

Franklin Historical Society
July 2020

With the temperatures soaring and the threat of drought and dry wells looming, there is no question that summer is upon us. Although thunder storms are sporadic and oftentimes in the next township over, not enough rain is being generated to sustain the gardens of which so many are proud to have cultivated. Green lawns will be the first victims, to which some may say that it will allow less time mowing and more time to pursue higher priority tasks, such as roofing and painting projects. Such is true at the Society, where warm weather opened up the possibility of removing the final (apart from that which is under the back porch roof, and the dormer above) vinyl siding of the Webster building and the restoration of the window sills and trim negatively impacted by its improper application so many decades ago.



Painting of that area plus touch up of other sides (west and north) that had started to flake, will give the Webster building a fresh look for attendees of the June 28th plant sale. Some weeding of the surrounding gardens also showed the pride the Society takes in properly maintaining its stewardship of arguably the most historic home in Franklin.

Despite threat of thunderstorms (which never materialized during the sale or the clean-up afterward, thankfully) and the imposition of Covid-19 restrictions, the sale topped all previous year's totals! We actually made enough to almost cover the Society's insurance bill in 2020! As a small, all volunteer Society, we are incredibly fortunate to have investment reserves to cover major expenses, maintenance costs, insurance, and even monthly bills if necessary. Without the fundraising done by Albert Garneau in the 1990's, and without the benefit of a generous lease on a wonderful building, we would be in the same nail-biting straits as are many struggling Historical Societies. The annual plant sale offers the opportunity for the Society to be more of a public presence, and for members to volunteer to share their love of gardening, rather than only for the money. It is, by all accounts, the definition of a win-win.

The Society would like to extend a most sincere "thank you" to all who participated and made this year's sale a huge success: the organizer, who dedicated herself to the myriad of details involved in recruiting other volunteers, rounding up the donated plants, potting many and pricing all, Annette Andreozzi, with the generous help of Elizabeth Jewell as co-organizer; volunteer helpers and plant donors Nita Tomaszewski, Sandra Burney (and with

Cyndy Campbell, also made up, placed, and retrieved, highway signs advertising the sale), Sally Bussiere (who helped out as cashier), sale helpers Rita Norander, and helper-in-training Calvin Jewell; plus all the donors of plants, gardening books, tools, and decorative lawn items, including Karen and Dan Darling, Steve and Mary Foley, Lucilla Sokol, Glenn Morrill, Donna Gilbreth, John Benham, and Tyler Baroody, a 12 year old who donated house plants he personally cultivated, who came with his mother who had pre-ordered plants to buy. The Society would also like to recognize Dave Liberatore for his generous cash donation on top of his purchases. It was a great day, for those who have new plants to cherish and appreciate, and for all the volunteers and donors, who were able to bask in the satisfaction of a job really well done.

Pictured below (photo by Sally Bussiere) is Annette, recognizable even behind all her protections, taking a “posing” break, between identifying what was for sale and pairing customers with the plants they sought, and Elizabeth, in the green apron, tending to two potential buyers.



There will be no July meeting of the Society, not just because of Covid-19, but also because in the recent past it was decided that with the first Thursday in July so close to the 4th, attendance was always wanting, and therefore not a productive date on which to meet. *If* the pandemic restrictions allow, Thursday August 6th will be a “Welcome Back” meeting featuring Bill Caswell, the president of the Covered Bridge Association, as our speaker. And if we can continue on in the regular meeting mode, September 3rd will offer “Mokalaki’s 100th Anniversary”, a look back through archival newspaper clippings and photos, and a look forward with Rob Pearlman outlining Mojo’s future. Please check with the Society’s website (franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org) for

confirmation of all upcoming meetings and events, as conditions are subject to change quickly and with little time for proper notice.

Following a suggestion by Glenn Morrill, Mike Mullavey was approached to help identify the building that was the subject of last month's photo. The structure was indeed in West Franklin, identified as the Sturtevant Block, 14-18 N. Main St., torn down some decades ago to accommodate the expansion of Benson's Chevrolet. By the time it was razed, its façade had changed considerably, having undergone "a facelift" during the period of urban redevelopment. Mike has compiled a history of the site to be included in the Society's archives.

As part of the research associated with that building as well as the Congregational-Christian Church's heritage, the Society was able to procure a PDF file of a 1988 Survey of the West Franklin Historic District (alas, never officially recognized) from which a hard copy was printed by Colorama (for a nominal fee) as a valuable resource to help answer future questions about buildings in the area. Andrew Cushing, Director of the NH Bureau of Historic Sites, provided the file. The lone building (north of the Church property line) of the original business district on that side of the street, was demolished this past week. It had served as the venue of multiple businesses since c. 1850, finishing out its life as a multi-family until recently.

While requesting annual dues from members, it was learned that one member, who lives out of state, is connected to Franklin by his ancestor who fought in the Revolutionary War and is buried here. An attempt was made to locate the grave, and although the probable last resting place was found, no markings on the venerable gravestones could confirm which grave belonged to Thaddeus Gage. What was learned, however, or reinforced, was that there are so many small cemeteries, off the beaten tracks, that need to be cataloged and cared for. Those who came before us and provided what we now enjoy, deserve to be honored in perpetuity.

More donations to the Society's collections have been received, for which the governing board is most appreciative. Thank yous are extended to **Donna Gilbreth**, for three hats, from c. 1945-50, worn by Helen Hird, found in her former residence; to **John Benham**, for a 1951 Franklin directory (with an attached chain for hanging on a hook!), two town reports for 1881 and 1884, a library index for the Granite Monthly magazine, 1903-04, and a can *full* of paper wrapped straws from the Franklin Dairy; to **Jo Brown** for close to one hundred vintage photos of various sizes, mostly from the early 20th century but a couple of tintypes, CDV's and from the 19th century, all related to her father's family while living in St. Johnsbury, VT, long before moving to Franklin; and to **Roger Smith** for copies of Aiken related material from his personal collection; **Steve and Mary Foley**, for a porcelain creamer with a color cachet of the Library and Soldiers Memorial Hall (made in Germany for H.L. Young), a porcelain saucer also of the Soldiers Memorial Hall (made for the Shepard Bros.) and a milk glass lidded jar with a color rendition of the Webster Birthplace, now all on display; and **Rita Norander**, for a wooden American Legion cane dated Louisville 1929 from the American Legion Convention in KY, a snapshot of Benne



LaPlante as the oldest member of the Elks Club, a leather penny postcard from Franklin, and a 1912 postcard from Andover to a resident of the NH Home for Orphans. These treasures are now a permanent part of the Society's revered collections.

Fingers crossed, the Franklin Historical Society can very soon return to its normal regimen of monthly meetings before the end of the year, and continue the tradition of healthy and informative social interaction with the sharing of memories, photos, and personal histories. In the meantime, stay well!