

## Franklin NH Historical Society Newsletter

**June 2019**

Einstein had his theory of relativity, and most experienced elders have theirs: as a child, time moves inexorably slowly, whereas when older age inevitably supplants youth and vitality, time speeds up exponentially. All of which is to say that June is suddenly upon us! From an unusual spring with much cooler temperatures than expected, we find ourselves quickly on the brink of summer, with a wonderful program being offered by the Society. **Author Michael Bruno** will present the subject of **“NH Historical Markers”** in the **Webster/Tay meeting room, 21 Holy Cross Road** (directions on the Society’s website, [franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org](http://franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org)), **at 7 pm on Thursday, June 6th**. Mr. Bruno is not only familiar with all the markers that dot the historical landscape of NH, educating all those who take the time to stop, read, and absorb the numerous stories that these signs relate, but was actually the author of the marker honoring Frances Glessner Lee, an innovator in the study of forensics. He is a native to the Lakes region, an Army veteran for more than 23 years, and a JROTC instructor at the White Mountains Regional High School. The program is free, and open to all.

June also offers the opportunity to “stock up” on plants for your garden, as the Society’s **4th Annual Plant Sale** will take place on **Sunday, June 23rd from 10 am to 2 pm** (rain or shine, but preferably with favorable weather!) **on the front lawn of the Society’s Webster/Tay building** at Webster Place. The Society is looking to expand the sale from just plants of all varieties to garden tools (hand implements, shovels, rakes, pruners, etc.) and even lawn ornaments (pedestals, urns, and one can never have too many flamingoes or gnomes...) and is asking donors of such items (must be in saleable condition) to contact Annette Andreozzi at 934-8222. Arrangements can be made to pick up donations, or they can be dropped off up until, and including, the morning of the sale.

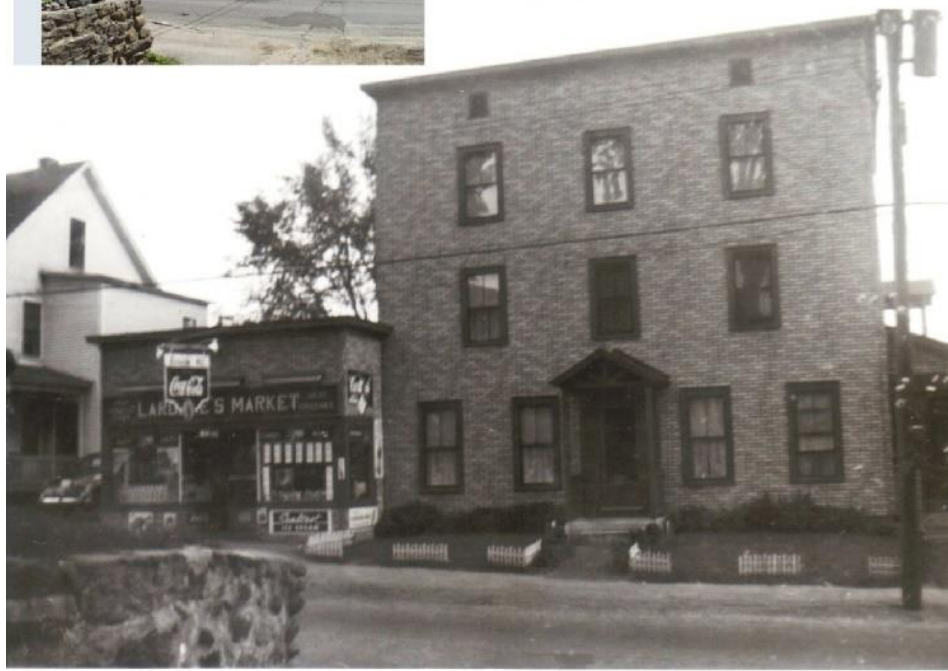
The Society’s museum is now **open every Saturday, from 10 am to 2 pm**, offering free guided tours of the exhibits, and sales of books on the history of Franklin, postcards, and other merchandise, as well as membership information and snacks—ice cream, drinks, and trail mix bars! If you are using the Rail Trail, stop in and learn how rich this area is in legacy and lore.

As is the norm since the Society obtained its permanent home, more folks have sought out wonderful and sometimes unique items from Franklin’s past from attics, closets, and basements, and generously donated them to enrich the Society’s archives. This month’s list includes: from **Leonard and Rachel Downes** (via Brenda and Dan Johnson): glasses case with pince-nez glasses from Dr. James Shaw, OD, latch needle boxes from both Acme Knitting and Franklin Needle), Giles Dairy Bar glass ashtray, wooden ice pick from Webster Lake Ice Co., 1957 Cookbook “Kitchen Secrets of Franklin, snapshots of Acme Knitting, Howard’s Bike Shop, Laroche’s Market (see below), small envelope from C.P. Stevens Hardware, and milk bottles from Giles and Franklin Dairies; from **Carlton Ham**: more postcards, pamphlets, newspaper clippings and (of particular interest to the president and curator who attended that university) a 1931 letter on UCLA stationery to Carlton’s father, referring to the campus, an earthquake, and flooding around her family’s rented house, which the writer says “was never built to last”

(the small, single story Mediterranean-style home still exists today in West Los Angeles and is currently appraised at \$2 million!); from **Steve and Mary Foley**: 1886 book "Town Officer", updating laws from 1878 detailing the governance of towns and cities, and an 1811 pamphlet of a speech by NH Governor Langdon to the state Legislature, just prior to the War of 1812 (which, with the permission of the donors, has now been passed on to the NH Historical Society); from **Linda Denoncourt of the Salisbury Historical Society**: newspaper articles, three postcards, Republican Bridge photo, and letter (no date unfortunately), from Hattie E. Webster (of Danbury) about attending school in Franklin (the Franklin Academy?) mentioning her roommate Rosa Shepard and an "Indian woman skeleton in a glass case" in one of her classrooms (!); and from **Nancy Jo Chabot, Hopkinton Historical Society**: two bags of 1930's and 40's era clothing from the Starie family (Dorothy Richardson Starie, Franklin Public Librarian from 1935-43, and her husband John H. Starie, a teacher in Tilton). It is always very gratifying to receive items from sister societies, a courtesy the Franklin Society returns whenever an artifact or piece of ephemera is discovered in our collections that is best suited to another venue. To all our donors, the Society most sincerely extends its deepest thanks.

Come learn about NH's historical markers *and* beautify your gardens, all in the same month!

*[This month's photo is a composite of a "then" and a "now" photo of Laroche's Market, once located on Central Street some 70 years ago. Laroche was Rachel Downes' maiden name, and the market was her family's.]*



## **From The President**

The life's blood of any non-profit organization is its volunteers. With no paid, full or even part time employees, the sometimes menial but essential jobs must be done by those dedicated and selfless individuals who believe in the Society, not just with their hearts, but with their hands. When the call goes out for help, be it to weed, prune, and beautify the gardens surrounding the building, or to be a docent during an "Open Hours" day at the museum, or help out at the annual plant sale, too often the same faces appear. Granted, the dues everyone pays is a help, so everyone in that regard is aiding the sustainability of the organization, but more is needed, and always will be.

As president, I try to lead by example. I would never ask anyone to do something I myself would not be willing to undertake, and I would never ask a member to volunteer for a task beyond their capabilities. But even the smallest gesture is greatly appreciated. Sitting at the Society table on Community Day is actually fun. Interacting with passersby, answering questions from those curious about the history of Franklin, or sharing memories with long-time residents, is certainly within my definition of an enjoyable time. The same experience can be duplicated at the Webster/Tay during open hours. The light in a visitor's face when shown a "one-off" document like the voter's roll from the very first Franklin town meeting in 1829, or being able to read a letter handwritten by Daniel Webster, or the expression of reverence when viewing the WWI tank corps uniform of Maurice Gilchrist, is payment in itself for a docent's efforts.

As we move into and through the 2019 season, I hope that more will step forward to partake in the pleasures of volunteering and enjoy the satisfaction derived from performing a selfless act. Standing back from a well manicured garden and being able to say, "I did that", or teaching a child a fact about Franklin they might never have heard otherwise, warms the soul.

The Society is hoping to accommodate a field trip to Webster Place by the Franklin 4<sup>th</sup> graders, in addition to the talk on the traces of history left behind in Franklin by Daniel Webster, which is given at the school every Fall. If this event comes to pass, perhaps not this year, but in the very near future, hands will be needed to guide these malleable minds around the grounds and through the museum. I can guarantee, along perhaps with challenging, the effort will be rewarding.

The Society has for many years now, been considered by Ben Wilson of the NH Bureau of Historic Sites, a "Friends Group" to the Daniel Webster Birthplace State Park. I check the buildings for vandalism on a regular basis, Jack Tobey is a seasonal employee and works there on weekends from Memorial Day to Columbus Day, and his wife Bette re-glazed all the windows in the cabin not so long ago. The Society still maintains a plethora of reproduction items in the birthplace cabin to enhance the visitor experience, and Jack has access to a considerable cache of material (to which

more is added every year) provided by the Society to regale even the most knowledgeable tourist with fascinating facts about the property.

The Franklin Firefighters Museum may also provide an opportunity to volunteer, and learn, as the Society is in talks with the Firefighters Association to take a more active role in preserving this institution worth saving and expanding.

The chances to participate are there. There is no better time to volunteer than now, and once the taste of giving is experienced, it can be habit forming...

I hope, at the very least, members might show an interest in learning about the Birthplace, the Society's museum, and the Firefighters Museum, if our role in its maintenance is expanded.

This is a great city, with new things to learn every day and pass on to the next generation. After all, isn't that the core mission of the Society?

All best wishes,

Leigh A. Webb

May, 2019