

Franklin Historical Society

April 2022

Recently a “dusting” of snow reminded us all that winter can have a tenacious hold on New England even into April, as we all long for warmer weather, a return to the vibrant colors of spring, and the Society’s first meeting of 2022! On Thursday April 7th, at 7 pm, a new season of presentations will be inaugurated with a slideshow of “Then and Now” pictures, as well as aerial photos of Franklin from the 1950’s commissioned by John Shepard and a couple of long-lost businesses, at the Webster/Tay House at Webster Place (21 Holy Cross Road—directions are on the Society’s webpage, www.franklinhhsociety.org).

The event is free and open to all, with light refreshments offered between the presentation and the usual business meeting, to which all are welcome. Social spacing and masks will be voluntary. From the Shepard archives, comes this photo of a business that John Shepard Jr. may have represented as a real estate agent. Anyone know exactly where this business was (on Route 3 presumably)?



In the last edition of the newsletter, “name cards” which used to be a tradition for FHS seniors (when did that stop?) to have printed and distributed prior to and after their graduation were categorized as “calling

cards". The latter were a European and Victorian tradition used to announce oneself when visiting members of the elite social classes, and although may have been the distant origin for "name cards", they are not the same. At least one member pointed out the difference, and the newsletter stands corrected.

Maj Desautel added to the ephemera of the Society's collections by donating newspapers from 1996, documents, handbills, and minutes from Franklin's Opera House during 2003-2004, and vintage sheet music once owned by Katharine Gilchrist, Kathy Fuller's mother. The Society is always so grateful for to those who think of preserving the city's history through thoughtful gifts to the Society. However, not everyone is convinced that such a route to preservation is preferable. Comments on social media about withholding vintage photos have prompted the Society to form the following response. Believing that the Society does not share these invaluable views into the city's past, secreting them away never to be seen again, is simply not true. Slideshows at Society meetings are common occurrences, along with similar presentations that have been given at Franklin schools, the hospital, and senior facilities, with individual photos being copied for businesses such as the Service Credit Union, the A.W. Frost Insurance, Seufert Law, Peabody Place, the Chinburg development, and most recently Downtown Crepes, set to open on Franklin Street in June. Donations are all cataloged for easy retrieval, and scanned when time or dedicated purpose allows. When a prospective donor is reticent to give up the originals, the Society simply asks permission to scan the images into a "reference only" digital file, so at least a record exists should something ever happen to the hard copies. Original material, and particularly pictures created from negatives the Society owns, are suitably protected from unrestricted copying, as is the policy of all concerned historical societies.

One thing is absolutely certain: the Society can never share what it does not have, which would be a loss for everyone.

With an optimistic view towards the future, more fantastic images will come to the Society to be incorporated into illuminating slideshows for the education and enjoyment of all. And if Ms. Wirth's class at the high school on the history of Franklin comes to fruition, the archive of the Society will be utilized to its fullest extent.

For those planning on coming to the April meeting, remember that renewing your dues for this year would be most appreciated, and all should be prepared that the building may not as yet be heated to an average level of comfort.

The scan below is of a 1923 printing of sheet music played and owned by Katharine Gilchrist, with thanks again to Maj.

Katharine Gilchrist

18695



MOON-MARKETING

SONG

WORDS BY

RICHARD LE GALLIENNE

MUSIC BY

HORTON CORBETT

PRICE 40 CENTS

Philadelphia
Theodore Presser Co.
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