

Kite & Key

Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

MAY 2015

GOING HOME

On April 9, 1865 General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse. The War of Aprils had ended! The soldiers would be going home!

Otto Berger served four years in the 5th Michigan Infantry Company D. He enlisted as a private and was discharged as a captain. Berger fought in the Eastern Theater in battles that included Williamsburg, Chancellorville, Manassas and Gettysburg. During battles, he lost hearing in his left ear, was wounded in the hand and shoulder, and severely injured in his right hip. His disabilities would keep him from working any length of time.

When he had an opportunity, he wrote his friend Rachel Van Every. After his return home, they would marry and bear 9 children.

Joseph Bowden joined the 10th Michigan Cavalry Company B and served two years. During that time, he was captured in Thornhill, Tennessee. While awaiting transportation to Libby prison, he stood out all night in the cold and rain. He caught a cold which ultimately resulted in kidney disease. His ailment haunted him throughout his life.

When Bowden left Franklin, he also left behind his future wife. Mary Drake was a domestic in the Bowden household. Joseph was 25 at the time and Mary was 17. They would get married on the fourth of July 1865.

Bowden would pass away in 1904; Rachel Van Every Berger in 1907. Otto Berger would marry Bowden's widow, Mary, in 1910.

Henry Cox served the length of the Civil War. He enlisted in the 1st Michigan Cavalry Company G. a year after his wife died during childbirth. His four daughters lived with aunts and neighbors while he was away at war.

Cox was promoted from private to hospital steward then

to assistant surgeon. His time on the battle fields was spent in field hospitals carrying for the wounded and dying soldiers. What gruesome memories he must have brought home with him.

How did Cox travel home? Typically, a soldier's transportation was on foot, on horseback or by rail. We know that he probably did not arrive on horseback at least not on his own horse! An affidavit stated. . . "In the beginning of March 1865, the regiment was given orders to move. We were at that time under command of General Custer and when we arrived at a place called Beaver Dam, Va., many of our horses were worn out and exhausted by long marches and want of feed. We could not get them along and an order was issued by General Custer to shoot what horses were disabled in order to keep them out of the hands of the enemy and amongst the horses shot, was one belonging to Cox. Said horse was about 16 hands high, sorrel in color and with a white strip in the face." After the war, Cox was compensated for his horse.

Joseph Ferguson was assigned to the 1st Mounted New York Rifles regiment. He left his wife and five children in New York where he enlisted. He did not return home after the war. Had the time away from his family fractured relationships? Was he trying to put his past behind him? Was he looking for a fresh start? For whatever reason, he ended up in Franklin. Although he kept in contact through letters with his oldest child, it doesn't appear that he had any contact with his other children. He divorced his wife and in 1878. He married Mary Brown, the widow of John Brown, 3rd Michigan Infantry, who died from disease and was buried in New Orleans.

Ferguson did integrate himself in the village of Franklin. He was a sextant in the cemetery and was fondly referred to



as "Uncle Joe."

Will Clemons was also a New Yorker. He was a member of the 161st Infantry Company E. for one year. He moved to Michigan some time after the war. His first child was born in this state in 1869.

Clemons was a farm laborer by trade. Known as a water wizard, he used a divining rod to find over 300 wells. Clemons' daughter married Joseph Bowden's son. They knew each other well. After all, they lived caddy corner from one another!

Christopher Klein was one of five children orphaned at a young age. He joined the 15th Michigan Infantry Company B in March of 1864 and was discharged in August 1865. During battle, he received a bullet wound in his back. His unit marched with General Sherman to the sea.

James J. Trott served a year and a half in the 14th Michigan Infantry Company K. During that time, he was a POW. Soon after the war, he married Mary Worthing. She was the daughter of Jonathon Worthing, one of Franklin's original landowners.

Upon his return, Henry Cox, now Dr. Henry Cox, attended many of these veterans. He testified for them as they applied for Civil War pensions. He commented that every man came back from the war like the rest of us...all used up.

And so, the men came home. They tried to work. Berger

was a blacksmith before the war. Afterwards, he was unable to work at that trade. He did farming when he could. Bowden was plagued by kidney disease and had difficulty even doing half a day's work. Cox opened up a dispensary in the red school house on Franklin Road. Written remnants of his prescriptions are still visible in the drawers of a cabinet. Ferguson did some farming, Clemons was a water wizard. He discovered water with his divining rod! Klein farmed and Trott was a brick and stone mason.

Berger's home was just south of Romany Way. He was a stone's throw from Joseph Bowden who lived on (where else . . .Bowden Lane!) Cox's home was on Carol Street two doors from Joseph Ferguson and James Trott lived across the street from them. William Clemons was on the corner of Carol Street and German Mill. Christopher Klein resided just footsteps away.

All of these men fought in different regiments. Some of their units fought side by side in battles. Some lived in Franklin before the war; some made their home in Franklin after the war. Many of them attended the Methodist Church on German Mill that had been dedicated in 1863. Trott lived behind the church and was a supervisor there. These men lived just a holler away from one another. Did they share war stories or did they put those days behind them and cope with how the war affected them?

WE'RE CONNECTED!

The Franklin Historical Museum will soon have a new computer and wifi! Many thanks to the Birmingham Area Cable Board and a HUGE thank you to Mira Stakhiv, our Franklin Cable Board Representative, for supporting our grant application.

HATS OFF TO BEN! (Ben Franklin, of course)

On Thursday, May 28th Detroit Country Day third graders will be visiting the Ben Franklin exhibit at the Historical Museum on 26165 13 Mile Road. Ben wore many hats: printer, fireman, statesman, post office, librarian, inventor, author and more. Children will be "trying on" all of them as they immerse themselves in puzzles, proverbs and printing activities related to his contributions to the world. Contact Bill or Ann Lamott (248-538-0273) to see which hat fits you. We need volunteers to help the kids with the hands on activities.

We are pleased to be hosting their 9th the Ben Franklin field trip to our exhibit.

DONATIONS

Reverend Edward Dunlavy notes while he was pastor at the Methodist Episcopalian Church in Franklin, family photos and Village Crier articles donated by Jan Stagg. Rev. Dunlavy was Jan's grandfather!



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,
Roger McClow

1840 – 2015

And What Transpired In Between

The Franklin Community Church is celebrating its 175th year! The old church at 26109 German Mill is listed in the National Registry of Historic Sites. The structure, now a private residence, is one of Franklin's gems.

In 1840 the church was officially organized with Reverend Laban Smith as preacher. In 1859 William and Emily Kyle deeded land to the church to erect a house of worship. Thomas Bigelow, a carpenter, completed the building the following year.

Here is the contract (exact copy)

"This contract made and entered into this eighteenth day of February, one thousand and eight hundred and sixty, by and between Wm. P. Durkee of the town of Southfield, R.C. Lanning (minister), William Barnum, George Congleton and Jonathan Worthing, as Trustees of the church herein after mentioned, of the town of Southfield, County of Oakland, and State of Michigan, of the first part, and Thomas Bigelow, of the town of West Bloomfield, county and state above named, of the second part, in these words:

"The said party of the second part, covenants and agrees to and with the said parties of the first part to make, erect and build in good substantial and workmanlike manner, and of good material, the frame of the Methodist Protestant meeting house in the Village of Franklin, County of Oakland and State of Michigan, agreeable to the plan and specifications herein named, to-wit: said frame to be thirty feet wide and forty feet long. Eighteen feet posts, to contain five bents, with beams, joists, studding, rafters, purloin plates, principal rafters and queen posts: all of which is to be hewed or sawed in size suitable for said frame, or agreeing with a bill hereto annexed. Said frame is to be up and ready for enclosing on or before the first of June next.

"There shall be ten windows and the double door to be distributed in the frame as follows: The spaces between the windows shall be equal. There shall be three windows on each side and two on each end. The opening for the windows shall be three feet ten inches wide: the door shall be five feet in the opening."

In the spring of 1863, the building was dedicated. In 1880 the horse sheds were added. They were built the full length of the lot to stable horses and carriages during the service.

In the front of the church was an eight foot wide plank

platform where you could assist your passengers in unloading the buggy, carriage or sleigh for the service and boarding the passengers when the service was done.

In 1903, the church acquired a parsonage at 26088 German Mill. John Rust had this home moved from 32440 Franklin Road (Cranbrook Realty location) prior to 1890. He transferred ownership to his brother Albert. When Albert passed away in 1903, it was his will that the house on German Mill become the parsonage for the Methodist Protestant Church.

The original church had wooden siding. In 1906 it was covered in rusticated concrete block. It appears that way today.

Between 1906 and 1908, a fireplace and chimney were added along with a basement and belfry. The horse sheds were torn down in 1922 to make room for the automobile.

Civil War veterans returned home to find a permanent church in their midst. Dr. Henry Cox was known to sit in the same pew on Sunday morning. His spectacles were always resting on the top of his head. James Trott, 14th Michigan Infantry, lived right behind the church and attended regularly. Joseph Ferguson was across the street from Trott. He served in a New York unit. He came to Franklin after the war and married the widow Mary Brown who was an active member. Joseph Bowden, 10th Michigan Cavalry, married Mary Drake in the church on July 4, 1865. The church was a haven for these weary souls.

By 1915, interest in the church and its services had diminished. For three years the doors were closed. Then, Reverend Edward Dunlavy, affiliated with the Methodist Episcopalian, was called to serve the parish. The church grew larger and stronger.

Church attendance grew steadily. In 1950, a hall for social functions was constructed from kiln dried clay bricks, painted white to be congruent with the existing structure.

In 1955, the congregation voted to move into its new quarters on the village green just two blocks away. It became the Franklin Community Church.

Watch for upcoming activities that will celebrate their milestone.

A While Ago in Franklin

Nearly one hundred years ago, Rev. Edward Dunlavy talked to his parishioners about tithing. One Sunday, a farmer handed him forty three dollars. He said that it was his tithe for the week. "I sold a cow two days ago, and that is my tithe replied the farmer." Dunlavy asked, "You did not get four hundred thirty dollars for a cow, did you?" And the farmer said, "It was a good cow."

Franklin Community Center Fundraising

**Catch the Fever
Kreger Fever
June 6, 2015**

7 A.M. - Registration Begins across from the Franklin Community Center at 26225 Carol Street

8 A.M. - 5 K Run, Walk and Strut Your Mutt Begins in front of the Franklin Community Center

9 A.M. - Kid's Dash Begins (1/3 mile) commences at the same spot as other events

8:30 - 11 A.M. - Pancake Breakfast at the Fire Station at 32707 Franklin Road

Registration forms as well as more information are available at www.a2racemanagement.com, www.franklin-history.org and the Village of Franklin Offices 32325 Franklin Road

Get Read, Get Set, Go to the 7th Annual Franklin Community Center fundraising events!

September Events on the Village Green

Friday September 25 - Questers' "Riders Up" event at 7:00 PM

Saturday September 26 - Build a Scarecrow workshop - 10 AM to 3 PM in the Kreger Barn

Saturday September 26 - Ming the Magnificent Magician Show - 1 PM.

**IN MEMORIAM:
KEN AND JOAN ISRAEL; MAX ALTEKRUSE**

The Historical Society observes with sorrow the recent passing of three champions of Franklin's history and character – Joan and Ken Israel and Max Altekruise.

Joan Israel, who passed away on December 30, 2014, was a member of the Franklin Historic District Study Committee in the mid to late 1990's. Joan was a long time board member of the Friends of the Franklin Public Library. With Jane Polan, Joan founded First Fridays at the Kreger House, where seniors would meet on the first Friday of every month. Joan also helped to establish a program to match volunteers with Franklin seniors to help them with household chores.

Ken Israel passed away on January 18, 2015. Ken was an officer and Trustee of the Historical Society from 1988 through 2002. He worked tirelessly for the Historical Society during that time and was a constant presence during plant sales, the Strawberry Jazz Festivals, Holly Days, Round Ups and other projects supporting the Society.

Ken, a psychiatrist, and Joan, a clinical social worker, both lived and worked in Franklin from 1977 until their deaths.

Max Altekruise died on February 21, 2015. He and his late wife Kathy lived and raised their family in the Historic District. Max, a past President of the Historical Society, and Kathy were stalwarts of preservation efforts in the early days, when various interests were competing to determine exactly what historic preservation meant in the context of Franklin's incipient Historic District. It was through the efforts of Villagers like Max and Kathy that the historical character of Franklin was preserved at all. Without the efforts of these early advocates, it is likely that a Kroger supermarket would be where the Village Green now stands.

Max worked as a commercial artist until his retirement when he devoted himself full time to oil painting. The Society is the proud owner of many of Max's ink drawings of historic Franklin buildings.

The Franklin Historical Society wishes to recognize the contributions of Joan and Ken Israel and Max Altekruise to the Society and to the Village of Franklin. Without their efforts, and the efforts of others like them, Franklin would not be the special place that it is today.



SATURDAY, JUNE 6th, 2015 **Seventh Annual** **Franklin Community Center** **Fund Raising Event** **FRANKLIN, MICHIGAN**

The 5K run, walk, Kids Dash, strut your mutt and pancake breakfast to raise funds for the Franklin Community Center is Saturday, June 6th. Registration forms are available at www.a2racemanagement.com or at the Franklin Village Offices (32325 Franklin Road). You can also register the day of the run beginning at 7 A.M.

The run/walk begins at 8 A.M. in front of the Franklin Community Center at 26225 Carol Street just west of the Village Offices. The cost is \$30 by 5/23, \$35 thru 6/6, which includes a T-shirt and pancake breakfast. Fees are \$5 less if you choose a vintage shirt rather than a new one. Prizes are awarded for first, second and third place males and females.

The strut your mutt commences at the same time as the walk. The cost is \$12 by 5/23, \$15 thru 6/6 per dog and includes one breakfast and a goodie bag for the first 25 participants.

The Kids Dash begins at 9:00 AM - \$12 by 5/23, \$15 thru 6/6 and includes one breakfast and a kite.

Pick up a registration form at the Village Office or sign up on www.a2racemanagement.com. For information on these events please contact: John Pulker 248-538-0183 or Ann or Bill Lamott 248-538-0273.

The pancake breakfast, a cooperative effort between Boy Scout Troop 1699 and the Franklin Bingham Fire Department, consists of pancakes, sausage, juice and coffee prepared by the Scouts and held at the fire station on Franklin Road.

Scouts will be cooking from 8:30 – 11 A.M. Adult tickets are \$8, children ages 4-12 \$5 and children ages 3 and under are free. *For additional information on the breakfast, please contact: Gary Roberts 248-626-0219.*

So, come run, walk, dash or strut your stuff and finish off the morning with pancakes or just come have a family breakfast at the fire station.

For updates and upcoming events on the Franklin Community Center visit the website www.franklin-history.org.



WWW.FRANKLIN-HISTORY.ORG