

Franklin Historical Society for May, 2025

Despite a few setbacks with colder temperatures, a vigorous and hearty band of daffodils have pushed through the detritus of fall, blooming in many sizes and various shades of yellow. Nothing has yet flowered in the Society's garden, but it won't be long. "April showers" will certainly bring "May flowers". The question now is whether we will have a spring, or go right to summer. 70's currently, but can 80's (or higher?) be far behind? New England weather, historically difficult to predict, has gotten even more so in the last decades. But being tough Yankees, whatever comes, it will be faced and conquered, however it plays out.

And speaking of plays, the program on **Thursday, May 1st, at 7 pm in the Society's Webster/Tay building** at Webster Place, will be **Memorable Moments at the Opera House**. Featuring some rarely seen photos of the Opera House space through the years, the slide show will undoubtedly spark interest and answer questions as to what famous and near-famous personages "trod the boards" on the venerable stage, *and* result in stories to be shared. Co-hosted by Dan Darling and Leigh Webb, this is one not to be missed (but then, why would any of these wonderful presentations be missed!). Followed by light refreshments and this year's annual business meeting, during which the 2025 board and officers will be selected. All are

welcome to participate in the entire evening, but only members can vote in the election.

Because of the ongoing construction, parking in the paved areas may be limited, but parking along Holy Cross Road should be on one side only, to allow room for emergency vehicles should the need ever arise. Driving instructions are on the Society's webpage at franklinhistoricalsociety.org. The Society is located in the soon-to-be Veterans Campus, and is marked along Route 3 only with a temporary sign acknowledging its future.



Mrs. Clarence Edmunds
and children.
Mrs. Henry Morrison.

ELKINS.

Card of Thanks.
We wish to thank all who worked so nobly and saved our dwelling at the time of the recent fire and to express our gratitude for the sympathy and kind words from many friends who try to make the hours more bearable for Mr. Adams who is suffering from terrible burns.
Mrs. Belle Adams,
Eugene Adams,
Ralph Adams,
Mrs. Harry Burnham.

Notice.
Webster, N. H., Oct. 1, 1913.
At a meeting of the directors of the Merrimack County Mutual Fire Insurance Co., held Sept. 27, 1913, it was voted to levy an assessment of 5 per cent on all notes in force July 5, 1913.
14-3t BEN P. LITTLE, Clerk.

Franklin Opera House
FRANKLIN, N. H.
Friday Eve., Oct. 17
TINKER'S
SINGING ORCHESTRA
Positively the Biggest Novelty Dance Orchestra in America.
Big Vaudeville Concert, 8 to 9.
Dancing 9 to 12.

M. Umberto Sacchetti, Primo Tenore.
Boston Opera Co. Stars
At the Franklin Opera House, Tuesday evening, October 21.

To whet your appetite for the program, and answer the question "Was opera ever performed at the Opera House?"

Switching gears, some really interesting items were donated this past month, for which the Society will always be eternally grateful. From **Kathy Fuller and the Clothes Closet** a cookbook from St. Gabriel's parish, an early c. 1930s "flip side" bread toaster, and to complete the food-themed gifts, a circa 1906 Universal Bread maker used by some family who lived in Franklin. Can't you just smell the titillating aroma of baking bread?



From **author Kim Varney Chandler** a copy of her book about covered bridges in NH, for which information was supplied by the Society on the Upside Down Bridge, and a promise, should she come visit, the gift of a trunnel from the Republican Bridge (apart from the ones the Society already has, several were rescued from the Soldiers Memorial attic).

From **Roberta Burke** a tea set with service for eight from Florence Burke who lived in Franklin in the 1940s and 50s, and a handmade eight track (remember them?) storage box in the shape of a house, the roof of which lifts off to accommodate the cassettes.

From **Annette Cain** annual reports and a 1987 newspaper article which interviewed candidates for city council that year, talking about a 33% tax increase (this was just before the tax cap was created) and costly additions to the two elementary schools, versus the construction of a new middle school, for which all hesitated to commit to spend the money needed, and a third topic, for which all expressed a hope, that a by-pass would be built to create another span over the Pemigewasset River (it obviously never happened). From **Linda Pauwels** her usual contribution of

newsy articles and obituaries. From **Joey Garneau** a folder of scanned news articles related to the history of Soldiers Memorial Hall and the Opera House, including allowing the Society to digitize for our records an amazing photo of his grandfather, Albert J. Garneau, lying on top of a

suspended airplane (similar to the Wright Flyer) for a 1911 production at the Opera House (which will be featured in the aforementioned evening's program). And lastly, from **Frank Genus**, a fabulous handwritten 1846 letter from George Nesmith to Charles T. Russell in Boston, referring to work being done (including efforts by "Boston" John Clark) to connect Concord to Franklin, via the Northern Railroad (of which Nesmith was president), and a lantern slide of the image used at the bottom of the Society's application form for membership. The picture was captured and duplicated by Underwood and Underwood of NY, the largest purveyor of stereo photos and lantern slides in the world at the end of the 19th century.



This is the stereocard version of that same image, also marketed by Underwood and Underwood.

It is with a saddened heart that the Society learned of the passing of Jim Prew, owner of the Ladd House, who had allowed photos to be taken of his home, which served as the basis of the presentation honoring the house as a prominent stop along the Underground Railroad. Thank you Jim, for your graciousness, and your generosity. Your gentle spirit will be missed.