

Franklin NH Historical Society News

March 2016

During the winter months, when the museum is closed and regularly meetings have been suspended until more favorable weather arrives in April, there is ample time to reflect on past accomplishments and look to the future to establish meaningful and attainable goals. In February, the officers and members of the board of the Franklin Historical Society were called together to discuss just such an agenda. In 2015 the Society successfully created "open hours" every Sunday from May to September to allow residents of Franklin and the public at large, especially those utilizing the nearby Northern Rail Trail, access to the varied collections and information supplied by knowledgeable docents. Trail users also found refreshments for sale on hot days, proceeds from which benefited the Society. This effort will certainly be duplicated and hopefully even enhanced in 2016. A display was created for the "All Alumni" FHS Reunion last August, which will be continued and augmented for the upcoming 2016 reunion. Also, in the spirit of being a good neighbor, Easter Seals (which now owns all the buildings at Webster Place) was approached with the offer for the Society to provide museum tours, informative lectures and/or slide shows, at their convenience, to their residents. The hope being that exposure to the comprehensive history that surrounds them might play a positive role in their outlook and recovery.

New this year will be an exhibit to entice visitors to our museum to also visit the Franklin Firefighters' Museum behind the Franklin Fire Department on West Bow Street. The exhibit includes an original fire alarm box from Cheney and Victory, period fire hose nozzles, an 8x10 photo of the 1959 members of the FFD in front of Ladder #1 (a 1926 Mack), a badge from that same truck company, a card c. 1960 denoting the location of all fire alarm boxes, and a copy of the booklet distributed during the dedication of the Firefighters' Museum in 1987 (thank you Andy Nadeau and Chief Kevin LaChappelle for making this display possible). Last year a concerted attempt was made to make quantifiable progress in collating and cataloging all the items in the collections, a monumental task (which is ongoing) with significant headway achieved. Incredible finds were discovered lingering in the material not inventoried to that point, and more are still to be uncovered.

More vinyl siding was removed with additional sheathing, clapboard and window sill repairs effected. This coming summer, even more will be removed and the original exterior restored to an even greater extent. Another generation of Franklin fourth graders was treated to a presentation about Daniel Webster, with the intent of inculcating an appropriate pride in being part of living in Franklin, and maybe even planting a desire to partake in the process of proclaiming Franklin's virtues as adults. As to goals for the coming year, all of the above will be continued with enthusiasm and verve, new exhibits will be mounted, intriguing speakers will be engaged to educate and entertain during our monthly meetings April to November, and a possible field trip in August will be explored. As always, a renewed effort will try to capitalize on past momentum to increase the membership to carry on and expand the work of current members, dedicated to preserving and restoring the rich history of our amazing city.

There will always be work that needs to be done, and a void of volunteers that needs to be filled. It is an ongoing hope that energetic and excited people, particularly younger folks, will step forward with the desire to continue this worthwhile legacy created by those who came before. The greatest crime imaginable would be to let efforts of those now and in the past be forgotten. So many have given so much in the past, and their contributions must be treated with the proper respect and acknowledgement, and most importantly, be protected in perpetuity.

In the context of thanks and acknowledgement of donations, a Society "Thank You!" goes out this month to Sara Tracy for the gift of a vintage photo of the Courtemanche Brothers business on East Bow Street, and to Sue Barton for two mannequins, one male and one female, to add to the Society's ability to display some of its fabulous vintage clothing. The society could still use more mannequins, particularly full size male models, and is looking for: Winter Carnival booklets from 1963, 1970, 1976, and 1984-86; a genuine 1936-17 pin-back button to complete its collection of all Winter Carnival buttons to date; city directories (not annual city reports, of which the Society maintains a full complement, although town reports, especially those prior to the Civil War, would be most welcome); and as always, reminds everyone that donations of vintage photos, advertising, textiles, family histories, historical documents relating to Franklin, and period and individual-specific clothing (such as Albert Garneau's father's baseball uniforms from 1915) will never be turned away.

Which is a clever devise to allow a segue to the description of this month's photo, which is a composite of several images collected over the course of 2015 including vinyl siding removal and building painting, Jr. Youth group volunteers, Museum Orphanage schoolroom exhibit, and FHS class of '73, plus a photo of an American Legion baseball shirt, gifted years ago, donor unknown. Does anyone know from where it came, or when it would have been used? You may contact Leigh Webb or Annette Andreozzi at 934-8222.

