

**Benjamin F. Miner**  
Gleanings from local newspapers

**ED GREGORY**

# Benjamin F. Miner

1841-1922

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ED GREGORY

July, 2023

# Benjamin F.<sup>1</sup> Miner

1841-1922



1917

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<sup>1</sup> Franklin

## B.F. Miner Directory

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## Greenfield Recorder

June 25, 1902      [Greenfield MA Recorder 1925 - 5325.pdf](#)

### THE VANILLA QUESTION

The essential quality of vanilla is determined in that crystalline; efflorescence which forms upon the pods of the orchid, *V. PLANIFOLIA*, technically described as "givre"[sic] chemically as "vanillin." This is, chemically speaking, an aldehyde of methyl-protocatechuic acid,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$  an exudate, of white, frost-like appearance. This is believed to be primarily a vapor, given out from the fruit and condensing like hoar frost on its surface.

That this vanillin is the true active principle of the commercial vanilla is proven by finely[sic] dividing the vanilla, and distilling with water, when a turbid liquid passes, which on agitation with ether becomes clear, and on evaporation yields the characteristic crystals, the product having however a faint acid property.

Thus it would seem that the product of natural exudation is properly vanillin, and the product of artificial distillation is vanillic acid. The two are analogous, the latter being however,  $C_{16} H_8 O_8$ . The crystals of both are hard, of a needle form, soluble in ether and with difficulty in water. It melts at 195 degrees F., and sublimates at about 300 degrees F. It has a slightly acrid taste and the characteristic vanilla odor. Like other aldehydes it forms a compound with the alkaline bisulphites, and can therefore be readily extracted wherever contained.

Vanillin is also obtainable from benzoin and raw sugar, and is prepared artificially from asafoetida, coniferin, and eugenol. It is from the latter, that much of the German "vanilla" is obtained.

Obviously that vanilla is to be preferred which contains the largest percentage of an active principle which is most, closely analogous to the true vanillin,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$ . This is not readily capable of imitation, while  $C_{16} H_8 O_6$  may be imitated, to the extent—that we have  $C_{34} H_{22} O_{20}$   $C_{22} H_6 O_4$ , etc. Nature also prepares an imitation, in the shape of cotimarin,[sic] the efflorescence of the Tonka bean, which may be foisted on the trade as "Vanilla." Coniferin (which is a glucoside obtained from the cambium sap of pines) also yields a similar "vanilla." These, and several other artificial products, yield a flavor containing vanillic acid, but not true vanillin.

Hence, in going into the market and obtaining that flavoring agent prepared with the label "vanilla," we find various preparations. Testing them to determine their value as expressed by true vanillin, we find that it is altogether absent from the larger percent of these preparations, but that vanillic acid is apt to be present in varying quantities, determinable as such. In not a few of the preparations neither vanillin or vanillic acid is present. In these latter, containing the imitation, principle, only, we readily find evidence of the use of powerful acids and chemicals in manufacture constituting them absolutely toxic.

In fact the artificial preparation cannot be obtained without the use of sulphuric acid and bichromate of potassium, or some allied powerful chemical. (Whatever maybe, said in weak apology, it should go without saying that this trash is responsible for the vanilla, poisoning which is becoming more and more frequent every season. The, intense gastrointestinal irritation is due to this poisoning.)

The question of adulteration does not intrude in considering relative values, but it is sufficiently grave to be protested as a violation of State laws.

What, then, is the "vanilla question?" It is not as to the preparation which is strongest in flavor and taste, as some of the rankest trash that never saw vanilla bean is strong as smelling, and of a hot, biting taste, absolutely unlike vanilla. Instead, we look for a certain delicious flavor, as light as a perfume, but distinct, definite, and agreeable. Plainly, we look for vanillin,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$ , and the preparation that contains the largest delicate percentage of this principle leads in real value.

What are we to say as to that percentage? Very much that is said is extravagant. Such expressions as an extract "contains 33 per cent," or "25 percent.," or even "5 per cent, of Pure Vanillin," is perfectly absurd, when we consider that the average amount of vanillin yielded by the finest Mexican vanilla is 1.69 per cent. It is said that the Java vanilla sometimes contains from 2.10 to 2.75 per cent, and the South American vanillas yield nearly or quite as large a percentage.

Probably the only way to explain the extravagance of pretention is by the vanillic acid or its, imitations contained, which may amount to some such high percentage.

But—let this be fully understood,—it is the preparation which contains the most vanillin,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$ , the aldehyde of methyl-protocatechuic acid, which is chemically THE BEST. We are not seeking any analogue, remember. In this "vanilla question" it is a matter of indifference as to the quantity of vanillic acid, coumarin, or other analogue present. Understanding fully that which we seek, and understanding it to be vanillin,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$ , we cannot expect to find more than the 1.69 per cent, of the best Mexican article. If an active principle be present, and be present as claimed in some prodigious percentage, it is not and it cannot be true vanillin; but rather it is either that which marks a cheap or a radically dangerous vanilla.

It is unnecessary to stigmatize any cheap-John goods along these lines. No other than this general warning is needed. Beware of "strong" preparations, which owe their quality to any deceptive analogue of true vanillin. That which is to be prized is delicious flavor, delicate purity, and superior quality, as expressed by the detection and valuation of true vanillin. Any other is either cheap or dangerous, or both cheap and dangerous.

There is good vanilla extract on the market, and there is trashy extract. There is superior extract, and there is inferior.—The latter is least commonly known as such. A

superior extract is made by B. F. Miner of Montague, Mass. Mr. Miner is the well-known proprietor of Toiletine, and not content with the honor that comes from manufacturing that elegant and invaluable preparation, he has turned his hand to the manufacture of pure fruit extracts, and among them a—vanilla—extract.— Mr. Miner would be the last man in the world to predicate anything on flattery or puffing; and it would be little short of distasteful to him. But in coming before a class in chemistry in the laboratory, I could not better show the presence of vanillin in a vanilla extract than by using his. By this I mean that his extract contains as large a percentage as any sold in the market, whether made in this country—or imported. This,—understand, beyond question—is pure vanillin,  $C_8 H_8 O_3$ . It is not vanillic acid, or any other analogue or imitation.

There is apt to be an unjust discrimination in fixing these relative values, and I want to say with emphasis that if it is stated that any fluid extract of vanilla contains more vanillin than this of Mr. Miner's, it is something else than true vanillin that is meant, and the fact is in evidence of cheaper inferior goods. In point of fact there are to-day on the market certain extracts, stated (advertised!) to contain from two to four times as much, vanillin, which, rather, should be estimated as, vanillic acid. And if that term is not liked, then speak of it as an Inferior form of vanillin, differing chemically from that which determines essential quality.

This which the chemist can say is substantiated by the consumer. It will be said, and it is said creditably, that in the sense of being rank with a crude odor, Mr. Miner's is not a—"strong" vanilla. There is, perhaps, no one who is a better judge of "strong" vanilla than the manufacturer of cheap candies; and he will never select Mr. Miner's vanilla. But when it comes to the French cook, seeking that which has an exquisite and delicate fragrance, uniform and uniformly delicate, his choice is of Mr. Miner's provided it is offered to his hand. One of these chefs in expressing his opinion of a choice, remarks. "I request that kind of vanilla where the peculiar odor is the only taste!" Is not that a rational way of, characterizing Mr. Miner's extract? It has the peculiar odor; that odor can be tasted; it is the legitimate taste; it has no other taste.

This agreeable richness of flavor is well appreciated in cream syrup. Take a gallon of fresh, sweet cream, and make it dissolve without heat, fourteen pounds avoirdupois of powdered sugar. Bottle the solution, and keep on ice. Now if a pint of this cream syrup be mixed with a pint of simple syrup, and three fluidrachms[sic]of Mr. Miner's extract be added. I will venture to submit to any connoisseur or epicure that it will give perfect satisfaction and satisfy far better than any "strong" extract, no matter whose[sic] brand it may be. That is a fair trial. There can be none more fair. "It is worthy of demonstration at any soda fountain, and it does not require repetition or confirmation.

If this is not elaborate enough, another test may be as follows, any druggist—undertaking it: —lake from an assistant as many extracts of vanilla as you please, the

assistant having given each one a number and one of these being Mr. Miner's. Let the quantity of each be two fluid ounces. Rub each of these samples with two drachms of magnesium carbonate, and gradually add another half of a pint of water; filter the mixture; add another half-pint of water and two and one-half pounds of sugar, dissolving the sugar by the aid of heat; strain. The products will be perfectly transparent syrup. And upon test the Miner number will be found to be inferior to none, and most satisfactory of all.

Again, let me add that I have the honor of being chief-of-staff-of one of the largest sanitariums for the treatment of alcoholism,[sic] drugism,[sic] and nervous disorders in the United States, and that when I desire to influence the nervous system by an aromatic that is diffusibly[sic] stimulant, I know of no happier, readier method than by employing Mr. Miner's vanilla extract. The "strong" extracts I would not employ.

On the whole, I think that Mr. B. F. Miner of Montague, Mass. has happily answered "vanilla question" with his Extract. It suits the chemist, the medical practitioner, the connoisseur, the cook, the confectioner, and the common-sensible man or woman. I have tested it time and again, and it is uniform in affording the delicious flavor which comes from choice Mexican vanilla beans, and which is gauged by vanillin.

W.H. Morse, M.D.  
Consulting Chemist

### **Gazette and Courier**

July 26, **1902** [Greenfield MA Gazette 1902-1903 - 0299.pdf](#)

#### **Recent Patents**

Benjamin F. Miner, Montague—Combination stopper and brush for bottles.

July 11, **1903** [Greenfield MA Gazette 1902-1903 - 0825.pdf](#)

#### **Recent Patents**

Benjamin F. Miner, Montague, closure device for bottles or similar vessels.

November 2, **1907** [Greenfield MA Recorder 1906-1907 - 1000.pdf](#)

#### **Trial List**

Fred T. Lyman vs Benjamin F. Miner. James J. Leary, William A. Davenport.

September 3, **1910** [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 0376.pdf](#)

#### **Benjamin F. Miner, F. S. S. C.**

The most export Manufacturer of the Extract of Vanilla from Vanilla beans, living. For Flavor, Purity, Strength and beauty of finish. I defy the world to produce its equal. Give it a thorough test and you will use no other. Sold by all Grocers. Use one-half the quantity of others.

Montague, Mass. B. F. MINER

Dec. 3 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 0528.pdf](#)

BENJAMIN F. MINER **General Agent** for New England for Dr. A. Wilford Hall's Health Pamphlet, the Greatest Medical Treatment of all times. Price \$2.00 Mail Orders Solicited. Agents Wanted. Montague, Mass., Nov. 30, 1910.

Dec. 10 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 0540.pdf](#)

**Do You Enjoy Good Health?**

I bought of Dr. A. Wilford Hall in 1888, a copy of his Health Pamphlet, paying him \$4.00 for it. After following his advice for 15 years, I write Dr. Hall, "I have followed your advice for 15 years and consider it responsible for my existence to-day." It was the best expenditure of money I ever made. I will sell you a copy for \$2.00, keep it 30 days, following advice given, and if not satisfied return it to me and I will give you \$2.50 for it.

Montague, Mass., Dec. 8, 1910. BENJAMIN F. MINER

Dec. 17 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 0554.pdf](#)

**Are You Subject to Headaches?**

Before buying Dr. A. Wilford Hall's Health Pamphlet in 1888, (for which I paid \$1.00) I was subject to the most terrible headaches. I HAVE NOT HAD A HEADACHE IN 22 YEARS. Dr. Hall's book with my 22 years' experience for \$2.00, with a guarantee of money returned after 38 days If dissatisfied. A health offering you cannot afford to neglect.

Montague. Mass. Dec. 15, 1910 BENJAMIN F. MINER General Agent for New England.

January 7, 1911 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 0586.pdf](#)

**Dr. A. Wilford Hall's Health Pamphlet**

**GOOD HEALTH SAVES TIME, SUFFERING AND DOCTOR'S BILLS**

In 1890 I sold a copy of this book to one of the best known men of Franklin County for \$4.00. He told me he had been in very poor health since leaving the army. When I met him two months after he was the most enthusiastic man over the treatment, was looking fine and has been in excellent health since. Book mailed to any address on receipt of \$2.00, money returned after 30 day's use, if unsatisfactory to the purchaser.

BENJAMIN F. MINER Montague, Mass. General Agent for New England.

Oct. 21 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 1002.pdf](#)

**Real Estate**

COME to Montague and build you a home in a beautiful location. I will-make you a present of a fine lot. Montague. October 16, 1911. BENJAMIN F. MINER.

Nov. 18 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1910-1911 - 1055.pdf](#)

### **Real Estate Transfers**

Benjamin F. Miner to Ada W. Miner, real estate on road from Montague-Center to Boston and Maine station.

### **Greenfield Recorder**

January 11, **1913** [Greenfield MA Gazette 1912-1913 - 0577.pdf](#)

### **For Rent**

A nice plant for manufacturing. Miner's Toiletine building is near the B&M. station, Montague, 3 story brick building, engine house gasoline engine, shafting and pulleys. Laboratory 40x26, 2 story, hot and cold water, heater, etc. Rent low to the right parties.

BENJAMIN F. MINER, Montague, Mass.

March 15 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1912-1913 - 0672.pdf](#)

### **Present Abolition of Precinct Voting**

Will Millers Falls and Montague Secede from Town?

The decision of the Montague town meeting Monday to do away with the precinct voting at Millers Falls and Montague has created a very hot feeling in the outlying precincts. The privilege of precinct voting has been held by these localities for many years, the whole town voting previously at Montague. The three sections are so widely separated that it will be a great hardship for the outlying sections to come in twice a year, and it would seem almost impossible to persuade the outlying voters to in at the primaries, leaving the whole political situation more closely under the control of the Turners Falls politicians than ever before. The action will seem unjust and arbitrary to outside observers. The Gazette and Courier has received the following letter:—

#### **To the Editor of The Gazette and Courier:**

I heard a man say of his sister and her husband: "It is a might y good thing that two families are not spoiled by them." This was forcibly brought to my mind yesterday at the business meeting of the town at Turner Falls.

Twenty-five years ago, I was living in New York state and accustomed to Tammany methods, since which time yesterday was the first time I have seen such methods exemplified.

Of the entire sum of nearly \$100,000, appropriated, Montague Center got \$160 for sidewalks.

In relation to the question of doing away with precinct voting, we asked that the question be submitted to the voters at the next annual meeting, but no, an immediate decision was demanded and carried, with the result of the instructed gang being brought in in droves overwhelming the unprepared outlying districts.

Turner s Falls should be set off as a Town by itself. Millers Falls will undoubtedly at some time join the town of Erving: Montague Center, with its large area, its law abiding and hard working citizens, its High school restored under the able management of Miss Town, its town affairs economically administered would be independent, and I believe prosperous.

Sincerely yours, BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague, March 11, 1913.

Sept. 17 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1912-1913 - 0890.pdf](#)

**Ad**

**A Side Line For Agents**

H. N. Ferry of Northampton has sold 12 gross since June 5th. Wrote me Aug. 14th. "Soap a great seller, A No.1. The ladies tell me it is the greatest soap on the market."

BENJAMIN F. MINER

Oct. 8 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1912-1913 - 0927.pdf](#) and [Greenfield MA Recorder 1912-1913 - 0917.pdf](#)

**Ad**

**Miner's P.D.Q. Soap**

E. B. BLAKE, Esquire, of Greenfield said as he looked at his bands with great satisfaction: "P.D.Q. is fine soap, keeps the hands so soft." Tell people to call at Blake's coal office If they want to hear a good opinion of P.D.Q. soap. BENJAMIN F. MINER

November 18, 1914

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 - 0468.pdf](#)

**At Superior Court**

The criminal business was completed Tuesday and other cases were completed as follows: Benjamin F. Miner of Montague, appellant, on a charge of wantonly destroying a shade tree, plea nolo contendere, decree of district court for \$15 fine affirmed.

April 7, 1915 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 - 0671.pdf](#)

**To Grow Dogproof Fences**

**B. F. Miner Advises Setting Out of Black Locusts for the Purpose**

To the Editor of the Recorder: To those interested in tree culture I will say that by sending for the catalog of the German Nursery company, Beatrice, Nebraska, much information can be derived about tree seeds of all kinds with prices also of seedling trees of all varieties which can be bought, delivered to you by parcel post or express at very low prices. I have for years bought of them with good results. I am ordering 100 black locusts of them for growing fencing around my land. They are hardy, quick growing trees and long lived. In this way one can soon fence their land against deer and dogs.

BENJAMIN F. MINER, Montague, March 3, 1915.

April 21 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 - 0684.pdf](#)

### **Growing Laurel at Home**

#### **B. F. Miner Will Mail Plants to Anyone Wishing Them**

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RECORDER: After coming to Montague, I tried in vain to transplant that beautiful flowering shrub, the laurel. One day I set some right next to the foundation of my house on the west side, and it was a complete success, as they have grown finely since and blossom every year. A traveling salesman for a nursery house seeing them last year, was pleased to know of my method, and I believe this information will be of service to many who have failed to make the laurel grow. As I have nothing to do but to entertain the public, and this is a laurel country, I would be pleased to mail these plants "to any one[sic] wishing them and willing to pay the postage.

BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague, April 20, 1915.

April 28 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1914-1915 - 0694.pdf](#)

### **Turners Falls**

#### **Mr. Miner Received Plenty of Orders**

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RECORDER: My letter in last week's Recorder demonstrates the fact that your paper is pretty generally read. Issued Wednesday, on the first mail Friday I received, besides local orders, ones from New York and New Jersey. I find I took a rather, strenuous contract as I must go a half mile or more for the plants, all taken up and delivered with a ball of earth on them, securely packed and carried to the post office nearly one mile, a slow process with my wheelbarrow automobile. It is very pleasing that I have created an interest which, with my method I hope now will be the means of beautifying many lawns. I have filled all orders, but must decline to fill more after the publication of this.

On your auto trips, take your spade and when you see a nice seedling plant you will find that it can be easily taken up with a ball of earth with all the roots. My love for a beautiful plant or tree has always created a desire in me to assist others in getting them.

BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague. April 26, 1915.

December 27, **1916** [Greenfield MA Recorder 1916 - 0502.pdf](#)

### **Montague**

Benjamin F. Miner and his grandson, Theodore Miner have gone to Detroit to visit Birchard<sup>2</sup> Miner who is at work there.

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<sup>2</sup> Birchard is the name as spelled. *e.g.*

## **Gazette and Courier**

March 24, **1917**      [Greenfield MA Gazette 1917-1918 - 0109.pdf](#)

### **Progressive Postmaster**

To the Editor of The Gazette and Courier:—The public is certainly pleased at the efforts of our new postmaster, S. L. Wildes, to accommodate the patrons of the office. In the first place he installed a telephone, thus making it possible for us, far away from the office, to know when the box rent comes due. Secondly, he installed one of the finest electric lights in the office, thus making it possible to write or read a letter. Thirdly, he has pleased the patrons of the office by placing the ("Old Franklin County Bible") the Gazette and Courier on sale. And, as he has many inquiries from strangers and others of the arrival and departure of trains and of routes to different points of the country, he proposes to install a desk as a bureau of information, asking; the different railroads to keep him supplied with time tables upon, every change of time, which will be quite an innovation.

Sincerely yours, BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague, Mass., March 21, 1917

May 19              [Greenfield MA Gazette 1917-1918 - 0217.pdf](#)

### **Montague Gray Fluid**

A promotor whose name is J. S. Berger, and who lives at 192 Chestnut street, Chelsea, will soon attempt to demonstrate that a gray fluid in which he is interested will expand gasoline so that it will do double duty. He claims that an ounce of his fluid put into (two gallons of ordinary gasoline will drive a car as far as four gallons of fluid-less gasoline will drive it. The inventors are Benjamin F. Miner and another man named Shaw, both of Montague. [Boston Traveler.

Messrs. Miner & Shaw call the fluid Multi-Calorium. They claim it will positively eliminate carbon from cylinders and increase efficiency from 40 to 100 per cent. Multi-Calorium is not for sale, nor are samples to be given away as they desire to sell the proposition. Demonstrations will be given.

June 2              [Greenfield MA Gazette 1917-1918 - 0244.pdf](#)

### **Montague Plan**

One of New England's Beauty Spots. One hundred miles from Boston, the same distance from Troy, five miles east from Greenfield, about half way between Northfield and Mt. Holyoke colleges, within five "minute's walk of the B. & M. railroad station at Montague, is a large tract of land beautiful as God ever created. Crossing Birch avenue on the north you enter a beautiful grove of white birch, pine and chestnut growth. This comprises five acres gently sloping to the south and west, an ideal spot for the enjoyment of

the nearby residents. Stroll up Birch avenue to the top of the hill, and a panoramic view meets the eye in every direction, its beauty unsurpassed in any country.

Cross the open field to the left and you come to an, open field of about 15 acres, perfectly level. To the right of this field is another grove of pine and chestnut growth, comprising six acres. A representative of one of the largest importing houses in New York visited me once a month when I was in business. He was fascinated by the beauty and possibilities of the location. The wife of a New, Jersey physician walked over it with me.

She said, "I have been in the Berkshires the past, three weeks, and have never seen such views as these." The possibilities of this lovely spot are legion. Easy of access, fine railroad and mail service, an electric road crossing the land, for permanent or summer homes of people from the cities. Here are hundreds of acres of land which should be a valuable asset to the town of Montague and Franklin county.

Adjacent to this; tract of land, three-fourths of a mile south of the Boston & Maine station, is the village of Montague, with fine Churches, schools, general stores, hotel, etc. Cheap land for homes or farming, good roads, the beautiful mountain and valley views, unsurpassed by any in New England, makes this as desirable a location as can be found for people desiring a quiet country home. A lighting district has recently been formed by which the Franklin Electric Light Co. of Turners Falls will furnish light and power to anyone wishing it. For manufacturing purposes every reasonable inducement will be offered in the way of land or rents to induce business men to locate in Montague.

BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague, Mass.

Mr. Miner believes in Montague and for 24 years has worked earnestly, to add to the beauty and prosperity of this attractive country town, and to call the attention of others to the charms and material benefits it offers to the public at large.

June 9 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1917-1918 - 0264.pdf](#)

### **Worth Knowing**

Sow hemp seed where cucumbers, squash and melons are planted. Leave a few plants in every hill and no bugs will molest them.

BENJAMIN F. MINER. Montague, Mas., June 4, 1917

June 16 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1917-1918 - 0274.pdf](#)

### **Real Estate Transfers**

Montague—Ada F. Miner to Benjamin F. Miner, real estate at Montague

March 27, **1918**      [Greenfield MA Recorder 1918-1919 - 0100.pdf](#)

### **Montague**

The incorporation has recently been effected of the National Service corporation, with a capital of \$100,000, with office and factory at Montague, Benjamin F. Miner as president, and J. Wilson of Springfield as secretary and treasurer, for the purpose of manufacturing various and sundry articles, among them Miner's P. D. Q. soap, and the Lightning Cleaner, a recent and wonderful invention of Mr. Wilson, with which, instead of painting your house you clean it, a small quantity of it put into a pail of water, and sprayed onto the house, immediately washed off with the hose, will leave the paint looking like new. In a short time, the corporation will be in a position to demonstrate to interested parties.

July 17              [Greenfield MA Recorder 1918-1919 - 0280.pdf](#)

The brief criminal session of the superior court, which occupied but one day, Monday, was followed yesterday by . . . sentences being imposed . . .

**Note:** Numerous cases are mentioned here. This entry will focus on **Benjamin F. Miner**.

. . . Benjamin F. Miner of Montague, for wantonly destroying a tree, paid \$25.

January 1, **1919**      [Greenfield MA Recorder 1918-1919 - 0547.pdf](#)

### **The Recorder Forum**

We publish today the first installment of The Forum, which we trust will grow in size and interest from place week to week. The response from Greenfield has been very fine and we hope that other towns in the county will follow the local example. Every community has problems which would reach a solution much quicker if given a thorough discussion in the press. This department offers the opportunity to all to express themselves on such matters. If anyone differs from 'opinions expressed, they are invited to reply, and their letters will be published. Although typewritten copy will receive preference, handwritten letters will be accepted, if in a plain hand.

#### **Montague Plains Offer Opportunity**

To The Recorder Forum: The Forum should be a popular in novation, and of much practical value to every reader of your valuable paper.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my letter to Hon. Wilfred Wheeler, Chairman Soldiers Land commission. I believe there are great possibilities in Montague Plains, and hope to see the day when a practical demonstration will be made. This should interest, every citizen of Montague and Franklin County.

Very respectfully,

Benjamin F. Miner. Montague, Dec. 26, 1918.

Mr. Miner's letter to Chairman Wheeler is as follows:

Hon. Wilfred Wheeler, Chairman Soldiers' Land Com.,

Dear Sir: I have a clipping from the Springfield Union of the 15th inst., in relation to land for Soldiers in Massachusetts. For 25 years I have been much interested in a large tract of land, lying between Montague and Turners Falls, this tract consists of 2000 acres or more, and I am sure, could that land have the same treatment as the Connecticut Valley land has, it would produce in five years, as much corn, tobacco, onions, potatoes, and greater crops of strawberries, or garden crops than any of them. I have grown very large crops of corn on this land, using as fertilizer only winter vetch plowed in. I have walked from my home, a half mile, picked a 12-quart basket full of wild strawberries, and back home in 80 minutes.

I am enclosing herewith a pamphlet "Fruit culture and its possibilities in Montague" and other printed matter which may be of interest to you. I have 65 acres of this land. I am not a farmer. I am 77 years old, but if I was a young man, I would show the detractors of Montague land as good a farm, as profitable a farm, as can be found in Franklin county.

With good markets, good railroad and mail facilities, good schools, churches of all denominations, there is no reason why this land practically of the same nature as the formerly deserted areas of Long Island, which now covered with immense market gardens and called the "Garden Spot of America" serve in large measure to feed the great city of New York, I say there is no reason why a practical test of its possibilities should not be made. I would be pleased to meet representatives of the state of the United States in relation to this land.

Truly yours, Benjamin F. Miner

Jan. 15 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1918-1919 - 0578.pdf](#)

**Ad What Would Jesus Do If He Lived in Montague?**

Mr. J. H. Newstead, a gentleman 72 years of age, bought himself a little home in Montague, after reading the government report on the culture of the Belgian Hares, ordered a trio of the most expensive ones, the Silver Cray, costing him \$50, the next day after receiving them, some fiend in human form, cut off the heads of two which they hung on his door, carrying the bodies away, the doe remaining had five young ones last night. Two of those were stolen and another killed. I will pay \$100 to the one who will have the perpetrator of this crime arrested and convicted.

A book entitled, "WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?" size 8x6 inches, 96 pages, one of the most fascinating; stories I ever read, should be in every home, and read by every man and woman, and placed in the hand of every child. I will mail a copy to any address on receipt of 10 cents, no stamps taken.

BENJAMIN F. MINER.

Montague, Mass., Jan. 12, 1919.

July 19 [Greenfield MA Gazette 1919-1920 - 0286.pdf](#)

**Real Estate Transfers**

Montague—Benjamin F. Miner to John Howard, on Mechanic street.

April 17, **1920** [Greenfield MA Gazette 1919-1920 - 0792.pdf](#)

**Real Estate Transfers**

Montague—Benjamin F. Miner to Charles J. Ewald, adjoining State pine reservation.  
Benjamin F. Miner to Madelene T. Nichols, on road to Northfield.

**Greenfield Recorder Gazette**

November 13, **1933** [Greenfield MA Recorder 1933 - 2667.pdf](#)

**Twenty Five Years Ago.**

November 1908

**Montague**

Benjamin F. Miner, well-known resident of this town, honored by election to the London society of Art, Science and Letters for his success to discovering a new method of extracting vanilla extract from vanilla beans.



**Addendum:**

Subsequent research offers . . .

**Greenfield Recorder**

September 24, **1913**

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1912-1913 - 0898.pdf](#)

**Land Offered for School****B. F. Miner Ready to Give Site for Lutheran Seminary**

Land for the German Lutheran seminary, which Rev. W. B. Rommel announced in last week's Recorder was ready to come to the town of Montague, is offered by Benjamin F. Miner the Montague manufacturer. The tract Mr. Miner, generously offers to give to the school is in the outskirts of Montague centre,[sic] on the line of the street railway and is in many respects ideal for institutional use. It is partly wooded, is practically level, dry and at the same time fertile, making its development into a school estate entirely practicable. Mr. Miner's letter to Mr. Rommel follows:

Montague, Mass. September 22, 1913.

Rev. W. E. Rommel, Greenfield, Mass.

Dear Sir:—I was interested in the announcement of the fact that the German Lutheran synod proposed to locate a seminary near Turners Falls. I will say that I have about 60 acres of land between Montague and Turners Falls within five minutes walk of the Boston and Maine railroad, the Connecticut river electric road passes through it, in as beautiful a location as God ever created, with several acres of beautiful groves of birch, pine and chestnut. There is no finer depot for your institution in the world. This land I will present to your institution, should you think best to locate here. I will be pleased to meet you and go over it with you.

Sincerely yours, BENJAMIN F. MINER

Jan. 22, **1919**

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1918-1919 - 0590.pdf](#)

**Ad - WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?**—This most interesting book, 6\*4x8 inches, 96 pages, advertised by me in another column, to be mailed to any address for 10 cents, has created such a demand that my stock is exhausted, but hope to have an inexhaustible[sic] supply very soon when all orders will be filled at once. Montague, Mass., Jan. 22. Benjamin F. Miner.

Dec. 27, **1921**

[Greenfield MA Recorder 1921 - 2897.pdf](#)

**Montague**

Benjamin F. Miner is in a very serious condition at his home on Depot street.

Jan. 3, 1922 [Greenfield MA Recorder 1922 - 0002.pdf](#)

### Montague

#### Death of B. F. Miner

Benjamin F. Miner, formerly a well-known manufacturer of this village died yesterday afternoon in his home on Depot road after a long illness.

He was born in Mystic, Conn., May 6, 1841, the son of Asa and Ann (Lewis) Miner, He lived in Mystic for a number of years. He moved to Wisconsin, where he entered the lumber business, and in 1870 he moved to Hoosic Falls, where he operated a grocery store.

While there he became interested in the making of extracts and toilet preparations and later he established in Montague in 1892. He sold his interest in this business in 1910 to W. H. Ulrich of Greenfield. Since that time he has been active in village enterprises.

He leaves two sons, Birchard of Detroit, and Louis of Montague, and three grandsons. He also leaves a sister, Mrs. Ellis N. Palmer of Greensport, N.Y.

The funeral service will take place at the home Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Rev. W.F. Anderson of Montague, county missionary, and Rev. R.H. Clapp, pastor of the First Church of Northampton, will officiate. The body will be cremated.

June 6, 1923

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS FRANKLIN, ss.**

Case 20.485. **PROBATE COURT.**

To all persons interested in the estate of BENJAMIN F. MINER, late of Montague in said County, deceased: Whereas, the Franklin County Trust Company, the executor of the will of said deceased, has presented for allowance, the first account of its administration upon the estate of said deceased:

You are hereby cited, to appear at a Probate Court, to be held at Greenfield, in said County, on the third Tuesday of June A. D. 1923, at nine o'clock in the forenoon, to show causes, if any you have, why the same should not be allowed.

And said executor is ordered to serve this citation by delivering a copy thereof to all persons interested in the estate fourteen days at least before said Court, or by publishing the same once in each week, for three successive weeks, in the *Greenfield Daily Recorder*, a newspaper published in Greenfield in said County, the but publication °to be one day at least before said Court, and by mailing, postpaid, a copy of this citation to all known persons interested in the estate seven days at least before said Court.

Witness, FRANCIS NIMS THOMPSON. Esquire. Judge of said Court, this fourth day of June in the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty-three.

JOHN C. LEE. Register