

Franklin Historical Society

September 2021

The August meeting, the first in a long time at the Society, was as successful as it was short. There has been no negative feedback and no one has reported any illness as a result of attending. Therefore, we shall proceed to hold a September meeting at **Webster Place on Thursday, September 2nd, at 7 pm**. The guest speaker for this "welcome back" presentation will be Bill Caswell, discussing with illustrations "The Covered Bridges of NH". The Society will ask, because of the insertion of the Delta variant of Covid into the expanding virus equation, that everyone wear a mask inside and, when possible, to seat their party with an empty chair between them and the next attendees, so some separation may be maintained. Masks will be made available, as will hand sanitizer. Refreshments will be served (during which, because mask cannot be worn while eating and drinking, that reasonable separation be maintained by members) before another short business meeting to keep members updated on current issues of importance.

One of the responsibilities of any historical society is to make available material in its collections for education or research. Recently, the Society has helped in finding facts and photos for members John Powell and Steve Johnson, in their quests to discover information either for family ties (John) or for for a potential book (Steve, on the Aikens, to whom he is related). The Society has also aided Richard Casella, a professional employed by the Peabody Home, in documenting the history of Peabody Place, as a tribute to the efforts of creating and maintaining a safe and secure place for older citizens to reside in Franklin. More work is ahead to honor the memory of the Proctors (also a Peabody Home project, as they own the land on which the Proctors lived), and to remind all those who will take advantage of the Mill City Park facilities of the significance of the area the Park will inhabit, and of the mills along the Winnepesaukee River which gave Franklin the reason to exist, to grow, and to flourish.

The Society is also pleased to help out in the Franklin High School classes of 1970 and 71 celebrations of their upcoming reunions, by allowing members to borrow yearbooks from the Society's collections to copy material for their programs, and to be open for their classmates on the day of the reunion should anyone care to visit the Society and reminisce...

The Society's collections continue to expand with the magnanimous contributions of those named here in thanks: from **the Byrne Family**, an exquisite 1885 "crazy quilt" created for her daughter by Narcissa Blanchard Herrick just two years before her death (husband Daniel Herrick, who not only was instrumental in determining the correct equipment necessary to establish the very first paper mill in Franklin in 1822, but also worked for Herrick and Walter Aiken in their mills as a designer); from **Annette Cain** rifle club mementos, maps, reference books, two FFD photos of her father fighting a fire, Hill history tomes, a local Franklin business calendar, and even blank name plates for a wall plaque; from **Linda Pauwels** newspaper obits and articles of historic interest; from **"Taffy" Johnson** a book published in 1886 on the dedication of the statue of Daniel Webster placed in front of the NH State House and a 1904 publication of memorial poems and the ancestry of Daniel Webster tracing a line of descent to Taffy as a relative of the great statesman and orator!; from **Maureen Aube** four ceramic dishes and a cache pot adorned with a picture of Franklin's Soldier's Memorial and City Hall captioned "The Franklin Opera House" (originally collected by Steve Foley and donated to the Opera House for its Celebrity Waiters Dinner auction, where they were purchased by Maureen and then generously donated to the Society to benefit both organizations); and from **Rita Norander** a marvelous miniature foldable jeweler's loupe in its original leather envelope casing from Franklin's Lawrence Jewelers, a 1921 note in its transmittal envelope with a stamp commemorating the three hundredth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620 with two unused 2020 stamps for the *four* hundredth anniversary of the same event, a Granny Judy's business card (proving how history continues to unfold every day, as this

restaurant has been replaced by Wyatt's Family restaurant), and two "lucky pennies" from the Merrimack County Savings Bank. Thank you one and all!

Aiken items on loan from Rob Sargent at the Franklin Public Library have been returned, with grateful appreciation. It appears that Jonas Aiken was a first hand witness to at least two historical events: the catastrophic fire of the "Crystal Palace" in 1858 (where Jonas had been an exhibitor of his knitting machines, some of which he was able to save) and the "Peace Jubilee" of 1869 in Boston, celebrating the end of the Civil War. There is a wealth of information online regarding both events well worth researching, should anyone wish to learn more...

The Society's sizeable insurance payment has been made for the year, so the only other notable expense will be any cost associated with the stabilization or replacement of the foundation sill of the Webster Mansion. The Society is currently in touch with Steve Fifield to get an assessment of what repairs may be needed.

[Below is a combined scan, front and back, of a Northern RR pass owned by Jonas Aiken, found tucked into the side pocket of his 1869 diary. Access courtesy of Rob Sargent at the Franklin Public Library]

