

## WITHIN MY RINGS

(RECOLLECTIONS FROM THE 1860 CATALPA TREE)

### HOW FRANKLIN GOT ITS NAME

When I planted my roots on the green, the village, which was originally dubbed the Stoughton-Bullock Settlement, was called Franklin.

Many of the old timers that settled here had moved to Lapeer or Ingham counties or even to new territories. Their recollections of how the village was named moved along with them.

What I can relay to you is based on speculation, hear say and perhaps a bit of embellishment. I'll give you the "facts" from my vantage point. It just might be up to you to pick one of the stories that has been floating around for generations.

Ebenezer Raynale was the first doctor to arrive in the new settlement. He was born in Vermont, but spent a good share of his life in Pennsylvania. Now he claimed that his father was good friends with Benjamin Franklin. Could it be? Well, Franklin also hailed from Pennsylvania so I guess it was possible. When the doctor became the first postmaster in the village, that's when he renamed the settlement Franklin.

I can't verify that story with Ebenezer because he moved on to Birmingham, Michigan. However, if any of you are traveling to Birmingham, you might check out the story with his son Dr. Charles Raynale who lives there. He might be able to shed some light on his father's claim.

Ask Minnie Leet about that story and she would vehemently refute it. Minnie and I more or less grew up together. We entered the world about the same time. While I spent my life in the middle of town, she lived up the hill on what is now Romany Way. I don't recollect what it was called way back then. In fact, her house is still standing!

Anyway, Minnie was born 35 years after the renaming of the village. She was not an eyewitness to the event. However,

Minnie insists that her mother, Louisa Van Every, a daughter of the infamous Van Every family, told a different tale. Seems there was a little boy named Franklin who lived on Mt. Tom. The youngster got sick and passed away. I suspect he is buried in our cemetery in an unmarked grave. The original markers were likely made of wood and did not weather well through the years.

Now, back to Minnie's story. She says that her mother and other neighbors tended to the boy. When he died, the village was named Franklin after him NOT after Ben Franklin!

There is some question of Minnie's claim that the sick boy was attended by Louisa Van Every, Minnie's mother. You see, Louisa was born in 1837 which was several years after the young boy named Franklin had perished. Could Minnie's memory been playing tricks on her? Could it have been her grandmother, Amy Deer Van Every who attended the child? It really doesn't matter. Minnie was a pillar in the village at the time. She spoke with confidence and conviction and was well-respected. Who would doubt her recollection?

Up to my demise in 2016, there were thirty-eight states with a town called Franklin. I think it was not by coincidence. Franklin was the first United States postmaster. It is likely that these towns were named in his honor. Of course, this is just my opinion. You are entitled to form your own.

It is quite possible that all of these stories have some merit. Raynale's father could have been a friend of Ben Franklin. Perhaps the little boy was named after Ben Franklin. And, naming a town after a notable person was common.

For whatever reason, the name Franklin has stuck since 1828. It reflects an historic village with a small town atmosphere, rural presence and character that defines the place we call home.



# A WELCOME SIGN

When the new owners of the Buel/Slade house at 32710 Franklin Road were renovating, they discovered a letter from Dr. Julian Buel's daughter Kittie that was written in 1883. It was in its original envelope and appeared as if it was written yesterday. It was in perfect condition! Kittie was attending a finishing school in Somerville, Michigan. "My dear papa" is how it began and continued as a classic letter from a daughter in college reassuring her parents that she was okay. "But Mama need not to worry I have not worn ragged clothes, neither have I had holes in my stockings." She added that she wanted to come home for a visit. She mentioned that Sam Slade came home. Sam would become her future husband. This link to the home's past has been framed and is hanging on the wall for everyone to see.

The owners, Katherine and Andrew Erlich and Joan and John Simon, Kathy's parents, purchased the building in May 2017. Soon after, the renovations began. Carpeting was pulled up uncovering the original flooring. A new roof and air conditioning were installed. Plumbing, lighting and electrical issues were corrected. Hornet and bird's nests were removed from the eaves. Siding was replaced. The building was painted inside and out. It was restored to its original glory!

Dr. Julian Buel would be proud! He built the house and started his medical practice there in 1866. Julian married Malintha Durkee. They had one child, Katharine "Kittie," the author of the letter found in the attic.

During Buel's practice, there were no pharmaceuticals. They used food and herbs as medicine, applying castor oil packs and other home remedies and using homeopathy. Today, we would consider his approach to medicine as holistic. His father, Henry Buel was also a highly respected doctor who lived and worked in Franklin.

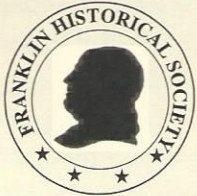
The Erlichs and Simons intend to make the Buel/Slade house a highly respected home for holistic medicine and also to carry on the tradition of passing down medicine from father to child(ren).

Currently practicing at the Buel/Slade house is a holistic pediatrician, Katherine Erlich, MD, acupuncturist Robert Simon, LAC (Katherine's brother), naturopathic doctor Jill Skurnowicz ND, RN, CRNA and traditional naturopath Anat Shlagman. Katherine's father, John Simon DVM is a veterinarian, who also eventually plans to see pet owners, part time offering holistic guidance for the care of their pets.

Open house is Saturday, June 2nd from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. In addition to sharing the inside of the house, there will be the First Annual Franklin Croquet Tournament (John Simon's vision) for some old time fun and competition outside.

The Erlichs and Simons feel that the discovery of the 135 year old letter is Dr. Buel's sign of approval, welcoming them to his home.

*(A special thank you to Kathy Erlich for sharing the letter and providing information on the renovation of the building)*



*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

Katharine "Kittie" Buel, daughter of Dr. Julian Buel and Malintha Durkee Buel, married Samuel Slade on 2 October 1888.



# HISTORIC MARKERS

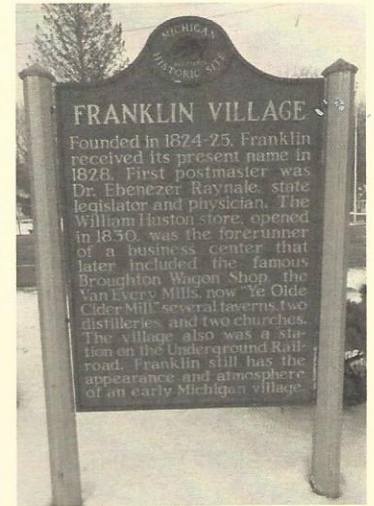
On September 10, 1960 a Michigan Historic Marker was erected on our village green. It was written and donated to the village by local historian Bert Wood. It reads:

*Founded in 1824 – 25, Franklin received its present name in 1828. First postmaster was Dr. Ebenezer Raynale, state legislator and physician. The William Houston store opened in 1830, was the forerunner of a business section that later included the famous Broughton Wagon Shop, the Van Every mills, now Ye Olde Cider Mill; several taverns, two*

*distilleries, and two churches. The village was also a section on the Underground Railroad. Franklin still has the appearance and atmosphere of an early American Village.*

The nearly sixty year old marker will be restored by the Franklin Historical Society soon.

The FHS has also submitted a history of the Broughton House (Village Offices) to the Michigan History Center requesting a historic marker at that site. We are waiting to receive their response.



## ANNUAL PLANT SALE

The Franklin Historical Society annual spring plant sale is ceasing to be a perennial thing. Because of the lack of volunteers and decreased orders, we made the tough decision to discontinue the plant sale.

We appreciate everyone that has supported us through the years! Your green thumbs have glorified our village. We suspect that will continue.



## OWN A PIECE OF HISTORY!

The 1860 catalpa tree that was located behind the Franklin library has found a new life! Picture frames, coasters, candle holders, address plaques, mirrors and assorted tables perpetuate Franklin's history.

For more information on the products, visit [www.franklin-history.org](http://www.franklin-history.org) to check out the store. From the home page, click buy. Click on go to the FHS store and scroll down to the bottom of the store.

Find the piece of history that speaks to you!

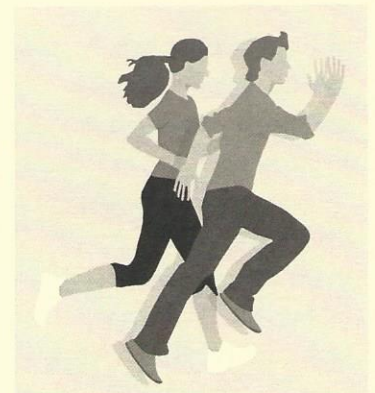
## IT WAS A GREAT "RUN!"

For nine years, the Franklin Historical Society, Franklin Bingham Farms fire department and Boy Scout troop 1699 teamed up to sponsor a 5K run, walk, kid's dash, strut your mutt and pancake breakfast to support the Kreger/Franklin Community Center project.

A huge thank you to everyone who participated over the years. With your help, we were able to renovate the house, barn and create public restrooms.

Putting together the event required teamwork and we had a great team! We had very successful years. Unfortunately, races are becoming commonplace in communities. It is increasingly difficult to compete for runners. For these reasons, we will not be hosting the event this year.

In the future we hope to resurrect the pancake breakfast. It was a wonderful way to bring villagers together in a down home setting.



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, April 28th**  
Kite Making  
Workshop *10 - Noon*

**Saturday, May 26th**  
Franklin Cemetery  
Tour *11 A.M.*

**Saturday, June 2nd**  
Franklin on Foot  
*10 A.M.*

What Happened  
There?

**Thursday, June 14th**  
FHS Annual Meeting  
*7 P.M.*  
Who Dat?

## WHO DAT?

Find out at the FHS Annual Meeting on Thursday, June 14th at 7 P.M. in the Historical Museum (26165 Thirteen Mile at the corner of Kirk Lane).

Rub elbows with the likes of Walter German, Andrew Bowden, Francis Xavier Stehle, Kittie Slade, Rachel VanEvery and Otto Berger. Discover the artifacts connected to them that were gifted to us.

Their stories deserve to be told. Won't you give a listen?

## LET'S GO FLY A KITE!

April is National Kite month! The Franklin Historical Society is going to join in the celebration by hosting a 'family make a kite' event on Saturday, April 28th from 10 A.M. to Noon.

Kids! Grab an adult and high tail it to the Kreger barn at 26225 Carol Street. The cost to make a kite is \$10.

All supplies are included. You'll use plastic, dowel rods, string and permanent markers to decorate your beauty!

Volunteers will be available to guide you with the construction.

Advance registration is encouraged to guarantee that you won't miss out. Send a check to the Franklin Historical Society P.O. Box 250007 Franklin, Michigan 48025.

Tell your friends about the event. When they get 'wind' of it, they will want to make a kite too!