

THE ROARING TWENTIES OR THE SNORING TWENTIES

(as told by the 1860 catalpa tree that once stood behind the library)

I was a mere lad of sixty years during the Roaring Twenties. I wondered what happened to people's sanity! There were marathon dances. Why, people would dance for hours in a contest to see who would survive the longest. Most didn't! Women's skirt lengths were shorter, their hair was bobbed and they suddenly had the right to vote! Times were changing. In the big cities, men would shinny up a flag pole and sit there for hours, sometimes even days hoping to get attention and some monetary gain. They certainly did receive a lot of attention! Others became barnstormers. They would stand on the wing of an airplane while it was in flight and do other unimaginable and unthinkable feats. And, the slang that we heard was colorful and incomprehensible. Who would have thought that if someone said you were the bee's knees or the cat's meow that it was a good thing?!

Now, that was life in the big city. Here in Franklin, life was more like the Snoring Twenties! What was the village like? It was like a little western ghost town. It had had its day. John Currin's store was in the building currently housing Driven. The post office was a cabinet at one end of the counter. Mrs. Clemons had a grocery store (Just Guys) and Fred Van Every had a pool hall (Weaver and Young.) The farmers and tradesmen were becoming a memory. Descendants of our first settlers were working outside of their comfort zones in Pontiac and Detroit. Many were employed in the auto industry. Auto industry? Yes, now we were getting places by another kind of horse power!

The first gas for automobiles was pumped at Currin's store. Gas was brought over from Birmingham by a team of horses and wagon about five-hundred gallons at a time. We still depended on our four-legged friends!

Telephones and electricity sparked up our lives and connected us to people outside of our village limits. We welcomed these new-fangled things in our homes.

Reverend Edward Dunleavy was the minister at the Methodist Episcopal Church on German Mill. He breathed life into a church that was struggling with memberships when the boys went off to war. Rhea Bowden was his step daughter. She remembers that the parsonage home was a reddi-cut one. You could order a custom home from a catalog from companies like Sears or Lewis. At that time, catalog homes were popular in Michigan. We may not have had dance marathons, barnstormers or flagpole sitters, but we were pretty excited about selecting our hardware, cabinets, plumbing, porches etc. to build ourselves a home! The lumber and everything else would be shipped by train to Birmingham. Building instructions were included. Everything was numbered. The house was put together like a puzzle!

Our boys were returning from the Great War. Frank German came home and filled the needed void of our village doctor. Harry Spicer, excited that his dad had erected a catalog house for him, was a mechanic. Kenneth Bingham became a salesperson for General Motors. Unfortunately, Charles Delling Jr. of Company E 47th Infantry was killed in France and was brought home to be laid to rest in our cemetery.

Across the street from the cemetery was the Brick school. At 4 o'clock in the morning on January 28, 1922, a fire roared through the building. The school could not be saved. Classes were held at the church or upstairs in Currin's store until the present building was completed.

And, so that was our Roaring Twenties. We were moving from a life as farmers and tradesmen to occupations that would take us out of what we had known. Electricity, telephones, automobiles, houses in a box. . .what would be next? We didn't marry the girl next door, but the girl in the next town. We had been to war, we had lost friends and family members. We were becoming more aware of our world and leaving our roots. Yet, we will always be rooted in our hometown. I can attest to that!

THE HORSESHOE CAPER!

The Franklin Historical Society is launching a horseshoe caper! We've put a little fun into our lives this summer by hiding a golden horseshoe in the historic district or around the village green. The person that finds it, then hides it again and so on.

The rules are written on a tag connected to the horseshoe. Here's the words:

If you want to play, text a message/picture to 248-931-0500 and let us know where you found the horseshoe. Text a picture of you holding it if you like! After messaging, re-hide it anywhere in the historic district or around the village green. We will be tracking its whereabouts and posting its journey on the Franklin Historical Society website - www.franklin-history.org



Here is the poem attached to the horseshoe:
HOORAY!
You found the horseshoe tucked away!
It's yours to hide in plain view
So another will discover and hide it too!
The hunt is on, the fun begins!
Keep it going! Everyone wins!

(from Franklin's Yesteryear by Bert Wood)
Minnie Lett walked the half-mile to the general store twice a week for her mail and provisions which shows the kind of mettle her generation was made of. Here is one of her conversations.
"What you need Minnie is a man." "Huh! More bother than they are good. Never see one yet that could split wood to suit me."
"How old are you Minnie?" "Eighty-one years and I can handle an axe or one end of a cross-cut saw today better than a lot of men, but I'm not going to do it anymore."

A WHILE AGO IN FRANKLIN

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HOPE, PURITY, DIGNITY

These three words represented the Suffrage movement. The Suffragettes organization was a national women's group promoting the right for women to vote. Their ultimate goal was realized when the 19th Amendment was approved by Congress. Michigan was the second state to vote for acceptance of it. The amendment became law in August 1920.

The movement was a long struggle. It was believed that women should not vote, work outside the home or be involved in politics. It was their job to reform society by raising moral children. The old adage, "A woman's place is in the home" rang true for many years. The men ruled the public sphere. Their involvement was business, trade and politics.

Prior to the right to vote, life for women in Franklin was no different than daily living for women in other communities. Since women could not participate on the school board, Cemetery Society, fraternal organizations or become a postmaster or justice of the peace, then what did they do? How did they contribute?

Franklin women supported their men and their community in a number of ways. Many were active in the Ladies Aid Society at church. They raised money for church carpet and held chicken pie suppers to pay for the minister's salary. Donations were twenty-five cents or less. They also accepted donations of meat, vegetables or firewood. The minister's family lived on these donations.

During the Civil War, they wrote letters to soldiers to keep them in touch with village goings-on like who was dating whom, when was he going to "pop" the question, who was visiting in town and how long they were going to stay. They knitted socks and gloves for care packages, sewed Company flags and sent food to the front lines.

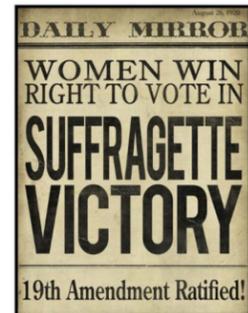
The Women's Auxiliary of the Cemetery Society had bake sales and published cookbooks to help pay for a fence around the cemetery.

Women served their village volunteering in many ways. They were wives and mothers. Prior to marriage, several worked as domestics. Perhaps,

this position, was in preparation for their future of keeping house. Others were midwives or teachers.

Elizabeth German Rust was more likely known as Albert Rust's wife. During these times women's identity was blurred by the success of their spouse. In this case, Albert was a church deacon, postmaster and merchant. However, Elizabeth came from a prominent English family involved in the milling industry. Why, even a street was named after them.

German Mill! She was very active in the Methodist Episcopal Church located on the street bearing her maiden name and served as the recording secretary there. She was known for her generosity and acts of kindness. Elizabeth passed away twenty-five years before she would have been able to vote.



Jane Drake Van Every was the wife of Peter Van Every Jr. They lived in the mansion on Franklin Road just south of 14 Mile. In 1872, part of their home became a hotel. It was called the Temperance Hotel. No liquor was served there. After her husband passed away, Jane was the sole hotel keeper. Hotel keeping must have been in their blood

because their daughter, Rosemond Van Every Tibbits also became a successful keeper at the Rosemond Inn located on the east side of Inkster just north of Northwestern Highway. Her mother, Jane, didn't have the opportunity to vote. Times had changed. Rosemond was able to vote at the age of 50. She left her legacy of her inn as well as three streets name after her: Rosemond Court, Lane and Drive.

Also, living for a time at the Van Every mansion, was Rachel Van Every. She was a granddaughter of Peter and Amy Van Every. She was a domestic for her grandmother. Rachel was in love with Otto Berger, a Civil War soldier. Her letters kept him posted on the oyster suppers, church events and the weather.

Women were not allowed to be a trustee or an officer in the Cemetery Society; however, they did form a "Hope, Puri..." *Continued on Page 3*

HOPE, PURITY, DIGNITY

Women's Auxiliary group which supported the organization. The Society was formed in 1852. By 1892, the first women were appointed as trustees. Welcome Rebecca West, Harriet Potts and Mattie Sly Cummings! Addie Sly, Mattie's cousin, became vice-president of the organization in 1918 and president in 1920. It was the same year the amendment passed allowing the women the right to vote. Do you think it was a coincidence?

Life was altered for women. They were playing a larger role in their community. Evidence of this, was Mildred Wood and Rhea Bowden. Neither of them would have remembered a time when women couldn't vote! Both worked outside of the home. Mildred was employed at her dad's store (the building that currently houses Driven), and Rhea worked at the Detroit Urban Railroad in Pontiac.

I haven't verified any Franklin woman that was a suffragette, but I suspect if there was one, Minnie Leet would be the candidate! She lived in the red house on Romany Lane. Minnie was born in 1863 and passed away in 1950's. She would have experienced not voting and gaining the privilege. She definitely had opinions about everything which leads me to believe she had thoughts on women's voting rights as well.

This summer on August 26th, we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment. Gentleman, tip your hat to the ladies. They have always stood by your side even when they didn't have a voice.

TWO OF A KIND

We were blessed to have Madeline Haddad and Bob Smith in our lives. They were steadfast volunteers in the Franklin Historical Society. They added spirit, grit and joy in every aspect of their voluntary work.

Madeline and her husband George were always available to help with elementary age school groups at the museum. They pitched in with our pioneer program helping kids grinding corn, "shaving," writing with quill and ink and playing with old fashion toys.

The Kreger project (Franklin Community Center) allowed Madeline to shine even more. She was part of the A-Team which was a joint venture between she and Gary Roberts. Between the two of them, they chaired the annual pancake breakfast. Madeline made sure that the coffee kept flowing during the event.

At our frequent Kreger committee meetings, Madeline kept us posted on the thank you notes she had written for donations made. We could always count on her.

Bob Smith was our resident handy man. There wasn't anything that Bob couldn't fix! He meticulously restored original knobs, handles and

CHOMPING AT THE BIT!

We have been laying the foundation to develop new, exciting, informational and interactive exhibits at the historical museum located at 26165 Thirteen Road at Kirk Lane.

The work began with our archivist, Barb Louie. Her experience in archiving journals, letters, photos, news articles and books has been invaluable. She has taken our "stuff" and made sense out of it. Everything has been indexed so we can access materials at our fingertips.

Next, we have had many of these materials scanned so that they are digitally available.

Through the years we have acquired artifacts from descendants of our early settlers. The artifacts are being catalogued so that we know their ownership. The information also includes a photo and description of each item.

Research of people, places and events is a constant task that provides insight into the beginnings of our village.

All of these factors have prepared us to tell the stories. We are excited to share them with you!

At the moment, the museum is getting a complete face lift. We've rolled into action painting rooms. Everything has been thoroughly cleaned. And now, the fun begins putting exhibits together in a way that not only makes sense, but is a fun way to learn about our community.

We'll let you know when we're ready to open the doors and welcome you.

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

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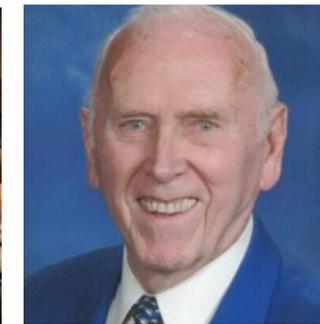
Contributors: Bill & Ann Lamott

DONATIONS:

Dress form and statue of Ben Franklin
-Madeline Haddad family

Original lumber/nails
- Alec & Stephanie Kokoska
(Snow house - 32635 Franklin Road)

Check out our new look!
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