came under management of a Boston firm in 1903. Cream from milk was separated in East Monkton and taken to a creamery in Bristol to be made into butter.⁸⁴ By 1918, farmers in East Monkton were sending their milk to New Haven Junction.⁸⁵ The Thomas Brothers ran two trucks daily to transport the milk.⁸⁶

Ice Harvesting

Before electricity came to East Monkton in the late 1930s, food was kept cold in icehouses and iceboxes (refrigerators). East Monkton residents and businesses harvested thick blocks of ice from nearby ponds, including small ponds at the kaolin and iron mining sites. Ice was packed in sawdust in icehouses, where it lasted for months.

Timber Harvesting and Sawmills

Timber was harvested on Hogback Mountain and vicinity for building materials and to produce charcoal, the fuel of choice for iron smelting (see Iron Ore Mining on page 22) and blacksmith forges. Cedar and swamp ash were harvested from the swampy areas in the Pond Brook watershed.

Local newspapers in 1882 ran numerous articles about “hop poles” being harvested in Monkton and other towns in Addison County. These poles, cut to about 22 feet, were shipped to central New York, where they were used to support tall-growing hop plants.

The Thomas Brothers, of Mountain Road, ran a lumbering business and sawmill. Apparently, some were concerned about the amount of lumbering by the Thomases: “The Thomas Bro’s are at work on Hogback mountain getting off a large amount of wood and logs. They are drivers and the mountain will ache.”⁸⁷



Ice Harvesting on Monkton Pond, circa 1915. Photo by Clark Thomas, courtesy of Margaret French Sunderland



Map of Addison County, Vermont” by H.F. Walling, 1857

For many years, a sawmill operated on the southern end of Mountain Road, near where Pond Brook crosses. In earlier times, the sawmill was on the east side of the road, as seen on the map to the left.

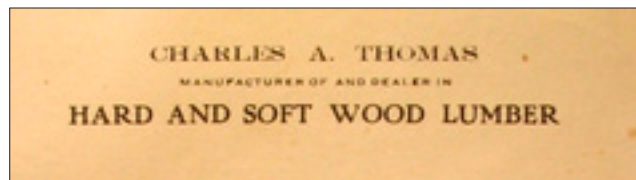
About 1899, Michael Quinlan constructed a sawmill on the other side of the road. That year, he bought 1100 acres of timber on Hogback Mountain and drew a large number of logs to the mill location. He secured a contract with Bristol Novelty Works for 100,000 feet of finished wood. He employed 13 hands to do the necessary work.⁸⁸

In the late 1920s, Bill Butler had a sawmill here, powered by a 1530 International farm tractor. Local people cut their own logs and brought them to Mr. Butler for milling.

Kermit “Kerm” Cox bought the business about 1944, and built a new mill on the site of the current home. He piped water out of Pond Creek to wash logs; he then returned the water to the creek. By then, electric power was available. He used saws with removable teeth that could be sharpened on

There have been fifteen car loads of hop-poles, eleven hundred poles in a car, sent from this place to central New York within a short time, and they are still drawing poles to the station, chiefly from Monkton. The

The Enterprise and Vermonter, 10 Feb 1882, page 3



Courtesy Vermont Historical Society

site.⁸⁹ This sawmill remained in operation until about 1957, seeing several owners over time. The building was unused until converted to living space about 1973. The building burned down about 1995.⁹⁰

Charles A. Thomas also ran a steam-powered sawmill in East Monkton. Whether it was at this same site, or on the Thomas farm to the north is uncertain.⁹¹

Blacksmiths and Wheelwrights

In former days, blacksmiths also operated as wheelwrights. Wheels for carts, wagons, carriages and farm equipment, then made from iron, frequently needed repair. In East Monkton, there were a number of blacksmiths, including:⁹²

- Joseph Marsh (1826-1888), whose farmland that backed up to Hogback Mountain;
- Eli Hall (1823-1901), whose shop was apparently on Bristol Road;
- Joseph Rivers (1837-1901), located on the west side of Bristol Road, just south of Hardscrabble Road. Rivers did a lot of blacksmithing for the kaolin works; and
- A shop opposite the H. B. Williams farm, current address 4843 Mountain Road.

Many farmers had a forge on-site and did their own blacksmithing.

Iron Ore Mining

Near the south end of Hardscrabble Road are beds containing iron ore. A paper titled *In the Days of the Monkton Iron Company of Vergennes, Vermont 1807-1830*, written by Adella Ingham in 1932, informed the following summary.⁹³

In 1807, several men formed the Monkton Iron Company, located in Vergennes. A previous company had installed a forge and other needed equipment. The partners augmented the operation and hired laborers. They hired 15 – 20 men to work the Monkton ore beds. They were mostly Irish and Canadian, as local men were busy with farming. They cleared land in anticipation of blasting. The company built a boarding house nearby to house workers. The company bought other land, so timber could be cut to produce charcoal to fuel forges. Thousands of cords of wood were cut for this purpose.

By November 1808, the company employed over 100 men, engaging in various endeavors to provide food for the employees. It is said the company planted 500 apple trees on their property in Monkton.

In 1812, the Monkton Iron Company contracted with the United States government to produce 300 tons of iron shot for cannons used during the War of 1812. Much of the iron came from Monkton. Following the war, the company had trouble collecting money owed to them, due to a nationwide economic depression. The company fell into financial straits. In 1829, they advertised its lands and works for sale.

In 1932, Adella Ingham visited the Monkton site. She found a water-filled pit, about 300 feet by 75 feet, with a slide at one end used by nearby farmers to harvest ice from the pit. She surmised that the original area of excavation was much larger. Trees had grown up all around the pit. She saw evidence of a cellar hole, probably for the old boarding house.

Kaolin Mining

Kaolin is a soft, earthy clay mineral used in many products, such as cosmetics, medicines and paints. In the past, the kaolin deposits in Monkton were called “putty beds”.



Map of Addison County, Vermont by H.F. Walling, 1857

Stephen Barnum discovered kaolin in East Monkton in 1792, while he was searching for iron ore. In the early 1800s, he dug kaolin in the summer, hauling it by ox-cart to Vergennes. From there, it was shipped to Burlington and New York on flatboats.⁹⁴ In 1810, the Monkton Argil Company formed to mine kaolin for the manufacture of fine porcelain. Reportedly, the deposit covered 100 acres and was at least 25 feet deep.⁹⁵

Over time, several companies mined kaolin in various locations along Hardscrabble Road in East Monkton. An early location was near the northeast end of Hardscrabble. At that time, the operation was called the Putty Mill.

The 1857 map above shows just a few residences. Only 14 years later, the 1871 Beers Atlas map shows a number of residences clustered together. Almost certainly, these houses (shown below) were built to house employees of the nearby kaolin mill.⁹⁶



101 Hardscrabble Road



304 Hardscrabble Road



504 Hardscrabble Road

The 1870 census shows that most men living on this stretch of road worked at the kaolin mill. Most households included women and children. A total of 42 people, including 24 children, lived on this section of Hardscrabble Road. Most of the adults were born in Canada, Ireland or England.⁹⁷ In contrast, almost all other adults living in the area at this time were born in Vermont.

In early days, kaolin was shoveled and laid out on the ground for the rain to wash. It was then dried and packed

into barrels for shipping from Bristol. Later, much larger pits were dug. Kaolin was hauled to the surface in buckets, and then washed in a series of troughs.



Kaolin Drying Sheds, circa 1880. Courtesy Monkton Museum and Historical Society

About 1915, operations moved to a site further south, off the current Putty Bed Place. Here, by use of sluices, water was used to separate the kaolin, which was then dried in sheds and packed in barrels made in the company's own cooper shop.

This was the first industry in the area to run entirely by electricity, generated on site by a steam generator. About 30 men were employed. The company handled most of the hauling, but local farmers also earned extra money by hauling kaolin. Some discovered kaolin on their own properties, and began small mining projects. This mill burned down after 2-3 years.

Just south of the junction of Hardscrabble and Old Airport Roads, a whitish-appearing body of water is seen on the west side of the road. It is one of several small bodies of water referred to as Putty Bed Pond. It was called "Kaolin Bank" on the 1871 Beers Atlas. For a long time an old steam shovel lay in the bottom of this deep water-filled pit, left after the kaolin works closed. Eventually, a salvage company pulled it out, along with several wrecked cars pushed into the pond over the years.⁹⁸

From the 1920s through about 1946, Frank E. Bushey and son Leon mined kaolin as a sideline to farming.⁹⁹ They reverted to open pit mining, producing about 1000 tons annually.

In 1956, the Busheys sold their business to the Vermont Kaolin Corporation, founded by Duncan Bostwick of Shelburne. Construction began in 1959 on a large



Putty Bed Pond on Hardscrabble Road, 2023. Courtesy Cindy Walcott



Monkton Kaolin Works, 1905. Courtesy University of Vermont Silver Special Collections

processing plant and storage facility across the road from the Bushey Farm on Hardscrabble Road. Production began in 1960. This company purchased additional adjacent land, and mining rights. Larger areas of land were cleared so bucket loaders could load kaolin into trucks.

By the mid-60s, demand for finer-grade kaolin caused challenges for the company.¹⁰⁰ The plant closed in December 1967. For the most part, the buildings were dismantled.^{101, 102}

A concrete foundation can still be seen close to the Hardscrabble Road about opposite Putty Bed Pond. Through a gate, an abandoned road leads to substantial ponds. Few other signs remain today of this operation, which played such an important part in Monkton's industrial past.



Photo by John F. Smith, Jr. in Vermont Life Magazine (Vol.16, Issue No. 1, Autumn 1961), page 38. Used with permission



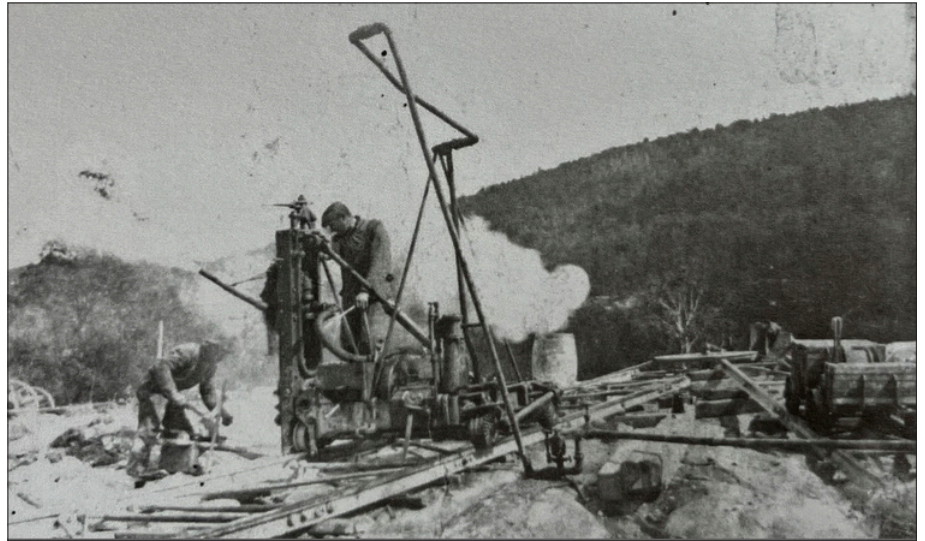
Remnants of kaolin processing plant foundation, 2023. Courtesy Cindy Walcott

That Marble Boom in Monkton.

MONKTON, May 3—The sun now rises and sets in Monkton tipped in gold and dropping scales of gold, and the inhabitants of its stout old hills see visions of marble palaces. And they have wheels in their heads—car wheels, some say running to Vergennes, to Bristol, or to Rutland, where Proctor, the marble king, will convert the huge blocks into beautiful wainscoting and polished tile whereon his Washington friends may feast their eyes. It is a fact, Monkton has marble—very hard, very handsome, very rare. In fact, nothing like it elsewhere has been discovered in this country. The Columbian Marble company of West Rutland has secured a 20 years lease of the Drake-Farr quarry and has a small gang of men busy getting out blocks. The company will put up a derrick, drills, etc., right away, and employ twenty or more men until they develop the quarry. Fletcher Proctor, superintendent of the Vermont Marble company, Treasurer Morse, B. F. Taylor, marble expert, and several other gentlemen, were here recently and looked over the Thomas ledges. One of the gentlemen expressed great satisfaction with it. A conditional lease of 99 years has been secured from the Messrs. Thomas and work will be commenced this week. The supply seems inexhaustible and the prospects are certainly very bright. Of course a railroad will be built to the works. Senator Proctor has a fine property on the north side of Vergennes falls, but as the company's finishing shops are located at Rutland and a short line of six miles would connect with the Bristol road, the latter plan will doubtless be pursued. This marble was discovered about 10 years ago, when J. H. Doten owned the Drake-Farr farm. H. H. Burge and Wilbur Higbee both pronounced it dolomite marble of the best quality.

Marble Quarrying

In 1890, there was great excitement when marble was discovered on the East Monkton farms of the Thomas Brothers, Julius Doten and Levi Downing, all on Mountain Road. Early reports were of an inexhaustible supply of high quality marble. Both the Columbian Marble Company and the Vermont Marble Company acquired mineral rights, and began quarrying. There were high hopes of building a railroad spur from Bristol to the quarries.¹⁰³ The first marble was shipped from the quarries in 1899. Unfortunately, when the marble was dressed for commercial use, it was determined that it flaked quite easily, making it largely unmarketable. The proposed railroad spur was never built. By 1912, all quarrying had ceased.



Steam engine used in Monkton by the Vermont Marble Co. to cut marble, circa 1900.

Middlebury Register, 5 May 1899, page 1

Cemeteries

Many cemeteries are located on hillsides, as this terrain was difficult to farm, was far away from sources of drinking water and had good drainage. Hillsides had positive spiritual connotations, as the remains of loved ones are “closer to heaven”. Two of the three cemeteries in East Monkton are located on hillsides.

Beers Cemetery



Beers Cemetery, courtesy of Patrick Polzella

This small cemetery sits on a hillside on the west side of Bristol Road. It is also known as the Smith-Layn Cemetery, and very occasionally the Eagan Cemetery.¹⁰⁴ There are only 43 known burials. The first burial was of Sidney Sweet, who died on July 3, 1800 at the age of 15 days. Members of other early families, such as the Coxes and the Barnums, are buried here.

Civil War soldier Augustus Tripp Cox [1836-1864], who died after being wounded at the Battle of Cedar Creek near Winchester, VA, has a stone here.¹⁰⁵ His actual burial site is in Virginia, and is unmarked.¹⁰⁶

Horan Cemetery



"Cemetery at Tommy Town not much used now. Many graves are marked by small field stones that do not show here. Here is where Eliakim + Hannah [Beers] are buried." Courtesy Vermont Historical Society

The oldest cemetery in East Monkton is the Horan Cemetery, sometimes called the Kaolin Hill Cemetery, off Bear Pond Road. At least 32 people are buried here; 15 have no existing stones.¹⁰⁷ Their names are known only because in 1919-1920, Vermont town clerks were required to inventory the stones in their older cemeteries.

The first person known to be buried here was Easter Rutherford, who died in 1793. The earliest settlers of this part of East Monkton are buried here, including members of the Beers and Tracy families. The last burial was in 1874. The cemetery was located in an open field, seen above in a photograph taken in 1927 by William Harrison Haight of Cambridge, WI while on a trip to Monkton.

In recent decades, forest has grown up around the cemetery, as seen below in the image to the left. Below on the right it is an image of a home, owned by Charles Horan, that once stood near the cemetery. It appears on the 1871 Beers Atlas map at the end of Bear Pond Road.



Horan Cemetery, 2005. Courtesy Monkton Museum and Historical Society



Horan Homestead. Courtesy Russell Memorial Library

East Monkton Cemetery



East Monkton Cemetery. Photo courtesy Lauren Parren

This cemetery was formerly known as the Morgan Cemetery and occasionally the Butler Cemetery, after Thomas Butler, who cared for the cemetery.¹⁰⁸ There are 346 known burials in this cemetery.¹⁰⁹

The earliest known burial is for Eli Wheaton, who died in 1809 at the age of 16. He was the son of Calvin and Rachael Wheaton, also buried here.

Seventeen people born before 1800 are buried here – members of the Doten, Wheaton, Williams, Tracy, Thomas, White, Rutherford, and Tibbetts families. Their stones stand testament to the early settlers of this part of Monkton, who lived in the shadow of Hogback Mountain, clearing deeply forested land, and relying on each other for basic help, and human companionship.

The Town of Monkton owned the cemetery until 1968, when voters approved selling it to the East Monkton Cemetery Association.¹¹¹

Formed in 1925, the association was first called the Morgan Cemetery Improvement Society. “A Cemetery association has been formed by the people of South Monkton, who will clean and beautify the Morgan cemetery. It is a step in the right way and very commendable to the people of the community.”¹¹²

The Association is still active, and the cemetery is still in use, with over 20 burials since 2000.



This gravestone commemorates William James Cox [1856-1936] and his first wife Roxanna “Roxa” Aken [1858-1901] and their son Ralph Waldo Cox [1890-1912]. It is an example of a “treestone.”

Most popular from about 1880-1905, these gravestones were inspired by the Victorian “rusticity movement”, in which art mimicked nature.

During the period, they could even be ordered from the Sears & Roebuck catalog.¹¹⁰

Historic Buildings and Families of East Monkton

A number of homes and buildings in East Monkton were built in the 1800s. This section describes some of them and the families who occupied them.

The Dean Homestead – near present location of 604 Barnum Road



Dean Homestead. Historic Sites and Structures Survey: Addison County (Survey No. 112-5)

This house, no longer standing, was described as “Monkton’s finest extant example of its most pronounced building type, the 1 ½ story 5x4 bay Cape Cod.” The Cape Cod style building is rectangular, with clean simple lines, a central door and chimney. Numerous outbuildings existed, on both sides of the road.¹¹³

The Dean family owned this homestead through the early 1940s. In the late 1980s, the house was in deteriorating condition. It was condemned about 1992 and burned down by the Monkton fire department.¹¹⁴

The Barnum Homestead- 351 Barnum Road

Barnum descendants have continually owned this property since the very early days of settlement. Today, the property comprises over 400 acres, including the home lot, open land devoted to agriculture, and wooded acreage.



Barnum Homestead. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/>)

This is the Barnum homestead. The original house burned down; a replacement was built around 1900.

Barnum Family

A number of Barnums settled in Monkton very early. Like the majority of settlers in town, they were from Litchfield Co., CT. Barnabus Barnum, along with John Bishop, and John and Ebenezer Stearns, settled in Monkton in 1774.¹¹⁵

During the Revolutionary War, the new settlement was largely abandoned after John Bishop, several of his sons, and Ebenezer Stearns were captured by Tories and taken to Canada. Although not taken captive, Barnabus Barnum did not survive the war. In March of 1778, along with others, he responded to the alarm summoning men to the siege at the Shelburne blockhouse. He died during this skirmish. Reportedly, upon hearing of his death, his wife took her several small children and walked all the way to the fort at Pittsford, VT, following marked trees.¹¹⁶ (Note: there is some question about the veracity of this story. This is discussed at length in the History of Monkton.¹¹⁷)

A 1787 “general list” of Monkton residents included Samuel, Stephen, Richard, Ebenezer and Jehiel Barnum.¹¹⁸ Samuel Barnum (about 1749-1815) was the first town clerk in Monkton. He also served the town as chief magistrate and state representative.¹¹⁹ Stephen Barnum first discovered kaolin in Monkton in 1792, when looking for iron deposits.

The current owner of the Barnum homestead and farm is the 4th great grandson of Ebenezer Barnum and his wife Mabel Booth.

A story about John Barnum appeared in the Vergennes Enterprise and Vermonter in 1868, which may be seen to the right.

LONGEVITY. — *Editor Vermonter* : A remarkable coincidence coming to my knowledge, I transmit the facts for the columns of your paper, thinking it may interest many of its readers :

I saw recently five generations at one fireside, John Barnum, the great-great-grand sire, is in his eighty-seventh year, a hale hearty man with brilliant mind, excellent memory and youthful heart. His only grief or sorrow is the recent loss of his wife, with whom he lived sixty-five years, and for half a century they occupied the same farm where he now lives. Never were the highest joys of wedded love more brightly verified than in their daily companionship.

The Enterprise and Vermonter, 14 Feb 1868, page 2

2845 Bristol Road



2845 Bristol Road. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)

The current homeowners believe the house was built in 1791. The Cox family owned it for several generations. The barn was probably built in the early 1900's, after a previous barn burned down. The last of the Cox family to live here was Carroll and Evadne (Meador) Cox, who owned it until 1963.¹²⁰

Cox Family

James Cock [1774-1825] and his wife Mary Feke [1780-1860] came from Long Island with four young children. They were members of the Friends' religious denomination, also known as Quakers.¹²¹ They lived on the west side of Bristol Road, opposite Church Road. James was a tailor, the only one in the area.¹²²

With the exception of one, James' and Mary's six adult children adopted the spelling Cox rather than Cock. One son Cole Fekes Cock/Cox adopted the surname Cook, apparently to please his future wife, Mariah Barnum, who found the name Cock not to her taste.

James and Mary are buried in the Friends' Cemetery off Cemetery Road in Monkton, suggesting they continued to be Friends. Several of their children became Methodists. Son Robert Fekes Cox was disowned by the Friends in 1845 for joining the Methodists.¹²³ Son Benjamin Cox [1817-1901] became a well-known Methodist minister.

One of James's descendants, James P. Cox, visited Monkton in 2004 to learn more about his Cox forebears. He knew that the approximate location of the Cox home was on the Layn Farm on Bristol Road. He dropped by to see Roger Layn, then aged 85. The two men hopped in Roger's pickup and went down the road. After crawling under a couple of electric fences, Roger pointed out fieldstones he remembered were previously in a rectangular layout. This was the cellar hole for the old Cox house, situated in a now-wooded area 25-30 yards off the road. The home appeared to James to have been very small for a family of nine and a tailoring business!¹²⁴

3204 Bristol Road



3204 Bristol Road. Google Maps, 2023

This original homestead of the Beers family was destroyed by a fire in 1889. John Allen Beers, his wife Polly Williams, their son Carter L. Beers, and Carter's wife Lucinda Miller then occupied the home. They rebuilt on the existing foundation the same year. In September 1889, the Beers held a housewarming party at their new home. Over 100 people attended, the Citizen's Band providing music.¹²⁵ The barn in the photo was built after the previous barn was destroyed during the Hurricane of 1950. (See photo on page 8.)

Here, Carter L. Beers had a store and post office in the 1890s (see page 16). For more information on the Beers family, see page 37.

3984 Bristol Road



3984 Bristol Road. Google Maps, 2023

Columbus Smith, the very wealthy owner of Shard Villa (a stately home in Middlebury, now a nursing home), once owned this farm. He owned this investment property by 1892,¹²⁶ renting it out to various farmers. After he died in 1909, his wife Harriet (Jones) Smith owned it. She sold it to Benjamin Rockwood in 1918.¹²⁷ In the 1920s, Wright Layn bought the farm. The property has remained in the Layn family for five generations, continuing as a working farm to this day. Over time, members of the Layn family have actively participated in community life.

The house was originally just one story. Sometime around 1930, the Layn family raised the roof to create a second story.



Aerial view of the Layn Farm from the north, 1954. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

5090 Bristol Road



5090 Bristol Road. Historic Sites and Structures Survey: Addison County (Survey No. 0112-24)

This house is on the west side of Bristol Road just before the Bristol line. It was built about 1845 in the Greek Revival, Classic Cottage style, featuring square pillars on the entry porch and sidelights on either side of the front door, typical of the style.¹²⁸

2790 Boro Hill Road



2790 Boro Hill Road. Historic Sites and Structures Survey: Addison County (Survey No. 0112-29)

This house, on the northwest corner of the intersection of Hardscrabble, Boro Hill and Barnum Roads, was built in the early 1800s, one of the earliest of that period still standing. Featuring a gambrel roof, it is the only example of this type of architecture in Monkton, and one of few in Addison County. In its basement are massive, braced framing timbers.¹²⁹

704 Hardscrabble Road



704 Hardscrabble Road. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)

This house is located on the southwest intersection of Hardscrabble, Boro Hill and Barnum Roads. It is a classic home with gable roof, molded cornice and returns under the roofline. It is an example of “Federal massing and proportions”. Originally, a porch surrounded the side and back. The front porch has scroll sawn brackets and posts with molded cornices. The house was built for Eliakim Beers (1776-1871), who settled in Monkton in 1790.¹³⁰ The farm remained in the family for at least three generations.

William Harrison Haight of Cambridge, WI took the photo of the homestead below on a 1927 visit to Monkton.



“House built by Eliakim Beers + Hannah Haight in 1818. Their boys were John Allen and Lewis Legrand, both fine looking men and above the average intellect. John Allen, like his grandfather, could read fine print by candlelight at 83 without glasses.”

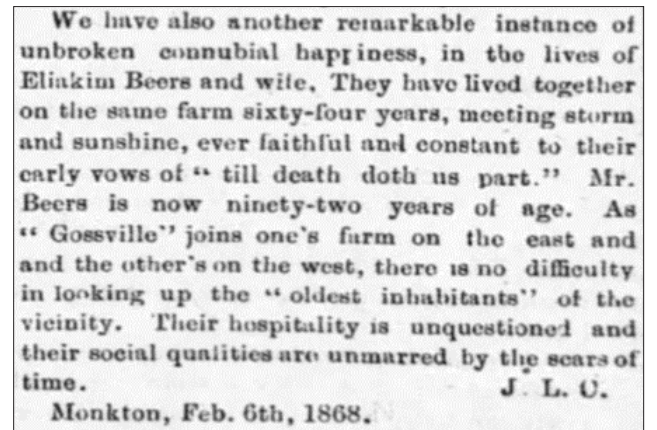
Courtesy Vermont Historical Society

Beers Family

Eliakim Beers [1776-1871] settled in Monkton in 1790.¹³¹ He was born in Trumball, CT, the son of Elnathan and Mehitable (Booth) Beers. His first wife, Hannah Burroughs died in 1801 when she was only 20 years old. The couple's one child, Legrand, died at age 4, just a few weeks before his mother. Both are buried in the Horan Cemetery, although no stones are visible today.

Eliakim and his second wife Hannah Haight had three children - John Allen Beers, Lewis Legrand Beers, and Lydia. Lydia died on June 9, 1842 at age 15; she is buried in the Horan Cemetery. According to Rev. B. Cox's diary, on the day of Lydia's funeral, the fields surrounding the cemetery were covered in snow.¹³²

Eliakim and Hannah lived a long and reportedly happy life together, according to the article to the right. The other person alluded to in this article is John Barnum who married Abigail Dean.

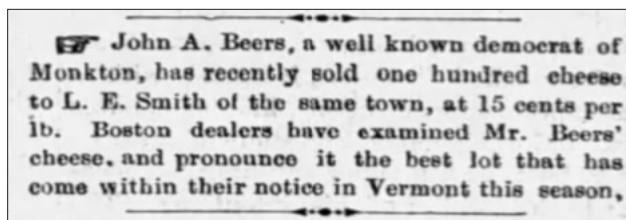


We have also another remarkable instance of unbroken connubial happiness, in the lives of Eliakim Beers and wife. They have lived together on the same farm sixty-four years, meeting storm and sunshine, ever faithful and constant to their early vows of "till death doth us part." Mr. Beers is now ninety-two years of age. As "Gossville" joins one's farm on the east and the other's on the west, there is no difficulty in looking up the "oldest inhabitants" of the vicinity. Their hospitality is unquestioned and their social qualities are unmarred by the scars of time.
J. L. U.
Monkton, Feb. 6th, 1868.

Eliakim died in 1871 in Monkton at 94 years, 10 months. He and Hannah are buried in the Horan Cemetery.

The Enterprise and Vermonter, 14 Feb 1868, page 2

Sons John A. and Lewis Legrand Beers lived in Monkton all of their lives. John generously sold the land to build the East Monkton church to the church stewards for just \$1.00. He also contributed substantially to the cost of building the church. He served Monkton as a Senator in the Vermont Legislature in 1845-46. His brother Lewis Legrand Beers served in 1849-1850. Both served as assistant judges.



John A. Beers, a well known democrat of Monkton, has recently sold one hundred cheese to L. E. Smith of the same town, at 15 cents per lb. Boston dealers have examined Mr. Beers' cheese, and pronounce it the best lot that has come within their notice in Vermont this season.

The Enterprise and Vermonter, 14 Aug 1868, page 2

In 1872, John A. Beer's son-in-law, J. P. Barnum (who married Caroline Beers in 1863) forged Mr. Beer's signature and absconded out of state with a large sum of John Beer's money.¹³³ That same month, Beers declared bankruptcy, "due to his late loss".¹³⁴ In February 1873, his livestock, farm equipment, etc. was sold at public auction.¹³⁵ Oddly, John's brother Lewis L. Beers also became financially insolvent late in 1878.¹³⁶

Whether J. P. Barnum suffered consequences for his theft is unknown. It appears that he remained married to Caroline. They both died in Wisconsin. In 1881, Caroline returned to her western home after spending the summer in Monkton at the home of her father.¹³⁷

By 1889, John owned a farm with his son Carter L. Beers. He died in 1890. In 1892, his wife Polly (Williams) died in Prairie du Chien, WI while on a visit to daughter Caroline.¹³⁸ Both are buried in the East Monkton Cemetery.

John and Polly's son Carter, often known as C. L. Beers, played a prominent role in East Monkton. His first marriage to Eliza Green of Richmond ended in divorce in 1871. In August 1871, Carter presented himself at a meeting of the Chittenden County Good Templars Union (an organization established in Marshfield, VT in 1866 to promote temperance), as a "reformed drunkard", who had been positively influenced by the organization.¹³⁹

Carter married Lucinda Miller in 1872. In 1873, in an era when few women worked outside the home, Lucinda

was hired as head manager of the cheese factory in Hinesburg. She had previously managed a cheese-making operation for six years.¹⁴⁰

Carter filled many town offices in Monkton. He was appointed as a side judge in Addison County, and held hearings in his East Monkton home. Newspapers often mention him as a speaker at community events. He was East Monkton's first and only postmaster, and the first of two storekeepers.

should some day represent Monkton. John A. Beers and his son Carter own a nice farm located near the Monkton putty or Kaolin mill. They keep a fine dairy and make the best of butter. They do not agree in politics. John A., the father, is a Democrat of the old school, and it is singular that his wife and his daughter-in-law are latter-day Republicans. It is an old proverb that a divided house cannot stand, but although divided in politics the Beers' family stands. **UNCLE ELI.**

Argus and Patriot, 27 Feb 1889, page 1

Carter did not enjoy good health; he is often mentioned as being "on the sick list" in local newspapers. Carter had a stroke (called a "shock" in those days) in 1893 and one or more subsequently. Lucinda must have been a key partner in their post office and store business, in order for them to succeed.

In 1901, the couple moved to Bristol. After Carter died in 1904, Lucinda moved to New York. She returned to Monkton in 1907, when she married Henry B. Williams.

12 Putty Bed Place, off Hardscrabble Road



12 Putty Bed Place. Historic Sites and Structures Survey: Addison County (Survey No. 0112-17)

This house on the west side of Hardscrabble Road, is a smaller version of homes in Monkton built in the Greek Revival style. The dormer, porch, and other additions shown in the photo on the next page, were made later.

Originally, elaborate trim and a paneled door graced the front entrance, large for the size of the house.¹⁴¹ It was built around 1845 for Safford Tracy (1795-1882), son of Thomas Tracy who settled in East Monkton in 1790. It was formerly the farm of Leon Bushey, town clerk of Monkton for many years. After the formation of the Vermont Kaolin Company in 1960, the firm's offices were in this house.



12 Putty Bed Place. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)

Tracy Family

Daniel Tracy ([730-1823] of Preston, CT and his wife Mary Kennedy were the first of the Tracy family to settle in East Monkton, arriving by 1800. They married in 1755 and had as many as a dozen children between 1756 and 1777. Their son Thomas is known to have settled in Monkton in 1790.¹⁴² The family settled on the southern end of Hardscrabble Road. Several sons and daughters lived nearby and had families of their own.

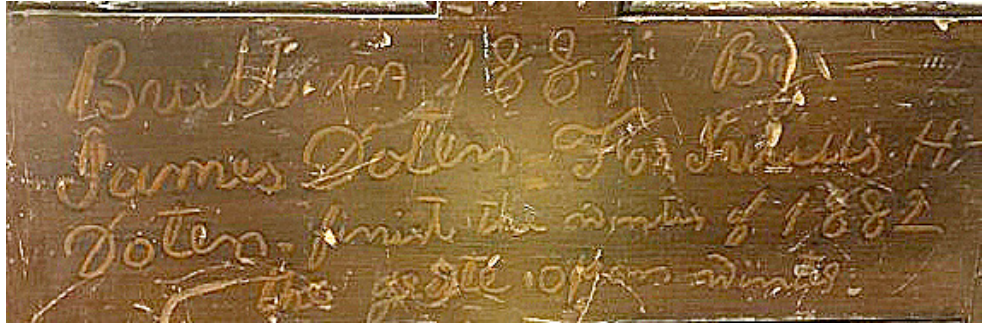
2969 Mountain Road



2969 Mountain Road. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)

When the current owners bought the house, they discovered carved into the attic door the following, transcribed as written: "Built in 1881 By James Doten For Julius H. Doten. finished in the winter of 1882, the great open winter."

Also, door molding is inscribed: "built in 1881 and 2. The warmest winter ever in this country. BB Franklin, painter."

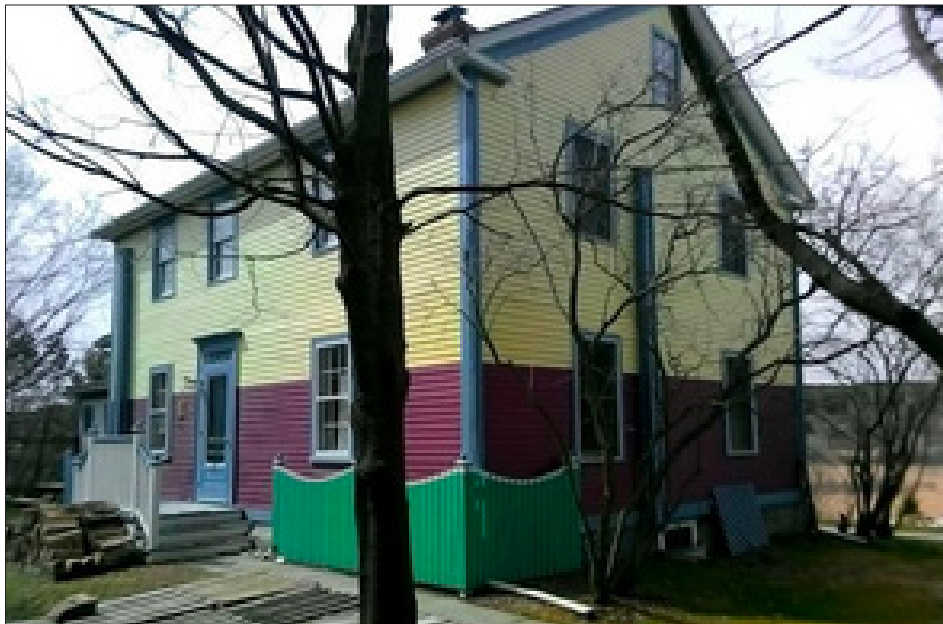


Carving in attic door at 2969 Mountain Road. Courtesy Susan Jones

In 1890, Julius H. Doten was the first person to discover marble on his farm in East Monkton. He did not live long after his discovery, dying of unknown causes in 1893, at the age of 48, at the Mary Fletcher Hospital in Burlington, VT. His remains were sent via the mail train to Ferrisburgh, VT. ¹⁴³

He is buried in the East Monkton Cemetery.

3434 Mountain Road



*3434 Mountain Road. Monkton Parcel Map
(<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)*

Thomas Family

For many years, brothers Charles A. Thomas [1853-1940] and Andrew H. Thomas [1855-1930] ran this farm, which they inherited after their father George Thomas died in 1886. In addition to farming, the Thomas brothers engaged in a variety of businesses, including the East Monkton Creamery, a lumbering business and a sawmill. Both were active in civic affairs on the local and state level.



Andrew Thomas and wife (probably his second wife Mary E. Harris, whom he married in 1901). Courtesy Vermont Historical Society.

The farm was established in 1827 by their grandparents John and Bolina (Smith) Thomas. This John was the son of John and Rebecca (Carter) Thomas, early settlers of Barnumtown.¹⁴⁴

Above are photographs of the Thomas farm, taken early in the 20th century.



*Thomas Homestead, 1908.
Courtesy Vermont Historical Society*

I also visited the Thomas brothers. They are No. 1 farmers, and well-off in this world's goods, and are very free-hearted. They run a creamery, and milk 50 cows. They probably own the best farm in town, situated at the foot of Hog's Back Mountain. Their land is a mixture of clay and loam, and bears heavy grass and English grain. These men are in favor of the Bristol branch railroad, as are all others on the East Monkton road, and they will pay their share to build it. It is now quite certain that the road will be built and put in running order by the first of next August. UNCLE ELI.

Argus and Patriot, 19 March 1890, page 4

4149 Mountain Road



4149 Mountain Road. Historic Sites and Structures Survey: Addison County (Survey No. 0112-26)

The Beers homestead, built about 1848 in the Greek Revival classic cottage style may have been built for Lewis Legrand Beers, son of Eliakim Beers, early settler of Monkton (see page 37).¹⁴⁵ The Historic Sites survey calls this house “remarkable” and “unsurpassed in Monkton.” The house’s hilltop location with accompanying views make it a memorable Monkton landmark.¹⁴⁶



View of house showing height of land. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

4792 Mountain Road



4792 Mountain Road. Monkton Parcel Map (<https://www.axisgis.com/MonktonVT/>)

This home is on the west side of Mountain Road. In the past, it was used as a “tenement house” for the farm across the road. Tenement houses were provided by farmers for their farm hands and families. The original house burned down and another was built on the same site.¹⁴⁷

4843 Mountain Road



4843 Mountain Road. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

Although less elaborate than the nearby Beers homestead, the design suggests it may have been built by the same person. Built in a typical Greek Revival style, it has 1 ½ stories, with an attached wing and decorative trim. The house may have been built for Charles Hulbert (1801-1861).¹⁴⁸ His daughter Isabella was the first wife of Henry Williams. The house was typically called the Williams homestead. Across the road from this house once stood a “dance pavilion”, owned and operated by the Booska family approximately 1923 – 1928.



I also visited Judge Henry Williams, one of the best farmers in Monkton. He owns some 250 acres of land, a large proportion being on level intervale ground. He probably cuts 150 tons of hay yearly. His wife is opposed to cruelty to animals, as is Judge Williams. No one can visit their home and go away hungry.

Left: Historic photo of Williams house. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

Above: Argus and Patriot, 19 Mar 1890, page 4

5017 Mountain Road



5017 Mountain Road. Courtesy Candace Layn Polzella

This was almost certainly the site of the St. George family home. The St. Georges were coopers who made tubs and barrels. Francis St. George first appears in the census in Monkton in 1850. He was born in Canada about 1790. His son Alex/Ellick took up his trade. They likely made all kinds of tubs, including those for butter and cheese needed by the creameries in Monkton. Francis died in 1873 and Ellick in 1884.

Want to Know More about East Monkton?

Any work documenting the history of a place is, by nature, unfinished. If you have stories of East Monkton to share, please record them on our survey form here: <https://tinyurl.com/y6n7etby>.

The Monkton Museum and Historical Society strives to engage our community as we collect, preserve and share Monkton's heritage. The Historical Society welcomes donations related to the history of Monkton. Find out how to become a member here: <https://www.monktonhistory.org/>

The following books about Monkton are available for purchase:

- *The History of Monkton, Vermont, 1734-1961* (1961) and a supplement, at the Monkton Town Clerk's office.
- *MONKTON: the Way It Was* (2007), a book containing historic photographs, at the Russell Memorial Library. Or email the East Monkton Church Association at emcavt@gmail.com. All proceeds benefit the preservation of the East Monkton Church.

Access our 2022 publication, Monkton Ridge History Tour and this current publication at: <https://www.monktonhistory.org/>

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to Margaret French Sunderland, whose work on Monkton's history has inspired us for many years.

End Notes

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- ¹²⁶ Burlington Weekly Free Press (Burlington, VT), 16 Jun 1892, 6.
- ¹²⁷ Bristol Herald (Rutland, VT), 7 Nov 1918, 8.
- ¹²⁸ Historic Architecture. Monkton, 175
- ¹²⁹ Historic Sites and Structures. Monkton. Survey No. 0112-29.
- ¹³⁰ Historic Sites and Structures. Survey No. 0112-30.
- ¹³¹ Smith, Henry Perry, History of Addison County Vermont. (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason and Co., 1886), 512.
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- ¹³³ The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes, VT), 13 Dec 1872, 3.
- ¹³⁴ Middlebury Register (Middlebury, VT), 17 Dec 1872, 3.
- ¹³⁵ The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes, VT), 14 Feb 1873, 3
- ¹³⁶ The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes, VT), 20 Dec 1878, 3.
- ¹³⁷ The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes, VT), 14 Oct 1881, 3.
- ¹³⁸ The Enterprise and Vermonter (Vergennes, VT), 6 May 1892, 3.
- ¹³⁹ The Independent Order of Good Templars was a temperance society established in Marshfield, VT in 1866. (<https://digitalvermont.org/MarshfieldStoryProject/0016-Group-GrandLodgeGoodTemplars-1907>)
- ¹⁴⁰ The Burlington Free Press (Burlington, VT), 6 Aug 1873, 3.
- ¹⁴¹ Historic Sites and Structures. Monkton. Survey No. 0112-17.
- ¹⁴² Child's Gazetteer, 161.
- ¹⁴³ The Burlington Independent (Burlington, VT), 18 Mar 1893, 5.
- ¹⁴⁴ Carleton, Hiram, Ed. Genealogical and Family History of the State of Vermont (New York, Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1903), 15.
- ¹⁴⁵ Historic Sites and Structures. Monkton, Survey No. 0112-26.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁴⁷ Oral History, Diana Rose, as communicated to Candace Layn Polzella, June 2023. Diana worked with Rita Menard Kimball who lived at 4843 Mountain Road during her childhood. Her father worked the farm. He provided housing for his hired farm help at this house.
- ¹⁴⁸ Historic Sites and Structures. Monkton, Survey No. 0112-27.

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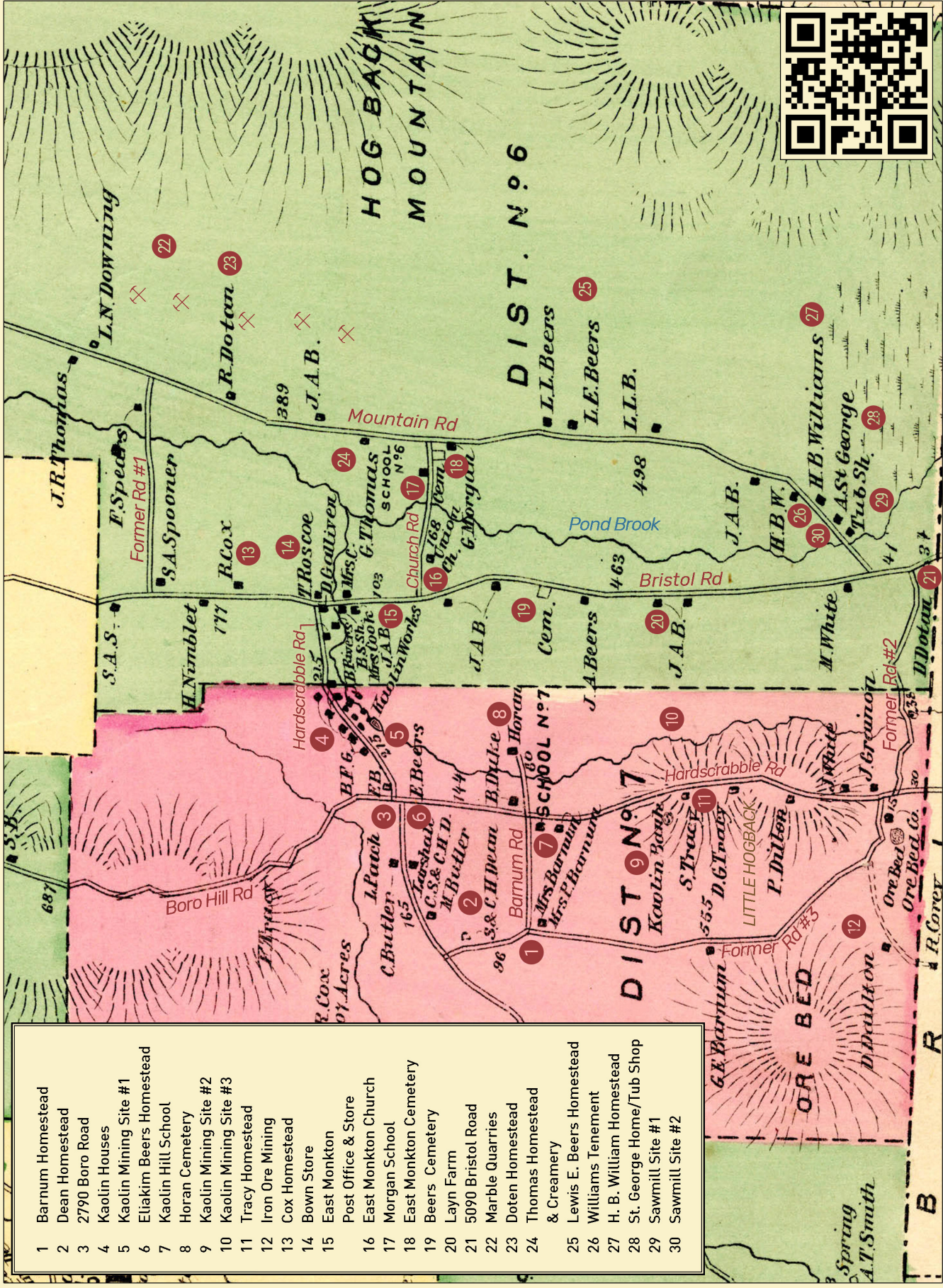
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The back cover map was adapted from the 1871 map of Monkton published by F. W. Beers. The table below supplements the map key, and includes the location of each feature and the page of this book where more information can be found. All buildings are now privately owned. Please respect the privacy of the owners.

Key #	Building or Feature	Location	Page
1	Barnum Homestead	351 Barnum Road	30
2	Dean Farm (burned about 1992)	near 604 Barnum Road	30
3	2790 Boro Hill	Intersection of Hardscrabble, Boro Hill & Piney Woods Roads	35
4	Kaolin Houses	101, 304 and 504 Hardscrabble Road	23
5	Kaolin Mining Site #1	off Hardscrabble Road	23
6	Eliakim Beers Homestead	704 Hardscrabble Road	36
7	Kaolin Hill School	Intersection of Barnum & Hardscrabble Roads	11
8	Horan Cemetery	off Bear Pond Road	28
9	Kaolin Mining Site #2	off Hardscrabble Road	24
10	Kaolin Mining Site #3	off Hardscrabble Road	25
11	Tracy Homestead	12 Putty Bed Place	38
12	Iron Ore Mining	Off Bristol Road	22
13	Cox Homestead	2845 Bristol Road	32
14	Bown Store	3091 Bristol Road	17
15	East Monkton Post Office & Store	3204 Bristol Road	33
16	East Monkton Church	Church Road	14
17	Morgan School (torn down in 1962)	site of 134 Church Road	13
18	East Monkton Cemetery	Church Road	29
19	Beers Cemetery	Bristol Road	27
20	Layn Farm	3984 Bristol Road	34
21	5090 Bristol Road	5090 Bristol Road	35
22	Marble Quarries	Mountain Road	26
23	Doten Homestead	2969 Mountain Road	39
24	Thomas Homestead & East Monkton Creamery	3434 Mountain Road	40
25	Lewis E. Beers Homestead	4149 Mountain Road	41
26	Williams Tenement House	4792 Mountain Road	43
27	Williams Homestead	4843 Mountain Road	43
28	St. George Home and Tub Shop	5017 Mountain Road	44
29	Sawmill Site #1	Lower Mountain Road	21
30	Sawmill Site #2	Lower Mountain Road	21

Access the electronic copy of this book and map at: <https://www.monktonhistory.org/>



- 1 Barnum Homestead
- 2 Dean Homestead
- 3 2790 Boro Road
- 4 Kaolin Houses
- 5 Kaolin Mining Site #1
- 6 Eliakim Beers Homestead
- 7 Kaolin Hill School
- 8 Horan Cemetery
- 9 Kaolin Mining Site #2
- 10 Kaolin Mining Site #3
- 11 Tracy Homestead
- 12 Iron Ore Mining
- 13 Cox Homestead
- 14 Bown Store
- 15 East Monkton
- 16 Post Office & Store
- 17 East Monkton Church
- 18 Morgan School
- 19 East Monkton Cemetery
- 20 Beers Cemetery
- 21 Layn Farm
- 22 5090 Bristol Road
- 23 Marble Quarries
- 24 Doten Homestead
- 25 Thomas Homestead & Creamery
- 26 Lewis E. Beers Homestead
- 27 Williams Tenement
- 28 H. B. Williams Homestead
- 29 St. George Home/Tub Shop
- 30 Sawmill Site #1