

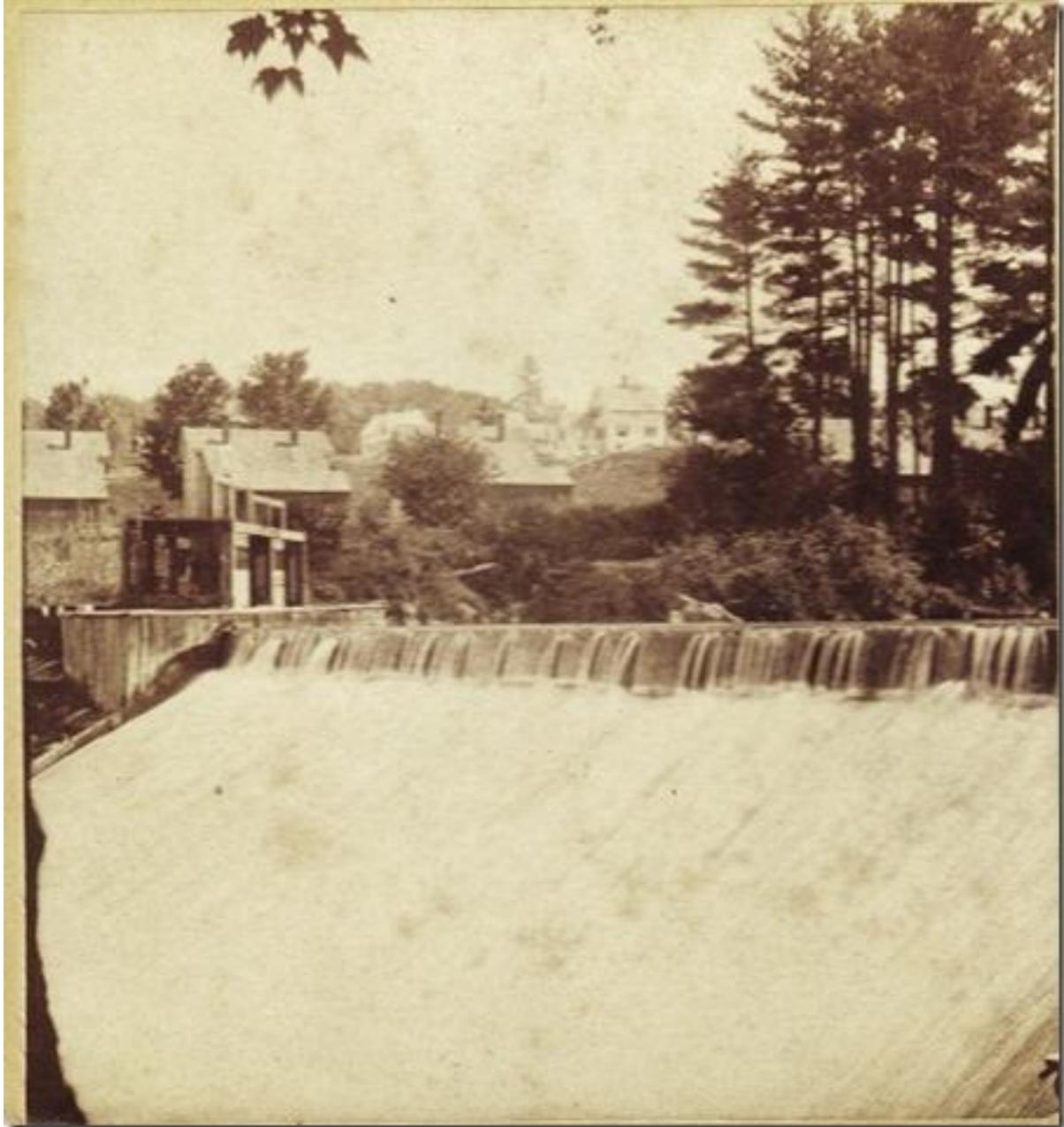
Franklin Historical Society, May, 2024

April, what a month! The day scheduled for the first monthly meeting of the season was greeted with winter's last snowstorm surprise, forcing cancellation of the gathering. Add the unintentional drama at Soldiers Memorial/City Hall on a day which should have resulted in celebrating vestiges of Franklin's past, and the month became four weeks gratefully now in the rearview mirror. A little holdover will be noticeable in May's program chronicling the "**History of the Franklin Opera House**", to be held **Thursday May 2nd, at 7 pm, at the Society's Webster/Tay building at Webster Place** (21 Holy Cross Road—directions on the Society's website). The Opera House's story is inexorably intertwined with that of the building in which it functions, so some of Soldiers Memorial's tales will be disclosed as well. If for no other reason, except of course the free light refreshments offered after the talk, a "reveal" of a surprising find should pique anyone's interest and encourage attendance. The event is open to all, as is the business meeting which concludes the evening. Attendees are asked to either park completely off the pavement, or in the paved parking areas adjacent to the Society's building. Be aware construction equipment and protective fencing is omnipresent, and should be avoided. Saturday May 11th is the annual Choose Franklin Community Day, for which the Society will once again have a booth at Odell Park, and is looking for volunteers to help answer questions, accept new memberships, and offer history-related merchandise for sale. There is even a chance to win fascinating and valuable prizes in the Society's first "Scavenger Hunt" contest. Entry forms at \$10 each will be available at the booth, with the winners announced at the Society's regular monthly meeting in September. Find the answer to questions of Franklin's history, and you may win!

The end of the month marks the museums seasonal reopening to the public. From Memorial Day weekend on, the Society will be open every Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm. Offered are tours of the exhibits, books, T-shirts, postcards, maps, and even drinks and snacks are available for purchase.

There was so much material that wended its way to the Society this past few weeks, it is only fitting that the bulk of the news is to acknowledge these "new" treasures and thank those responsible for bringing them to be preserved and displayed by the Society.

From **Edith Thompson (by mail)**, came a trove of photographic images, on tintypes, ambrotypes, and paper photos, descendants of the Thompson family as germane to Franklin, including a Gilchrist who is related to Kathy Fuller! Edith even mentioned a possible current Franklin connection in Denise Donze, whose family tree includes Oliver Thompson. From the **Tilton Historical Society**, a circa 1870 stereo card of an "Upper river dam", possibly associated with the dam near Cross Mill Road (see below). Is there a possibility that this pictures a dam elsewhere on the Winnepesaukee River?



From **Sandra Sherman (via email)**, came digital photos of Mrs. Donegal's 1976 5th grade class, proudly displaying the bicentennial quilt to which they all contributed. That quilt is currently on display with other centennial, sesquicentennial, and bicentennial items in the Society's museum.

From **Chris Lewis**, for a portable handheld scanner, already used to document the decision, as discussed in the local press from 1892-1894, to transition Franklin from a town to a city. Not an historical item, but one that is invaluable in digitizing printed material.

John Benham donated local annual reports from surrounding communities (which will result in an attempt to get them to the Societies of the named municipalities), a Journal Transcript circa 1955 advertising poster, a copyrighted Civil War photo of Lincoln and McClellan's officers (backstamped "AcmeNewspictures", a company which existed from 1923-1952, whose library of photographs eventually became owned by Getty Images), and two interior photos of stores which sold stoves (alas, not Franklin businesses, but to prove once again how small a world it is, one is backstamped with a Photographer's name from the Massachusetts hometown of the Society's president!). The photos were all probably acquired by John's father, who sold antiques and regularly attended estate sales, picking up whatever he found interesting.



This is a great shot, even if it isn't in Franklin...Would Judkins and Wallace have had a similar look?

Maurice Tandy added to the display that already pays tribute to the magnanimous extent of his generosity, with a framed copy of the Chaplain's prayer for USS Daniel Webster's 1965 commissioning, a framed copy of the 1990 decommissioning's closing statement, and a framed copy of his great grandmother's diploma from the FHS class of 1899—the oldest such document in the Society's archives!

Annette Andreozzi found an old, heavy, solid metal iron and a single venerable woman's ice skate, probably dating back a hundred years—or more.

And then, from **Joanne Norbury of the Middletoen, NY Historical Society**, a pocket tri-fold brochure advertising Griffin Hack Saw blades, probably from just before the time Griffin sold out to Stanley in 1978.

After years of asking to be present when the city's archival storage was cleared out, the Society is thankful for being allowed by City Manager Milner and Fire Chief Foss to preserve some items for posterity. The contributions of Mayor McLaughlin and Kathy Fuller need also to be recognized. There is a considerable list of artifacts and papers that are now in the keeping of the Society, such as: the town clerk's cubbyhole cabinets (probably last used by Kathy Fuller's great grandfather Harry W. Gilchrist) still containing a few old receipts and documents dating as far back as 1855, including an 1859 notice of a town meeting, an 1864 appointment of a Fifefield, and an 1875 appointment to surveyor for J.K. Judkins (if not mistaken, a great great (?) grandfather of Kay Judkins Spratt, a long time Society member); a box of city correspondence from 1925, containing letters from Benson Auto; wooden storage chests, one with built-in cubbyholes labeled "Writs, Returned Marriage Certs., Warrants Town & Persons, and Petitions"; a piece of original slate from the building's roof; a wooden crate half filled with trunnels from the Republican Bridge; newell posts from the torn-out corner staircase to the balcony (to accommodate the clerk's office closet. The other still exists in the office opposite); a ballot box with partial cover from circa 1900, with the signature of Walter Duffy as Moderator still visible on the remaining portion of the glued-on report; and the best surprise—a more than 100 year old ballot counter (see below). The completed ballot was inserted in the top, the handle was then turned pulling the ballot into the box below (unfortunately not found) with rubber rollers, and when an internal bell sounded, the tally had advanced by one number. What a prize find!



Getting all these wonderful items cataloged may take a while...but worth every minute of the effort.

Dan Darling and Lilly Machos from the Opera House extracted from the attic several of the original folding chairs that held much narrower backsides in 1893, to the tune of allowing nearly 500 to sit downstairs alone! With the balcony, the total was around 800!

Please come by the Society on open Saturdays, and stop by the booth on Community Day, May 11th. We love to chat!