

## Franklin NH Historical Society News

February 2016

I have consciously eschewed writing these articles in the first person, as the Society does not represent a singular effort to sustain its success, but requires a consolidated and collaborative group of dedicated members to move the Society's goals and mission forward. This offering is, for the first time, a departure from that approach only because of a "mea culpa" on my part, a confession that, as much as I would like to be further ahead than I am, time (or lack of it) and the ongoing generosity of members and friends of the Society, whose contributions to our collections continue to come in on a monthly basis in what might almost be described as an embarrassment of riches, have worked in concert to allow certain items to be temporarily overlooked in the cataloging process. This is not to say that I would wish for that flow of fabulous artifacts and documents to slow—quite the contrary. I will always prefer having too much to do, rather than too little, but as the monthly meetings are now on hiatus until the spring, I have had a little more time to sort donations given a while back, and discovered some rather amazing items. From the considerable material given to the Society in 2011 by Holly Burbank, functioning then as Franklin city clerk, I found a pile of folded documents, tied with a string, which upon examination revealed the lists of eligible voters for the very first Franklin town meeting on March 10, 1829, through to 1874, with only a very few years missing. What a find! Also uncovered in a box simply designated "Historical Society", was a ledger which contained the certificate of incorporation, signed by the NH Secretary of State, for the first Franklin Historical Society, dated March 26, 1930! Flipping pages in the ledger brought to light minutes of the first meetings, and by-laws signed by such prominent Franklin luminaries as Richard Sulloway, Alice M. Shepard, and Bessie Rowell. And here I thought that the book I found in the library's collections was the only reference to this early preservation consciousness! Cataloging the Society's collections is tantamount to discovering history right there before you, and is never dull, always exceedingly educational, and very often, spiced with astonishment and outright amazement.

New items recently received by the Society (and already cataloged) are: from Fire Department Chief Kevin LaChapelle, an 8 x 10 photo, identified as being from 1959, of Franklin's first ladder truck, the 1926 Mack Ladder #1, with the men of the department lined up in front of the old firehouse; from Donna Gilbreth, leather bound presentation copies to the city of Manchester of Franklin annual reports for 1900, '01, '02, and '07; from Carlton Ham, a framed vintage photo of the Baptist Church steeple, a 1989 program for a Baptist Church service, Christmas lights for next year's offering to the Opera House's "Festival of Trees", a circa 1960 tourist map of NH, and more cushions for our meeting room (not all donations have to be historic in nature, and can be just for creature comforts); from Brian Barry, the original gravestone for Isaac Hale (d. 1865), which had broken in two and replaced in the 20th century with a grand monument in Webster Place Cemetery to Isaac, both his first and second wives, and his children; and from Rita and Bob Norander, a shipping crate for "Huston's Biscuits", stenciled on one end "B.F. Quindly Franklin NH P.C. Mkt", (see this month's photo) leaving a bit of a mystery. To all our donors, thank you so much for your continued consideration and support. These donations mean more than you know.

As in the case of the biscuits' shipping crate, often items given rise to more questions than they answer. With additional research, using that which is already available at the Society, I was able to determine that the gentleman's listed name and occupation (in the 1929 city directory) was B. Frank Quindley, teamster, of 162 W. Bow Street. The identity of the "P.C. Mkt" is still unknown however, and if anyone can reveal additional information, it would be most welcome. The crate has to be from between 1919 and 1931 because it contains the names of two cities in Maine where the product was baked during that time, which narrows the search somewhat to what existed in this area during that period. As a "what a small world" note, in a Huston's 1913 catalog (per the Internet) NECCO wafers were offered, a sweets company that is featured in another recently acquired (last year) shipping crate, destined to the Franklin Shepard Grocery store...!

In time spent away from the Webster/Tay, I have devoted several hours to researching other varied areas of interest such as determining the names and exact locations of the mills along the upper Winnipisaukee River in preparation for creating an interpretive trail on north side of the river, in hopes that interest can be generated to restore the upside down bridge as access over the river to this potential extension of the existing trail system. Also I dug into the Orphans Home annual reports stored at the state library in Concord, in hopes to ascertain the reason why a summer kitchen and carriage house Daniel Webster himself added to his home at the Elms Farm in the 1830's, disappeared sometime in the early part of the last century while part of the Orphans Home. Alas, I ran out of time and will have to return at later date to continue my quest for that information. I also was curious about the origin and use of the railroad turntable foundation from which Steve Rayno removed considerable trash and debris to make it a point of interest on the Northern Rail Trail. On Boston and Maine Railroad trackage maps, stored at the Franklin Planning Department, this structure was labeled "the old (*italics mine*) TT foundation", meaning it had been abandoned long before these maps were created—in 1914! Although the underlying question was not answered, certainly a fascinating fact was uncovered.

So much to learn, and so little time...

In closing for this month, I wanted to personally thank Sara Tracy for becoming a lifetime member of the Society, and suggest to others, in keeping with Valentine's Day, how about considering a 2016 membership to the Society as a gift to those you love and who love Franklin? It is only \$10 for the year, and truly shows how much you care, about the recipient, and about the city in which you live.

Stay warm—by keeping the fires of preservation burning brightly!

Leigh A. Webb, president

934-8222

[This month's composited photo is of the aforementioned shipping crate with its allusion to Franklin]

