



Office of the Sheriff

MONROE COUNTY
"ONE TEAM"



Sheriff Todd K. Baxter

Undersheriff Korey K. Brown

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MONROE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE UNVEILS AND PROUDLY DISPLAYS THREE PRESIDENTIAL PARDONS

The Pardons, Dating Back to 1864, 1865, and 1875, are Restored and will be Permanently Displayed at the MCSO

Rochester, NY (May 18, 2021) – The Monroe County Sheriff's Office is proud to unveil and publically display three Presidential Pardons, dating back to the mid-late 1800's. All three of the 145 year-old Pardons, signed by Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Ulysses Grant, were recently stabilized and restored by world-renowned paper and photographic conservator Gary Albright of Honeoye Falls. The late Sheriff Andrew P. Meloni had custodial stewardship of the documents for more than a half century. In recognition of the significance of these historic documents, Sheriff Todd K. Baxter felt passionately that the public be afforded the opportunity to view the pardons before they are permanently displayed at the Monroe County Public Safety Building (Sheriff's Headquarters). MCSO is grateful to the Monroe County Sheriff's Foundation for its support in funding the stabilization, conservation and framing of the documents.



"We are fortunate to behold these American treasures and feel honored to bring a slice of our local history to life again through the restoration and public viewing of these significant and historic Pardons," said Monroe County Sheriff Todd K. Baxter. "Thank you to Mr. Albright, the Sheriff's Foundation and the collaboration of Kristen Campo Fine Art and Design and Estate and Fine Jewelry by Harry Krikorian for helping to preserve and display these pieces of American history. We are grateful to the family of the late Sheriff Meloni for sharing the Pardons with the Sheriff's Office so that our children, grandchildren, and their children can learn about the Pardons and appreciate their significance for generations to come."

History:

In 1852, the County of Monroe began construction of the County Workhouse at South and Highland Avenues in the City of Rochester. The building was constructed to house up to 96 men and 40 women. In 1858, the Workhouse was reclassified as the County Penitentiary. It is there that the Superintendent of the Penitentiary received these three Presidential Pardons in 1864, 1865 and 1875. Each Pardon was signed by the President of the United States, as well as the Secretary of State at the time of issuance. The Pardons, issued and signed by Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, were also signed by Secretary of State William Seward. President Ulysses Grant's Pardon was also signed by Secretary of State Hamilton Fish. All three Pardons have the Great Seal of the United States affixed to them with wheat paste.

These Pardons were kept at the Penitentiary and were last displayed in Superintendent Riley's Office until the Penitentiary was closed in 1971. At that time, Sheriff Albert Skinner gave the Pardons to his Undersheriff, Andrew P. Meloni, who maintained custodial stewardship of the documents until his death in 2015.

In early 2020, the family of the late Sheriff Meloni was approached and asked if it would share the Pardons with the Sheriff's Office. Through the kindness of the Meloni family, and in memory of the late Sheriff, the family graciously agreed to share the Pardons with the Sheriff's Office with the intent they be permanently displayed in the Meloni Training Room, located at the County Public Safety Building (Sheriff's Headquarters). The Pardons suffered significant handling-related damage. The Lincoln Pardon was especially fragile, as it had previously been mended with cellophane tape. Paper and photographic conservator Gary Albright was selected to stabilize and restore the documents where he works in his home in Honeoye Falls, New York. Mr. Albright's credentials and talents are well respected, as he once worked on the restoration of the Emancipation Proclamation.



Upon completion, the Pardons were professionally framed under Ultraviolet (UV) blocking glass to not only protect the documents, but to preserve the iron gall ink from fading under both natural and artificial lighting. Further, they were framed to allow the viewing of the Pardons, front and back.

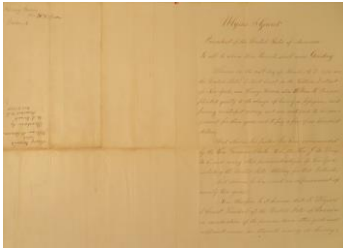
Description of Presidential Pardons:

Presidential Pardons are authorized by Article II, Section 2, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution and include granting Full Pardons/Clemency, Commutations of Sentence or the rescinding of conviction in regard to Federal Charges.

Although no detailed information could be located regarding the charge(s) and subsequent conviction of the three who received these Presidential Pardons, the following is a summary of their cases and reason for receiving their pardons:



- *In July 1863, Addison Demeritt pleaded guilty and was convicted of counterfeiting coins of the United States. He was sentenced to pay a fine of six (6) cents and to be imprisoned for one (1) year. Note: During the Civil War, coinage was extremely scarce. President Lincoln granted a full and unconditional pardon on January 18th, 1864, as it was determined that these coins were in fact made and issued for the “convenience of business” and not to defraud the government through counterfeiting.*
- *In November 1864, Selah North, the Postmaster in Clarendon, N.Y., pleaded guilty and was convicted of “abstracting letters for the United States Mail.” He was charged with opening letters and appropriating (stealing) stamps. He was sentenced to pay a fine of \$2,000.00 and to be imprisoned for one (1) year. He served the majority of his sentence and as recommended by the U.S. Attorney and the U.S. Judge, he was granted a full and unconditional pardon by President Andrew Johnson on July 1st, 1865.*
- *On March 24th, 1874, Henry Morris, aka William H. Beacon, pleaded guilty and was convicted of having been in the possession of and passing counterfeit money. He was sentenced to pay a fine of \$1,000.00 and imprisoned for a term of three (3) years. Upon the recommendation of both the U.S. Attorney and the presiding Judge, Henry Morris, aka William H. Beacon, received a full and unconditional pardon by President Ulysses S. Grant on December 9th, 1875.*



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