

Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

December 2013

GETTYSBURG

It was the morning of July 1st 1863. The Iron Brigade was in position along McPherson's Ridge. This unit consisted of the 2nd, 6th, 7th Wisconsin, the 19th Indiana and the 24th Michigan. Also called the black hat brigade, these men were known for their fighting dispositions. They were as tough as iron! Their distinctive hats let the Confederates know who they were up against.



Edgar Durfee was a private in the 24th Michigan. His black hat was adorned with brass and a sky blue hat cord to indicate that he was in the infantry. He had joined the service in August 1862 at the age of 20. Now, only a year later, he was entering a battle that would turn the tide of the war for the Union.

During the struggle, Durfee's right arm was shattered by a Minnie ball. As he attempted to get behind the lines, he was wounded in the calf of his left leg as well. Eventually, he found his way to a field hospital that was set up in a church about three miles from where he had been wounded in McPherson's woods. The hospital staff, afraid they may be captured by the

oncoming Confederate Army, moved their patients to the courthouse on the other side of the city. There, Durfee, was placed on a desk, which served as an operating table, and his right arm was amputated at the shoulder. He was discharged in December 1863. The 24th Michigan lost more wounded and killed on the first day at Gettysburg than any other Union regiment.

After returning home, Edgar taught school for one term and helped out on the family farm. He attended Ypsilanti Normal School (Eastern Michigan University) in 1867-68. He was elected probate judge in 1877 in Detroit and served for 50 years. He was the first Post commander in the GAR (Grand Army of the Republic) building in the motor city. The building is currently under renovation.

Edgar Durfee was born in Livonia, Michigan and now rests in the Franklin cemetery. His wife was the great niece of Elijah Bullock, the 2nd landowner in Franklin who donated land for the cemetery.

On July 2nd and 3rd, the 5th Michigan Infantry was engaged in the Wheatfield. Otto was 5 feet, 10 ¼ inches tall. He had gray eyes, brown hair and a light complexion. He had emigrated from Prussia with his parents as a young boy. Now, at the age of 31, he was a seasoned soldier. He had joined the Fighting Fifth two years earlier. In his first battle, he suffered loss of hearing to his left ear from friendly fire. While at White Oak Swamp in 1862, he contracted a serious cold that caused chest pain and difficulty breathing. He fought at Manassas where he was found on the battlefield sick and had to be transported by ambulance. At Spotsylvania, he would be severely wounded in the right hip by a Minnie ball. Berger terminated his battles at Sailor's Creek and participated at Appomattox.

But today, his focus would be the Confederate Army in the Wheatfield at Gettysburg.

On a sultry afternoon, the Wheatfield would become the center of a swirling and confused whirlpool of fighting and death. By the end of the day, the wheat would be trampled and the ground soaked with blood, forever hallowing the ground, surrounding woods and the simple name of this place where Americans fought and bled and died. (from www.wheatfield.goelinitz.org/index.html)



Around 4:30 P.M. Berger assembled with his unit for battle. He was wounded in the hand and shoulder.

Berger was in service for 4 years! He started as a private and mustered out as a captain. After returning to Franklin, he married Rachel Van Every, granddaughter of Colonel Peter Van Every. He worked as a farmer and a blacksmith when he could. He suffered from his battle injuries throughout his life.

The couple had ten children. Rachel passed away. Otto married Mary Bowden, the widow of Joseph Bowden who was a veteran of the 10th Michigan Cavalry. Both Bergers and Bowdens are buried in the Franklin cemetery.

Henry Cox was an Englishman born in 1826. He married Grace Trick and they had five daughters. During the birth of his last child in 1860, his wife died.

Cox joined the 1st Michigan Cavalry Company G in 1861 and served until the end of the Civil War. He entered as a corporaal and was discharged as a captain and assistant surgeon.

At Gettysburg, his unit included the 1st, 5th, 6th and 7th Cavalry commanded by General George Armstrong Custer. I was also known as the Michigan Brigade, Wolverine Brigade and Custer's Brigade.

On the 10th of April 1863, just 3 months before Gettysburg Cox was promoted to Hospital Steward. A steward was the lowest ranking member of the medical department. Each regiment was required to have one hospital steward who was often chosen by the regimental surgeon from the enlisted men in his unit.

As a hospital steward, the individual had to be of good character, temperate, honest, reliable and sufficiently intelligent and skilled in pharmacy.

His duties included controlling and dispensing medicinal whiskey, assisting field surgeons in operations, supervising hospital cooks and nurses, prescribing drugs and performing minor operations during emergencies.

Standing at only 5 feet 6 inches, Cox had a tall order to follow. He would have been a busy man at Gettysburg!

When he returned home after the war, he was a village doctor. His dispensary is the red school house which is a private residence on the east side of Franklin Road. He was also a member of the Methodist church on German Mill, a Justice of the Peace and a member of the school board.

Durfee, Berger and Cox were not the only Franklin soldiers at Gettysburg in 1863. I have discovered several others that have parallel stories. Let us also remember. . .Edwin Adams, John Allen Bigelow, Henry Buckley, Michael Burns, John Darling, John Mentor, and James Smith.

A Fresh Look Waiting and Ready!

In the spring, the Franklin Community Center (Kreger house) donned a fresh coat of paint. It is a welcome sight for any of your rental needs!

The interior is decorated with stunning wallpaper from Perlmutter's. Every doorknob, latch and creak has been attended by Bob Smith's patience and expertise. Uncovering original hardwood, floors was exciting. They have been refinished and brought back to their old charm. The kitchen is furnished with a stove and refrigerator. The fridge accommodates the biggest of serving trays and houses enough ice for your gathering. You supply the caterer and decorations for your event.

The uses of this facility are endless. A graduation open house has all ready taken place here. Village clerks have held an event and luncheons have occurred. The cost of rental is \$200 for Franklin villagers and \$300 for non-residents. Securing a date is as easy as a call to Gary Roberts or Ann and Bill Lamott.

Through the efforts of Mira Stakhiv and Gary Roberts, we have wifi in the house and on the green. They were able to get a grant from the Birmingham area cable board that pays for video equipment and internet access including wifi and cable television. This provides high tech information that meets today's demands.

Besides rental possibilities, the home is open for Franklin volunteer groups to use free of charge. The

Cemetery Association, Franklin Historical Society, Questers, and Mainstreet folks have all ready held meetings. A seniors group gathers on the first Friday of each month to

discuss a variety of topics, socialize and even exercise!

The 1850's farmhouse is 1,300 square feet. Although not large enough to turn into a historical museum (the current museum is 4,000 square feet), it can display traveling exhibits related to our community.

It is a wonderful reuse of a building for another purpose without changing its integrity. It was a common practice in our early history to preserve. Our predecessors were the forerunners of reduce, reuse and recycle. It was certainly not a new concept to them.

This Greek Revival home inhabited by settlers now buried in the cemetery is a tribute to the legacy they have left us.



Franklin Historical Society: Accomplishments 2013

EVENTS:

Detroit Country Day 3rd grade visit to the museum for the B. Franklin exhibit
Franklin Community Center talk to a Quester's group
Gettysburg exhibit of Franklin soldiers at the Franklin library
Museum maintenance and landscaping
Planted flower boxes at public restrooms and by Community Center sign

FUNDRAISING:

5K run, walk, strut your mutt, kid's run and pancake breakfast
Spring plant sale
Fall folk concert and magic show

PRESERVATION:

Genealogical research on Franklin families
Published 2 Kite and Keys
Record oral histories

TOURS

Civil War cemetery tour
Walking tour of Franklin for the Detroit Historical Society



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
Contributors: Bill & Ann Lamott

Donations

Rita Kerr - Round Up and holiday nostalgia for the archives, dry sink and other household items for the Community Center
Bart and Marcia Kreger - farm tools, shoemaker kit, lightening rod, other Franklin memorabilia
Barry and Sandy Silverman, Jesse and Jane Polan - tools and scale cart for the Community Center
Betty-lee Hepworth - personal files related to Franklin history

Not Even a Day Trip!

The Franklin Historical Museum at 26265 West 13 Mile Road is practically in your backyard! This 1950's style home owned by Stanley and Jennie Derwich sets on 5 acres of woodlands, some of which are wetlands that are safe from development.

They gave 3 ½ acres to the village known as the Jenstan Nature Preserve and donated their home and 1 ½ acres to the Franklin Historical Society to be used as a museum. If the structure ceases to be a museum, the deed states that the building will be demolished and all 5 acres will become a nature preserve.

The house has 4,000 square feet of usable space including the basement. It is perfect for archives storage, office and meeting rooms as well as huge exhibit areas.

Upstairs is a history of early Franklin that focuses on the original landowners, the farmers, tradesman, schools, post office and general store.

One area of the basement concentrates on Ben Franklin and the Colonial period in which he lived. Yet another section is devoted to Franklin during the Civil War.

The museum is more than exhibits. It draws school

age children into hands on activities so that learning about Franklin's early years, Ben Franklin and the Civil War is fun. Adults find it entertaining too.

Discover the original landowner of your property, write with quill and ink, make a tinsmith project, shop at the general store, grind wheat, wash with an 1850's machine and immerse yourself in the village's history.

Find Ben Franklin's "John Hancock" on documents, print a project, make a colonial hat, discover Ben-ventions, recite proverbs or join the bucket brigade!

Learn about the ordinary man that participated in extraordinary service during the Civil War. They were villagers who served together. Their stories are waiting to be told.

As you drive east along 13 Mile Road, turn right on Kirk Lane just after Franklin Road. It is the only house on the right side of the road. It is open on the first Saturday of the month from 1 to 3 P.M. but an appointment anytime can be arranged. Call Ann or Bill Lamott at 248-538-0273 to set up one. We'll keep the light on for you!

Holiday Shopping Ideas

Did your children grow up in Franklin and move to another area? Is there a new neighbor next to you? Are you looking for something "Franklin" in your home? Check out the Historical Society website at www.franklin-history.org to satisfy your needs!

The All About Franklin book records the history

of the village since 1824 to the 1970's. We have a set of 4 glasses with our logo, yesteryear prints, a fleece, an afghan and wooden toys for the curious.

These items are available on line or for purchase at the Franklin Historical Museum on Kirk Lane.

Financial Statements

Franklin Historical Society Financial Statement
December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013

Beginning Balance		\$12,448
Income		
Memberships	\$6,734	
Plant Sale Profit	\$1,335	
Programs	\$200	
Interest	\$10	
Total Income	\$8,279	
Expenses		
Utilities	\$1,400	
Security	\$571	
Lawn Service	\$986	
Insurance	\$1,337	
Technology	\$299	
Fees & Misc	\$385	
Printing & Postage	\$1,571	
Total Expenses	\$6,549	
Ending Balance		\$14,178
Increase in funds		\$1,730

FHS Kreger Fund Financial Statement
December 1, 2012 to November 30, 2013

Beginning Balance		\$16,558
Income		
Donations	\$3,755	
Fundraiser profit	\$4,691	
Grant	\$7,142	
Total Income	\$15,588	
Expenses		
Construction	\$3,915	
Furniture	\$1,676	
Loan Payment	\$2,500	
Misc.	\$771	
Printing & Postage	\$228	
Total Expenses	\$9,090	
Ending Balance		\$23,056
Increase in funds		\$6,498

FYI

There's a new IRS 501 C3 non profit in town called the Historic Franklin Fund. It is affiliated with Mainstreet Franklin whose purpose is economic development in our village center.

As you make your donation decisions, be aware that a contribution to the Franklin Historical Society benefits historic preservation efforts in the entire village where a contribution to Historic Franklin is focused only on downtown businesses.

Your contribution is your decision. We just want you to be able to make it with clarity.

A While Ago in Franklin

Michael Burns, an Irishman, and James Darling, a New Yorker, were boarding at the Franklin hotel (Beadworks) in 1860. Burns joined the 5th Michigan Infantry Company D. He was wounded during the war. Darling enlisted in the 5th Michigan Company F. He was wounded and a POW. Both men fought at Gettysburg from 1861 to 1865.

In Your Attic

We may not know what treasures we hold in an old trunk or attic. Recently, someone found a Civil War belt buckle and asked if we were interested in it. With a little detective work, we were able to identify the Franklin soldier that wore it during his service.

We welcome artifacts that are related to Franklin history. If you have any treasures, please consider a donation to the Franklin Historical Museum.

Check out the new Franklin Historical Society Store offering Franklin logo merchandise at www.franklin-history.org

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FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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