

# Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2022

## WITHIN MY RINGS

(recollections from the 1860 catalpa tree)

### Deep Roots

One of my most vivid memories of Franklin occurred on 13 August 1860. As my roots grew more firmly planted behind the current library, across the street from me was the raising of the Lincoln pole.

Although a mere sapling at the time, the height of the pole and the banner in bright colored letters announcing Abe Lincoln and his running mate, Hannibal Hamlin, was easily visible.

Raising political poles during presidential elections was commonplace. To add to the festivities, five members of the Old Light Guard band from Detroit filled the air with music. The speaker's platform resembling a flat boat to pay homage to Lincoln, was poised for Stephen Durkee, a pioneer, and other notables to deliver inspiring speeches. A six hundred pound cannon was loaded and ready to be fired.

The stage was set. As the fuse was lit and sped through the fuselage, cucumbers, planted by spirited Democrats, spewed into the crowd!

The uproar brought not only surprise and laughter, but cause for Republicans to reload the cannon with the expected roaring outcome.

On November 6, 1860, Lincoln, known as the log cabin president, was elected. Five months later, the War Between the States, began launching our country into a Civil War.

At the time, John Allen Bigelow, Franklin born, owned and operated a general store at the corner of German Mill and Franklin roads. When the war broke out, he sold his store to Albert Rust and enlisted in the 1st Michigan Cavalry 13 August 1861. Other Franklin boys and those in the vicinity followed his lead.

Otto Berger and John Mentor – 5th Michigan Infantry  
Henry Cox – 1st Michigan Cavalry  
Three boys enlisted at the former Bigelow

general store in the 10th Michigan Cavalry:

12 July 1863 Warren Barber, 26 September 1863 Joseph Bowden, 11 October 1863 Joseph Van Every and more followed them to serve in the northern army.

And, what was happening on the home front while the boys were away? Ladies Aid Societies were sending letters, photos, sewing kits, stamps, envelopes, non-perishable foods, bandages and knitted socks to their loved ones. And, they were praying for their return.

Was Franklin involved in other ways during the war? Were there whispers of an underground railroad, a secret network, to help slaves escape to freedom? Did I see signs of participation in the cause? Can I name names or goings on that could give answers?

It's still a bit of a mystery that I have tried to unravel. It might just be in the hands of a log cabin quilt.



*Rust's General Store*



## HIDDEN IN PLAIN VIEW

In the big red barn on the Pickering farm north of 14 Mile Road on the east side of Franklin Road resided a Broughton wagon. A brass plate on the rear of the wooden wagon reads:

D. Broughton  
Buggy Maker  
Franklin, Michigan

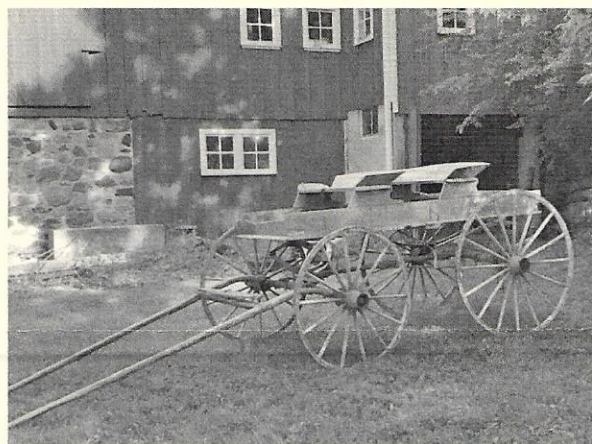
Daniel Broughton, its maker, came to Franklin in 1866 and bought the house (village offices) which was named after him. He also built a two-story brick building where our current post office is located. The building housed a blacksmith shop as well as a buggy works. Daniel was a wheelwright by trade and spent the next twenty-five years working in the village.

Only the best timbers were used to build a Broughton wagon or carriage. His carriages could be recognized by the sound that the wheels made traveling on the roads.

For years after its use was no longer needed, it was stored in the Pickering barn just waiting for its worth to be discovered and once again to serve a purpose.

The Franklin Historical Society is honored to be its caretaker! It will be featured at the museum in a buggy works exhibit which is a work in progress. We hope to have the project completed in the spring.

You can see the wagon and hear its story. How did a Pickering acquire a Broughton buggy? Here's a hint: It's all in the family!



## DONATIONS

Donations are the heart of our exhibits! Through the generosity of village descendants sharing artifacts from their families, we are able to tell their stories. They are authentically Franklin!

- From Betsy & Bill Berlin - Antique trunk, wood planes and cookbooks.
- From Bart Kreger - 4 framed prints, a wall mirror, an antique lamp and a fire department sign.
- Photo of Tryphena Bigelow and her 1860's quilt. Compliments of Bob Ladner, a Bigelow descendant

*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:



P.O. Box 250007

Franklin, MI 48025

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

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# THE LOG CABIN CONNECTION

**Hello!**

**I am Tryphena Malcolm Bigelow. I was born in 1828, the same year that the Stoughton-Bullock Settlement was renamed Franklin. My parents were Hugh Malcolm and Eliza Bigelow. We lived in Scotland, Brant County, Ontario, which at the time, was western Canada.**

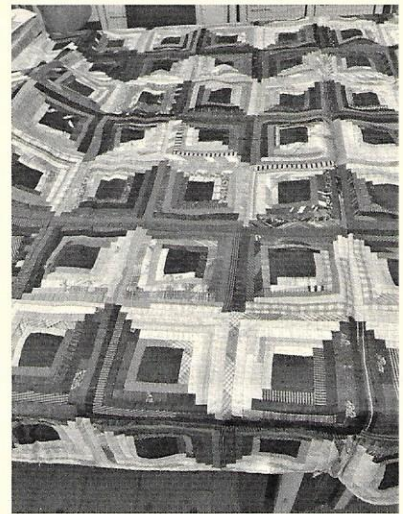
**My father died in a barn raising accident a month before I was born. My mother married James Markle two years later.**

**On 21 March 1850, I married Thomas Allen Bigelow. Thomas was born in Canada as well, and ironically, he was my mother's younger brother and therefore, my uncle! He was a widower with two young daughters. When we married, we were already a family. We had thirteen more children.**

**Many of our children were born during the Civil War. At that time the log cabin quilt pattern was very popular. The pattern was a reference to Abraham Lincoln who was born in a log cabin.**

**The log cabin blocks usually started with a square. Strips were added around the square, often with two sides being of lighter fabrics and the other two sides of darker prints. A red center square was thought to symbolize the hearth of the home and a yellow center was believed to represent light shining through a window. Anecdotal evidence, based on oral folklore, suggests that during the Civil War, a log cabin quilt with a black center hanging on a clothesline was meant to signal a stop on the Underground Railroad.**

**Here is a picture of the log cabin quilt that I made during this time in our history. Look at the color of the squares in my quilt. Can you uncover the intent of my design?**



## VOLUNTEER EXTRAORDINAIRE!

George Witte, a Franklin resident and high school student, earned community service hours volunteering at the Franklin Historical Museum during the summer.

With his dad by his side, George cleaned up the landscape pulling out dead bushes, weeding and laying down mulch. He cleaned out the gutters, assembled wooden patio furniture and secured weed wacker guards on the split rail fence.

George also researched three historic structures and write ups for future QR use. We appreciate his time and interest in helping at the museum.

## HAPPY 200TH BIRTHDAY FRANKLIN!!!

It's not too early to start looking for your party hats! Franklin's bicentennial celebration is in the planning stages for 2024 through 2025.

The first settlers arrived in April and June of 1824 to claim their new land; however, they did not receive their land deeds until the following year, 1825. So, we decided we would celebrate throughout the whole year. Who doesn't love a party?!

Stay tuned for future events and how you can become involved in planning them.

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FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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## A WHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

In 2017, the catalpa tree located behind the library was removed due to disease. The stories within the 1860 era catalpa rings give us insight into the people, their daily life struggles and successes. The stories are told from the point of view of the aged tree that experienced Franklin first hand for generations. And now, after its demise, its value continues in the bowls of history, candle holders, coasters and furniture produced from it. With the exception of the bowls, these items are for sale through the Franklin Historical Society. Send an e mail to [info@franklin-history.org](mailto:info@franklin-history.org)



## EVENTS

Franklin Historical Society Recent Events

Museum Grand Re-Opening  
Cemetery Tour – The Women Behind the Men  
Behind the Scenes Tour of four historic homes  
Questers meeting at the museum  
Franklin in the 50's exhibit in the Kreger barn at Round-Up  
Display and Information at the Block Party  
NEXT museum tour  
Horseshoe Caper!  
Scarecrows Along Franklin Road  
Crow to Go!