

Franklin NH Historical Society News

May 2016

Despite record warm temperatures during the winter, and snow and freezing temps in April, a rumor persists that spring is finally upon us. At least one April staple is the Society's first meeting of the 2016 season, which former Society president Steve Foley began in great style as he opened this year's round of monthly meetings with a wonderfully informative and articulate talk on how to trace your family's history, just by using your home computer and the Internet. Those in attendance picked up some valuable tips and shared some of their own family history stories. During the regular business meeting which followed, topics such as where Society members might take a field trip in August, setting a date for the first annual Historical Society plant sale (tentatively scheduled for Sunday, June 26), the progress made in restoring the proper look to the GAR Hall upstairs in city hall, updating roster information for current members, the hours during which the Society's museum will be open (10a to 2p) from Sunday May 8, through Labor Day weekend, and finally proposals to celebrate past accomplishments with the proper acknowledgments. It was a full and satisfying meeting.

The program in May will highlight, in the form of a slide show, recent acquisitions by the Society, scanned photos from outside sources, and newly discovered gems (sometimes "hiding in plain sight" already in our collections!). It is always fascinating poring over old newspapers or delving deeper into stored archives while uncovering tidbits and items previously inaccurately classified, misunderstood, or underappreciated. The program will be presented in the Society's building at Webster Place (21 Holy Cross Road, in the Farnum Center North complex—directions online at www.franklionnhhistoricalsociety.org) at 7 pm, Thursday May 5th. Light refreshments will be served after the viewing and discussion and before the regular monthly business meeting, to which all present are encouraged to attend. Take a look at "mystery photos" of seemingly a single family, spanning several generations from the mid 1800's, evidenced by tintypes and carte de visites, to albumin photos and 20th century snapshots dating from 1900 to the 1940's (see this month's composite images), all donated anonymously through the Easter Seals maintenance and caretaker extraordinaire, Dan Carow. Gaze upon articles such as a small straw doll sold at the Webster Inn for a few dollars, or the actual contracts used to book entertainers at the Franklin Opera House in the early 1890's. As always, the show will contain wondrous and marvelous pictures and representations to entertain and amaze, gauged to spark lively conversations and delightful reminiscences.

In the Curator's Corner, thanks are in order to Dan Carow for the above referenced archive of photos, and to the town of Gilmanton and its land use clerk (who also happens to be the Society's curator) for the generous donation of two file cabinets, into which even more photos and fragile pieces of ephemera can be properly stored. Now that inventorying new arrivals has been completed, the task to completely organize the Society's collections is to go through previously cataloged storage containers to further separate and more accurately describe paper items (letters, deeds, programs, clippings, etc.) and photographs, as too often, in the haste to have at least an idea what was in the collections, important items were overlooked or misidentified. The work is never really done...

Special reminder: on Saturday, May 14th, Franklin will be celebrating Community Day, with a parade at 10 am and displays, vendors, exhibits, food and entertainment in Odell Park until 2 pm. The Society will have a table manned by volunteers to answer questions, offer memberships, and sell merchandise such as books, T-shirts, sesquicentennial commemorative plates, postcards, magnets, and pin-back buttons. Become a member for only \$10 a year that day and get a free historical keepsake!

To all current members, remember to pay your annual dues this month to enjoy, without interruption, all the benefits of helping to protect and preserve the history of the city we love. Mail your check to the Society, P.O. Box 43, Franklin 03235 .

Enjoy the warm weather, and think about what your garden may need so you can stock up during next month's first annual plant sale at the Society!

[This month's image from the Franklin Historical Society is a collage of photos, possibly from the same family, anonymously donated, and none identified. If any of these individuals looks familiar, you can call the president of the Society at 934-8222. Your help in rescuing these people from obscurity and possibly connecting them to Franklin would be deeply appreciated]

