

Franklin NH Historical Society News

April, 2015

New Englanders are a hardy breed, with a generational tolerance to the harsh realities of winter's bitter cold and mountains of snow. Survivability is a matter of knowing that the shoveling will end, the daffodils will bloom, and once again, as the cycle of seasons repeats itself, mud will envelope our feet and blackflies will swarm our faces as the surrounding growth turn from bare to glorious green. Ah, magnificent spring, the warmth for which we have all longed these months since the last leaves fell. And for the Franklin Historical Society, spring heralds another year of meetings, special events, and the camaraderie of a shared vision of preserving and interpreting the past.

On Thursday, April 2 at 7 pm, at the Society's building at Webster Place (21 Holy Cross Rd.), the tradition of the Society's monthly meetings will begin anew. The offering will be a slide show of photos scanned from the Franklin Library's collection, a project completed last year, to compile a digital file of those images only the library has, so should anything happen to the originals, a permanent record could be kept by both the Society and the library. As the number of photos is considerable, the showing will be in two parts, the second to be announced in the near future. Directions to the Society can be found at our website, www.franklinnhhistoricalsociety.org. As there are some pictures with no captions, the more folks who show up, the greater chance of identifying them properly.

And that segues us neatly to the next topic: how donations to the Society can actually create a mystery rather than solve one. Recently an anonymous package arrived in the Society's mailbox, with no return address, save that the postmark was from Unity, ME. Enclosed within were two vintage (c. 1910), card-mounted photos of a group in costumes for a period play. The writing on the back said only "The play that Mae was in". No clue as to who Mae might have been, the name of the play, or its venue besides "Franklin NH". Included with the photos was a Xerox copy of two obituaries (no newspaper name or date) for Fred Webster Smith, who left behind a wife Mary Mathes ("Mae"?). Strangely, the Society had, in an old photo album, a period cabinet card c. 1920 of Mr. Smith, obviously a former Franklin resident and possibly an employee of the Mayo Knitting Machine Co. before moving elsewhere. Anyone who could shed more light on this story, is invited to contact president Leigh Webb or curator Annette Andreozzi at 934-8222, or email at frankin_pride@yahoo.com (an underscore separates the two words).

In other news relating to our expanding collections, Bob Morin donated two Kodak Carousal projectors and twelve empty slide trays as backups to the Society's existing Kodak projector. Unfortunately, both suffer from operating issues, but can possibly be used as a source of scavenged parts (unless of course, there is a brave soul out there with the appropriate knowledge who would volunteer to make them fully function again...). Also Yvonne Weglarz contributed two more cushions from the Clothes Closet on Central Street to add to the comfort of those attending our meetings. Thank you to both, and thanks to anyone considering supporting the Society with archival, monetary, or practical item donations, either anonymously or allowing public acknowledgement.

In February the Society's officers and board directors met to discuss building maintenance, the May election of board members, roster changes, the schedule of speakers and events, and in general the Society's goals for 2015. During the meeting a unanimous vote was taken to recognize John S. Shepard III for the invaluable contribution of his grandmother's and father's material used in compiling "The History of Franklin", as well as the rights to reprint the book in the future with updated additions. The Society has offered him an honorary Lifetime Membership in the hopes that he will be able to partake of our monthly gatherings and participate in the continuing effort to ensure that Franklin's history is never forgotten.

[This month's scanned photo is courtesy of Rob Sargent from the Franklin Library collection: A group photo of the DAR dedication ceremony of the Philip Call marker along Route 3, 1929]

