

## Franklin Historical Society, Newsletter, December, 2025

Thanksgiving traditionally marks the beginning of the holiday season, with New Year's Day bookending this annual period of celebration. Having concluded the year's monthly meeting schedule, the next gathering will be the **Society's Christmas Pot-luck Dinner at Thompson Hall** (Congregational-Christian Church) as it has in the recent past, on **the second Sunday of December (the 14th this year), starting at 4 pm** for set-up and social hour, with dinner at 5 pm, and going until 7 pm. *All* are welcome—membership in the Society is not required (but always appreciated). The celebration is open to members, relatives, and friends. Attendees are asked to consider donating non-perishable food items to be added to the Church's offerings as contribution to the stores of the local food bank. For those wondering what to bring for the feast, know that the following items have already been promised: turkey (two birds from the Frank Genus family, to be cooked by Annette Andreozzi and Sally Bussiere), garlic mashed potatoes and ginger ale punch (from the Society), and squash, corn bread, stuffing, gravy, and cranberry sauce (from various members). Suggestions for other items include appetizers, rolls and butter, other vegetable dishes, and of course a variety of desserts. The event has never been short of sufficient amounts of satisfying delectables, so see you there and bring a healthy appetite!



Updates on past articles: After finding a photo of the traffic light at Central and Franklin which included the original Franklin Bank clock, the considered opinion would now be that the old clock was a victim of the 1961 granite façade renovation, not the addition of traffic lights.

Although the Society does clear the steps to the Stevenstown Fort marker on a yearly basis, the group of volunteers organized by Fr. Roger Sargent went above and beyond in clearing back the offending growth to a much greater degree. Thanks again to the group for all their efforts!

To those who have not heard, Easterseals has purchased the Abigail Webster House, built in 1805 by her husband William Haddock, who had earlier built the two story section of the Webster/Tay in which the Society holds its meetings and maintains its museum. There is some speculation that Easterseals will create a museum space in the building or dome other constructive use of this historic home, but no definite plans have been divulged currently.

After the fire destroyed the attached barns (one of which may have dated back to the tavern in which Daniel Webster grew up), the house has taken on a most forlorn appearance. It is fervently hoped that Easterseals will undertake a restoration and repurposing of the building in conjunction with the Military and Veterans campus. The Society stands ready to help in any way possible.



It has also come to the Society's attention that the valence which has hung above the Opera House stage for (at least) a century, if not from its earliest days, must be moved prior to the renovation project involving the entirety of Soldiers Memorial Hall. The Society has volunteered to remove and store this last vestige of the of the building's stage history, in the hopes that it may once again be restored to a place of prominence in a rejuvenated Opera House. In the Society's archives, are photos from various dates in which this valence appears. As examples, are one from a 1920s trade show, and another of a minstrel show from the 1960s. Too much history of the Opera House has already been lost, so every effort will be expended to save this possibly last irreplaceable piece.



*Photo courtesy of Dan Darling, Executive Director of the Franklin Opera House, and the Society's Treasurer*

Curator's Corner: More treasures have come to the Society as donations from the following, to whom the most sincere thanks are extended.

From **Dave Liberatore**, a reprint of the history of Salisbury (which was Nita Tomasewski's copy), and two ledgers from the Webster Place Cemetery Association—titled “Webster Social Circle” 1866-1902 (pre-cursor to the Cemetery Association), and “Webster Place Cemetery Association” 1962-1982;

From **Kathy Fuller**, six White House Christmas ornaments, valued at \$25-35 each (to be potentially sold as fundraisers for the Society), two Franklin High School jackets from football championship years of 2008 and 2012, three athletic “F” letters, a 1988 graduation tassel, and a glass goblet commemorating the 1978 Franklin sesquicentennial;

From **Rob Sargent**: a framed state of NH 1867 certificate of appreciation for service in the Civil War given to George B. Towle, a Daniel Webster matchbook, six Christmas carol song booklets from the Franklin Cooperative Bank plus one from J.P. Stevens & Co., and a 1975-76 Franklin Woman's Club Yearbook;

From **Barb and Dave Therrien**, three vintage Franklin postcards, one of which features a colorized view of the Orphans Home not seen before; and

From **Paul Duncanson**, a four volume set of “The New England States” published in 1897, with a portrait and biographical sketch of Walter Aiken.  
To all our generous donors, THANK YOU.

As a reminder to our members and friends, merchandise from the Society including memberships, books, maps, and postcards, make wonderful gifts. Contact Leigh Webb, 603-934-8222, for access to everything we sell.

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS!**