

Franklin Historical Society

July 2021

To all members, friends and family, may your 4th of July be fun, safe, and memorable! With cautious optimism we can hope for a replacement of "new normals" with good old-fashioned, pre-pandemic normals. Just to be able to congregate and socialize once again will be a welcome sign. Although there will be no meeting this month, August will signal a return regular gatherings at Webster Place. Mostly intended to be a "catch up" business meeting with no guest speaker, a display is being arranged to exhibit long held but hidden gems from the Society's collections, as well as recent and fascinating additions. More details will be forthcoming in next month's newsletter, but be prepared for an earlier meeting time: probably 5 or 6 pm instead of 7 (any preference?) with a short duration. It will be held outside unless rain threatens, in which case we will move inside with masks and appropriate precautions.

The June Plant Sale exceeded expectations. Initially the revenue tally was less than last year, but later donations and after-sale activity (due mostly to Annette Andreozzi's efforts) boosted the bottom line to over \$1,000! Thank you to all who contributed plants and other sales items (Annette, Dan and Karen Darling, Glenn Morrill, Donna and Roy Gilbreth, Elizabeth Jewell and her parents Jack and Betty Tobey, Nita Tomasewski, Annie Lund, and Lisa West and her son Tyler Barody), and who helped with the sale itself (Annette, Rita & Bob Norander, Sandra Burney, Cindy Campbell & Brian Campbell (for roadside signs), Sally Bussiere, Karen Darling and her youth group volunteer Roxy Morrison). The collective contributions of all these volunteers is deeply appreciated, with the proceeds certainly proving the efficacy of their efforts!

The path to the Stevenstown Fort marker, always hard to find first thing in the summer because of Mother Nature's natural camouflage, has been cleared for 2021 visitors.

Of some concern is the downhill lean developing in the stone on which the plaque is affixed. Currently it is listing at approximately 15 degrees. Should that increase next year, some corrective action may be mandated, so a monitoring of the situation will be maintained.

Answering inquiries through the website or the Society's Facebook page is ongoing, regardless of the season. Often, such queries lead to a better understanding of Franklin's history, and those who contributed to its past. Such was a question about the history of the Auerbach Building. Using Albert Garneau's book as a source, it was learned that the current Auerbach Building (between the Regal and the Shepard Buildings) was constructed in 1938, in the space formerly occupied by the Kennedy Hotel, a wooden structure destroyed by fire in 1925. We never know so much that we cannot learn something more.



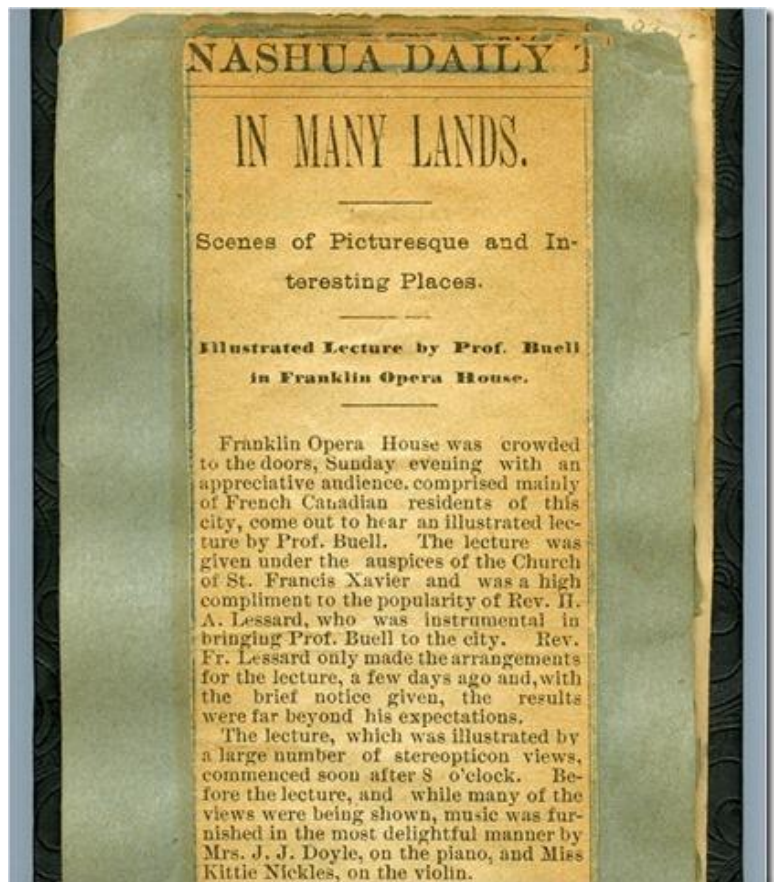
Before clearing the surrounding growth hiding the path, and after.



Photo of Prof. Buell found on the Internet, with scan of article (no date, unfortunately) of Nashua article sent by person who initiated the inquiry. The names mentioned are not familiar.

And then there was an 1894 letter, sent to Oliver Buell (no apparent relation to George Buell, of Buell's Block) by Pastor A.J. Timon from St. Paul's Church, mentioning an "ARA invasion". The person who uncovered this letter was curious for what those initials stood. After some time researching the microfilm at the Franklin Public Library of 1894 issues of the Transcript, a small article was found solving the mystery. The Pastor's handwriting had been misread: it was actually an "A. P. A. invasion", referring to a secret political order (the "American Protective Association") formed to defeat the perceived conspiracy by the Catholic Church and the Pope himself to unduly influence the US government. The organization was anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant, and supposedly had 300 members in and around Franklin. In essence this movement died out after the election of 1896, but its ugly sentiments still echo today. *Those who refuse to learn from the past, will be condemned to repeat its mistakes...* As a side note, Oliver Brown Buell was known to hold "picture shows" or stereopticon presentations, of images from around the world. Although mentions were found in Nashua newspapers of 1895 that he had performed at the Franklin Opera House, nothing could be found in the Transcript. Could it be that the Opera house to which the article refers, is the one in Franklin, **MA**?

More wonderful donations from people who quite obviously care about preserving artifacts and memories, to whom the greatest amount of thanks is offered: to **Joel and Sara Doherty** for a second aerial photograph of the Griffin Hacksaw Mill and surrounding buildings, from a different angle, facing Odell Park and making it apparent that it was taken prior to 1934, as the Proulx Center had not yet been built, a doctor's scale from the Sanborn Hospital (now the Testermans' home), a Webster Birthplace tile trivet, an early hand sewing kit, and the genealogy of Stephen Cross; to **Eva Sharp** for a wealth of material—photos, books, Franklin High School memorabilia including diplomas relating to the



Wescott family, with her own 1958 baptismal dress and her grandmother's (Mary Wescott) *1913 wedding gown*; to **Tara Shore** at the Belknap Mill for a fabulous early hand drawn plan of Harry Daniell's mill, and machine parts for Jonas Aiken's home knitting machine; **Bob Lucas** for several town and city reports; to **LeAnne Hamilton** (in case I forgot last month) for a 1940's era Franklin Dairy milk bottle, with almost all of the label made transparent with age, but still readable ("Health and Energy in every glass"); and to **Stan Weglarz** for a scythe, so the famous story of Daniel Webster and the "hanging scythe" can have the visual aid it always needed when being retold to museum visitors.

The Society wishes also to extend its thanks to those who renewed their commitment to Franklin's legacy, by bringing their dues up to date. The latest roster will be released in its electronic version presently to all paid members, a labor of dedication for which the Society has to acknowledge Karen Darling for all her time-consuming work.

It is the Society's hope that these newsletters are informative and even entertaining. Should any member have a suggestion as to how the content can be improved, you need only reply to the email which delivered this missive to your inbox. All replies will be considered, and unless otherwise specified, be held in strictest confidence.

Happy Independence Day!