

Franklin NH Historical Society News

June, 2015

Historical material donations never cease to surprise, delight, or elicit multiple emotions. A case in point is a donation that began with a phone call, totally unexpected, which led to the acquisition of an archive detailing the war experiences of a true Franklin heroine, Lt. Col. Bernice (pronounced Ber-niss) Sinclair. Robert Jay Evans, a cousin of Bernice's, asked if the Society was interested in a three-ring binder of her WWII memorabilia. Without hesitation, the answer was of course a resounding "yes!". Upon meeting Mr. Evans and his lovely wife Frances and examining the material, it became very clear that this archive should be the basis of a permanent display honoring the name and service of Lt. Col. Bernice Sinclair as a courageous, caring, and inspirational Franklin native. It is hoped that by the beginning of this month, the display will be up and the story of this amazing woman and wartime nurse will serve to inspire and instruct for generations to come. As a reminder, the Society is open every Sunday until Labor Day from 11 am until 2 pm to educate our visitors on the wonders and lessons that the past continually conjure and teach.

In another fascinating acquisition tale, on the first Sunday the Society was open to the public in May, two visitors, Toni and Greg Gualtiere from New Boston, appeared bearing a wonderful gift: the personal photo album of Guy Buswell. In a somewhat ironic twist, after Guy himself had contributed considerable material about his family to the Society's collection during his lifetime, that arguably one of the most significant, certainly most personal, items from his life, comes from two strangers who just happened to buy it at an auction. Words can hardly express the gratitude to The Evans' and the Gualtiere's for the thoughtfulness of considering the Society as the final repository for these invaluable and irreplaceable tributes to two of Franklin's memorable citizens. Recognizing additional donations this past month, thanks are extended to Fay Mahoney for a panoramic photo of the first annual outing of the M. T. Stevens Mill in 1941; to "a friend of the Society" for photos of the Kenrick Farm and a vintage image of Charles Kenrick seated near the side porch with his faithful dog at his side; and to Jean Pratt from Massachusetts, the "best intentions award" for the 1891 book "Picturesque Franklin", which actually turned out to be about Franklin County in her home state, but still served a productive purpose by finding a home with a member originally from that area for a monetary donation to the Society. The curator, Annette Andreozzi, or the president, Leigh Webb, can always be reached by calling 934-8222 if anyone wishes information on how contribute to the Society's collections or to make arrangements for a donation of items. Both are waiting for the next treasure to be offered or to simply appear at our doorstep.

In other news the Society participated in May 9th's very successful and well received Choose Franklin's 11th Annual Community Day with a table at Odell Park. Merchandise was sold, questions were fielded, and new memberships were started. The current "open Sundays" policy at Webster Place continues to pay dividends, as the anecdote above certainly proves, but also by welcoming visitors with the wealth of knowledge our exhibits and docents are eager to share. Please plan on stopping by on any Sunday,

whether it be when just passing through the area by car, out enjoying the great weather, or when utilizing the Northern Rail Trail for exercise. Besides catering to cerebral stimulation, refreshments are also available to replenish the body's needs.

June's program will feature local historian, published author, and Historical Society member Andy Nadeau, whose talk will focus on his latest research project, "The Paper Mills of Franklin", accompanied by then and now photos. Mills of all sorts created the town of Franklin, so the story of mill development is also the story of Franklin's past. Free light refreshments will be served after the talk, and as always the event is free and open to all. The program is offered at the Society's Webster/Tay building, Webster Place (21 Holy Cross Road--for directions go to www.franklinhistoricalsociety.org) starting at 7 pm, Thursday, June 4th.

July's program, on Thursday, July 2nd, at Webster Place starting at 7 pm, will feature Part II of the slideshow "The Franklin Library's Collection of Photos and Historic Articles". Come prepared to participate in a lively discussion of identifications and memories.

May, 2015

Just when it was thought to be safe to take the lawn mower out of winter storage, April dropped a surprise, weather-wise, with a fresh blanket of snow! And then followed it up with 60 degree temperatures! Will May forego spring, and rush headlong into summer? After such a wacky winter, nothing should be unexpected, particularly the unpredictable.

April's Historical Society meeting was well attended and the slide presentation of scanned photos from the Franklin Library's collection (thank you Rob Sargent) was a huge hit. To follow up on the celebration of vintage images of Franklin, on Thursday May 7th at 7 pm, at the Society's Webster/Tay building in Webster Place (21 Holy Cross Rd.--directions on the Society website, www.franklinhistoricalsociety.org), Glenn Morrill has graciously consented to exhibit his extensive postcard collection (a sample of which is this month's scan). Because of the number of postcards Glenn has acquired over the years, the program will be divided into two parts, with Part II scheduled for the first Thursday in October.

Images in the form of photos, etchings, drawings, and paintings are a significant and fascinating portion of the Society's collections. For this reason, a number of programs this year will be devoted to savoring these treasures preserved by the due diligence of many dedicated individuals. The Society continues to seek out donations of such contributions, and reminds any potential donor that if the original needs to be retained for the time being, the president or curator will be happy to scan and digitize the items so at least a record can be kept of oftentimes singular and irreplaceable pictures. Either Leigh Webb or Annette Andreozzi can be contacted by sending an email to franklin_pride@yahoo.com (an underscore separates the words) or by calling 934-8222. All temporarily loaned items will be treated with the utmost of care and returned promptly. Speaking of which, Franklin historian and author Andy Nadeau

recently loaned for scanning the photos he is using in his current endeavor to document the history of paper mills in Franklin, and will be discussing that topic at the June meeting of the Society.

Andy also donated a couple of JJ Newberry merchandise tags, two Franklin National Bank deposit envelopes, and a typed transcription of Norman Nadeau's WWII diary written while serving in the Navy. Other donations this month included: a panoramic photo of MT Stevens mill employees, c. 1955 from Roberta Burke, and a box of Franklin High School class of 1938 memorabilia from Bob Morin, all of which are deeply appreciated.

NEWS STORIES for the month of May: starting this month and continuing to Labor Day weekend, the Society's building will be open on Sunday from 11 am to 2 pm, with tours, drinks, treats, and Society merchandise for sale. The Society will also have a table at Franklin's Community Day at Odell Park, Saturday, May 9th, offering books, postcards, T-shirts, and other items for purchase, and disseminating information on membership and upcoming events.

In other news, president Leigh Webb recently addressed a Franklin High School class which had been assigned various topics relating to the history of Franklin, such as women in the workplace, railroads in Franklin, and child labor in the mills. Teacher Amanda Maguire was excited to create a sense of "pride of place" in every student, and understanding and appreciating our city's past is a wonderful way of accomplishing that goal.

Lastly, Easter Seals has acquired ownership of Webster Place, and the Society is looking forward to a productive relationship with its new landlord, in the hopes that an even more secure future can be forged as a result of this new alliance.

April/May is the beginning of a new year for the Society, and members are reminded to pay their yearly dues (only \$10 per person, or \$125 for a lifetime membership) AND encourage someone they know to also join in the ongoing quest to preserve and perpetuate the history of our beloved city.

A final request: the Society is looking for the donation of velvet ropes and stanchions, or something similar, in order to "rope off" an area where vintage clothing can be displayed. Please reach out to either Leigh Webb or Annette Andreozzi (contact info is above).

[This month's Franklin Historical Society image: a postcard view of Central Street, c. 1895]



Central Street, Franklin Falls, N. H.