

## Franklin Historical Society December 2020

In a time of unnerving uncertainty, it might be comforting to know that your Society is in a strong financial condition, ensconced in an historic building with constant oversight, housing collections growing apace with so many generous, and continuous, donations. Despite the temporary loss of some cherished traditions, such as the annual Christmas dinner for this year, the Society and its officers remain committed to serving its members and the Franklin community with heart, vigor, and an enthusiasm of purpose. This month the Society will again have a presence at the Franklin Opera House's Festival of Trees, offering a full size tree (donated some time ago by the Tobey's) adorned with vintage ornaments (circa 1950's), flickering lights (a bit more modern), and colorful Victorian Christmas images printed on cards. Along with the tree, the winner will receive a membership in the Society, a tour of the museum, and a sampling of books about Franklin. Speaking of which, these books make great gifts for the historically minded and their relatives, neighbors, and friends. The list of available titles (ranging in price from \$15 to \$25) includes the Shepard "History of Franklin", Alice Shepard's 1931 first edition tribute to Daniel Webster "I Still Live", Elizabeth Jewell's "Franklin: Then and Now", the Society's own cookbook "Recipes and Recollections", Helen LaPlante Duchesne's "Echoes From The Mills", Mary Proctor's "Indians of the Winnepesaukee and Pemigewasset Valleys", and a very limited supply of Andy Nadeau's books, "The Papermaking Industry of Franklin" and "The History of the Railroad in Franklin". All can be purchased by contacting Society president Leigh Webb, by email through the website, or by phone, (603) 934-8222. It is also hoped that members and friends of the Society, as we approach the new year, will consider the benefits of Planned Giving to sustain the Society for the next generations. With thanks to all in advance, information on this important element of support may be found in the Roster, or online at the Society's website.

As mentioned above, donations continue to arrive at the Society, and this past month welcomed the gifts of the following: from **Raymond Reid**, a copy of the 1890 map of Webster Lake which he brought when visiting with his collection of Aiken tools (perhaps those might someday come to the Society as well?); from **Tom Caldwell**, two video camcorders, so that in the future Hi8 tapes may be reviewed and shown; from **Stan Weglarz**, multiple storage bins (of which the Society can never have too many), tools to sell at next years plant sale, a large cooler (since donated to the Treatment Center), and an oxen yoke, with the words "Bristol N.H." painted on it (and also since donated, to the Bristol Historical Society, where it rightfully belongs); and from **Tara Shore, Program Director at the Belknap Mill**, eighteen masonite boards which comprised a 1998 display on the "Inventive Aikens" (see example below, which featured the Aikens' contributions to the Cog Railway).



As always, the Society acknowledges with great appreciation and thanks these donors for their thoughtful generosity.

From the "Good News File": Recently the Society was contacted by a representative of the USS Hornet (aircraft carrier) Museum in California, to see if it were possible to send digital copies of "Ted" Lepianka's WWII photos that had been scanned by the Society in 2015. These images reflected his service aboard the Hornet, and would be a welcome addition to the story the museum wanted all visitors to know. As we did not have the originals, and therefore the rights to the images, attempts were made, ultimately successful, to find a family member who could grant the necessary permission to proceed. Therefore, the naval museum will now get the photos, the family will add Ted's accomplishments to the Hornet's archives, and the Society will receive copies of any new material on Ted, resulting in a fruitful collaboration for all parties concerned!

From the "Ongoing Mystery File": In the perpetual attempt to preserve history, often more questions loom than answers. For many years now, the whereabouts of certain iconic objects has remained an unsolved and vexing mystery. Whatever happened to the original bank clock that adorned the corner of Franklin and Central Streets? How about the wonderful chandelier that originally lit the auditorium of the Franklin Opera House (as appeared in the 1908 postcard of the Opera House's interior)?



And then there was the stained glass window of the Chapman Chapel in the Franklin Cemetery, that disappeared decades ago. What did it even look like? It has been described as a cross, perhaps with the Chapman family name underneath, surrounded with colored squares of glass. Is there even somewhere a photo of this lost work of art? If anyone has any information as to the resting places of these Franklin treasures, feel free to contact Leigh Webb, and perhaps help to reclaim these "one offs" from Franklin's past, or at the very least, write the final chapter of their stories.

As 2020 comes to an end, with the promise of better days ahead, the governing body of the Society expresses, as one, for all to please have a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season. Whenever "normal" returns, however long that may take, the Society *will* be here: preserving, protecting, and educating.