

Franklin NH Historical Society News

AUGUST 2017

How could it be that proms, and graduation, and fireworks lighting up the sky celebrating the birth of this nation could now be just so many memories, and the summer be half over so soon? August is upon us, with the beginning of a new school year looming on the horizon. As is so apparent when documenting history, time flies by, creating new stories to be captured in memory and preserved, for the future that is as close as tomorrow.

The Society in past years offered a picnic social instead of a regular monthly meeting in August, replaced just three years ago with a field trip as an alternate and a good reason to learn more about proximal historic sites. For 2017 the membership selected a trip to the Fells in Newbury, which offers garden and house tours for a modest \$8 (for seniors) admission charge. Attendees are encouraged to carpool and must RSVP to take full advantage of the services of this venue's perks. Details are posted on the Society's website, at franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org.

Despite the heat and slower pace that comes with summer, donations continue to steadily arrive at the Society, for which the president Leigh Webb is perpetually grateful. Some gifts arrive with very interesting stories, such as the organ from the basement of the H.L. Young Funeral Home graciously gifted by Carlton Ham. Built in 1909 (according to the intact label made visible when the top was removed) by the Estey Organ Company of Brattleboro, Vermont, it was quite probably used for services to speed the departed on to their heavenly rewards. This organ replaces the one (permanently) loaned to the Andover Historical Society (from the Franklin Society's front Victorian parlor), which now graces the interior corner of the Potter Place General Store (it had greater ties to Andover than it did to Franklin). Then there is a donated item which takes a most unusual path to the Society, such as the stokes rescue litter that was saved from recycling by Doug Sargent (of D&D's Cleanout and Recycling Service) who was tasked with disposing of unused items at the Veteran's Memorial Ski Area, and chose instead to "recycle" the vintage stretcher by donating it to the Society. As a companion piece, Jim Jones, co-president of the Franklin Outing Club, gifted a Korean-era foldable canvas field stretcher, also from the ski area, with stenciling on its underside proclaiming it came from the U.S. Army Medical Corps. And sometimes there are the objects which pose real mysteries, such as the slate "grave marker" found behind a house on Garneau Street by Brian Baker after clearing some brush, once given to Albert Garneau, but found where originally? Engraved on its surface were the words "Erected in memory of Mrs. Sarah Webster, died March 19 1811 in the 27th year of her age Wife of Mr. Ebenezer Webster". Sarah Webster was Daniel Webster's sister, and married to the Ebenezer who was the son of Daniel's father's brother William. The mystery is that this early 19th tablet is quite different than the marker at Sarah's grave in the Webster Place cemetery, so why were there two, and where was this one placed more than two hundred years ago if not at her grave? Markedly there are also gifts

made to the Society to honor the life and service of a close family member, such as the material donated by Lori St. Jacques to honor her father, Capt. Arthur J. St. Jacques, of the Franklin Fire Department. This archive included his dress uniform, Veteran Fire Fighter vest festooned with patches and buttons, photos of him and given to him, handcrafted VFF plaques, and vintage aluminum helmets (which don't look today like they offered a whole lot of protection then). Thanks go to Andy Nadeau, who made the trip to Bedford to gather these articles from Lori, and also gave a box of scrapbooks containing newspaper clippings of Franklin, plus vintage photos photos of Franklin Firefighters going back to the late 1930's, originally donated by Mose Mercier to the Franklin Firefighters' Museum, which had no place to adequately display, or store them. To all these donors, for parting with, in many instances personal treasures, a most sincere "thank you" for your thoughtfulness, and your enduring support of the mission of the Franklin Historical Society.

Sunday public hours continue through Labor Day Weekend, 10 am to 2 pm, and all are welcome to learn, to refresh oneself after riding or walking the trail (cold drinks, ice cream, and snacks are available for purchase), and to reflect on the nuances of the always fascinating story of Franklin. Please stop by. Bring relatives and friends. The trip will be worth it for all.

[This month's photo is of the 1904 Graduating class of Franklin High School. Perhaps a relative of yours was in this class?]

