

**Franklin Historical Society**  
**April 2020**

Spring may be days away (or may not—don't start planting just yet), but April will definitely come, and with it, a new season begins at the Society, with a list of speakers with interesting topics to entice, new museum displays to provoke, and events to educate. For members, it is time to renew, and for non-members who have always meant to, it is time to join. The first meeting of 2020 however, will have to wait at least until May, as the corona virus pandemic has interceded and caused considerable disruption in what has been, up to now, a relatively normal life. This e-newsletter and the Society website will keep you updated on schedule changes moving forward.

The Webster/Tay building held its own during the winter, with little snow accumulating on the roofs, and no interior damage from the sometimes frigid cold. In the coming months, the last of the vinyl siding will be removed from the unprotected sides of the Webster building, and any damage revealed underneath will be repaired and painted. Other areas will get fresh paint as well. Although this is not a specific call for volunteers, help is always welcome and days of work will be published on the Society's website.

Month after month the Society attempts to find the most suitable words to express its immense



gratitude to those who continue to amaze with the vast array of treasured photos, vintage clothing, business memorabilia, artifacts and relics, all donated to expand the tale of Franklin's fabled past. The most exciting news comes out of Medford Massachusetts through Andrew Cushing of NH's Bureau of Historic Sites, who was approached with a proposition, and thought the Society would be a more fitting recipient. Many decades ago, the Medford Historical Society received donations attributed to Daniel Webster. Without really precise and unimpeachable provenance, these items cannot be positively associated with Webster, but still deserve respect and can certainly be the impetus for many fascinating discussions. The first is a slant top desk with detachable stand, said to have belonged to Daniel, and if true, could have been housed in the tavern where Daniel spent his boyhood. That building, long since gone, was right around the corner from the Society's home today. It has now become the "school master's desk" in the schoolroom display upstairs in the Tay portion of our Society's building.

Then there is the piece of a scythe blade embedded in a tree branch, offered as “evidence” that the famous tale of a young Daniel hanging his scythe in a tree rather than using it to hay, could be true. If such a story were based on fact, it is on the Elms Farm property that it occurred, and this object becomes a wonderful tribute to the almost mythical figure of the Great Orator. There is also a fireplace bellows which reportedly came from Webster’s home in Marshfield, Massachusetts. Although the connective leather is almost completely gone and the piece a bit worst for the wear, it is still a great display piece and a creditable link to Franklin’s, and NH’s, favorite son.



Lastly, there is *le piece d’ resistance*, is a cotton vest which may have been owned and worn by Webster, proceeding then through the hands of Horace Greeley before going to Asa Law, a prominent citizen of Medford, who then donated it to his local Historical Society more than one hundred years ago.

For these amazing gifts, we owe the thanks of the Society to Heather C. Anderson, Director of Collections at Medford, who shepherded the approval process through their board to de-accession the items, so that they could return “home” to Franklin, and her husband John Anderson, President of their Society. All of these pieces are now included in the Webster display, in the Alice M. and John S. Shepard Jr. Memorial Exhibit Room.

These gifts were not the only significant donations to the Society in the past month. Eternal thanks are extended to the following donors: to **Mary and Steve Foley**, while winnowing down their collection of Franklin treasures in preparation of moving, gifted a Velma Smith Agency ash tray, a 1902

medicine bottle from the Jackman Pharmacy, an 18” souvenir wooden canoe paddle from Webster Lake, a photo of the Republican Bridge with “ice out” dates from 1939-1950, a small paper Santa ad from the Franklin Co-op Savings Bank, a postcard of a Daniel Webster marker in Stratton VT, an 8 x 10 of the Pemigewasset Power Co., an old FHS baseball game ticket, a newspaper insert of Franklin Falls business ads around sheet music for a (non-politically correct) tune, and a 1978 “This Is Franklin” newspaper insert; to **Dale Valena** of the UNH Museum, a souvenir dish made from an elm of the Farm “Now the NH Orphans Home”; to **Mary Ham**, for H.L. Young photos and negatives of the 175 S. Main St Funeral Home, hearse window signs, ads for H.L. Young over decades, Brasscrafters mirrors, a plaster

plaque of cherubs, Ham family photos, and photos of the original house at 175 S. Main razed in 1916 by Lucy Odell to build the current structure; and to **Sally Bussiere**, for ten silver metal candle holders (with clips), ostensibly to attach to the branches of a Christmas tree), a 1982 newspaper clipping from Pat Dunlap honoring Mme. Charbonneau, the owner of a millinery shop in Franklin for decades, and a NH Business magazine article touting the rise of Franklin as a recreation destination. From last month, a CORRECTION: the 1999 Franklin Frontier flyer, and 2000 newspaper insert/program, came from **Lorraine Pelletier**, for which the Society is grateful and sincerely regrets this oversight.

*It is the most sincere hope that all members plan wisely, stay healthy, and make the right decisions during this ongoing Covid-19 global crisis, so that ALL may return to enjoy an informative program in May, and the continuing camaraderie for which the Society is famous.*