

Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

DECEMBER 2023

WITHIN MY RINGS

(recollections from the 1860 catalpa tree)

Three Women and a Book

My position on the village green behind the library offered the perfect place to see and hear what was going on in the village throughout the years. I have mostly talked about the men, their livelihood, conversations and contributions. Women were seen, but seldom heard. Their role in their daily lives was not to hold positions on the school board, cemetery society, fraternal organizations, governmental positions such as constable or justice of the peace or even be a church deacon.

Women supported their men by being active in the Ladies Aid society at church, holding chicken pie suppers to help pay the pastor, the Women's Auxiliary of the cemetery society held bake sales and published a cookbook to raise money to build a fence around the cemetery. Women couldn't vote until 1920 so their voices in making decisions and holding offices in their world were silenced.

A women's place was in the home raising responsible children and teaching them to follow the Golden Rule. One of their social activities was a quilting bee. Their cooperative efforts created quilts and also offered them an outlet from their daily routines of washing clothes, making soap and candles, cooking, mending and raising children with proper behavior. Ah, it makes me weary just thinking of the responsibilities they had and little input in the men's society.

There were however, three women and a book that contributed to recording the history of our quaint village beyond their generations! And, they accomplished this feat before the 20th amendment! Allow me to introduce you to Emma Pickering Brooks, her daughter Nellie Brooks Wood and granddaughter Mildred Emma Wood. More about them in a bit.

A descendant of the Wood's family donated a book to the Historical Society. It didn't look like anything special. It was a hard-cover book with frayed edges, yellow and brittle pages, a loose binding and pages in disarray. The title of the book in faint gold lettering read Michigan Board of Agriculture 1886. There wasn't much interest in opening the cover, but curiosity won out. Besides, I remembered the old saying: you can't judge a book by its cover! So, the book was opened. It revealed this signature: *Mildred Emma Wood*

Now, I wasn't surprised that she was identified with her husband's surname. It was common in those times, but I was familiar with her true identity. She was Emma Pickering, the daughter of Joseph Pickering, an English immigrant. They lived in a farmhouse on the north side of 13 Mile road east of Franklin road. If you're curious, you can find the house still standing today.

Mrs. Nellie Brooks Wood was the daughter of Emma Brooks and wife of Bert Wood, Franklin's historian. She was a member of the Franklin Methodist Church on German Mill, business manager of the church paper, active in the Ladies' Aid Society and president of the Golden Rule Society.

Mildred Emma Wood was the granddaughter of Emma Pickering Brooks and her namesake. She was very involved

in the church and the cemetery, in fact, there is a room at the church dedicated to her and a road in the cemetery named after her.

So, what was all the hoopla about these women? The connection between them and this book was extraordinary. They were not only bonded by blood, but also with a passion to preserve the history of their beloved village for others to read.

The book, with Emma's signature, identified it as being in her possession. So why then are the other ladies mentioned? Well, I won't leave you wondering. You see, upon opening the book, you will find pages and pages of carefully cut out newspaper clippings of weddings, births, deaths, events, photos, tragedies and triumphs of three generations of Franklin history. They were randomly yet carefully pasted on each page in this book by these three women.

About halfway through the book was an article titled Franklin Village Observes Century Anniversary Mark! It was Franklin's 100th birthday in 1924! What a find! Emma started with page one of this book pasting articles of interest to her and others that would follow her. Were her hands responsible for clipping and pasting *this* article in this treasured publication? She was not. Emma passed away the year before. Could Nellie have followed in her mother's footsteps and added the celebration story in the book? Probably. The article was written in March 1924. Nellie passed away in November of that year. Mildred, Emma's granddaughter more than likely carried on the tradition of clipping and pasting Franklin's history for generations to see. In fact, Mildred earned the title of historian just like her father Bert Wood.

I wonder if these ladies ever thought if someone would discover this book and share it with its generation? Well, someone did Emma, Nellie and Mildred. Someone did!



VILLAGE OF
★
FRANKLIN
BICENTENNIAL
EST. 1825

OUR BICENTENNIAL IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

In the Spring of 1824, Dillucene Stoughton and his family left Niagara County, New York to start a new life in the Michigan territory. Six weeks later, Elijah Bullock and his family, also from Niagara County, followed in their footsteps. They named their new land the Stoughton-Bullock settlement.

Although they purchased their land in 1824, they didn't receive their signed land deed from President John Quincy Adams until the following year. We figured that gave us the license to party for an entire year!

Be on the lookout for three major events beginning in April 2024. A dinner/barn dance is slated for the 6th of April in the parking lot between the police station and the village hall. Get ready to enjoy delicious

vittles and learn a dance step or two. It's time to kick up your heels and party like it's 1824!

In July of next year, we'll gather for a birthday party bash on the green by the library. Who doesn't love cake?!

At Round Up, we will be highlighting our heritage and holding a Franklin alumni school reunion! Interspersed between these major events are activities provided by civic groups in our village. Everyone has a role to play in our 200th birthday celebration including you!

Information will be posted at franklin-history.org

A WHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN Emma Pickering Brooks (1854 – 1923)

This is the woman that had the book, that clipped the articles, that pasted them in the book, that preserved the history of Franklin village. Thank you Emma Pickering Brooks for your passion for history, generosity of your time and your insight to share narratives of our past.

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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FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY PROJECTS

WEBSITE:

A fresh new look is coming to our website soon featuring museum exhibits, guided tours and upcoming Bicentennial events. Find out how you can get involved!

franklin-history.org

ARCHIVAL WORK:

Barb Louie, our archivist, is diligently identifying recent artifacts, labeling their family history and creating a computer record.

QR CODES:

FHS is creating an audio walking tour of the historic district that will make its debut in the Spring of 2024.

FRANKLIN ON FOOT:

This is another Bicentennial initiative highlighting moments in our history.

PORTRAITS FROM THE PAST:

Life size portraits of sometimes whimsical events that occurred in our village will appear during the Bicentennial

CARRIAGE HOUSE:

The museum garage is a work in progress. It will be turned into a carriage/buggy works. It will feature a cutter, a carriage and an original Daniel Broughton wagon plus all of the character of its time period.

DONATIONS

The Franklin Historical Society is thankful for artifacts that Franklin descendants and villagers have shared with us. They reveal the stories of who traveled here, why they came, how they came and what contributions they made to our village.

It is important to remember our past, the struggles, the vision and the foundation created. We are truly a unique place to live. It didn't happen by accident.

- Robert Ladner is the great, great grandson of Abel Bigelow whose family was in the brick making business. He contributed family photos, clothing, a children's rocker, an original brick and many more items that reveal the Bigelow legacy.
- Byron Hanson is the grandson of Bert Wood who was our village historian, builder, teacher and merchant at the Brick store. His contributions include journals, documents, photos and a Pickering/Wood dresser. Copious notes by his Aunt Mildred Wood offer unbelievable insight into our history.
- Tricia Hanson is the great granddaughter of Bert Wood. We have a Ken Bristol watercolor of the Community church, photos with names and dates, inscribed children's silverware from her descendants and an oak cranked telephone believed to have been at the Brick store. All of these items bring our past into focus.
- Judy and Pete Shagna were antique dealers. Judy grew up in Franklin and was a merchant here. They contributed an 1800's rocker, baby shoes and other items that help tell our stories.

We want you know how much we appreciate your sharing precious stories about your ancestors and your connection to Franklin. We're so happy that you took the time to search for us and make us a home for your artifacts.

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FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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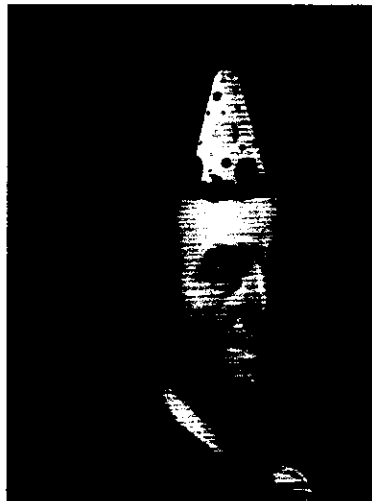
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FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS!

200 candles on a birthday cake,
200 years to celebrate!
200 reasons not to wait. . .
to blow out the candles and commemorate!
HAPPY BIRTHDAY FRANKLIN!
Events beginning next year!
Get ready to party like its 1824



"Newspaper article dated 1924"

FRANKLIN VILLAGE OBSERVES CENTURY ANNIVERSARY MARK

(Special to The Daily Press)

Franklin, March 13. — This is Franklin's one hundredth birthday!

Just one hundred years ago, Dillucena Stoughton took up an 80 acre tract of land on the east side of, and bounded by the present main street of the village. The following year Elija Bullock bought 240 acres on the west side of main street and named the village the Stoughton-Bullock settlement.

Dr. Ebenezer Raynale, the first physician in Southfield township, came here from Pennsylvania in 1828, and established himself in his profession.

Dr. Raynale arrived here on May 6, and six days later made his first professional call, his patient being the wife of George Gage.

Seven Families

At that time there were seven families settled here. They were as follows: D. Stoughton, Elija Bullock, his son-in-law, George Gage, Dorus Morton, Samuel Babcock, Henry S. Smith, and Richard Bignall. The heads of these families were all tradesmen, carpenters, joiners, masons, and bricklayers.

The following spring a shoemaker, Harvey Lee, joined the community. The first frame house in the village was built in the summer of 1828 by H. S. Smith.

Named in 1828

The village was officially named Franklin in the fall of 1828, when a post office was established here by Dr. Raynale, his appointment being made on Sept. 19. The post office was kept in the log dwelling of Dorus Morton, where the doctor boarded at that time.

A school was also opened here the same year in a log school house near the present home of Hayes Levee. The first teacher, not only of Franklin, but the township of Southfield, was Miss Sophia Gotie.

In the summer of 1829 Dillucena Stoughton built the first brick house to be built in Oakland county. The brick in the house were bought from the Bigelow kilns, or the present site of

the Bigelow Clay Products company. It was situated near the present home of George Pickering.

About this time a great impetus seemed to be given to immigration, and many settlers came to Franklin and vicinity. When, in 1830, Dr. Raynale went to Pennsylvania for his wife, he found on his return that 40 families had settled here during his absence of 25 days. The first public house was built by Elija Bullock in 1830, near the present home of W. J. Spicer

Establish Store

The first store was started in 1830 by William Houston of Orange county, N. Y. Mr. Houston died in 1832, after which time the store was bought and run by Dr. Raynale and Morgan L. Wisner, a brother of Governor Wisner. In 1833 another tavern was opened by Dorus Morton. Afterwards it was kept by a Mr. Hurlbut and later by William Van Every, who named it "Franklin Cottage."

Peter Van Every, Sr., moved from the vicinity of Detroit to Franklin in 1837 and took up the residence of Dorus Morton, in the tavern house on the west side of Main street. He also purchased the property now owned by James H. Flynn, and started the grist mill, which is still in operation.

Colonel Van Every was the sponsor for most of the village, as he operated the grist mill, the distillery, and the potashery, all of which were located on the creek north of the village.

Build Mill

In 1851 Col. Van Every erected a steam flour mill in the north end of town. It was equipped with a good engine and boiler. It was not, however, a financial success, and after running five years and lying idle two years, its machinery was removed to Muir, Mich., and put in operation.

Southfield Lodge No. 59, I. O. O. F., held its meetings in a commodious hall, which was erected in 1871 on the east side of Main street, just north of John Currin's store. The cost of the hall was \$1,700, which was raised by

voluntary subscription. This lodge was instituted April 30, 1852, with the following charter members: I. A. Chapman, O. W. Fuller, J. B. Sherman, A. F. Jenks, G. Blindbury, C. Lawrence, S. F. Beardslee, A. J. Owen, William Smith, Luman Williams, and J. M. Harden. In 1865 the officers of the lodge were as follows: N. G., Samuel Wheeler; V. G., Charles Coder; recording secretary, R. L. Bryan; financial secretary, G. Blindbury, and treasurer, Nathaniel Higby.

This much of the history of Franklin was taken from a history of Oakland county.

If beauty of scenery goes for anything, this little burg should be the largest in the county, think residents, as from the hills on either side of town one can command a view of Detroit, a distance of 20 miles.

Several of the old time residents still live here and relate to the younger generations the doings of our ancestors in the days of yore.

Founder Lives

Prominent among these "old timers," and with a memory unimpaired in spite of his 94 years, is Otto A. Berger, a veteran of the Civil war. Mr. Berger has always been a real live "boy" and often relates humorous anecdotes to the "bunch" in the post office that causes people to hold their sides.

Many people have expressed the hope that Mr. Berger will live to see the century mark, and to see the pleasant little village grow to the size he dreamed of when he helped to form a settlement here.