

Northbridge the birthplace of President Millard Fillmore's mother, Phoebe, and home to the Whitin Machine Works from 1831 to 1964

The earliest residents were the Nipmuc, or "Small Pond People". The town was once part of Mendon, from 1667 to 1726, and part of Uxbridge, from 1727 to 1772.

This suburban community near Worcester has a rich manufacturing heritage.

The Blackstone and Mumford Rivers run through the Town and in the early 19th century numerous industrial developments were erected along the riverbanks, most notably the Whitin Machine Shop in Whitinsville, at its peak the largest manufacturer of textile machines in the world.[4] Northbridge stands as a testament to the success of mill

villages throughout the 19th and 20th centuries when production was expanding so greatly that immigrant labor from Canada, the Netherlands and Armenia was imported.[5]

[Northbridge is part of the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission and is working with its neighboring communities to "promote the region's special character and sense of history".] The Blackstone River Valley was the first industrialized region in the United States.

Samuel Judson Fletcher was born on March 31, 1831 in Solon, Maine, son of Margaret Ann Chapin and Ephraim Spring Fletcher. He was educated at Brown University and graduated in 1857 with a degree in engineering. Samuel enlisted

as a private with the Fifteenth Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry on July 12, 1861. His brothers, James Brainerd Fletcher and George Fergo Fletcher, and his cousin Edward Fletcher Chapin, who left Harvard to enlist with him all served in Company H of the Fifteenth Infantry. Fletcher was promoted to lieutenant and was shot through the jaw at Antietam but survived. He was promoted to first Lieutenant on November 14, 1862. On July 3, 1863 he was wounded at Gettysburg while leading his men into battle and was presented with a "Sword for Bravery" by the Regimental Commander. On July 4, 1863 Fletcher was promoted to captain. His brother James was killed in the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862 at the age of

twenty-three. He was shot through the head and Samuel caught him as he fell dead. His brother George was killed in the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863 at age nineteen. His cousin Edward, age twenty-three, was also killed at the Battle of Gettysburg on July 3, 1863. Samuel was the only family member to return home alive.

On March 8, 1864 he married Emma A. Luther in Ashland, Massachusetts. He mustered out of the Fifteenth Massachusetts on July 28, 1864 as a captain. The residents of Northbridge elected him to the Massachusetts State Legislature Eighteenth Worcester District in 1865. Fletcher was appointed as a state police deputy constable for Worcester County on July 26, 1867. In May of 1870,

Fletcher was stabbed and thought killed, during a raid in Uxbridge where several persons were arrested and tried for the assault. He served as a state constable until February 1875 when the state detective force was established. In April 1875 he was appointed a constable in Northbridge. Fletcher and his wife had four children, Nellie, Alice, Bertha, and Edward. Around 1912, they moved to Gill, Massachusetts where Fletcher died at ninety-three years of age on July 11, 1924.

His obituary was posted in the Turner Falls newspapers and he is buried at Pine Hill Cemetery in Sherborn, MA.

(Northbridge Challenge Coin)

## **NORTHBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS**

**250<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
COMMEMORATIVE COIN  
1772 - 2022**