

## **Franklin Historical Society** **September 2019**

How could it be that the summer is over so quickly!?! Children are back in school, the temperatures are declining, and within the month fall colors will once again be emerging. Time passes, new history is created every day, and the Society continues to do its best to preserve what is truly vintage, while protecting that which will be considered “old” in due course.

**On Thursday, September 5th at 7 pm**, the Society **will meet at its Webster Place building** to strive to “right a wrong” in attributing the origin of the Cog Railway solely to Sylvester Marsh. Franklin’s place in history, and Herrick Aiken’s considerable contribution to that enterprise, has been the subject of debate for more than a century. Along with viewing the (somewhat biased in favor of Mr. Marsh) video “Railway to the Moon”, the Society’s president will show, through archival material from the Society’s collections, that the *real* story began and was perpetuated by influences from, and direct action by, the Aiken family. The Webster/Tay building is located at 21 Holy Cross Road, with directions on the Society’s website [franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org](http://franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org). Light refreshments will be offered after the presentation and before the general business meeting, to which all are invited. There is no charge, and all are welcome. Parking should only be on the Society’s side of the road, with the vehicle completely off the pavement. Come learn Franklin’s *real* place in the history of the Cog Railway.

Donations to the Society’s expanding collections continue unabated. The most gracious of thanks are extended to: **Wendy Kennedy** (of California) for sending vintage postcards of the Webster Birthplace; **Mary Foley** for a wooden Franklin, NH souvenir napkin holder with the image of a horse’s head (what did this signify?) and a 1963 Rumford Press (Concord) calendar featuring New England views; **Linda Pauwels** for a 1970’s era booklet “Smiles” published for the patients of Franklin Regional Hospital, a FHS Class of 1935 newspaper article and picture, and various newspaper obituaries and clippings; **Frank Lossani** (Franklin Finance Director) for copies of city reports and 1960-70’s city audits; **Chris Lewis** for student history projects, school books, photos and original art from Richard Lewis of the Journal Transcript, and considerably other material as yet not inventoried. The Society is most grateful to all these generous supporters of the organization's mission. Each item donated is another piece of the past to further educate future generations as to the importance of knowing what came before and understanding the lesson it teaches.

Another “thank you” needs to be extended to Steve Foley who was able to make operational once again a 16 mm film viewer/editor that had been donated in 2014 by Alison Keay. The light worked, but no image was discernable until Steve worked his magic. The device can now be used to review other 16 mm films in the collection to determine if their subject matter warrants conversion to a digital medium, which is at considerable cost.

Creating digital files is only one expense for which the Society is obligated to explore in keeping with its core mission of preservation. Supplies such as protective sleeves of all sizes, acid-free folders, storage boxes, and other archival items are essential to properly save and store many of the precious items that come to us for safe keeping. However, the most important and costly responsibility of the Society is to its building, without which there would be no meeting place, no museum, and no dedicated

storage. At some point the foundation and sills will have to be addressed in the Webster (1795) portion of the building, which can only be properly done by professionals. A long range project requiring considerable funds would also be to create climate-controlled spaces in the building to ensure the archives are protected from excessive heat, cold and moisture. All of this comes in the way of asking our members and friends to consider the planned giving approach to sustaining the Society long term. The Planned Giving plaque is now on display in the meeting room, but only has one name on it at present. It is a fervent hope that before long all the plates get filled with names of those pledging to keep the Society moving ahead to the future by paying tribute to Franklin's past (information on how to give is spelled out on the Society's website under "Planned Giving"). Thank you all in advance for your thoughtfulness and consideration in this critical area of fundraising.

*[This month's image, captured circa 1880, is taken from a stereocard in the Society's collection of the Cog train at the top of Mt. Washington. Walter Aiken, one of Herrick Aiken's sons, not only ran the railroad from its opening, but designed and built two of the locomotives, and erected the Summit House, the large hotel in the background of the photo. Sadly, it burned down in the 1930's and was not rebuilt. All that is left today is a small corner of its original stone foundation.]*

