

Franklin NH Historical Society News

February, 2015

The most recent bout of sub-freezing temperatures was viewed as a reminder that frequent trips to check on the Historical Society building (the "Webster/Tay) at Webster Place are vitally important. Last year frozen copper pipes in the heating system itself led to a substantial leak and only a fortunate and timely discovery averted a near catastrophe. Even though the building's thermostats are set to maintain an above-freezing temperature to preserve the plumbing and keep the interior from suffering damaging temperature fluctuations, constant vigilance to guard against power outages and other unforeseen circumstances is required.

Despite the less-than-comfort-zone interior temperatures, some inventory and organizational work does go on during the winter months. The most recent project was sorting all the original vintage newspapers (Journal Transcripts, Merrimack Journals, and assorted miscellaneous papers, circa 1873-1974) into chronological order, during which it was determined that some years are missing (1895, 1896, 1900 and 1901 for example). Custom sized boxes were donated to further simplify the process and attempt to keep these fragile relics from deteriorating further. There is also a backlog of donated artifacts and documents which need to be cataloged, an unending process, actually encouraged, as new contributions arrive, and previous gifts are further categorized. To be completely caught up would mean no new arrivals and stagnation of the collections, a situation no Society would look upon favorably. And in that spirit, the president and curator are continuing to seek original city directories (listings of residents and businesses with their respective addresses) and town (remembering that Franklin was only a city after 1895) annual reports, prior to 1861 (which were paper sheets, folded in half, printed on both sides of the quarters, and bound by string). The Society has sufficient numbers of City Annual Reports from 1895 on. Although the Society has one now, another Kodak Carousel slide projector is needed as a back-up, as the current model has some operational issues. The value of all gifts, archival or monetary, are fully tax deductible.

And finally, the Society is requesting information in two specific areas: first, the fate of the large clock from the Franklin National Bank which once proudly resided on the southeast corner of Franklin and Central Streets. When was it removed? Was it taken down to accommodate the electric traffic signal? Is it stored somewhere? Sold? Or was it scrapped? And additionally, can anyone shed light on the whereabouts of items missing from the GAR Hall upstairs in the City Hall? The Society has in its charge all the material and objects once stored in the basement of City Hall, mostly American Legion items, but some Civil War artifacts and framed photos (such as the oval portrait of Pvt. William A. Fenlason, KIA in WWI and honored by naming the square at Central and Bow Streets after him) have disappeared. Anyone with information on either subject is invited to call either Leigh Webb (president) or Annette Andreozzi (curator) at 934-8222, or leave a message on the Society's website, at www.franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org.



This month's photo, as a reminder that the current Outing Club Winter Carnival is winding down, is of a small (approx. 4 inches in diameter and not quite 3 inches tall) silver plate bowl, given to each Winter Carnival Queen candidate in 1963, from the Society's collection (donated by Linda Pauwels).

Winter is still with us, so please, stay warm, stay safe, and during these cold months, consider going through your attics and basements for those precious reminders of the past that you would consider giving to the Society for posterity and safe-keeping. One person's "trash" may well be an historical society's treasure...

January was a very sad month for the Society, losing two longtime members, both constant donors to the Society and to the community, Pauline Feuerstein and Norma Bushman.

This month's newsletter is dedicated to the memory of these esteemed and beloved members.