

Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

May 2019

OUR BELOVED GREEN

(as told by the 1860 catalpa tree on the green)

As you may recall, my roots were planted on the green prior to the Civil War. A lot has gone on in this village since then. One event in particular stands out in my memory. Had this event not occurred, my life and my perspective could have been altered.

But, let me back up a bit and tell the story as I know it. You see, there was a realtor in town named George Wellington Smith. He owned the very village green where I stood.

Smith, the son of a builder, was born in Port Huron in 1893. He was a prominent land developer in and around Franklin. He planned Woodcreek (1937), Quakertown (1938,) Meadowlake Farms (1952,) and Powderhorn Estates (1957.)

His first office was a stone's throw from me in the Broughton house. I often saw Daniel Broughton, the well-known carriage maker, walk to work at his carriage shop located where the post office stands today. His next office was right in my neighborhood... the current Franklin library. During its recent renovation and my demise, workers found old papers behind walls with Wellington's name on them. Franklin does exude with history!

In September 1938, Smith offered his office to the PTA for their two year old library and 384 donated books. They stayed there for twenty years rent free. Village offices moved here in 1961 and the police department in 1967. Smith moved across the street where the Jacqueline Drake studio resides. The slogan: The Town That Time Forgot which appears on the building was coined by George Wellington Smith.

Enough said about Smith's background. Let me get to the heart of my story.

Smith loaned the two acres of the green to the community for their use. He mowed the grass and maintained it for free. However, the area was not public domain. It was plotted and zoned in twenty-four lots for commercial development. In 1957, Smith's master plan for a colonial type village center changed.

His plan would be in jeopardy when he learned that he owed the Internal Revenue Service back taxes! It was a sad day for him, but about to become the happiest of days for our village.

Ed and Marian Green, Bob and Sadie Hampson, Donald and Violet Green and Benjamin and Louise Kronlund would relieve Smith of his burden and benefit the likes of us. You see, they paid Smith for the

two acres of land, which Smith in turn, paid his taxes to the IRS. And then, the four couples generously sold the acreage to the village for the same amount that they paid Smith!

No buildings were going to be built on our green. Yes, it was now our green! For the past one hundred years, I had an unobstructed view of the village and that would not change. What was once Sammy Green's dairy farm, would now become a village gathering place for an art fair at Round-Up, music on the green, 5K runs, picnics, ice cream socials, a farmer's market and a hang out on quiet mornings, lazy afternoons and pleasant evenings.

Our village green was made possible because of the vision and generosity of these four families. The rural character of the village center was preserved. I, for one, applaud their efforts and will forever be grateful.



**FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL MEETING
AND
ART EXHIBIT
Thursday, June 13th
7 P.M.
At the Kreger house and barn
26225 Carol Street**

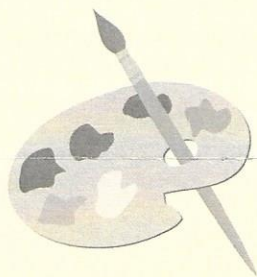
Please join us for a brief meeting. The highlight of the evening is an art exhibit featuring Ken Bristol's art work.

It is likely that you have experienced Ken Bristol. You may not have met him personally, but you have seen the village through his eyes. Anyone who walks in the door of the Franklin library is greeted by his watercolor of the village. Although the painting depicts Franklin Road around 1875, I suspect that you will recognize several of the buildings.

Ken never ventured far from his beloved home. He was born in 1913 at the cheese factory on the northeast corner of Franklin and 14 Mile Road. It was operated by Fred Warner, former governor of Michigan. For a short time, Bristol lived in Farmington.

From 1936 to 1972, he and his wife lived no more than a 1,000 feet west of the old cheese factory in the historic Barnum house located at 26265 14 Mile Road.

It is no surprise that Bristol focused on the village that he adored. His art work is our treasure. Enjoy his perspectives, villager comradery and refreshments.



FRANKLIN, DEAR FRANKLIN !

John Simon

Franklin, dear Franklin thy river runs deep
Through the ravines of time —generations wake and then sleep.
You have kept your composure through the ravages of time.
Ben would be proud that his name remains so refined and sublime.

I believe Ben would say, if he were still alive, —
“I am proud of my name and it is through your village it thrives.”

When I walk down your streets following the footsteps of time
I feel joined by the others that have sadly reclined.
I am now part of your life and will become part of your past
Your long history intrigues me but today is not your last.

Your whispering willows tell of the days from your past.
They speak of times gone by and of wanting those days to last.
A gentle breeze rustles your leaves which help these stories be told
of past village days where the elders' voices unfold.

Your small, quiet cemetery echoes the days that have gone by.
The head stones of the founders desperately ask to reply:
They say, — “Please, be kind to our village and with it take great care,
Your present life will determine our past while the future prepares.”

A distant whistle was once heard but no train appeared.
Perhaps you were fortunate that your future was steered
Away from the hustles and bustle of big city lights
which would have threatened your nature and stolen your life.

So I salute you dear Franklin— you are unique in your stand
To preserve your long past while letting your future expand.
I am just one of the many that adds to your heart and your soul.
May the others feel that heart beat and have your health as their goal.

Franklin, dear Franklin thy river runs deep
Through the ravines of time— generations wake and then sleep.

A WHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

In 1827 Elijah Bullock, Franklin's second landowner, donated an acre of land as a burial site. It is on the southeast corner of the cemetery and known as the old plat.

It is believed that the first burial was Levi Warner who died of consumption in 1829. He was the brother in law to Dillucena Stoughton, Franklin's first land owner.

RECENT DONATIONS

- Ken Bristol water color of Noble Robert's home, our tinsmith and a rendering of the Franklin church – Don and Patti Brundirks
- Guy Van Every reader – Kay Stauff
- Pickering Bible – Lisa Bartlett

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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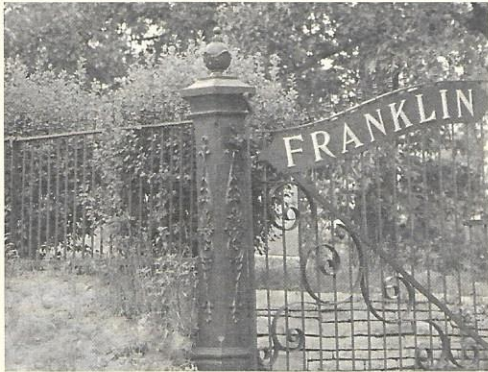
CEMETERY TOUR

(in the words of the people who were the cemetery custodians and policy makers)

A well-planned Franklin gem rests on a sandy hill between Franklin Road and Drummond Court and Scenic Drive and the sledding hill. It is a serene setting, but its inhabitants speak volumes!

On May 11, 1852, a group of villagers met at the red schoolhouse. It was moved and seconded that this society be called the Franklin Cemetery Society. There was a motion to obtain a blank book not to exceed one dollar for the purpose of recording the minutes of the meetings. And, the rest is history!

On Saturday, June 8th at 2 P.M. the Franklin Historical Society will be conducting a tour of the cemetery as told by the handwritten minutes. The cost of the tour is \$10. All proceeds benefit the historical society. To register, send an e mail to info@franklin-history.org



[franklin-history.org](mailto:info@franklin-history.org)

Who were the people that made the cemetery policies? When was the tool shed built? Were women allowed to be an officer or trustee? What were the duties of the sexton? Come live the life of our cemetery.

SLADE HOUSE PROGRAM

On February 12th, John and Joanie Simon, Andrew and Kathy Erlich and Rob Simon hosted an informative history of the Buel/Slade family and home located at 32712 Franklin Road with a focus on Samuel Ira Slade.

In 1888, Samuel married Kittie Buel, Dr. Julian and Malintha Buel's daughter, in Franklin. He was an actor that loved to portray Abraham Lincoln and appropriately on Lincoln's birthday!

We viewed a clip of Slade's reenactment of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. We were treated to an array of refreshments and left with an understanding of the buildings history and its inhabitants.



PROJECTS IN THE WORKS

ARCHIVAL WORK:

Barb Louie, who has laboriously been organizing our materials in the museum archives, has completed her work. We now have an outline that guides us to the correct box to locate information. Researching materials is no longer complicated.

The next task for Barb is cataloging the artifacts in the museum. This requires identifying them and describing their significance. This project is key to future caretakers of our history.

NEW EXHIBIT:

An area in the museum has been cleared and painted to make room for a new exhibit called Let's Hear it for the Boys! It is centered around Franklin's early baseball players, our Civil War veterans and the Franklin Village band. There is a connection between baseball, veterans and boys in the band dating back to the 1870's. Come see how this exhibit plays out! Opening day to be announced.

ORAL HISTORIES:

We have a collection of oral histories that are invaluable. They record the recollections of people who lived here and provide a picture of village life frozen in time.

FHS trustees, Leslie Frick and John Simon, are contacting people willing to record their oral history.

Please consider doing so.

TOURS:

Cemetery tour on Saturday, June 8th at 2 P.M. The cost is \$10. To register, e mail to info@franklin-history.org We will meet at the cemetery gate on Scenic.

The Women Behind the Men walking tour is scheduled for sometime this summer. It is a cooperative effort between the Franklin Historical Society and NEXT. Stay tuned!

HISTORIC MARKERS:

The marker on the village green has been restored to its original glory! It was dedicated in September 1960. Watch for its rededication date coming soon. We hope to include descendants from early Franklin villagers as well as other dignitaries.

For the past few years, the FHS has been working with the Michigan Historical Commission to create a marker for the Broughton House. It has been a challenging process. We hope the wording will be approved and we can have the sign made.

STREET SIGNS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT:

In cooperation with the village government, some damaged cedar street signs in the historic district will be replaced. There will be a more reflective paint used so that the signs are more readily visible.

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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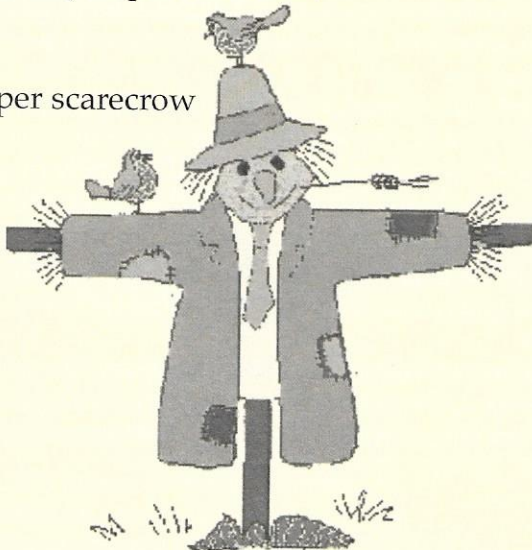
SAVE THE DATE

WHAT: Family Build a Scarecrow Workshop

WHERE: at the Kreger Barn
26225 Carol Avenue

WHEN: Saturday September 28th

COST: \$10 per scarecrow



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!

The Franklin Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on February 10, 1969. It was the first Michigan district to be listed.

A 50th year celebration was held in February at the Kreger house.

