

Franklin Historical Society

September 2022

Is summer almost gone? Is autumn approaching so quickly as to manifest itself with falling leaves littering the ground in small clumps this soon? Too soon. Time slips by at an accelerating pace as perceived by an aging mind. However, September *is* upon us, and the presentation on **Thursday, September 1st** is to be **“The History of the Webster Lake Association”** on which Sheila Rainford will elaborate, **at 7 pm in the Society’s Webster/Tay House at Webster Place** (21 Holy Cross Road). Infusing the talk with personal reminiscences, this is as much an individual story as it is the chronicling of an important organization developed to preserve a resource dear to all those who live, work, and play in Franklin.

Light refreshments will be served after the presentation and before the business meeting, to which all attendees are invited. All are welcome, and as always, the event is free.

Members who have been active since the late 90’s might remember a Living History Program, subsidized by the Society, which utilized the Webster Birthplace from 1997 until 2005, when the park was closed by the state after deeming the Sawyer House to be unsafe (it hasn’t collapsed into the basement yet...). As a result, many of the articles which “dressed” the Birthplace cabin belonged to the Society, and remained there when the park reopened and Jack Tobey was hired as a docent. For the next fifteen years or so, because the cabin was observable from the road, the contents and the cabin seemed relatively safe. That streak of good fortune came to an end when this past month thieves entered the cabin and virtually stole everything. That is obviously the *bad* news. The good news, thanks to the efforts of Randy Kovach, Jack’s replacement, and the incredible generosity of Linda Denoncourt of the Salisbury Historical Society, almost all that was lost has been replaced. Once again, the cabin is alive and welcoming. On behalf of the Society, which has a decided interest in maintaining the Birthplace in good order, a thank you was sent to Linda, acknowledging her philanthropy and magnanimous heart.

In the vein of generous gifts, the Society once again recognizes, and gratefully thanks, the following donors for contributing several gems to the Society’s collections: **Virginia and Roger Gross**, for a “Re-elect Whittemore” cap, blank “Log Cabin” stationery, and a summer concert on the island fan (which may well be passed on to the newly energized Tilton Historical Society); **Annette Cane** for an “archaeological” find on her property by the lake, of a large rusted “tooth” from a farm machine—begging the question, why was it there?!; **Linda Pauwels** for her usual collection of interesting newspaper articles, including a copy of the tribute to Chris Lewis for her 45 years as a teacher; **Kathy Fuller** for a long list of finds—including photos such as one of the Webster Inn during its better days and a vintage image of Alfred Chase Elliott (see below), a trunnel from the Republican Bridge, a framed Sawyer print of the Birthplace cabin, a 1945 Legislative manual signed by her grandfather Henry Proulx, WWII era Franklin High School yearbooks, High School Booster Club books, NHHS magazines, Life Magazine publications, toys, a 1948 calendar from a Concord company, various booklets, two maps of Vietnam with a list of those places Major Priscilla Gilchrist was sent during her service there, and a binder of her awards, promotions, and certificates (now on display with Lt. Colonel

Gilchrist's uniform and medals); and **the family of Denise Lemire Montambeault** for a Zippo-style lighter from Merwin's Gun Shop, a Franklin Centennial pin-back button, a 1919 program welcoming back the heroes of WWI back to Franklin, Armand Lemire's Daniell Jr. High report card, and autograph book with signatures from FHS students from call of 1925, '26, and '27, and photos with Armand Lemire including his FHS class of '43 reunions, a newspaper photo accepting archery equipment, the 1953 K of C bowling team, and the St. Mary's Jr. Baseball League Champs.

There is never enough gratitude expressed for those gifts which continue to flow to the Society, enriching not just the collections, but the research and extended knowledge to which those items lead. However, in offering a humble "thank you" the effort continues...



Alfred Chase Elliott, owner of Elliott Ford, in his "snow car", or perhaps his "horseless sleigh"?