

Franklin Historical Society
March 2020

This has been one of the strangest winters in recent memory. Last month, the Society attempted to have a meeting of the Officers and Directors of the Board. However, in the first go-round, Mother Nature played one of her most egregious tricks by showering us with rain in freezing temperatures—not rain really, but certainly not snow, with the precipitation sticking to the windshield and coating the wipers to streak the view, while playing havoc with the vehicle’s traction. With obvious safety concerns, the meeting was summarily postponed until the following week. The agenda included topics such as finding a new treasurer, and compiling a slate of officers and directors to be presented at the May annual meeting. Seeking out active members who are willing to take on the added responsibility of serving on the board, or volunteering to help with events, or just providing refreshments at gatherings, is essential to the health and well being of the organization. If you are such a member, or know of someone not yet a member who has an abiding interest in the Society’s mission, please consider taking that extra, all important step, to be more involved. The Society, and you, will be the better for the effort.

In the voluminous works of the great orator Daniel Webster, a speech was found recently that spoke to the importance of remembering history and its relevance to the future. Delivered in 1820 in Plymouth, Massachusetts, on the 200th anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrims, Webster waxed poetic upon the importance of understanding and preserving history to ensure prosperity while moving into the future. A salient quote from this oration is now posted in his house, the Society’s home, at Webster Place, creating an indelible link to Webster’s thinking 200 years ago, and the purpose his property serves today.

Speaking of Webster, the annual talk by Society president to the 4th graders on the impact of Mr. Webster on Franklin was facilitated by teacher Mary Charnley and delivered to a receptive audience at the end of January. Although Daniel Webster is the most famous person to have come from our fair city, the students were reminded that he should not be the last, and that perhaps this class will be the source of the next notable celebrity: the first person on Mars, or the discoverer of the cure for cancer, or maybe the second person from NH to be president. And until that happens, their pride in living in Franklin has considerable justification in being from the birthplace of a great American. That link to the past cannot be more obvious than with the donations that are offered almost weekly to the Society. Communications via the Society’s website arrive in the president’s inbox all the time, promising new insight into collective memories, ranging from momentous occasions, such as the dedication of the Roger S. Martin athletic field during WWII, to the purely personal, such as memories of the time spent at the Orphans Home (another pertinent use of the Webster property) illustrated with treasured photographs, or the offering of a 1910 Singer sewing machine owned by a former Franklin resident. Even an historic souvenir plate was offered, made from an elm tree which once stood proudly on this revered land and helped give it the name by which all knew the Webster property, “The Elms Farm”. The Society is eternally thankful to this continuing flow of support for the preservation of memories and materials that spark the imagination, and leave tangible proof of the contributions of those who came before. Donations actually received this past month included printed information about Frontier Days in Franklin from **Lorraine Pelletier (via Rita Norander)**, miscellaneous

pin-back buttons from the **Clothes Closet (via Kathy Fuller)**, and leather puttees (leggings) purported to have been worn during WWI by Dr. Frank McQuade from **Jeff Kropp (via Kathy Fuller)**. These gifts are gratefully accepted and the donors thoughtful generosity appreciatively acknowledged. March is also the time of year when we are all contemplating the annual ritual of paying our federal income tax, and so is also the time to remind those who care about the sustainability of the Society to consider the positive tax benefits of giving to a 501 (c) (3) charity. The Franklin Historical Society offers such an opportunity with its Planned Giving program, either with a direct gift or a pledge for financial support via a will or trust. Details are spelled out on the Society's website at franklinhhistoricalociety.org. By committing to a legacy gift, you will be joining a growing circle of members dedicated to furthering the Society's goals well into the foreseeable future, and beyond, for which the Society will be forever grateful.

Due to an arrangement with the Nadeau family, a very limited number of Andy Nadeau's books ("The History of the Railroad in Franklin" and "The Papermaking Industry in Franklin" tracing the history of the mills along the upper Winnepesaukee River), are now available through the Society. Contact Leigh Webb at 934-8222 for purchasing information.

[One of this month's images comes from Carlton Ham's extensive collection of vintage postcards, now part of the Society's growing archive, courtesy of Mary Ham. One of the few pictures, possibly the only commercially available picture, of Daniel Webster's home in Marshfield, MA, this was colorized and sold in the early 1900's. The building suffered a catastrophic fire in 1878 and was completely destroyed. The other image is a photo recently discovered amongst the items donated by Chris Lewis from the Journal-Transcript. The man's name is not known, and any help in identifying him would be greatly appreciated.]



