

Franklin NH Historical Society Newsletter

January 2018

The old year is about to reach its conclusion, the New Year rung in, and the Society will, as it always has, face new challenges, mount new exhibits, accept and catalog wonderful (oftentimes unexpected) donations, offer educational and enlightening programs, and reach out to all those who believe that to charter a course to the future, one must really know the past from whence you came.

Despite being closed for the winter, the Society continues to see more and more gifts to enhance not just the numbers of items in the collections, but to broaden the “story” those objects tell, and attempt to solve the mysteries that so often accompany many of the photos and artifacts. A case in point, a box of glass negatives recently arrived at the Society, ostensibly having captured numerous views relating to Franklin in the late 19th, early 20th centuries. The photographer’s name was unknown, but one lady, appearing in several of the images, may be a Clara D. Lang and may have resided in Franklin, prior to, and just after, WWI. However, seeking information in the city directories and annual reports of that period yielded nothing, and the mystery deepened. Even the locations in which she was filmed have been allusive to identify. Several residences appear in the negatives, but none to date that have been positively linked to Franklin. The Franklin main railroad depot appears as well in three of the pictures, but it has a semaphore pole that does not appear in other photos in the Society’s collection of the same station. With the help of Ken Cushing, noted railroad historian, it was determined that the pole was added in 1909, so that confirms the station to be in Franklin. And then there is the wooden I.O.O.F (International Order of Odd Fellows) building, which has, on its ground floor, a meat market owned by a F. H. Mastin—not a name that can be traced to Franklin. However, with the help of Rita Norander, a photo of a church was positively identified as being in New London, and making further inquiries of Jim Perkins, the New London archivist, the I.O.O.F building as well as a handful of other views have been confirmed as being of New London. The conclusion is inescapable: not all these places and people are connected Franklin, so a deeper delving into the mystery will be required. But then, is that not part of the fun?

There are also the questions posed by inquiring residents who may have unearthed something which cannot easily be explained. Such as the mill wheel discarded at the end of Franklin Street. Although the answer is to how it arrived at this particular spot may never be known, its location is near where W. F. Daniell owned property, and as an interested partner in a pulp mill, which, coincidentally, utilized this type of stone, a connection could be made...

Other fascinating material has come into the Society’s possession via several individuals generosity, for which the Society is exceedingly grateful. From Beverly Smith, minutes and scrapbooks from the activity of the Abigail Webster Franklin Chapter of the D.A.R. (Daughters of the American Revolution) with specific mention of the 1929 dedication of the plaque commemorating the death of Sarah Call as the result of an Indian attack in 1754; from Tom Keegan and his sister Kathy Malsbenden, several ledgers documenting the business of Keegan Hardware, vintage Franklin postcards, original card-mounted photos of early Franklin High School athletic teams from John Keegan’s personal collection, notable newspaper clippings, memorabilia and photos from the Forest Vale Camp, tickets from long ago Franklin events, and a large Gile’s Dairy milk can! Also thanks go out to Molly Sanborn of CATCH, for family snapshots uncovered in the Acme Co. mill building during the ongoing conversion to apartment units, whose identities may forever remain hidden, as the photos came from Braintree, Massachusetts during the period 1939-1942, with possibly only a remote connection to someone working in the mill. Lastly, original artwork came from Linda Keegan, who recently gave to the Society similar works from her aunt and art teacher, Helen Hird. Together, the Society will be mounting an new exhibit of local artists, in which both Linda and Helen’s work will be showcased, along with at least one other Franklin artist of botanical subjects who, although gone, should not be forgotten.

The annual Christmas pot-luck dinner was once again a resounding success. Many brought non-perishable food to be added to the Congregational-Christian Church’s donations, for which the Society and the Church are grateful. Although our treasurer was absent due to illness, president Leigh Webb made a passable substitute punch, mimicking as best he could the Carlton Ham tradition of excellence. Along with the copious amounts of food, many new donations to the Society’s collections were added to the largesse, donors to be thanked properly in the next newsletter.

Cash donations of \$30 (from the Stanley family) and \$25 (from the Franklin Masonic Lodge) were also generous gifts made to the Society in December, for which the Society is sincerely thankful. The tabletop tree decorated with vintage photos of winter scenes in Franklin for the Opera House's Festival of Trees, was won by Stuart Trachy. When Mr. Trachy contacts the president, he will receive additional gifts, a family membership, and a personal "behind the scenes" tour of the Society's museum.

So no matter what the time of year or how grisly the weather is outside, the work of the Society never stops. 2018 promises to be an exciting year, and anyone reading this may certainly be a part of it, as joining the Society is as easy as filling out an application and sending in the \$10 yearly fee. More information may always be obtained at the Society's website, franklinhistoricalsociety.org, or by calling the Leigh Webb at 934-8222. Happy New Year!

[This month's visual offering is from the many images contained on the glass negatives purportedly of Franklin. One has already been identified as the First Baptist Church in New London, which could mean others may be of New London as well. Can anyone recognize this winter scene as a Franklin (or New London, or somewhere else...) neighborhood? It is a closed store of some kind, with either a dealer or repair shop in the rear dedicated to Adriance Farm Machines]

