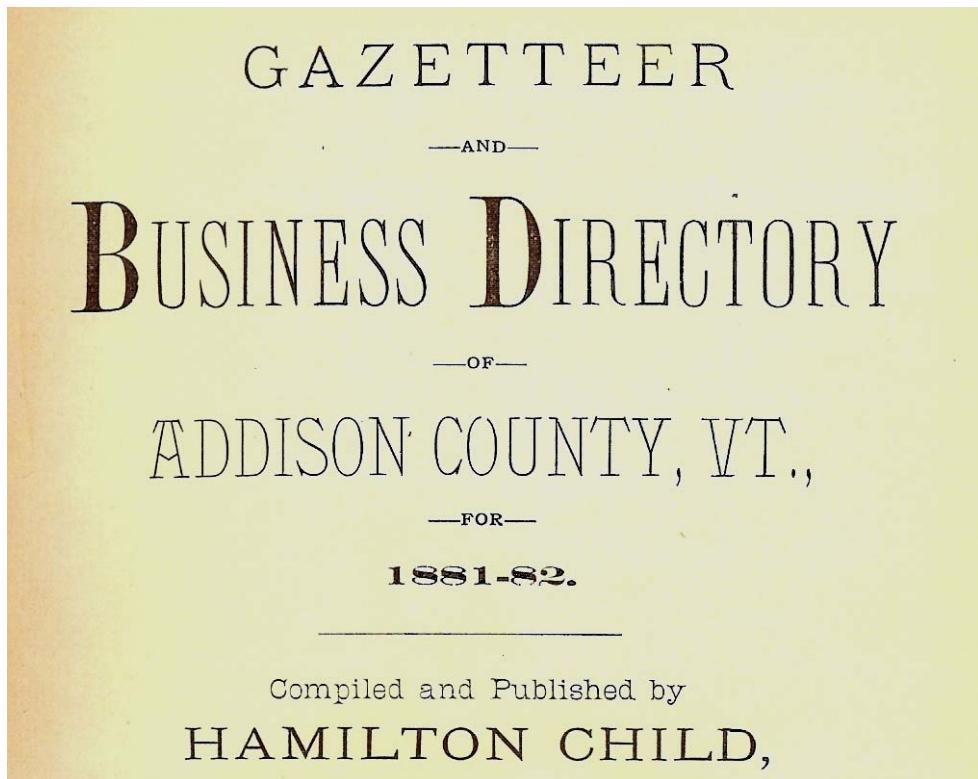


MONKTON HISTORY

Transcribed from the:



*Transcribed in April of 2007 by:
The Monkton Museum and Historical Society*

MONKTON HISTORY

From “*Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, VT, for 1881-82*”

Introduction

This Monkton History is from the “Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, VT, for 1881-82”, compiled and published by Hamilton Child. It is presented here exactly as printed without any editing or comments as to whether the information presented is correct, except for one road number reference. A name index and a road index have been added to enhance research using this document. Also, a map is included at the end of this document for the numbered roads that are referenced in the text.

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"MONKTON, located in the extreme northern part of the county, in lat. $44^{\circ} 13'$, and long. $3^{\circ} 55'$, bounded north by Hinesburg, in Chittenden County, east by Starksboro, south by Bristol and New Haven, and west by Ferrisburgh, was chartered by New Hampshire June 24, 1762, to Abraham Dow and sixty-three others, in seventy shares, said to have an area of 24,000 acres. This amount, however, was decreased by the annexation of 2,726 acres to the township of Starksboro, March 4, 1797, leaving the town with the present area of about 21,450 acres, or a little less than six miles square. The surface is very uneven and mountainous, the principal elevation being Hog Back Mountain, which extends across nearly the whole eastern portion of the town from north to south. The western part is watered by Little Otter Creek, and the eastern by Pond Brook, which rises from Bristol Pond, nearly on the line between Monkton and Bristol, and runs north through this town into Hinesburg. Lewis Creek also runs a short distance in the northeastern part. These streams afford few mill-sites, and principally to this fact Monkton owes her dearth of manufacturers, for aside from her timber, large quantities of iron ore are found, though it is taken to other localities for manufacture. There is also found the black oxide of manganese, ocher, and kaolin, the latter being extensively prepared for market. Taken all in all, Monkton is rich in her mineral products, and at the same time possesses large areas of good arable soil, producing a fair percentage of grain and fruit, and also affording sustenance to large herds and flocks, the pride of the township. The scenery is varied and picturesque, with many points affording excellent views of the surrounding country, while the hills and mountains contain many curiosities of nature which are well worth a visit. Among these is a large cavern in the northwest part of the town. The orifice by which it is entered is at the bottom of a large chasm in the rocks on the side of a small hill. After descending about sixteen feet, you arrive at a room thirty feet long and sixteen wide. From this is a passage leading to a second apartment, which is not quite so large but more pleasant. Monkton Pond, in the north part of town, is a handsome little body of water, about one mile in length by a half mile in width. The rocks are mostly the *red sandrock* formation, with some beds of *quartz* and *marble*, in the extreme eastern portion.

In 1880, Monkton had a population of 1,022, was divided into nine school districts and had nine common schools, employing two male and twelve female teachers, at an aggregate salary of \$838.40. There were 402 pupils attending common school, while the entire cost of the schools for the year ending October 31, was \$999.96. O. L. Nimblet was superintendent.

MONKTON, a post village located in the central part of the town, contains a hotel, store, school-house, etc., and about twenty-five dwellings.

MONKTON RIDGE (p.o.), a hamlet located in the northern part of town, contains a store, school house and fifteen dwellings.

BARNUMTOWN, a hamlet in the western part of the town, contains about a dozen houses.

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EAST MONKTON, a hamlet located a little south of the center of town, contains a church (union), school house, blacksmith shop, kaolin works, and a dozen or so scattered dwellings.

The Kaolin Works, located on road fifty-four¹, have been under the management of Mr. B. F. Goss, of Vergennes, since 1864. First as B. F. Goss, then Goss & Talbott, and finally, as it still remains, Goss & Gleason (C. J. Gleason, of Montpelier.) The works employ thirteen men, with an average product of 1,500 tons per annum. The kaolin is used principally as a "filling" in the manufacture of paper. A large proportion of their product is sold in New York.

Tradition says that John Bishop was the first settler of the town, though the records show Barnabas Barnum, John Bishop, John and Ebenezer Stearns to have settled coincidentally, in 1774, twelve years after granting of the charter. These, perhaps, were joined by some others, but after the breaking out of the Revolution the settlement was broken up, and John Bishop, with several sons, and E. Stearns, were captured by Indians and Tories, and taken prisoners to Canada. Barnabas Barnum was killed at the siege of Shelburne Block-house, March 12, 1778. After cessation of hostilities, some of the settlers returned to their farms, where they were joined by others from time to time, till in 1786, the population was thought sufficiently large to warrant the organization of the town.

Accordingly, a meeting was called on the 26th of March, at which Samuel Barnum was chosen town clerk, Colonel John Allen, constable, and John Bishop, Jr., John Ferguson, and Samuel Barnum, selectmen. The first justice was Samuel Barnum, in 1787; first representative, Ebenezer Barnum, in 1787; first born, Ebenezer Stearns, October 18, 1775; first death, Eunice Church; Buel Hitchcock was the first physician and also built the first saw-mill; Isaac Sawyer, first minister, ordained September 24, 1798. Jesse Lyman, major of militia, was at the battle of Plattsburgh. Stephen Haights was many years a leading member of the Legislature, county sheriff, and officer in the U.S. Senate. Died at Washington, D. C., January 12, 1841, aged fifty-eight years, while seargent-at-arms of the Senate.

Daniel Smith came to Monkton in 1780, from Bennington, located on road twenty-two, upon the farm now owned by L. E. Smith, and the different members of his family have been among the most prominent men of the town. He was a counsellor, town representative for twelve years, and held other offices. He had a family of seven children. Luman B. became a lawyer and remained in Monkton, where he was prominent in civil life. His son, Lucius E., now lives on the old homestead, one of the prominent and respected men of the town, a representative and treasurer. Dr. Ira Smith, son of Daniel, was a deputy sheriff, county judge, and representative. Daniel died about the year 1814. Lucius E. was first elected to represent the town in the Legislature in 1858-'59, and has since served eight terms, and was also State senator in 1866-'67.

The first hotel was built by Barnum, and still stands on road thirty-six, owned and occupied by Ashbel Dean, though remodeled. It was built during the Revolution, or soon

¹ The map from the Directory can be found on the last page of this document.

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after and near it, corner roads thirty-five and thirty-six, where the M. E. church stands, was a whipping-post and pillory. A Quaker named Carly was condemned to stand a certain number of hours in the pillory for getting in hay on the Sabbath. He underwent the punishment, his wife sitting knitting work in hand, on a stone near by.

Nicholas Holmes, from Nine Partners, N.Y., came to Monkton in 1787, locating where H. R. Baldwin now resides, on road seventeen, corner four. Nicholas was a member of the society of Friends, and had a family of eight children. Jonathan succeeded to the estate, and after him his son Andrew, making three generations that occupied the old homestead.

Beers Stilson, from New Milford, Conn., came to this town in 1783, locating on road twenty-one. Afterwards, he purchased a farm off road twenty-two, where his son and grandson now reside. He married Eunice Dodge, and had a family of four sons and one daughter, of whom Alpheus, at the age of eighty years, is the only one now living.

Solomon Barton, from New York, came to this town in 1785, locating on road seventeen, where A. J. Cushman now resides. His second son, Moses, built a house where H. Jewell now resides, in 1812. Mrs. Jewell is a daughter of Moses.

Ashbel Dean, from New Jersey, came with his brother, Benjamin, to this town just after the war of the Revolution, where he had served six years. He located on the "old stage road" in Barnumtown, which ran near and parallel with road 46. Ashbel was at the battle of Eutaw Springs, Yorktown, and others, an artillery-man, and had his gun taken and retaken several times, though it finally remained with the Americans. He married a daughter of Jehiel Barnum, had a family of nine children, four of whom are now living. Arzah C., the eldest, is now nearly eighty-six years of age, having been born February 16, 1796. The house occupied by T. N. Dean is the oldest in the village, if not the town. It was built by Capt. Kendrick.

Eleazer Finney, from New Milford, Conn., came here in 1785, and located on road forty-six, upon the farm now owned by his great-grandson, H. J. Finney, never having been owned out of the family since its first settlement. Eleazer became a prominent citizen, and for nearly fifty years held the office of justice of the peace, and also held all the town offices at different periods. He died February 28, 1859, aged eighty-four years. Eleazer F., was gifted as a poet, and gained the title of "Monkton's Bard." N. Finney has a chest of drawers which has been in the family possession for over one hundred years.

Frederick, Joseph, and Benjamin Artemas, and John and Jesse Smith, all remarkably tall men, came to this town from Bennington at an early day. Frederick settled on road 22, was for many years town clerk, and held other town offices. He also made the first plan of the town.

Daniel Collins came from New Milford, Conn., in 1789, and died here August 22, 1844. He had four sons, Nathan, David, Edmond, and Daniel, and one daughter, Phoebe. David moved to Ohio, Daniel remained at the village, Nathan settled on road 47, on the farm now owned by the widow of his son, Nelson. Edmond also remained at Monkton village,

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and Phoebe married Joseph Smith. Nathan was a major of militia and quite prominent in the political history of the town. Daniel, Jr., became a judge, and had three sons, Allison, Harmon, and Frank, all substantial farmers. Mrs. Nelson Collins is a daughter of Elnathan B. Beers, of Ferrisburgh, now deceased.

Hezekiah Smith, from Bennington, came to Monkton in 1780, in company with three brothers, Daniel, Champion, and Samuel. He was a shoemaker by trade, but after his settlement here he kept a hotel at Monkton village. He has a family of twelve children, ten of whom arrived at maturity. Buel W., the youngest son, is a clergyman in Michigan. The eldest, Horatio A., was a physician, and practiced in Monkton most of his life.

John Barnum, from Litchfield, Conn., came to Monkton with his father, Ebenezer, in 1786, being then five years of age. He subsequently married Abby Dean, with whom he spent a happy married life of sixty-five years, having a family of six girls and four boys. He served the town in various offices, and stood guard sixteen days during the war of 1812. He possessed a brilliant mind and wonderful memory. Died in 1878, aged ninety-eight years. The Barnums are relations of P. T. Barnum, "the greatest showman on earth."

Josiah Fuller removed from Bennington to Monkton in 1788, locating on road ten upon the farm now owned by Ethan Lawrence. He had a family of ten children. Sylvanus, the eldest son, went to the war of 1812, and was never heard from after the battle of Plattsburgh. Milton was the only son who settled in Monkton, and became a respected citizen, holding various town offices. He died at the age of seventy-seven years on the farm now owned by his son Jonas.

Henry Miles, now residing on road twenty-one and one-half, at the age of eighty-six years, though devoting his life to agricultural pursuits, has found some spare time for science. He has, besides a large and varied scientific library, a choice collection of over one thousand specimens of rare minerals and stones, one specimen of which is designated in Hitchcock's *Geology of Vermont*, as *Graphitolitus Milesi*, in honor of Mr. Miles, who discovered it.

Joseph Willoughby, second representative of the town, built a house now the residence of his grandson, D. W. Smith, on road twenty-four, about the year 1781. It has since, however, been remodeled and refitted by Mr. Smith.

Josiah Lawrence, a native of Norwich, Conn., a soldier of the Revolution, came to Monkton previous to 1790, locating at the north end of Hog Back Mountain, where he spent the remainder of his life, dying in 1835. His son, Ethan, a namesake of Josiah's old colonel, Ethan Allen, now occupies the farm at the age of seventy-six years.

D. F. Knowles, born in Westford, Vt., came to Monkton at an early day, and in 1813 married Jemima Hoag, daughter of Joseph Hoag, the first minister of the Friends church, and to whom was given the ministerial lot and again returned to the town for school

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purposes, she being now eighty-six years of age; and they are the oldest married couple in town, having been wedded sixty-eight years.

Robinson Mumford located on road fourteen in 1791, coming from Bennington, Vt., and died here in 1854, aged ninety-six years. He held the office of justice of the peace for many years, and was a leading member of the Baptist church. His grand-daughter, Mrs. Ira Day, now occupies the old homestead. Upon this farm is an old elm tree, said to be the largest and most symmetrical in the county. It stands remote from any other tree, is 105 years old, has a circumference of twenty-three feet, and shades an area of nearly a quarter of an acre.

Eliakim Beers settled in Monkton in 1790, from Connecticut, locating upon the farm now occupied by his grandson, L. E. Beers. He died in 1870, aged ninety-five years.

David Roscoe settled in Barnumtown, from Connecticut, early in 1795, where he owned three hundred acres of land. A few years after his settlement here the snow was so deep that in the spring, when it went off, the stumps of the trees they had cut during the winter were found to be six feet high.

Samuel Webb came to Monkton about 1790, and for a time followed his trade of carpenter, after which he purchased three hundred acres of land on road thirty-four, where he spent the remainder of his life, dying November 19, 1838, aged seventy-one years. His son, Daniel, now resides on road thirty-five, a hale old man of eighty-four. Daniel's wife, Sophia (Conger) Webb, is eighty-one years of age and has passed the sixtieth anniversary of her wedding day. Mr. Webb has held various official positions, among which that of town treasurer for a period of thirty consecutive years.

Dan Stone, from Connecticut, a graduate of Williams College, came to Monkton in 1795, and engaged in the practice of medicine, becoming one of the most prominent physicians in this region. He had a family of three sons, Dan C., George E., and Charles. Dan and George became physicians, practiced in Monkton and Vergennes, and in 1857 removed to Illinois. Charles became a farmer and died here in 1857, aged fifty-three years. His son, Charles H., now occupies the old "Dart Farm."

Nathan G. Baldwin, from New Milford, Conn., came to Monkton in 1793, locating upon the farm now owned by H. and S. Miles on road 21-1/2. Here he built a log house, where his four children were born. Roderick, his second son, born May 6, 1801, is now living on land adjoining the old homestead, at the age of eighty-one years, and has served the town in several official capacities. Two of his sons, Albert N. and Jay N., reside on the home farm. Two others, Henry R., who has been constable and collector for the last nineteen years, and E. D., own a farm on road 17, corner 4. On Roderick Baldwin's farm is located the cave previously mentioned.

George Dart, from New Milford, Conn. came to Monkton in 1789, and bought one hundred acres of land of David Ferris. The original deed is now in the possession of the family, dated June 23, 1789, and recorded in book 2, by Samuel Barnum, June 22, 1790.

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To pay for this property, Mr. Dart returned to Connecticut and made one hundred axes, valued at £20, which he delivered to Mr. Ferris. He had a family of nine children, two of whom remained in Monkton. The farm is now owned by Charles H. Stone.

John Thomas, from Connecticut, came to Monkton in 1796, where he died in 1799, leaving a wife and nine children. Mrs. Thomas married Dr. Dan Stone in 1800.

Nathan Williams, born in 1772, came to Monkton in early life, where he married Lois Stearns, daughter of Isaac Stearns, one of the earliest settlers in town, on road 5. At the time of his death, Nathan owned the farm where L. E. Beers now lives, on road 42. He was quite prominent in local politics, and did a large amount of public business. He had a family of six children, three of whom remained in town. All of the children lived till the youngest was sixty years of age, and four are now living whose ages aggregate 286 years.

Thomas Tracy, from Manchester, N. H., came to Monkton in 1790 locating on road 52, upon the farm now owned by J. White.

Stephen Ballou came to Monkton and started in business as a tanner and shoe manufacturer, at the village, in 1803. The tannery which now stands in rear of Gee's blacksmith shop, on road 36, was built by him. His son, Philip C., was born here July 23, 1806, and subsequently studied medicine with Horatio Smith, of New Haven, then settled in Monkton, where he has practiced forty years.

Ira Ladd, from Pittsford, Vt., came to Monkton in 1805, and opened a general store at Barnumtown, where he did considerable business. He was justice of the peace for many years. Leonard Deming, father of Mrs. Ladd, was a native of Addison County, and in early life was a blacksmith, and later, an author of considerable note. Among others, he published *Deming's Vermont Officers*, and a collection of legal cases, etc., entitled *Remarkable Events*.

Levi E. Atwood, in 1803 or '04, then a boy of twelve years, while on his way to Starksboro "to mill," broke a willow switch, which, on his return home, he stuck in the ground where its now stands, a monstrous willow with a trunk twenty-seven feet in circumference. His father, Paul Atwood, came to Monkton from Bennington in 1790, and died here at the age of ninety-two years. Cyrus W. Atwood, of Starksboro village, is the only remaining one of Levi's family.

Labon G. Hurlburt came to Monkton from Lebanon, N. H., in 1820, locating on road nine, and subsequently removing to road forty-six, where G. T. Hurlburt now resides.

H. B. Williams, located on road forty-two, has a large and valuable collection of Indian relics, among which are arrow-heads, war-clubs, stone knives, hammers, etc., and pieces of ancient pottery. These curiosities were found on a bluff on his farm near Bristol Pond, where it is supposed a favorite camping-ground of the Indians was located. Near by is a burial place of theirs, where many bones have been disinterred, and one complete

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skeleton found. The place was discovered by workmen who were engaged in digging gravel for a dam, and bones were found so numerous that they were obliged to desist from their labor and procure gravel elsewhere.

Calvin Wheaton, from Dutchess County, N. Y., came to Monkton in 1802, locating on road forty, where there were but few settlers in the valley of Pond Brook. He was a clothier by trade, and worked in a cloth mill below Barnumtown for many years. He died in 1853, aged eighty-four years.

James Cox removed from Long Island, N. Y., to Monkton, early in 1811, located on road forty-three. He was a tailor by trade, and the first one in this section. His son, Robert, settled a farm about one-half mile north, where William J. Cox now resides.

John French located in Monkton about the year 1800. He was a blacksmith by trade and worked many years for Capt. Kendrick. He married Hannah Smith and had a family of five children, two of whom, Matthew O., and John W., are now living, Matthew in this town and John W. in Iowa. Mr. French died in 1852, his wife in 1869.

Hosea Nimblet, father of Dr. O. L. Nimblet, came to Monkton from Woodstock, Windsor County, between 1820 and 1825. Dr. Nimblet has practiced medicine here twenty-seven years. He wrote the historical sketch for Miss Hemenway's *Gazetteer*, to which we acknowledge our indebtedness.

Religious services were early held in town, in barns, private dwellings and school-houses. The first church organized was the *Calvinistic Baptist*, July 24, 1794, with twelve members. The society is still living though limited in numbers.

The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1797, by Joseph Mitchell, the first pastor. There being no convenient centre in the town, the society has four different places of worship. At the church in East Monkton, the town house at Monkton Ridge, the Baptist Church in Monkton village, and the church in Barnumtown, one service being held at each place on alternate Sabbaths, served by one pastor, Rev. Thomas Munro. The first church, at Barnumtown, was erected in 1811, and rebuilt in 1854. Its original cost was \$1,250.00, and now, with seating capacity for 250 persons, is valued at \$4,500.00. The building in East Monkton, erected in 1867, will accommodate 250 persons, cost \$2,000.00, and is now valued, including grounds, at \$2,500.00. The society is at present in a prosperous state with 118 members.

The Friends Society, located at Monkton Ridge, was organized by Joseph Hoag in 1798, he also acting as their first minister. Their first building was erected about the year 1800. The present house will seat 250 persons, and was erected in 1878, at a cost of \$1,200.00. It is now valued, including grounds, at \$2,400.00. The society has eighty members, with W. L. Dean, Fred Skiff, and Samuel Miles, elders."

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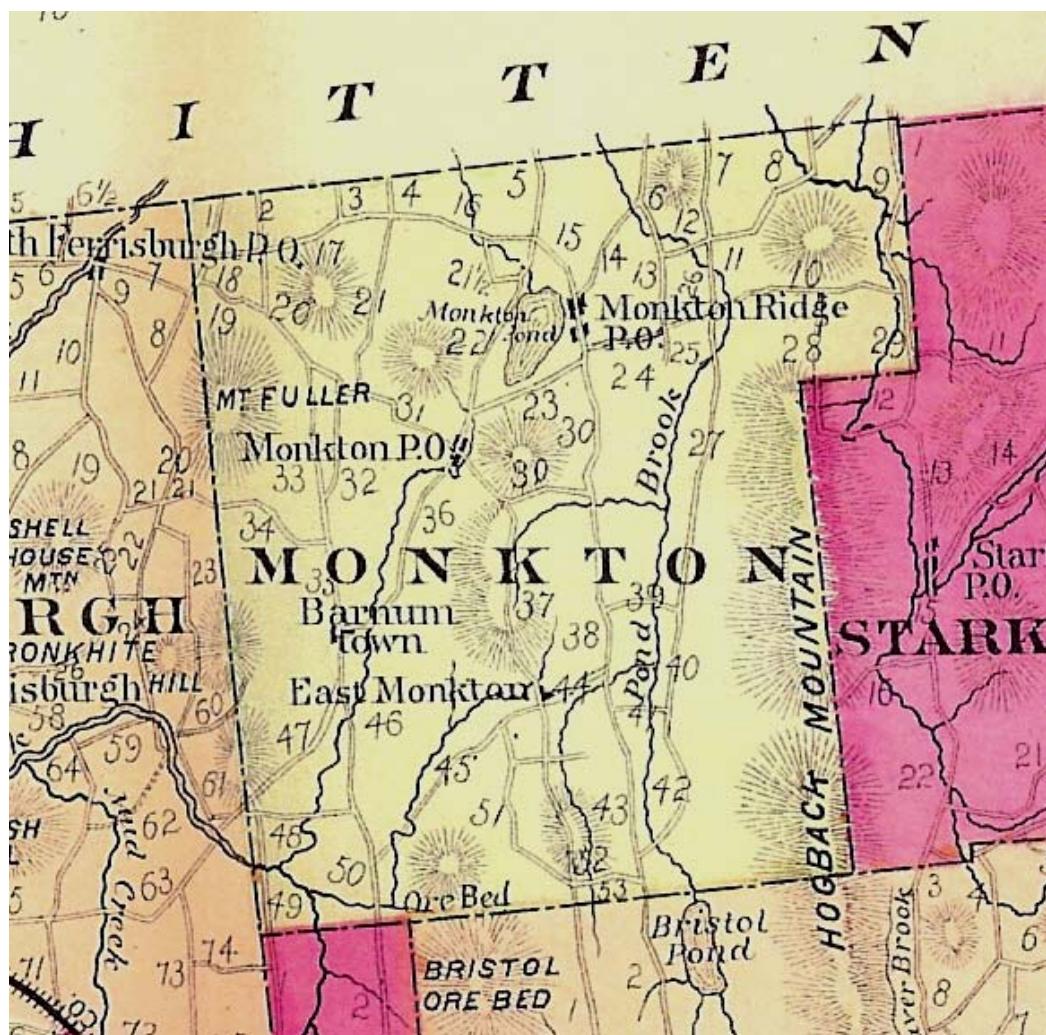
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Road 54 (not shown on the Directory's map – reference believed to be Road 44).....	2

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From "Gazetteer and Business Directory of Addison County, VT, for 1881-82"



Transcribed in April of 2007 by the Monkton Museum and Historical Society