

Franklin NH Historical Society News

August 2018

Summer has swept in with a tidal wave of heat to begin the season, ushering in the prerequisite thunderstorms, sweltering and uncomfortable nights (for those without air conditioning), and signaling the membership to choose a (cool and relaxing) destination for the August Field Trip. At the July meeting, sparsely attended due to vacation plans, competing events, family get-togethers, and stifling heat, those in attendance voted three choices to be offered to the entire membership, with the winner decided by return email. The destination receiving the most responses was the Saint-Gaudens Historical Site in Cornish, to be visited on Friday, August 24th, gathering in the venue's parking lot at 9:30 am to take advantage of the self-guided (although information will be provided from research) house tours beginning at 10 am. Although there is no official docent for that tour, the "Gilded Age" tour at 11 am will have a guide from the NPS.

The June Plant Sale was considered a blooming success, although not quite attaining the lofty financial level of the previous year, but still garnering a respectable total of revenue. The "dampened" receipts were most likely the result of an unfortunate forecast of rain, which did begin to lightly fall in the latter part of the day. However, sales of the Society's new cookbook added to the final tally, a figure in the mid \$300 range which pleased all those who participated. Volunteers and donors who made the event possible were Annette Andreozzi, Annette Cain, Mary Foley, Elizabeth Jewell, Sally Bussiere, Rosemary Mellon, Rita Norander, Sandra Burney, and Judith and Ken Ackerson. Donors of plants who added to the variety of offerings were Leslie Ervings, Dan and Karen Darling, Linda Pauwels, Yvonne Weglarz, and Nita Tomaszewski. To one and all, the Society's most sincere gratitude.

Despite the heat, the vinyl siding removal project has continued, albeit at a slower pace. The most unusual finding during the removal process was a gap just under the eaves of the north wall, with 220 year old corn cobs stuffed in the space—for insulation!? Or was the builder just back from a corn-on-the-cob lunch? Historic buildings always have interesting, and often baffling, stories to tell... The north facing wall is now complete, and the west wall is well under way, taking full advantage of the scissor lift the use of which which was graciously donated by William Day for this project. Years of neglect of the underlying structures were all too apparent when the siding came off: rot of significant portions of the clapboard (including some of the underlying original 1795 sheathing, attached to the frame with square cut nails), window sills half gone, and window trim board ends as porous as straw. As much as can be done this year, will be done, with "Before" and "After" photos posted on the Society's Facebook page.

From the Curator and President, additions to the Honor Roll of Giving to the Society's collections continues to expand. This month the Society acknowledges these generous donors and their gifts: Steve and Mary Foley: a dress form (to be used for displays of vintage clothing); Elizabeth Jewell: a mission style chair which may have been used by the freight agent of the Boston and Maine RR here in Franklin; Sue Marceau via Pat Collins: a price booklet from Cunningham and Marceau Wines on Canal Street, c. 1917; Pat Collins: a signed History of Franklin by

Albert Garneau as a reference volume; Ed Perkins of MA: seven vintage images of Franklin; Jan Andrus: a paper copy of a photo of Nesmith School (hoping the the original still exists from which a more representative scan can be made); and Donna and Roy Gilbreth: a pastel portrait, framed and matted c. 1940, found in the barn loft of the previous home of artist Helen Hird, posing the mystery of who was the subject, and was Helen the portraitist? Or was it the property of the owner previous to Helen?

A follow-up anecdote to a donation from last month of a panoramic photo of the 1932 dedication of the Webster Bust brought to the Society by Jim Collins. In replacing the broken glass, it was discovered the the backing material used in the original framing were cut-up posters for the Opera House, Pastime Theater, and a July 4th celebration in Bristol, all from the year of the dedication ceremony! Dissecting the past can truly be an adventure of discovery.

Coming next month: even more donations, already accumulating, to enumerate and donors to thank!

An open invitation is extended to all those who wish to visit the Society's exhibits (including a display of Helen Hird's work) any Saturday. 10 am to 2 pm. And if using the rail trail on a hot summer day, stop by for a cold drink, a trail mix bar, or an ice cream treat, with all proceeds benefiting the Society, and therefore the community.

[This month's historic image is a departure from previous norms, offering a photo taken by a Franklin scion, but of a somewhat distant venue. The well-to-do who could afford to rent or own a summer retreat, sometimes went to the coast to escape the interior's heat. In this case, Omar Towne appears to have taken his family to Old Orchard, Maine, to enjoy the ocean breezes and cooling water of the Atlantic, c. 1899. What is featured here is an impressive seasonal house on the beach with its own walkway across the sand.]

