

Kite & Key

WITHIN MY RINGS

I've been a witness to a lot of goings on in this village. My life spanned nearly 150 years! I was a catalpa tree. I had huge broad heart-shaped leaves. In the spring, I blossomed with beautiful white flowers and in the fall, I donned cigar looking seed pods. I had the perfect view to witness Franklin grow and to experience its joys and its sadness. Journey with me. Hold on tight and relive the life and times of the people that shaped our quaint and beloved village.

I planted my roots about thirty years after Stoughton and Bullock, the first settlers here, bought land for a \$1.25 an acre. When other pioneers from New York and New England heard the news of cheap land for sale, they were encouraged to pack up their belongings and head west to pursue a new life.

By the time I was settling in which was circa 1860, many of the original log houses were gone. They were replaced by wooden structures that reflected the homes back east. They were typical clapboard New England houses. After all, that is what the pioneers knew and felt comfort in bringing their past to the new frontier.

I was located on your current village green behind the Franklin library. As I grew, so did the village. I witnessed the growing pains of a farming community. There was land to clear of trees and rocks. Soil to be tilled. There was farmland as far as I could see. Everyone knew the Pickerings, Formans, Barkleys and Sly families just to name a few of the old timers who fed their children and neighbors by the toil of the soil.

The farmer was the heart of the village. They worked hard and they played hard. When they found some free time, they had picnics, church socials and barn dances. As the area became more populated, there was a need for tradesmen. Josiah Barkley, a farmer, wrote to family members that he left behind. He told them their need for blacksmiths, bricklayers, carpenters, coopers, shoemakers and tinsmiths. And, so they came. The tradesmen came. And, the village became the hub of this new found land.

By 1860, the population of Franklin Village was 400. It was a thriving place. Everybody knew everybody and everybody's business. That's just the way it was in a small place.

The river was a blessing. There were mills just about every

mile along its banks. From my vantage point, I could see the John German house and his mill located on your German Mill Street today. Of course back then, it was a dusty road in dry times, muddy in wet times and frozen and rutted in the winter. The German family came from England. They opened their mill in 1848.

A stone's throw from me, was the John Allen Bigelow general store. When the Civil War began, John sold his store to Albert Rust for \$50. The call to duty superseded his desire to remain a merchant. Bigelow would come home a hero.

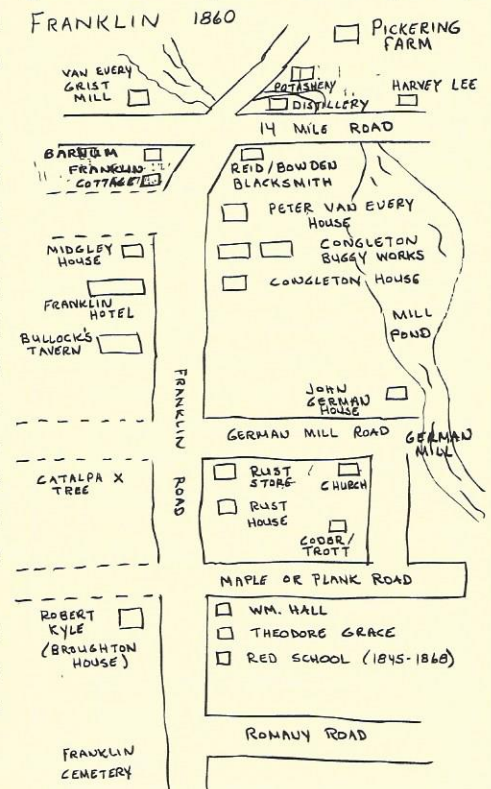
Other boys would follow in Bigelow's footsteps. Joseph Van Every, grandson to Peter, and Warren Barber, future husband to Peter's granddaughter, would volunteer in the 10th Michigan Cavalry. They signed their enlistment papers in Franklin, more than likely at the general store.

Mail was delivered on horseback once a week. Originally, it was delivered to the home of the postmaster, but now that we had a general store, this was the stopping place. I witnessed many a villager walk through the doors to pick up their mail and stay a while to catch up on the local gossip.

Behind the Rust store was the newly-built Methodist Church. Construction began the year before I arrived and was completed in 1860. Thomas Bigelow, John's uncle, was the carpenter that worked on the project.

Looking south along Main Street (Franklin Road) was the residence...

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WITHIN MY RINGS (CONT.)

of Robert Kyle (the Village offices.) Kyle was a church leader, merchant and secretary of the Cemetery Society that was founded in 1852. Kyle would move to Corunna, Michigan and enlist in the 14th Michigan Infantry. His home had the honor of housing a Civil War veteran.

Up the hill lies the final resting place of our friends and neighbors. Their stories are waiting to be told.

Coming down the hill on the east side of the road was the red schoolhouse built around 1845. For six months out of the year, the schoolmaster instilled the 3 R's to the children in the surrounding area. It would be the site of spelling bees, schoolyard games, learning and a few shenanigans!

Theodore Grace lived next to the little schoolhouse. He would become a merchant in Franklin. Sometime later, his residence would become Noble Robert's tin shop.

Next to Grace lived William Hall, a shoemaker.

In our present historic section of the village were a few homes. The Coder-Trott house was a prominent one located behind the church. Both Coder and Trott were once postmasters having the post office at this residence. Coder was a shoemaker; Trott was a bricklayer.

Continuing north, there were fields with open lands until you reached the George Congleton abode. Congleton brought his wife, mother-in-law and four daughters with him

from New Jersey. A son was born when they arrived here.

George built a buggy works (Franklin Grill) next to his home. From 1849 to 1876, he supplied buggies for the common folk, shoed horses, made cooking utensils and filled the air with smoke and hammers clanging. His family story ends on the sandy hill with his wife and mother-in-law

whose grave reads: Grandma.

On the same side of the street was the Peter and Amy VanEvery home built around 1840. Peter was a prominent miller on the Franklin River (Cider Mill.) He and his wife raised 14 children. Their home was the site of an elopement that caused quite a ruckus so I've been told. The event occurred four years before me, but people were still talking about it.

Van Every not only had a mill, but also a potashery and a distillery on the road separating Franklin from Bloomfield. Harvey Lee's home and tannery were next door. I mention Lee because he was a shoemaker in town, a great friend of Van Every and had a "hand" in the elopement.

Heading south from the Van Every mill, high on the hill, was the William Barnum house. William had married one of Stoughton's (first original landowner) sisters. Their daughter married a Power. The Powers were Quakers from Farmington. Rumor had it that the Barnum-Power connection participated in the Underground Railroad. Think about it. The home was hidden on the hill and it was close to the river which made for an unsuspecting escape to Detroit and freedom.

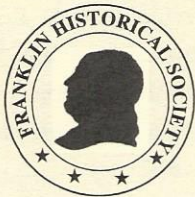
Below the Barnums, was the Franklin Cottage (still here!) owned by Peter Van Every. It was a watering hole operated by Peter's son William.

Going south from the tavern, was a Greek Revival home that was later tagged as the Midgley residence. Nearby was the Franklin hotel. The hotel keeper was George Green. It was a place to get a drink and to rest your head. In 1860, James Darling and Michael Burns boarded here. The two of them would enlist in the 5th Michigan Infantry and serve with other Franklin/Bloomfield boys.

The last building that existed during this time period and probably the oldest one, was Bullock's Tavern (former Gorback's photography.) Elijah Bullock, the second original landowner, opened his establishment in 1830.

So, there you have it! This was the Franklin that I experienced as a seedling. It's the stories of the people that lived here, the structures they built and the legacy they bestowed upon us as the new caretakers of a village filled with charm and character.

Grow with me as the stories of Franklin Village unfold. To be continued. . .



Kite & Key is a publication of the Franklin Historical Society. The Franklin Historical Society seeks to preserve such material, structures and artifacts that help to establish the history of the Village of Franklin and to make it accessible to those who wish to study it. The Society maintains a museum and archival area at the Derwich House, 26165 13 Mile Road (at Kirk). Volunteers and donations are most welcome. **Kite & Key** and the society welcome mail at:

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AWHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

John German Sr. and Grace Essary German left Biddaford, England on the Brig Lord Ramsay headed for America.

They arrived in New York on June 12, 1837 with their children, John Jr. (23), Mary (19), William (16), Betsey (12) and Grace (7.)

Their arrival would mark the beginning of the German family legacy in Franklin.

THE "TO DO" LIST

Every household has a "To Do" list and the Franklin Historical Society museum is no exception. We are pleased to report that we have scratched off three of them!

We had a hot water heat inspection and updated the system. A new water softener was installed. And, the museum grounds were cleaned up.

APPROACHING THE FINISH LINE!

The Kreger house, barn and pig sty were moved to the village green in December 2008. The house has been renovated and the shed (a former pig sty) is now a public restroom. They have been turned over to village to manage their use. The third phase is the continued restoration of the barn which will be completed by spring.

Here's the progress.

#1 - We received a \$2700 grant from the John Hunter Chapter of the Questers to reinforce the overhead beam in the barn and to repair the barn doors.

#2 - Three of the log beams in the floor were replaced and new floor beams were installed next to the others to insure that the floor is safe.

#3 - A landscape plan has been developed that compliments the farmhouse and makes the area more user friendly. It should be completed in the spring and work can begin shortly thereafter. When the landscaping is done, the entire project will be complete.

Keep the Kreger facility in mind when planning a birthday party, shower, graduation, wedding or other event. Contact Eileen Pulker at the Village Office for more information and to make a reservation!

**FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL OPERATING FINANCIAL REPORT - 2015 FISCAL YEAR
JULY 1, 2015 TO JUNE 30, 2016**

	FHS	Kreger	Total
Beginning Balance July 1, 2015	\$16,385	\$21,159	\$37,544
Beginning Balance November 18, 2015			
Revenue			
Membership	\$6,445		\$6,445
Donations	\$1,658	\$3,557	\$5,215
Programs	\$220		\$220
Sales	\$300		\$300
Grants	\$1,054		\$1,054
Plant Sale profit	\$742		\$742
Fundraising Profit		\$1,756	\$1,756
Interest	\$9		\$9
Increased market value			
Total Revenue	\$10,428	\$5,313	\$15,741
Expenses			
Museum facility	\$4,546		\$4,546
Insurance	\$1,417		\$1,417
Preservation Programs	\$1,516		\$1,516
Mallings	\$1,817		\$1,817
Scanning program	\$1,400		\$1,400
Technology	\$3,022		\$3,022
Construction		\$1,300	\$1,300
Furniture		\$659	\$659
Misc		\$194	\$194
Total Expenses	\$13,718	\$2,153	\$15,871
Ending balance June 30, 2016	\$13,095	\$24,319	\$37,414
less maintenance reserve		\$11,400	
funds available to spend		\$12,919	
Pending Questers grant		\$2,700	

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THANKS!

When the Franklin Arts Council dissolved, they decided to donate their assets to groups that contributed to the community. Thank you Arts Council for including the FHS in your donation!

Thanks also to Barb Cordell for donating the sign from the former Franklin Hunt Club that was located on 14 Mile Road east of Franklin Road.

Thanks to Legendary Timberworks owner Dean Sutton for installing historically accurate foundation vents in the Kreger Barn at no cost. Sutton's company has done an excellent job restoring the barn to it's original condition.

We appreciate Les Gorback's donating framed vintage photos.

HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE FORMED

The Franklin Village Council has created a new Historic District Study Committee to evaluate formal historic designation of an historic barn along Telegraph Road. The committee will determine if the barn is a significant resource and make a recommendation to the Council. FHS supports maintaining this important Franklin landmark.

REPURPOSED CATALPA TREE

The catalpa tree behind the library had to be taken down last summer because it was becoming so diseased that it was a hazard. While the tree is gone, the wood continues to exist in other forms. About 130 wooded bowls were made from some of its branches. They were sold in three days around Labor Day. More branches are currently being milled and dried. They will be used to make various wood products that will be sold in mid-2017. Watch the Franklin Historical Society web site for information on what will be made and when it will be available.