

Franklin Historical Society, February 2025

BRRRR! With frigid temperatures come specific caveats and challenges. Recently the Society got phone calls warning of the possibility of a temporary shutdown of water service. Because the Society's baseboard heating system is fed by water, not steam, this raised concerns. Easterseals had been heating the buildings in which the construction crews had been working, but had failed to notice that insufficient heat was reaching the basements of the Creighton/Mack/Kimball Chapel complex, resulting in frozen pipes and a flood scenario under the 1902 schoolhouse. In attempting to shut off the water at the interior valve, the handle came off, so the city was called to possibly shut down the entire campus. Luckily this did not have to happen, sparing the Webster/Tay from losing water to its boiler. The building is routinely checked to insure that any problems that may arise, can be remedied quickly. An electric space heater was placed in the crawl space under the Webster part, so that extreme cold can be handled. The only issue moving forward through the remaining winter months is maintaining adequate propane levels and a high enough balance in the checking account to handle the approximately \$500 a month filling charge. In order to facilitate future payments, arrangements have been made to transfer a back-up amount into checking from the building investment fund, one of the subjects to be discussed at the annual **Officers and Directors meeting at Thompson Hall, Thursday, February 6th, at 7 pm.** While all are welcome, members are encouraged to attend, especially those interested in serving on the board.



In last month's newsletter, the trestle in downtown Franklin was mentioned as a preservation concern, and two members responded with questions and comments. The outstanding issue is whether the trestle can be saved, and at what expense. McFarland Johnson, the engineering firm tasked with the initial assessment, declared that it would be more expensive to restore/stabilize the structure than tear it down. There is no question that rot is present, but can a more reasonable and less expensive alternative be found to make the trestle safe while preserving this historic icon? No "in kind" replacement can be the original.

An example of the worst of the deterioration of support members. Can the rot be cut out and a new timber "sistered" in place rather than replace the entire leg? Can an alternate approach be applied to save the trestle?

The Andover Beacon, with a specific section on Franklin under the (ironic?) banner of the Trestle Times, is now out. Under the leadership of Randy Kovach, this portion of the newspaper can only expand over time, giving greater access to Franklin news (and history) since the loss of local other local attempts at periodic coverage. Members can view news items online, or subscribe to the monthly, for home delivery.

In the ongoing quest to properly acknowledge Herrick Aiken's place in the concept of the cog railway, the Society has been in touch with Donna-Belle Garvin of the NH Historical Society, who is keenly aware of our Society's position. Will the proper footnote in history ever be attained? The question has not yet been resolved—but will not to be forgotten, or dismissed without the correct answer...

Donations of intriguing items continues unabated, for which the Society is undyingly grateful. This month's list of acquisitions include the following:

From **Roberta Burke**, a Windsor chair which once graced the office of lawyer James A. Hanley, whose place of business was 384 Central Street, the Kenrick Block of downtown, which in its last life was the JJ Newberry department store. Now it is the site of Marceau Park.

From **Kathy Fuller, (cleaned out from the home of Ed Briggs)**, a bound edition of one half month's NY Times newspaper Dec. 16-31, 1944, various news clippings from 1978-1997 with school programs, Gladys Easton's handwritten "sewing book", political pin-back buttons, postcards, a copy of "Who's Who in American High Schools and other books and magazines.

From **Karen Phleps Hanson (Andover, NH)**, a card mounted 7x9 photo of the 1914 Franklin Championship boys basketball team, and a late 19th century business card for John W. Russell, jeweler.

And from **Roger Smith (Massachusetts)**, two CDV's of young ladies (unfortunately whose identities have been lost to time) from the C.L. Hunt Studios.

A very unusual item has been offered to the Society, but would have to be picked up from the Sudbury Historical Society in Massachusetts. It is large (4 feet tall), and very heavy, making its acquisition somewhat complicated. It appears to be an industrial size stapler from Acme Stapler in Franklin, who was contacted by email, but had no reply. Anyone who might shed light on this equipment's function, is welcome to contact the Society through its website, www.franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org, with a hearty "thank you" in advance.



Just what does this monster do?

Should anyone ever forget the benefits to the community that the Society offers freely, contacts through the website and Facebook page continue, ranging in scope from questions about a newly acquired historic home, to research inquiries about family lineage. Most people *are* interested in history, some just may not realize it yet. But waiting until it is gone, is a price no one wants to pay.



Sadly, the barns attached to the Abigail Webster House, recently suffered extensive fire damage. Local lore attributed at least one to have been part of the tavern in which Daniel Webster grew up. The tavern itself was demolished many years ago, and the question as to where exactly it stood, is still open to discussion.