# The Munsons of Huntington, MA

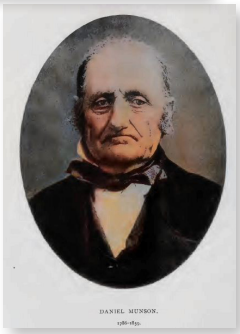
by Lori Hahn

One can't help but think that Daniel and Jerusha (Fowler) Munson's move from Connecticut to Norwich, Massachusetts (now Huntington) was fortuitous. It led their children into lives marked by service and leadership.

Daniel received his bachelor's and his medical degrees from Yale. His father paid for his education, which was counted as his share of his inheritance based on father Theophilus' will. Daniel had a big family and needed a house for all the Munsons. He found a building that would be perfect and purchased it in 1824 from Zenon Sackett, who built it in 1790 as a tavern. The Munsons would own the building for five generations. The building still stands in Huntington.

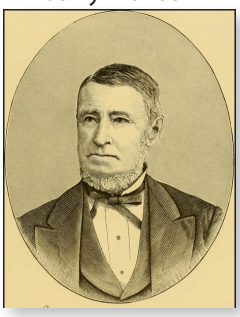


Born in 1810, Daniel's son Garry, attended the Westfield Academy and started teaching upon graduation. In April 1829, the store he opened with his father in Chester Hill went into business. During this time, he began production of the twist button, and later the lasting button. The manufacture of these buttons allowed him to employ 200 people. Unfortunately, competition from machine-made buttons soon shut them down.



Daniel Munson
Garry Munson

Garry married the lovely Harriet Lyman, daughter of Samuel and Miriam (Tinker) Lyman on 19 Oct 1833. Her ancestor was Richard Lyman, who came to Boston in 1635. He was one of the brave settlers who pushed out from Boston to outer settlements.



In Richard's case, he ended up clearing land and battling both wildlife and indigenous people in Hartford, Connecticut, along the Connecticut River

Then came the economic downturn of 1837, which caused him to lose a majority of his property. Garry moved on to Springfield, where for nearly three years he operated he operated a dry goods store with Galen Ames. The partnership dissolved and Garry headed to Huntington.

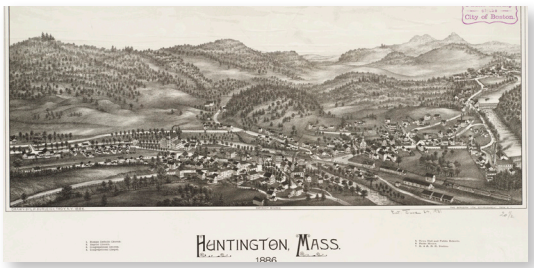
Garry took possession of his family's land at Norwich Bridge and began farming. He also acquired a half-interest in a lumber mill. Apparently he didn't have enough to do, so in 1848 he opened yet another store he operated for five years.

As 1850 approached, he built a store in Huntington. After more than over three years of operation, the store burned. Not to be deterred, he began work as a wool buyer. His father had been a quite successful wool man, so such a move seemed natural.

In later life, he became partners in Delaney and Munson, paper millers. They operated paper mills in nearby Unionville, Connecticut. On the heels of that partnership, he joined Maissasoit Knitting Mills in Cohoes, New York.

Garry filled many positions including president of the 1860 Republican Convention. This was the second election for president of the new Republican party. John C. Fremont lost the 1856 election. Abraham Lincoln would win this one. Garry served as a state legislator, moderator of town meetings for over 25 years, trial justice for Huntington, commissioner of insolvency, and president of the local cemetery association and of the Huntington Hall Association. Even in his final years, he managed to keep busy helping settle estates.

As busy as he was, he and Harriet started a family in 1835 and continued to add to the family until 1852. Five boys and two girls grew up and became leaders in Huntington. They served as business people and school board members, filled several city positions and were businessmen and farmers.




Huntington, Massachusetts 1887

John and Harriet's sons included:

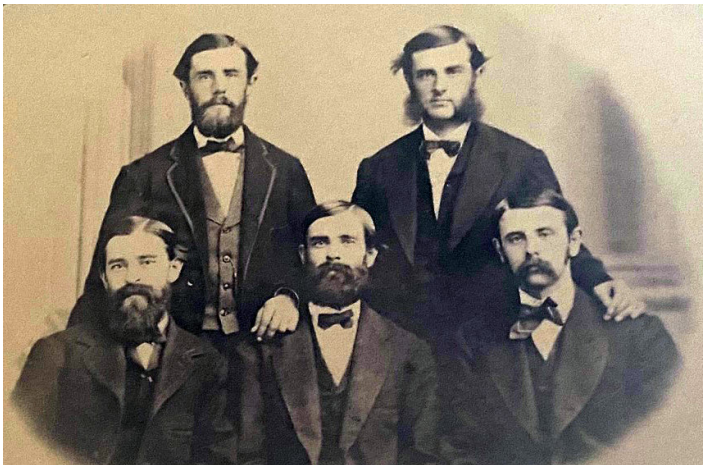


Photo courtesy of Sandy Wischmeyer

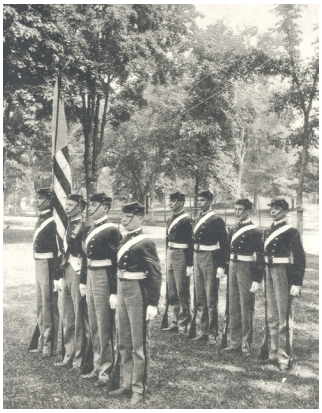
My best guess: Bottom row: Myron, Samuel, one of the twins. Top row: Edward, the other twin

**Myron Andrew (1835-1922):** (bottom left) who went on to put together the first two volumes of *The Munson Record* beginning in 1882 with the help of several other Munsons who provided funding.

Myron graduated from Yale and then received his master's from Andover Theological Seminary. He later spent another year at Yale studying geology. He authored a number of theological books and served as a Congregational minister for many years.

He married first Mary Fales (1835-1888) in 1861. They had a son and a daughter. After Mary's death, he married Jessie Chidsey in 1887. She outlived Myron by many years, dying in 1949.

**Edward Garry 1837-1907):** (top left) He was a graduate of the Norwalk Military Institue. He managed a wadding plant in Cohoes, owned by his father. Edward never married.



Norwalk Military Institute

**Homer Wilson (1840-1909):** He went by Wilson and was a twin. In 1862, he married a woman named Adaline Stanton, whose father was well-off and widely known.

DISAPPEARANCE OF A HUNTINGTON MAN.

Huntington has been stirred lately by the separation of H. Wilson Munson, a prominent citizen, from his wife and his disappearance for parts unknown. The surprise at his action was the greater as Mr Munson was born in the town and has lived there his whole half-century of life, and as from his past career no one had imagined he would perform an action so abrupt. Both Mr and Mrs Munson were of the oldest families of the town, and Mrs Munson has also lived her whole life there. The affair is the culmination of a long and unhappy married life. About 18 years ago Mrs Munson, during a sickness, formed the habit of taking opium, and has ever since been a slave to that drug. Recently the wife put herself under treatment, and was thought to be cured of the habit. During her absence the husband left town, and wrote her brother of his intention. The news was broken to Mrs Munson when she had partially recovered, and soon after she returned, getting home about three weeks ago. On his departure Mr Munson left a power of attorney with his brother, H. Willard Munson, who was to make a settlement with the wife. He has, through his brother, offered nearly all his property in town for sale. Mr Munson is generally considered in town as a well-to-do man, and Mrs Munson feels that the propositions which he has made to her are not at all sufficient, even for her living expenses. She claims that the homestead in which they live, and which occupies one of the most valuable situations in town, was deeded to Mr Munson by her father with the distinct understanding that it should be held for her. Mr Munson's store, which is offered for sale, occupies a part of this land, and she objects most emphatically to its being sold. Mrs Munson's side of the question is generally supported in town.

27 Jul 1891 Springfield Daily Republican
Springfield, MA

The marriage, alas, was not a happy one. The biggest news that had hit town in a while occurred in July 1891, when H. Wilson put all of his properties including his store up for sale and just left town. The townspeople were shocked and his wife doubly shocked. At any rate, they divorced in 1892, and he did indeed sell off all of his property. He moved to Holyoke and lived the remainder of his life there. In 1893 he remarried a woman named Abbie. Wilson's family did not take his side in this event.

**Horace Willard (1840-1912):** A twin to Wilson, Willard also went by his middle name. He attended the Norwich Bridge School and spent a year at the Easthampton Seminary. Willard purchased the Munson homestead farm at Norwich Bridge in 1869 and remained there for the rest of his life. He took particular interest in the education of Huntington youth and served in several capacities on the board and council. Like his father, he served as president of the Huntington Cemetery Association. In town, he served on the liquor control committee and the law enforcement

enforcement committee. Like all the Huntington Munson's he was a member of the Congregational church. He married Nancy Elvira Avery (1942-1923) in 1863. The couple had five children: three boys and two girls.

**Samuel Lyman (1844-1930):** (Center) Samuel received his education at Williston Seminary and Bryant and Stratton Commercial School in Albany. After graduation, he started in sales, serving the mostly western territory of an Albany firm. After a couple of years, he joined two other men in starting a linen collar factory. Two years later, Samuel bought his partners out. He would go on to have an incredible business career, making a significant mark on his chosen hometown in Albany. In 1900, he was a Republican presidential elector for William McKinley. He married Susan Babcock in 1868. They had four boys and three girls. You can read the complete article on Samuel in the *TMF Newsletter, Vol XXVI, Issue 8*. One little known fact about Samuel is that he had a fabulous library and read voraciously. One day, while book shopping, he picked up a Littlefield Almanac and decided to start collecting them. Then his collection expanded to all almanacs. By 1924 he had accumulated over 10,000 almanacs, a collection which in size was bigger than anyone's except the American Antiquarian Society. In 1925, he merged his collection with theirs. (I'm sure his wife was glad to have the room in the house back.)

The daughters:

**Emma Harriet (1849-1863):** It appears she died of illness at 14. Oddly, in the list of obituaries for the day hers was in the paper, none of those listed were over 60.P**Cleora Fowler (1852-1930):** In 1876, Cleora married John Kellogg Judd (1851-1929), who owned Judd Paper Company which would grow to be one of the biggest wholesale paper companies in the country. They had two boys and a girl. The first few years of their marriage John spent traveling, selling for several companies. Judd Paper Company was founded in 1883 and incorporated in 1890. At that time, they built their first building at Holyoke. Business booming, they expanded in 1909. In 1921 the business was completely destroyed by fire. The next location was in the American Braiding Company building. His business continued to thrive and eventually Cleora and John were able to mostly retire. Sons Clifford and Philip took the reigns of the company. He became a city alderman and was deeply involved with the Congregational Church at Holyoke. The couple went to St. Petersburg, Florida, to winter in 1921, but found the weather not at all to their liking and they returned a few days later. They spent the remainder of their lives at home, enjoying their children and grandchildren.

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