
Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

DECEMBER 2017

Within My Rings

(recollections from the circa 1860 catalpa tree)

December 18, 2008 is a date I well remember. It was a snow-covered crisp morning. The air was filled with exuberant anticipation of the historic event that was about to occur. It was moving day! The Kreger house, barn and pig sty that were situated on Scenic Drive since the 1850's were going to find their new residence and purpose on Carol Street just west of the Village Offices.

The house, divided into two parts, led the procession. It was followed by the gabled red barn and the pig sty. Tree trimmers cleared the pathway, cable, utility and telephone wires were raised to allow the buildings to gracefully pass beneath them. And, there they were! I watched as they headed to their appointed positions.

I've had the privilege and the vantage point of observing Franklin for over 150 years. By 1860, 85% of Michigan people depended on farming for their sustenance. Nearly everyone was a farmer back then. Some were more successful than others, but all raised crops and livestock to feed their families and to trade or sell to their neighbors. The families that lived in the house on Scenic tilled the land. When Lucius Miller and his wife Mary lived on the 55 acres, they grew corn and oats. They had three milk cows, one other cattle, two working oxen, six sheep and one swine. Their property was surrounded by names that are probably familiar to you. These farmers have observed the goings on in our village from their final resting place in the Franklin Cemetery. Passers-by can't help but take note of names like Van Every, Drake, Adams, Worthing, Stoughton and German engraved on tombstones. They comprised rural Franklin.

Lavinia Miller was a sister to Dilucenna Stoughton, the very first landowner here. He named the area the Stoughton Bullock Settlement. Bullock was the second landowner. It would be three years until the name was changed to Franklin. I'll save the story of how our village was named for another time.

I don't recollect who resided on the farm after the Millers. I do remember that some years passed until Charlie Johnston and his bride Grace German ran the farm. It was around 1900. Now Charlie's mother was the daughter of Jonathan Worthing, an aforementioned farmer. Worthing

was also one of the original landowners in Franklin. Grace German was the daughter of John German Jr. a farmer and notable miller in town. Together they had a daughter Cora and a son Robert. Charlie grew potatoes among other vegetables. A weekend trip to the Eastern Market to sell his produce was a common occurrence. I bet you didn't know that Charles Lane was named after him!

In 1919, Cora wedded Arthur Kreger, a builder. The couple had a son Robert and a daughter Maxine. Both were born in the house.

Robert Kreger married Ruth Barton. The two of them moved into his parents house. For a time, the house was splitting at the seams. Not only was it occupied by Arthur and Cora, Robert and Ruth but also by their twin boys Bob and Bart!

Maxine, or Max, as she was fondly called, would live here with her parents until their death. She would then marry Bob Nelson who preceded her in death. Maxine would be the last tenant at this address. Her family would span over one hundred years living there!

So there you have a history of the house in a nutshell. The Greek Revival home and the people that lived there played important roles in creating the Franklin that we know.

A farm from our past has become a community center for our future. We have bridged our past, present and future seamlessly.



FRANKLIN COMMUNITY CENTER

The Franklin Historical Society is excited to announce that all three of the Kreger buildings - the house, barn and shed - have been fully restored and gifted to the Village of Franklin. As agreed to in 2008, FHS moved and restored the buildings on public land. The Village now owns and operates them.

The 1850's Greek Revival house is available to be rented for business meetings or other gatherings such as holiday parties, graduations and bridal or baby showers. It accommodates up to 30 people. It is air-conditioned and has a kitchen with a refrigerator/freezer that accommodates large trays, a stove with oven and a microwave. There is also a living room that seats eight. One meeting room seats 15 and another that seats eight. WIFI is available and the larger meeting room has a big screen TV, speakerphone and video playing equipment.

The 30 foot by 40 foot barn has been restored to look exactly as it would have 100 years ago. The floor has been reinforced and a new 8 inch by 12 inch by 20 foot long beam installed in the upper level so the lower level center post could be removed. It is available for seasonal use.

The shed was a former pigsty and is now public restrooms. Improvements that were done this fall include redesigning the open area between the buildings to include a flag stone patio and exposed aggregate walkways. The space can accommodate a 20 foot by 30 foot tent.

To visit the Kreger buildings or schedule your event in this truly unique historic venue, call the Franklin Village Office at 248-626-9666.

AWHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

Although there is a difference of opinion, Levi Warner who died on 1 February 1829, is thought to be the first burial in the Franklin cemetery. The lives of the pioneers in this small village crossed each other's paths over and over.

YANKE JEWELER "CHARMED" WITH THE FRANKLIN LIBRARY

Frank Yanke has created another signature village charm. The latest one is a replica of the library. Check it out in his shop. Yanke is donating \$25 to the library for every charm that is sold.

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY OPERATING FINANCIAL REPORT 2016 FISCAL YEAR (JULY 1, 2016 TO JUNE 30, 2017)

| | FHS | KREGER FUND | TOTAL |
|------------------------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| BEGINNING BALANCE 7/1/2016 | \$13,093 | \$24,037 | \$37,130 |
| REVENUE | | | |
| MEMBERSHIP DUES | \$6,450 | | \$6,450 |
| GRANTS | \$9,197 | \$8,457 | \$17,654 |
| DONATIONS | \$877 | \$1,470 | \$2,347 |
| PLANT SALE PROFIT | \$1,280 | | \$1,280 |
| CATALPA PROD. PROFIT | -\$1,567 | | -\$1,567 |
| SCARECROW PROFIT | \$382 | | \$382 |
| INTEREST | \$8 | | \$8 |
| BREAKFAST & RACE PROFIT | | \$2,599 | \$2,599 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$16,627 | \$12,526 | \$29,153 |
| EXPENSES | | | |
| MUSEUM UTILITIES | \$1,137 | | \$1,137 |
| MUSEUM INSURANCE | \$1,399 | | \$1,399 |
| YARD MAINTENANCE | \$4,274 | | \$4,274 |
| BUILDING MAINTENANCE | \$3,035 | | \$3,035 |
| BUILDING SECURITY | \$524 | | \$524 |
| SUBTOTAL - BUILDING | \$10,369 | | \$10,369 |
| PRINTING & POSTAGE | \$1,981 | | \$1,981 |
| MISCELLANEOUS | \$1,187 | | \$1,187 |
| CONSULTANTS | \$1,050 | | \$1,050 |
| TECHNOLOGY | \$6,055 | | \$6,055 |
| BARN IMPROVEMENTS | | \$7,575 | \$7,575 |
| LANDSCAPING | | \$6,348 | \$6,348 |
| REPAIRS | | \$175 | \$175 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$20,642 | \$14,098 | \$34,740 |
| ENDING BALANCE JUNE 30, 2017 | \$9,078 | \$22,465 | \$31,543 |



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

CHECK IT OUT!

The Historic Society has created a photo slide show of people, places and things around Franklin. The next time you visit the library, take a gander at the photos.

You're going to feel right at home!

FRANKLIN FARMS BARN RESTORATION PROJECT

The Franklin Historic District Commission has concluded a study of the historical significance of a barn located on the Franklin Farms Condominium grounds and is recommending that the building be formally designated an historic structure that contributes to the character of Franklin. The building is the last of many farm barns that were located on farms along Telegraph Road. A public hearing was held on October 30th and the next step is formal Village Council action in the near future. The Franklin Historical Society continues to urge all people involved in this issue to find a way to preserve this important architectural element in our Village.

THE SPICER HOUSE CELEBRATES ITS 100TH BIRTHDAY!

The Spicer house is a focal point at the corner of Franklin and Vincennes roads. It's caretakers, Suzanne and Roger McClow have meticulously restored its historic character.

Who would suspect that the building was a kit or catalog home? Kit homes were popular because they were affordable. A customer could peruse a company's catalog and pick out the style of house that fit their wants, needs and budget. The square footage, type of windows, doors, hardware and moldings were all decisions required by the customer purchasing the final product.

All of the lumber was labeled, packaged and shipped according to use and delivered with a set of plans and a guarantee to arrive five days after the order was placed!

William Henry Spicer was intrigued and excited about the prospect of purchasing a kit home for his family. In fact, he was so enamored, that he bought 3 catalog homes! He treated himself as well as his son Harry and daughter Hazel. Their homes are located on Vincennes behind the Fire station.

On the 20th of December 1916, several farmers (William Spicer, Edwin Miller and Frank German) sold 250 acres of their farm land located south of Maple Road and east of Telegraph. There were plans to create a club (now Oakland Hills golf club) and home sites. The sale of the property afforded Spicer the opportunity to invest in the catalog homes.

In 1917, he ordered the Lancaster model from the Lewis Company which was located in Bay City, Michigan. Lewis manufacturing had alliances with mills across the United States. It was able to deliver its kit homes to various markets at a reasonable price. Shipping was included.

The house that Spicer built was 1792 square feet plus a basement. The cost was \$4039. The building plans, pre-cut lumber (labeled with Spicer's name), hardware and thousands of individual parts were shipped in a box car to Birmingham, Michigan. It was Spicer's responsibility to make arrangements for delivery at the construction site and employ people to do the work.

Today, the home at 32683 Franklin Road is an historic gem in our village. With the painstaking restoration efforts of its owners, it has maintained its historic glory and significance to Franklin. Happy 100th Birthday Spicer house and many, many more!

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2016 2017

EVENTS:

- Museum maintenance and landscaping
- Farmer's market presence on the green
- Planting flowers on the Franklin Community Center campus
- Annual meeting with Secret Life of an Object exhibit
- Guest speaker at the Franklin Garden Club

FUNDRAISING:

- Plant sale
- 5K run, walk, dash, strut your mutt and pancake breakfast
- Build a scarecrow workshop
- Sale of catalpa tree products

PRESERVATION:

- Renewed ancestry membership and assisted descendants of early villagers (Barkley, Berger, Stehle)
- Supporting Franklin Farms barn restoration
- Published two Kite and Keys
- Archival sorting by Barb Louie

- Completed Kreger (Community Center) landscaping
- Application for historic marker at the Broughton house
- Framed a photo of the 1860 catalpa tree for the library

TECHNOLOGY:

- Maintain Franklin-history.org website
- FHS facebook page
- Power point presentation of Franklin photos for the library
- Scanned two books (Franklin's Yesteryear, and All About Franklin). Cemetery minutes dating back to 1852 and the 1991 Franklin Historic and Architectural Survey

TOURS:

- Cub Scout tour of Ben Franklin exhibit at the museum
- Daisy troop field trip to the museum

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 250007 Franklin, Michigan 48025

www.franklin-history.org

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NON-PROFIT
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PAID
PERMIT NO. 694
SOUTHFIELD, MI

ONE OF A KIND EVENT!

WHAT: FHS Merchandise Sale
catalpa tree products, prints, fleece, glasses,
stationery, post cards, wooden toys, books and
biscuits for that special canine!

WHERE: FHS museum 26165 Thirteen Mile
at Kirk Lane

WHEN: Saturday, December 9, 2017
10 A.M. - 1 P.M.

Special Features

crafts for kids
music, cookies & punch
check out the exhibits

