

Franklin NH Historical Society News

December 2015

At the conclusion of every calendar year, there are two important family-and-friends holidays: Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The Society has traditionally combined the spirit of both in a Christmas dinner featuring turkey and all the trimmings in a pot-luck get-together in early December. This year it will be held on Sunday, December 13th, from 4 pm to 7 pm, at the Congregational Church's Thompson Hall, for which we warmly thank those in charge of the Church's schedule and Society member Glenn Morrill for arranging "the use of the hall". There is no charge, unless one considers bringing a dish to contribute a "fee" for admission (actually, no one has to bring anything—it is strictly voluntary). As the Society has done in the past, donations to the area's food banks in the form of non-perishable items are also welcomed, in order to share the season's largesse with those less fortunate.

In recent Society news, the project to bring back to a pristine condition a painting of the Franklin Public Library done in 1967 by Laconia artist Betty Jeanne Bassett, and found in the High School basement, is moving ahead. Principal Richard Towne has asked the high school's art teacher if she can, with the help of her students, repair the minor condition issues with which the picture has been afflicted. In the area of restoration, another project with which the Society has been involved, the reupholstering of the original 1893 GAR (Grand Army of the Republic, or Union Veterans of the Civil War) furniture from city/memorial hall (see photo with this article) has taken a significant step forward as well. The four "station chairs" were sent to a local artisan, B.K. and Sons, to be restored, thanks to the anonymous donations of three Society members. The seat material of these chairs, as well as all the benches, was obviously replaced (and not very well) several years ago, as the yellowish leather should have matched the dark leather on the seat backs. Black leather will be now used to conform more accurately with the original design. The four remaining nine foot long benches, and two five foot long benches, will unfortunately have to wait until more funding can be secured.

In other news, the Society is participating as a donor in this year's Franklin Opera House "Festival of Trees", offering a lit table top artificial tree adorned with traditional ornaments and historic photos of Franklin. The winner of the tree will also receive a family membership to the Society, a copy of Alice Shepard's "The History of Franklin", and a full tour of the Society's Webster/Tay building/museum, including area's not open to the public.

For those seeking an attractive sign to commemorate the original owners of their historic home and the date of its construction, it has come to the attention of the Society's president that Dan Nowell, right here in Franklin, is willing to design and execute such custom order signs at a nominal charge. For additional information, please contact Leigh Webb at 934-8222.

And has been done for several years, in November Mr. Webb gave his yearly presentation to all Franklin fourth graders (now at the Middle School) on Daniel Webster, Franklin and New Hampshire's favorite

son. And as usual, the slide show resulted in some very interesting questions from the grateful, inquiring, and imaginative audience.

One of the greatest joys, and thrills, of being associated with an active historical society, is receiving surprise donations from caring members and friends, wishing to contribute to the growing collections and legacy of the Society. Such donations are duly recognized every month, and November was no exception in the quantity and quality of items donated. Our warmest thanks this month go to: Carlton Ham, for city Franklin Regional Hospital annual reports, newspaper supplements from the Trumpeter, 1985 and 1986, a booklet from the Firefighters' Museum Dedication; "Peddlar", for the book "Our Times 1900-1925"; Linda Pauwels, for postcards of the Franklin Library, an Insulfab 1996 calendar cover, (2) 4x5 framed vintage photos of the Daniel Webster Birthplace (that her grandmother had on her wall), an "Old NH" song sheet, a Salloway Mills pay envelope (alas, no money), an ad card for Gussie's Restaurant, a Neil's Restaurant paper placemat, a truly wonderful New England B&M route map, and miscellaneous clippings and newspapers; Andy Nadeau for many copies of historic Franklin photos, class of 1950 info, RR photos and newspaper clippings; Glenn Morrill, for the 1921 blueprints for the Daniell Bridge and a Franklin 1965 Sewer System and Sewerage Treatment Report, plus a Merrimack Farmer's Exchange paper bag; Annette Cain for a vinyl sesquicentennial bag with the current high school pictured, a dinner plate with the Village Congregational Church pictured, (3) 1887-1889 town reports, her own 1958 "Trained Driver" cert., a 1945 (WWII rationing) "rubber footwear purchase" cert., a 1950's Franklin Chamber of Commerce promotional pamphlet, and a Eugene Daniell booklet with an invitation to a tribute in his honor; and Gail Brophy Barry, for her mom's (Genevieve Buchanan Brophy) Carnival Queen 1939 trophy and FHS class of '39 memorabilia, including scrapbook of calling cards, photos, graduation program, her diploma, an FHS '39 pin, Rebekah Assembly cookbook, and 1959 and 1989 class of '39 reunion information. To all, THANK YOU!

Considering that artifacts, photos, and memorabilia are not the only contributions that should be recognized, the Society wishes to also thank Betsy Davison for her financial donation in the memory of George Turgeon. Such generous monetary gifts can help with the several projects with which the Society is engaged, and each is gratefully and humbly received.

And so closes another successful and productive year at the Franklin Historical Society. Not resting on our laurels, however, the Society looks forward to an even more exciting 2016, during which more vinyl siding will be removed, more artifacts will be received, different exhibits will be mounted, and more programs of interest will be offered to entertain and educate. Despite not meeting during the winter months, volunteers will continue to catalog and organize the Society's collections, to better understand and present the story of Franklin to future visitors and members.

Stay safe, stay warm, have a joyous Christmas and New Year, and see you in the Spring.

[This month's photo: top left to bottom right: the four 1893 "station chairs" from the GAR Hall, upstairs in the city/memorial hall, before restoration; close-up of the bottom of one chair; chairs after being restored; George and Geraldine Iliff, who helped load and unload the chairs]

