

Franklin Historical Society for July, 2024

Although the Society will have no regular monthly meeting in July (it was determined years ago that because of the proximity of our first Thursday meeting time to the July 4th holiday, few people attended), its members are encouraged to use the month to explore historic sites in NH. Such places as the Franklin Pierce homestead, the Robert Frost Home, the Cog Railway, and the Weeks Estate are too often overlooked, or perhaps taken for granted, by those living in the same state. How many New Yorkers never visit the Empire State Building or the Statue of Liberty? Anyone who has a memorable visit this month can share the impressions of their adventure at the meeting in August. Saturday hours when the museum is open to the public continue to be 10 am to 2 pm, and Scavenger Hunt entry forms are available for purchase. For just \$10 per form, prizes worth much more will be awarded at the September meeting, so learn something about Franklin while filling out the form, with the possibility of being handsomely rewarded!

Mother Nature rained on the Society's annual plant sale, affecting sales and discouraging drop-ins. The return for all the volunteer efforts was about half of what had been enjoyed in the past, resulting in a net of only \$425. However, that will pay for a fill of the propane tanks come the cold weather, so every dollar helps. For all those who either donated plants or their personal time, the Society wishes to recognize and thank the following: Annette Andrezzi (Chair, organizer, and lead sales person), Elizabeth Jewell (Co-Chair), Belinda Aylward, Rita Norander, Karen and Dan Darling, John Cutter, Cyndy Campbell, Lisa Martin, Tyler Baroody, Glenn Morrill, Stacey Luke (from the Merrimack County Conservation District), and Jessica Wheeler Russell. Without the kind assistance of all these people, the plant sale would not be possible. Plants that were left over were placed on the driveway side lawn in front of the building, and have since disappeared and (hopefully) found appropriate home gardens in which to flourish...

While on the topic of donations, the following have generously added to the Society's collections: from **Kathy Fuller** Arthur Fontaine's Army uniform and 1973 scrapbook of newspaper articles, when his talent as an accomplished knitter received national attention, plus a 1940's woman's hat; from **Sue Pabst, via Kathy Fuller**, a box of unused circa 1954 Franklin High School notecards; from **Frank Genus** an 1874 check from the Franklin Mills, signed by Horace Stevens (of the Stevens Mill family, as Treasurer) to a Massachusetts concern which sold animal hides;



and from **Annette Cain**, two sheets of insurance ads from Frost Agency along with her father's medals from the Granite State Rifle League. The Society can never say "thank you" too many times. As an historical resource, local societies depend exclusively on donations from caring individuals, intent on preserving meaningful pieces of their regions history. As one of the first places to which inquiring minds turn, it is always so wonderful when the information is there to answer questions, or services are available to render assistances. In the latter regard, there is a story to tell.

Recently, the Society was approached by a young man on a mission. He had been tasked with the job of sorting through the contents of his grandfather's attic and the memories therein. He found in his search what he termed "thousands of photographs" and a large number of glass negatives, many of which were Franklin related. He was hoping the Society could help scan and identify some of these photographic treasures. The Society was happy to oblige. Knowing that he wished to retain the originals, the Society sought only to capture a digital record of relevant images for its files. So a full day was set aside to accommodate this mission. Below are a few of the discoveries made. As a postscript, Mr. Scott Hinds, the young man in question, has now become a lifetime member of the Society.



Most of the glass negatives appear to have been taken around the turn of the last century, dating to circa 1900. This image of the Franklin Opera House shows the incredible painted scenery, the black decorative valence that still hangs above the stage to the rear, and is that an orchestra pit in front of the lectern filled with greenery? If so, it is a rare photo indeed.



A relative of Scott's, "Eddie" Hinds' bar (as part of a lunch room?) on Franklin Street.

Many more of these pictures will be revealed as part of presentations at the Society, so stay tuned...

The original metal city "welcome" signs that had adorned the side of the road on Route 3 for decades prior to the construction of I-93 and had been lent to the Society for display, have been reclaimed by the city. They are to be placed on Central Street between the police station and the entrance by the trestle to the river trail.



Lastly, a story with a very happy not-yet ending. Some years ago, by happenstance or serendipity, a 1904 Journal Transcript article caught the attention of the Society. It mentioned, as part of Franklin's first Old Home Day celebration, an exhibit of important historic items, mostly loaned by private parties, in the G.A.R. Hall. The reporter described the city's contribution as "the original town plan for Franklin" with no additional details. Was it a document? A map? Not knowing what happened to it, it was added to the list of historic materials currently MIA.

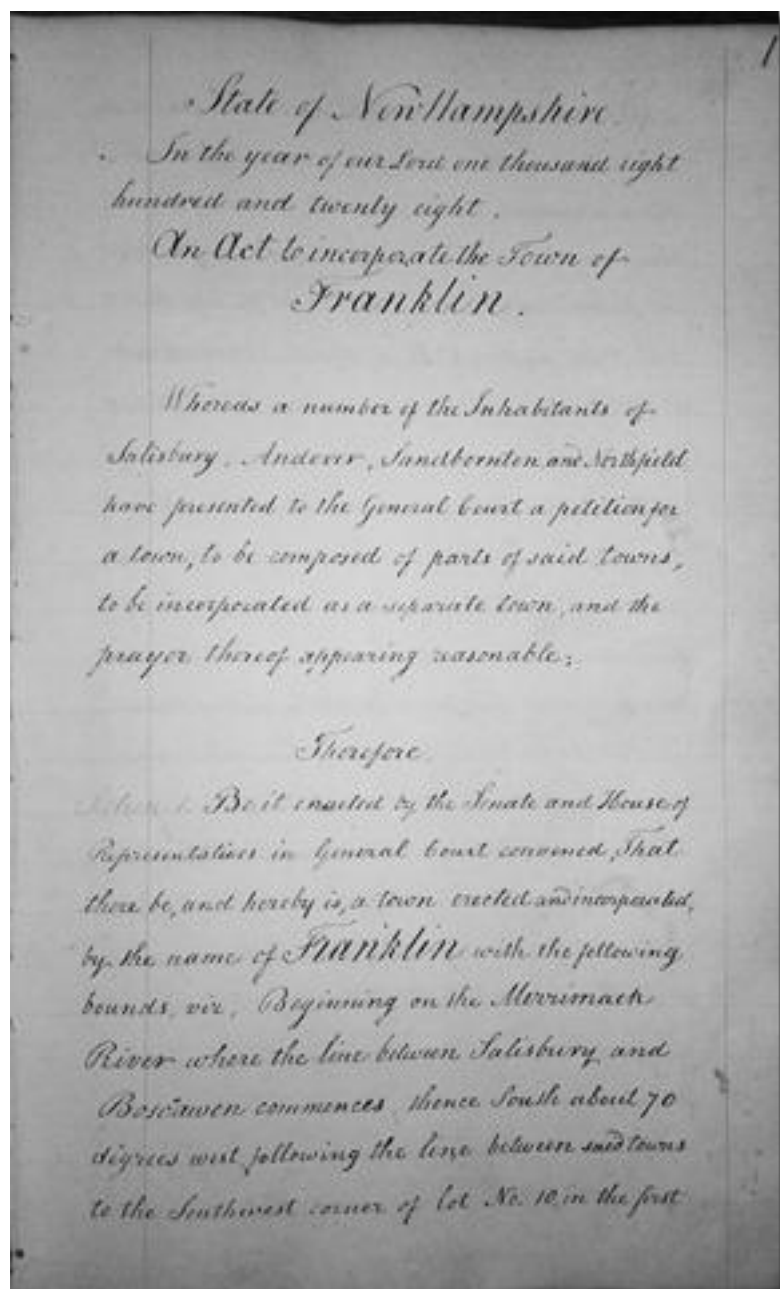
Until this week.

A question was asked if Lisa Jones, the City Manager's Executive Secretary, knew of the contents of the walk-in vault next to her desk. She was excited to show some of the interesting items held there. One was a ledger, chronicling major events from 1828 to 1848, relative to the formation of Franklin as a town.

A light bulb flashed in an epiphany.

It was *most certainly* the "original plan of the town of Franklin".

FOUND.



The title page, from what might arguably be the most important document in the Franklin city archives. As it is over 400 pages in length, to make a complete digital copy will be a future project. For know, some 20 representative pages have been photographed.

Now, if the Society can only track down the stained glass window missing from the Chapman Chapel of the Franklin Cemetery...