

Franklin Historical Society, Newsletter, November, 2025

November means cooler temperatures, the end of peak foliage (and the beginning of the annual raking of the leaves), and for the Society, the end of regular monthly meetings until next April. There will be of course the annual pot-luck Christmas Dinner in December. November is also the month which contains Veterans' Day, and it is in the spirit of properly honoring those who served that this month's program was selected. At **7 pm, at the Society's Webster Place museum (21 Holy Cross Road) on Thursday the 6th**, the presentation will highlight the nursing career of Bernice Sinclair, "**A Genuine Franklin Heroine**". Serving in the European theater under Gen George S. Patten in WWII, she brought distinction to her profession, her hospital staff, and herself, during the trying months after D-Day. The program is based on slides of the memorabilia she brought back with her, of photos, documents, and artifacts. It is a fascinating journey, or as Bernice called it, an "odyssey" of trials and tribulations of treating wounded soldiers not-so-far behind the lines of battle. The presentation is free (as always), open to all, and offering light refreshments as an added inducement to stay for the business meeting following the program.

News affecting the Society: On Saturday, October 18th, Father Roger Sargent marshaled his forces to clean headstones in the Webster Place Cemetery, erect a flag pole with a solar powered light (for those who know their flag protocol, when flying an American flag 24 hours a day, it must be lit at night), and clearing weeds at the stairs to the Stevenstown Fort marker. The volunteer group was made up of representatives from the VFW Post 1698, the Tilton American Legion Post 49 with members of the Auxiliary and Sons of the American Legion, and the USMC League Detachment 542 (Manchester area). This occurred with little advance notice to the Society, so no members were able to attend and be of assistance—at least this year.



With beautiful weather and helpful spirit, the volunteers were able to accomplish a considerable amount.

Most now know that the Mason's Lodge (the former Christian Church) is up for sale. The Society approached the leadership to see what might happen to the stained glass, the bell (currently residing in the foyer), and in particular, the theatrical backdrop of the Old Man of the Mountain, painted in 1918 (the year the brick Christian Church was built to replace the wooden one that burned the year before), hanging in the rear of the downstairs stage. The Society expressed a sincere interest in preserving and displaying this wonderful New England piece of irreplaceable art, if the Masons would so allow.



The backdrop, signed by the artist, has been hidden from public view for many years.

The library treasures continue to astound. The contents of the Joseph L. Thompson box are particular impressive, and could be the basis of several monthly programs at the Society in the future. To whet the appetite, there are numerous folders with handwritten notes detailing pieces of Franklin's past—by whom, and from where was the information gleaned, is only open to speculation, but was compiled and saved by Mr. Thompson. One such entry divulges the fate of the tavern in which Daniel Webster grew up, and whose exact former location (perhaps a cellar hole left behind?) is unknown.

Curator's Corner: The Society acquired some very interesting pieces for its collections, for which the following are thanked profusely:

From **Carolyn Hurst**, two ledgers, dating from 1822-1832, belonging to Dr. Job Wilson (the first owner of the Beck & Bellucci building), detailing his accounts (and being true to the tradition of physicians' handwriting, is barely legible) along with various notes and newspapers showing the wear and abuse of being found in walls (during a period of renovation) subject to the occupation of mice;

Dr. Wilson's ledger

From **Gary Brassard via Kathy Fuller**, a large original photo in an oval frame of Arthur E. Shaw, the first Franklin casualty in WWI, for whom the Franklin American Legion Post was named (and, after the renovations are completed, will be returned to the G.A.R. Hall where the American Legion met for more than six decades, for permanent display);

And from **Linda Pauwels**, her usual contribution of insightful newspaper articles and obituaries of those with Franklin connections.

Thank you, one and all.

To all members and friends, have a fun Halloween, and a safe, warm, and happy Thanksgiving.