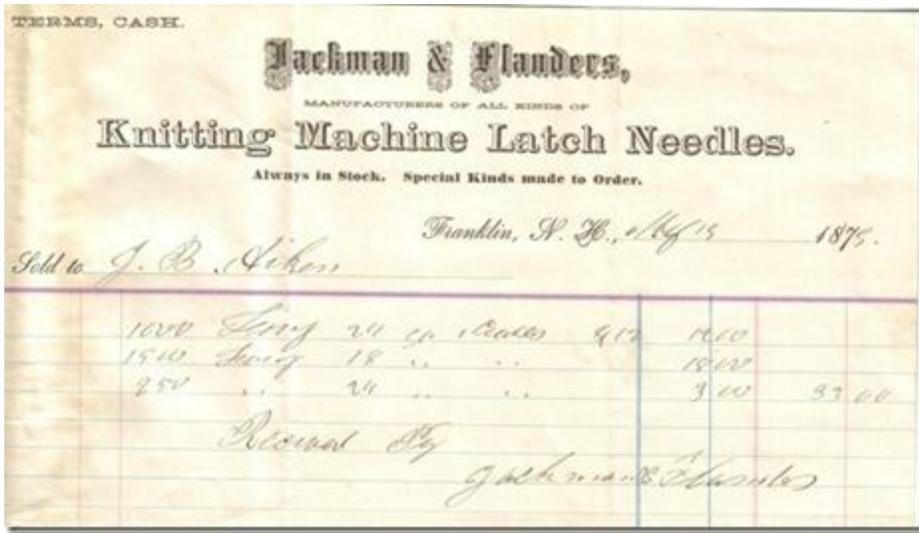


Franklin Historical Society
November 2020

It has been a cruel year, a year of tears and sorrow, apprehension and adaptation, expectations and disappointments, a year for which most will be counting the days until its end and hoping that the following months might begin to once again assume the appearance of the familiar. In an unpredictable time, when so many aspects of life had before been casually taken for granted, so much changed. Comfort came at a distance, and while we as a society fight to retain and regain, too little remains the same. The November meeting of the Society has been cancelled for lack of a readily available and suitably appropriate gathering place. What was intended to be a celebration of the 100 years of Mojalaki, scheduled to be held in the clubhouse there, will have to now be a tribute in writing and images only. The renovated space is, for many unfortunate reasons, simply not ready for public use. Therefore, below, is an abbreviated history of the area many came to love.

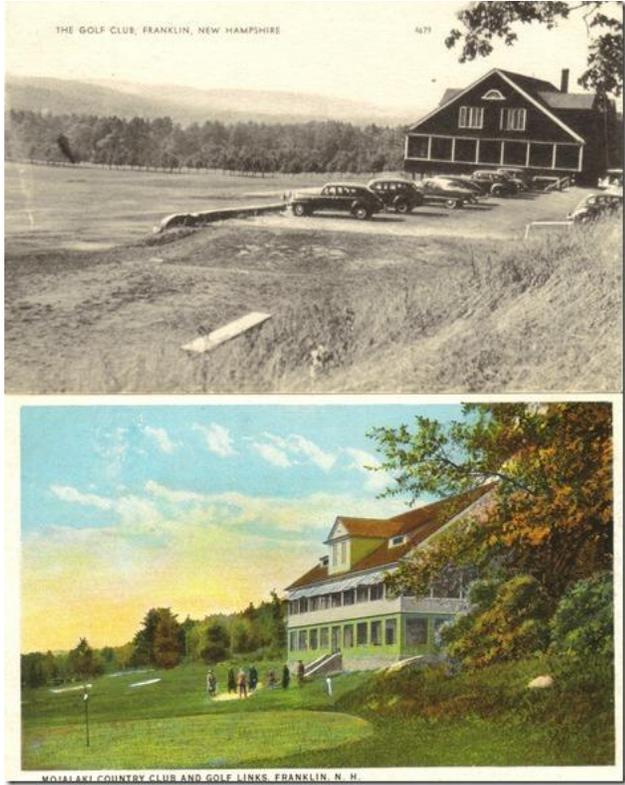
What began as a sprawling farm on hilly terrain, became an idea in 1920 for a nine hole golf course and clubhouse. Planned by and incorporated by, prominent men of the city, it was to provide a popular recreational outlet for all. As an historic side note, Frederick Flanders was not just a farm owner, but a businessman, partnered with Enoch Jackman, manufactured knitting machine latch needles under the name Jackman & Flanders in the 1870's. This company was the predecessor of the Franklin Needle Company on North Main Street, with its wooden building (long gone, but with some remnants of its existence still evident) directly across the street from the present abandoned factory.



In April of 1920, a meeting of those interested in pursuing the idea of establishing a golf course met in "library hall". Led by A.L. Smythe (of whom the Society has 1930's 16 mm film footage playing golf at Mojalaki, taken by "Red" Young, and preserved in the Society's archive as a gift from Porter Young), a determination was made to form a corporation to hold the land and use the \$35,000 already subscribed (by 88 contributors!), to "remodel" the buildings, and "put the grounds in order".



Although it is not mentioned in newspaper articles later just when the first golf ball was launched, the clubhouse was opened to great fanfare in July of 1922. The main room had a color scheme of "rose and walnut", featured wicker furniture and from the piazza, it was noted, sported an "unsurpassed" view.



As the culture of golf changed, so did its fortunes, and in the last couple of decades, under different management, maintaining profitability and the grounds became more and more of a challenge. Finally, the property was put up for sale for the last time, and its tenure as a golfing center was to inevitably come to an end.

Although the future is still to be decided, under discussion were possibilities such as a limited solar farm to supply clean electricity to the area's grid, along with opening up the land to agricultural pursuits, with grapes and other produce under consideration. The clubhouse and grounds will certainly be used for various social functions (not unlike its storied past), such as weddings, reunions, proms, dinners, and community fundraising events (with rental opportunities beginning in 2021). Regardless of the many uses to which the property can be applied, many will remember "Mojo" simply for offering a pleasant round of attempting to put little white balls into a specific small hole in the ground, feasting on a lobster roll, and drinking a favorite beverage while enjoying friendly conversation, and that unsurpassed view from the piazza...

As is the monthly tradition of the Society to recognize and properly thank the following for gifting the treasured pieces of history found in closets, basements, garages, and attics, sincere "thank you's" are gratefully extended to the following: to the ladies at the **Clothes Closet** for a lifesize doll, to be used by the Society to exhibit vintage infant wear, and a 1930's era coat (with copies of a photo of its owner wearing it!); to **Claude and Almena Bernier** for a hanging display featuring a photo of the Republican Bridge and a trunnel pin which was used to hold it all together; to **Dr. Stanley Weglarz** for a tool chest filled with 1890's era saws, planes, files, etc. which once belonged to Edmond Garneau, two "pig scrapers" (for cleaning the hair off a boiled pig's hide), a hanging scale, a Franklin Dairy "porch cooler", and assorted garden hand tools to be added to next year's plant sale; to an anonymous donor who left a copy of a map of the Webster Place Cemetery at city hall; and to **Lyn Bullock**, for a 1940's era scrapbook of school memorabilia and newspaper articles with photos of her mother's FHS (Class of 1940) classmates and friends. The Society can never say "Thank you" enough to all these donors for their thoughtful and evocative gifts.

2020 has been a tough year, and were it not for humanity's propensity for resiliency, tolerance, adaptability and most of all hope, these past months would have been much worse. It is with that latter attribute that the Society looks forward to a 2021 that will produce a return to an appreciation of civility, common courtesy, and particularly for the Society, social interactions among members at regular meetings, enjoying the rewards of a common pursuit: preserving from the past the lessons needed to ensure a bright and educated future.

May you all enjoy, albeit restrictive, a Thanksgiving where memories of the past can be celebrated with an eye towards happier times ahead.