

Franklin Historical Society
August 2020

The museum at Webster Place reopened to the public on Saturday, July 4th, at the usual hours of 10 am to 2 pm, and will continue to be available to the public every Saturday through the Labor Day weekend (and then, all three days with the same hours). Initially, the Society only benefited from two visitors. A mother and her young son, Lisa and Tyler Baroody, both of whom had come to the plant sale (she to purchase and he to donate house plants he had cultivated himself), spent a couple of hours enjoying the tour and absorbing the stories our exhibits tell. Tyler became the first (at least to my knowledge) to take advantage of the \$1 yearly student membership fee, and is now our youngest member. Youth is the future of any non-profit, so the hope is that he is not the last to become excited about the knowledge and insight that the Society has to offer. Since the first two weeks, other visitors have come by, toured the museum, and contributed to the Society's coffers, so apart from the time to organize and inventory, the "open hours" are certainly proving productive. Should any member wish to learn how to be an effective docent, the invitation remains open on any Saturday.

Hannaford Markets has once again included the Society in its reusable Community Grocery Bag Program. For every bag that is sold in the month of August for \$2.50, the Society will receive \$1. Sadly, there is still a ban on these reusable bags (although recently there have been rumbles that Gov. Sununu is considering lifting that restriction), and the bags *can* be used if the customer packs his or her own purchases. Regardless, one must believe that these measures will end when the virus is no longer a threat, so now might be a good time to lay in a supply before the price goes up.

More donations to the Society's collections have made their way to our door. Thanks go to the following for their thoughtful gifts: **Janet Jurta**, for a copy of an article written probably in the 1990's about the importance of saving the Elms Farm property when the Sisters of Holy Cross put it up for sale; **Pat Dunlop**, via Maddie Jacobs and Sally Bussiere, for a snapshot c. 1925 from Arline Syvestre's family photos, and collectible local newspapers from 2003 (when we lost The Old Man in the Mountain) 1992, 1978, and c. 1945; **Donna Gilbreth**, for assembled research on Helen Hird's life (items from which she has donated in the past); **Kathy Fuller** for a 1964 receipt from Keegan & Co., a 1967 Franklin Parks and Rec report, and an 1892 Town Report, as well as being the conduit for donations from **Cheryl Elliot**, for 1960's era newspaper clippings about her stepdad Willie Nelson and a Sesquicentennial mug, from **Ed Briggs**, for a map of Franklin and two 1965 issues of "Torch of Beta Sigma Phi" magazine, and from **Ron Forster** for a half dozen latch needles, a 1921 Acme Knitting Machine catalog (in French), and two 1919 Acme price booklets.

The Society has also acquired through donation an amazing collection of receipts from the mid 1850's to the early 1900's relating to the Aiken family, including beautifully detailed billheads from 19th century companies, notes signed by Herrick, Jonas, and Walter, letters, legal bills, and Scientific American receipts for the patenting of Jonas' inventions. Included in the lot were also a box of Griffin Co. coping saw blades, a miniscule box from Walter Aiken's mill (probably held tiny screws), and the true treasure, a railroad conductor's ticket punch, proudly stamped "Manufactured by JB Aiken Franklin, NH" (see below and attached, with an example of its identifying die punched at the top of the photo) with accompanying advertising and receipts, relative to its production from 1878-1880.



And a final “thank you” goes to Yvonne Hobbs, owner of the Aiken Manor B&B (and new Society business member), who has allowed the Society to scan an album of photos taken by Jonas Aiken of his home on the shore of Webster Lake, Aiken Point, and views of the Lake. The originals were returned to her with copies of receipts of Jonas’ purchase of photographic supplies, indicating that he was obviously an amateur photographer, with excellent skills in composition and exposure. The album gave evidence that he was even experimenting with stereo photography, and succeeding handsomely!

The September meeting, scheduled to be held at the Mojalaki Clubhouse, is still on track to celebrate Mojo’s 100th year. Details are being worked out to allow safe distancing, and masks will be required. Check the Society’s website and your email inbox for confirmation in the coming weeks. In the era of Covid-19, or “The Lost Year”, be assured that the Society will continue on. There is always something to do—maintenance of the gardens, monitoring the building’s security, and lately, dealing with small amounts of water and soil penetrating the rock foundation in the basement, requiring some clean-up and replacement of mortar. Work continues...as it must, but always as a labor of love and dedication.