

Franklin Historical Society, April 2025

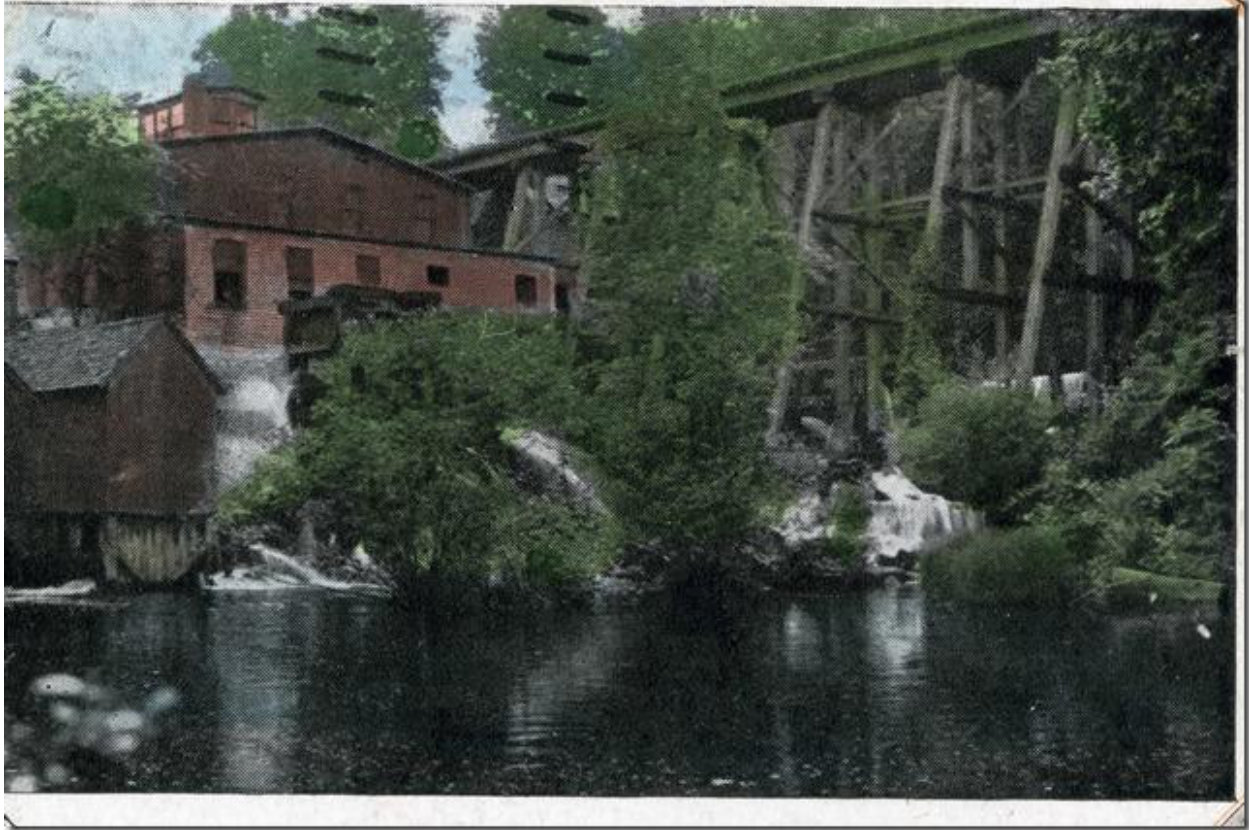
March has not been kind to either people or plants. Teasing both with warmer temperatures which succeeded in eliminating virtually all remaining snow, before dumping some inches of white to recoat the landscape and restart the process of ending winter all over again. Even now, a “wintery mix” or two may remain in our immediate future as a reminder that New England weather, even before climate change, was historically fickle and changeable. Fingers are crossed that the weather is amenable on the 3rd, to welcome in a new season of monthly meetings and educational and entertaining presentations. On that **Thursday, April 3rd**, the Society will begin its 2025 season of regular meetings with a presentation by Daniel Heyduk entitled **“The History of the Pemigewasset Valley”**. **The program begins at 7 pm** at the Society’s Webster/Tay Building at Webster Place (driving instructions to 21 Holy Cross Road, the Society’s physical address, are on the Society’s webpage, www.franklinnhistoricalociety.org). When parking, please utilize all paved spaces first, and only one side of the road when lots are full, to allow adequate space for emergency equipment if the need should ever arise.

As part of his talk, M. Heyduk will touch on railroad service through the area, including an unfortunate accident involving Orphans Home staff, and the Bristol Branch of the Northern RR, which ran from Franklin, through Hill, and terminated in Bristol. After the destructive flood of 1936, it was abandoned as being too expensive to maintain, with little sustainable revenue. America’s increasing dependence on the automobile had claimed another victim...

The program is free, and all are welcome. Light refreshments will be offered between the end of the presentation and the beginning of the regular monthly business meeting, to which all are invited. Mr. Heyduk will also be available during the break to answer questions and sign any of his books attendees wish to purchase.



Courtesy photo from Dan Heyduk



West Franklin trestle, part of the Bristol line that was finally abandoned after flood damage sustained in 1936. Yes, there were two trestles in Franklin...Postcard image from the Historical Society's archives

A "donation thank you" is this month given to **Chris Lewis**, chair of the Society's Education Committee, for her gifts of (1) a back-up scanner (the Lexmark printer/scanner donated by Annette Andreozzi, now more than 20 years old, is starting to groan with age whenever the scanner function is utilized) and (2) her husband's "pocket seal" embosser, that Richard Lewis used in his capacity of notary public. Both items are deeply appreciated by the Society. In the same vein as gifting to the Society, there is an emerging story of the possible acquisition of a painted portrait of Daniel Webster which once hung in a wardroom of the USS Daniel Webster atomic submarine. The saga started more than ten years ago when a search was launched (pun intended) by an inquiry as to where the painting went after the boat was decommissioned. Considering the Society has a permanent display (courtesy of Commander Marvin Blair, Sr., Col. Marvin Blair, Jr., and Chief Petty Officer Maurice Tandy) honoring the service of this illustrious Navy vessel, the painting would have been a meaningful addition to the exhibit. Donated in 1964 by the Concord artist who created it, and the townspeople of Webster who owned it, the likeness seemed to disappear from the Navy's "radar" until a letter written to Sen. Shaheen's office lead to determining that the painting was still aboard the boat, cut apart and being used as a training platform in South Carolina. The Navy, at that time, had no desire to part with the art work, feeling it continued to honor its namesake. Interest has been regenerated now, because of the original letter from the Society, the insertion of State Rep. James Thibault into the mix, and a Navy change of heart, which is considering giving it to the Society to add wholeness to the USS Webster display.

Stay tuned for further updates in the continuing saga...

The first weekend of good weather after the April meeting will be designated “garden clean-up and general maintenance days”, and no volunteers who don’t mind getting their hands a little dirty will be turned away. Date and time will be posted on the appropriate media sites. The Society is in discussion with Easterseals regarding painting of the Webster building exterior, and possibly pressure-washing the vinyl-sided Tay building. The Society is more than willing to uphold its responsibility towards proper maintenance of the whole structure. The only questions are about the level of our participation, and the extent of any potential financial obligations.

Now, with a fascinating, illuminating and educational program to start us off, let the 2025 season begin!