

## **Franklin NH Historical Society Newsletter**

**March, 2019**

As a local pundit said recently, March is the only month that is a command, so we “March” forward towards the always welcome spring, eagerly anticipating the reopening of the Historical Society museum, restarting monthly meetings, and creating new learning opportunities for all ages. Just because the Society was dormant during the winter, does not mean it was inactive during its long winter “nap”. Donations have continued to pour in unabated and one of the Society’s newest “angels” continues to surprise and delight with additional gifts. Joseph Rondeau, a Massachusetts lawyer and lifelong devotee of Daniel Webster, amassed an impressive collection of Webster material during his career, which he is now in the process of transferring to the Society. He has now sent over fifty books, some twenty-seven printed pamphlets all about Webster’s life, speeches, and eulogies after his death, and recently a colorful poster from the 1970’s of “Daniel Webster, An American”, the NY Daily Times dated October 25, 1852, the day after Webster died (with five full pages--of small print!) detailing his life and final hours, a postcard of his grave in Marshfield, MA, a signature on an autograph album page, and a signature glued onto a speech made in 1836 by Mr. Clayton of Delaware. His most recent donation included a book commemorating the dedication of a statue of Daniel Webster in Central Park, commissioned by Gordon Webster Burnham, the “brass magnate” of Waterbury, CT, who signed the book! This collection is literally a treasure trove of source material about the great man and Franklin’s favorite son.

Other recent acquisitions include: from Kathy Fuller and Kathy Zink, pinback buttons from various Franklin events and national political campaigns, a Frontier Days ribbon, a Girl Scout ribbon and canteen, FHS memorabilia including a Franklin “F” JV letter and info on the 50th reunion for the FHS Class of 1941, an American Legion cap, and a WWI certificate of service for Frank J. McQuade, MD (he was the previous owner of Kathy Fuller’s house); from Jan Andrus, photos of the FHS “Camera Club” c. 1941, the 1941 sophomore class, the 1941 field hockey team, the 1939 boys championship baseball team from St. Mary’s, the 1939 FHS JV basketball team, and reunion photos of the FHS Class of 1943; from Mary Foley and assembled and identified by her late mother Jane Fredette, a snapshot album of pictures captured during the 62nd reunion of the FHS Class of 1947; and from John Benham, a small (snapshot) photo album from c. 1900 with iconic images of the Republican Bridge, downtown Franklin, Memorial Hall, the Franklin and Tilton RR station, and Webster Lake, along with group shots of a family most likely the Seamans, with other larger format photos of the FHS Class of 1904, early basketball teams both male and female (with very modest athletic costumes for the girls), the Nesmith School, the Christian Church, 61 S. Main Street, the Griffin Hacksaw Mill (before the pitched roof was replaced with a flat one), and snapshots taken in 1922 from a biplane, of Hill and the surrounding area? Also from John, typed sheets written by Daniel Dunbar Seamans (FHS Class of 1904) of his genealogy. Many of these items (and more) may well be the subject of a program in either April or May. Hopefully this listing will encourage readers of this article to come learn more about not just these items, but what is on display at the Society. There is always something of interest! As is its custom, the Society extends its deepest thanks to all who contributed.

The BOD and Officers meeting on February 7th determined a slate to present to the membership for the 2019 BOD and Officers, but also disclosed a need to find a new director to

replace Will Clark, who has had to step down. The Education Committee will continue in its efforts to bring the Society to the schools, by offering various programs at different grade levels. A presence on Facebook, as it has certainly elicited a positive response, will be continued. A "Legacy" program for Planned Giving will soon be unveiled at the Society, offering another way to either give now or in the future, to help sustain the Society's mission. And a request is being made to anyone knowing the whereabouts and availability of a bicycle parking rack that the Society could use to entice more of those using the Northern Rail Trail during good weather to stop by the Society during its open hours on Saturdays, May through Labor Day. Any leads can be passed directly to president Leigh Webb at 934-8222, for which the Society thanks you in advance.

This month's photo comes from John Benham and the Dot Seamans Benham Collection, and was taken c. 1948 in the lower floor of the (then) Christian Church (now the Meridian Lodge). Although most of those in the picture are identified, any help in determining who the three "unknowns" are, would be most appreciated. They are the third from the left (seated), far left (standing), and thirteenth from the left (seated), also the first name of Mr. Wilkerson, far right (standing). Any information on the current location or history of the painted theatrical flats that surround the group would also solve another titillating mystery. In that space now only exists a single theatrical backdrop, painted in 1918 by Egbert Foster of the Old Man and the Mountain, and one question would be if the flats pictured are from the same artist. Foster painted several backdrops used in theatrical venues in Franklin. If you can help, please call Leigh Webb, at the number above.

