

# Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

June 2022

## I LIVED IT. NOW YOU CAN TOO! Within My Rings

(recollections from the 1860 catalpa tree)

I have been a village resident since the 1860's rooted on the village green behind the library. A hundred fifty years later, I was becoming weary. My time was coming to an end. I was removed, but I had a new life! The Franklin Historical Society transformed me into bowls, candle holders, address signs and even furniture! My past became the village's future.

Well, the same is true of Franklin's history. I **lived** the history of its people, stories and events. And, now, you can too at the Franklin Historical Museum.

Like most settlements, Franklin was a farming community. We had our share of livestock roaming the land. An agricultural census shows that farmers not only raised cattle and swine, but also sheep. It was not uncommon to see sheep corralled in our river and thoroughly washed before being sheared to insure the best price for the wool.

The farming community was always an integral part of the village, but as more pioneers settled into the area, Franklin became the trade center. People needed a blacksmith and a tinsmith to provide implements for the farm and home. Coopers made barrels and buckets for household use. The wheelwright worked in the buggy shops making and repairing wheels for transportation and farm use. The merchant not only provided goods, but also served as the post office and prime source of gossip. Doctors rode on horseback or in carriages to make their rounds. The log school was built to teach the 3 r's (read'in, writ'in and rithmetic) and the pastor circuit riders visited the rural setting to keep the inhabitants civilized.

Now what I shared with you is an overview on how Franklin evolved. Our story began like



*26165 Thirteen Mile at Kirk Lane*

most settlements. In that way, we probably were not unique. What made us different is the people that lived here, their interactions with one another and their stories. Oh, their stories are the best!

I suspect you'll meet some of our most upstanding people and maybe some not so much when you visit the Historical Museum. Meet our first physician, Dr. Raynale, and learn how he traveled on a steamboat to get here or Dr. Cox who traveled from England to enter a whole new world. Then there's Miss Sophie Gotie, our first teacher. She had her challenges haggling with the barefoot young'ins who would rather be fish'in, hunt'in or getting into mischief.

By 1877, we had a population of 400 people. Everybody knew everybody and was related to each other in one way or another. One had to bite his tongue when talking about someone for fear of offending someone or be ready to defend himself. It was not unusual for a man to marry his wife's sister after his wife had passed or cousins to marry sisters who lived next door. Villagers interacted on a daily basis whether it be bartering for goods at the general store, getting wheat ground at the mill, checking in on a sick friend, purchasing a wooden bucket from the cooper or securing some cookie cutters from the tinsmith. You tried to be cordial with everyone. If you were

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not successful, you could always make amends on Sunday morning at the church on German Mill.

Of course, there were plenty of stories to be had. They weren't always commonplace like how many bushels of potatoes Otto Berger harvested or how the Pickerings were getting on with their twin daughters Elsie and Edna. No, there were some real intriguing happenings that created interest among the curious, or should I say the nosy!

Why was Marion White, a young boy, firing his rifle aimlessly on the family farm. And, what happened when he aimed it at the outhouse? What happened when Della Roberts and Arthur Bowden eloped on a New Year's Eve and were met at the train station by her father and the constable? How did Harriet Forman move forward in her life when she lost four of her six children to cholera on their journey from England to America? The answer to these stories and more are waiting for you to discover at the Franklin Historical Museum.

Whether just curious or just plain nosy, people wanted to know. They whispered the stories at church, they talked about them in the fields, they questioned why these things happened and they shared what they heard at the general store. Why, I bet when you visit the general store at the museum and you listen carefully, you might just hear the walls talk. After all, there was a lot of conversations within those walls!

## THE HORSESHOE CAPER!

The Franklin Historical Society launched the horseshoe caper a few years ago. The golden horseshoe is hidden somewhere on the village green in plain view so that it can be found. Instructions on the horseshoe explain what to do next. Let's keep the hunt going.

*GOOD LUCK!*

Where is the horseshoe?  
Does anyone know?  
It's hidden all winter,  
All covered with snow!

But now it is Spring,  
With flowers in bloom.  
Surely it is uncovered  
And will be found soon!

The lost can be found  
And hidden again,  
This is a challenge  
That never will end!  
Are you up for it?



***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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## THEY WILL BE MISSED!

Recently we lost Sandy Kopelman, John Lake, Jesse Polan, Dave Roberts, Nancy Stewart and Shally Williams who truly made a difference in Franklin. Their community service is a tribute to them and an example for us to follow.

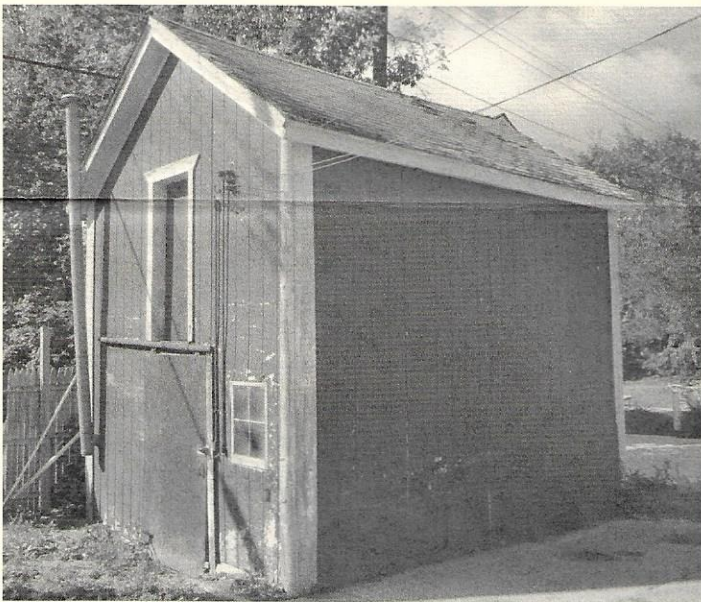
## DONATION

The Sandy Kopelman family donated a teak bench for the patio at the Franklin Historical Museum and a teak picnic table for the Kreger house in her memory. The Franklin Historical Society appreciates their generosity.

## A REMNANT OF OUR PAST

There was an icehouse in back of the Brick Store and another one in back of the hardware which I helped build. It was a big, two-story thing. Big empty shell.

No ice was sold to residents out those houses. The people had to go to Birmingham – the icehouse on East Maple.



The storekeepers got sawdust from Simpson's sawmill at 13 Mile Road and used it to pack the ice. Ice was piled up – up to the upper floors in the front.

We had a little ice business in winter. Ice was cut from lakes around town. Mostly, Wing Lake or the mill pond. We used handsaws to cut squares, and then the plow would cut beneath.

Ice was marked off in 16 -foot blocks and the plow cut 8 or 9 inches deep. Sometimes we marked off two-thousand cakes, plowed them up, cut them, and put them in the icehouse.

We couldn't cut if the ice was too thick. And, if it was too thin, the storekeepers wouldn't pay for it. We charged 2 cents a cake of ice.

*(written by Walter Johnston 1900 – 1978)*

The restored icehouse is behind Bullock's Tavern on Franklin Road where the Wine Shop is located.

## A WHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

I left Buffalo on the morning of May 3, 1828 on the steamboat Henry Clay. Landed in Detroit at 10:00 A.M. on the morning of the 5th. I went to a Yankee boarding home kept by Mr. Garrison and ate the best steak dinner of my whole life.

(Dr. Ebenezer Raynale, Franklin's first doctor)

## CATALPA TREE PRODUCTS FOR SALE!

While visiting the museum, check out the products made from our historic catalpa tree that was removed from behind the library. You can own a piece of Franklin history!

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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[www.franklin-history.org](http://www.franklin-history.org)

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 18th – Grand Re-Opening of the Historical Museum

July 9th – Cemetery tour “The Women Behind the Men”

October 1st – Crow to Go (build your own scarecrow)