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# Kite & Key

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Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

November 2008

*Do not let spacious plans for a new world divert your energies from saving what is left of the old. ~ Winston Churchill*

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## Recycle Kreger Farm Buildings

Maxine Kreger Nelson lived in the farmhouse at 26565 Scenic Drive her whole life. The home had been in her family since 1901. Charles Johnston and Grace German, her grandfather and grandmother, bought the home at that time. Maxine's mother, Cora, grew up there. She would later marry Art Kreger and raise Maxine and her brother Robert.

Listening to Maxine talk about growing up in the village of Franklin was alluring! She recalled skiing down school hill and skating on the mill pond. She walked down Scenic Drive to attend classes at the Franklin school. Along the way, she passed only two other houses that were on her street, one was across from hers; the other was just east.

Maxine was proud of her pioneer family! She would often point out structures where family members had lived. Homes on Wing Lake Road south of 14 Mile, 14 Mile west of Inkster and the Broughton house (Village Hall) had connections to her. Her family ties were intertwined with many early pioneer families, German Mill was named after her great grandfather, John German, a miller in the village. He traveled from England with his parents and siblings in 1837. They lived in the Broughton house.

Grace, one of John and Jane German's daughters, was Maxine's grandmother. Grace married Charlie Johnston. Their daughter, Cora, was Maxine's mother. Cora married Art Kreger. Maxine, their daughter, married Bob Nelson.

Although the farmhouse, barn and shed belonged to Maxine's family for over 100 years, the property ownership dates back to 1826 when Daniel Wood purchased it from the federal government. Lucius and Hamilton Miller (Hamilton is buried in the cemetery) owned the property from 1848 to the mid-1860's. Ownership from the 1860's to 1901 is unclear.

The property was recently sold. The owner has generously donated the structures to the Franklin Historical Society and \$15,000 to help defray the cost of moving the buildings to another location in the village. The buildings, rich in history, provided a way of life. We have the opportunity to recapture their rural life with a new purpose.

A group of villagers formed to save the Kreger farm has been working diligently with Gene Hopkins, an historic preservation architect. Gene has worked on projects at the Whitney, on Mackinac Island and Fishtown in Leland. A site plan has been developed. The home, barn and shed would be located near the Broughton house. It makes sense to bring two homes intertwined in history together! The buildings would serve the community. Suggestions for their use include a rest room and a gathering place.

The project has been endorsed by the Franklin Historical Society, Franklin Historic District Commission, Franklin Foundation, Franklin Community Association and the Garden Club. Discover how you can donate your time and money to make this project a reality. You can mail your tax deductible contribution payable to the FHS Kreger Fund, P.O. Box 200007, Franklin, Mi. 48025. To learn more about the project, check out the website: [www.kregerhouse.org](http://www.kregerhouse.org).

# Got History?

According to the handwritten minutes of the Cemetery Society at its annual meeting on September 18, 1896, it was moved "that we clean the cemetery and erect a tool house this fall." The motion was carried. The minutes were signed by George Bingham, Secretary.

The tool house or tool shed has been standing for a long time! At some point, there was an addition on the north side. Recently, the Cemetery Association presented a proposal to the Historic District Commission to restore the shed to its original look. The addition has been removed and a new roof is in place. A signboard has been constructed south of the building which holds a map of the plots.

In the 1950's, William "Gramps" Fraser lived in the converted tool shed in the heart of the cemetery. He was a farmer and father of Lester Fraser who operated the Franklin Food Shop.

Fraser kept a 24 hour vigil against vandals. Any defiance to his authority was likely to result in a seat full of buckshot! "I don't fool around with the ones who come at night to knock tombstones down and devil the dead," he said.

The Cemetery Society was organized in 1852. Now called the Cemetery Association, its responsibility to serve its members and respect its grounds continues. Looking for history? Watch for upcoming cemetery tours to hear the stories of Franklin's pioneers.

## Let's Here It For The Boys

### Sigma Phi Lends A Hand

In the spring and fall, Nick Downing and his Sigma Phi fraternity brothers from Lawrence Tech University continued to spruce up the Franklin Historic Museum property nature grounds. Their community service was outstanding. Garlic mustard, buckthorn, fallen trees, brush and deadwood were removed. Thanks Nick, for organizing your Zeta Omicron Chapter. We appreciate the time and effort you've given us the past few years!

### Boy Scouts Make A Difference

As an Eagle scout project, Onurkan Karabulut extended the path that other Eagle scouts had started. The trail is a work in progress. We have had three Eagle scout candidates that have cleared debris and trimmed trees to create a pathway. As you stroll through the woods, you might spot some critters! Tree stumps offer a spot for you to rest along the way.

Onurkan and his helpers added another rest area. They cut logs in half and rested them on tree stumps. Sit down on a comfortable log and enjoy the sights and sounds of the nature trail.

## Historical Marker Dedicated

The cemetery historic marker, located at the Scenic Drive entrance, was dedicated in memory of Jim Pikulas who was President of the Cemetery Association for 14 years. It was purchased through donations from Cemetery Association members. The dedication ceremony was held on Memorial Day.

Cathy and Chrissy Pikulas did the unveiling. The marker describes the cemetery timeline and highlights the original landowners that are buried there.



## List of Museum's Acquisitions

1. Child's buggy, high chair, books and assorted history related items - Bob and Bart Kreger
2. Village Tea Room sign - Jane Roberts
3. Boy Scout materials - Bill Wertman
4. Franklin Band music and related items - Bob Smith
5. Old printing press (on loan) - Jane and Jesse Polan
6. Quilting hoop - Kasey McQueen
7. Hand plow - Carmina Tuksal
8. Village Council records and prints - Anne Jones
9. Old school desks - Mary Jane and Bob Major
10. Historic whatchamacallits (they look like old farm implements) - Dave Roberts



*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 provide for accessibility for 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.

The *Kite & Key* and the Society welcome mail at P.O. Box 250007, Franklin, MI 48025.

Our phone is 248-538-0565.

Contributors: Bill & Ann Lamott

## Franklin Historical Society Financial Report

12 months ending October 30, 2008

Beginning balance	\$12,819
Income	
Membership dues	\$ 5,999
Donations	\$12,853
Tours	\$531
Plant sale profit	\$1,308
Interest	\$250
Total income	\$20,941
Expenses	
Gutters	\$2,200
Attic Insulation	\$2,150
Electrical and lighting	\$5,265
Maintenance/ utilities	\$5,521
Miscellaneous	\$4,253
Printing/ postage	\$2,423
Fees	\$211
Kreger Farm drawings	\$300
Total expenses	\$22,323
Ending balance	\$11,437

# 2009 Franklin Historical Society Membership

It's time to renew your annual membership in the Franklin Historical Society. We accomplished much in 2008 and, with your support, look forward to an even better 2009. Some of our activities included:

- Upgraded the museum building electrical and lighting system, installed new gutters, rebuilt the brick chimney and added insulation in the attic.
- Led efforts to preserve the Kreger Farm Buildings and recycle them into a contemporary use by all Villagers
- Completed the native plant landscaping in front of the museum building.
- Continued our Historic Franklin school group programs to include West Maple and Detroit Country Day 3<sup>rd</sup> graders.
- Continued genealogical research of early Franklin residents.

Your support in 2009 will allow the momentum to continue. Financial as well as volunteer efforts are needed to help us to continue offering historic education and to preserve Franklin's history. The Society also welcomes the donations of pictures and artifacts related to Franklin's history.

Please fill out the bottom of this page and return it with your tax-deductible contribution.

Thanks for your help.

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I want to become a 2009 member of the Franklin Historical Society.

Family/Individual Membership \$35

Business Membership \$50

Life Membership \$400

I also want to contribute an additional amount to the capital improvement fund.

Additional amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I have photos or artifacts to contribute. Please contact me.

I would like to contribute my time to work on Society projects. Please contact me.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

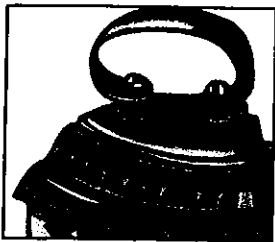
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form and your tax-deductible contribution to the Franklin Historical Society, P.O. Box 250007, Franklin, MI 48025.

# Harvesting History!



What do a hinge, flat iron, axe head, chisel, wheel hub, thimble and milk bottle have in common? They all tell a story! The story begins on the village green where the items and their origin have been buried for years. They were recently uncovered by a curiosity seeker and given to the Franklin Historic

Society to display at the museum. Researching the people that lived there may provide some insight into the relics discovered.

A map of Franklin from 1845 to 1872 places two structures on the village green. One of the buildings was the residence of John and Jane German; the other belonged to Henry S. Cox.

John German (1813-1884) boarded the Brig Lord Ramsey with his parents and siblings in Biddeford, England and arrived in New York on June 12, 1837. It is uncertain how they traveled to Michigan. The Erie Canal was completed twelve years before their arrival to America. The German family could have begun their journey on the Erie Canal to Buffalo, then boarded a steamship or schooner to Detroit. Travel on foot or horseback would have brought them to their new settlement called Franklin.

In 1844 John married Jane Ann White from Michigan. They raised eight children. John was a miller and a farmer. He served as a trustee and officer in the Cemetery Society. The street German Mill, was named after him.

Henry S. Cox (1826-1910) was also an Englishman. He departed Bristol, England on the ship Devonia and arrived in New York twelve years after the German family. Cox may have secured passage to Michigan in a similar way. He obtained a job as a wagon maker in Detroit. He also studied medicine in England and at the University of Michigan. Cox married Grace Trick around 1852. They had five daughters. His wife passed away after only eight years of marriage.

Henry Cox entered the military from 1861-1865. His unit, the 1st Michigan Cavalry, Company G, served at Gettysburg. Dr. Henry Cox was an assistant surgeon when he was discharged.

After his return to Franklin, Cox opened up his medical office on the green. Besides caring for the sick, he was a member of the school board, justice of the peace and secretary of the Cemetery Society.

A map of Franklin from 1872-1908 reveals the home and cow pasture of Sammy Green (1847-1928). Green was a native of Michigan. When he was 18, he joined the 13th Independent Battery, Michigan Light Artillery during the Civil War. Sammy and his wife Mary had 5 boys and 2 girls. Green was a farmer and had a livery stable. He served his community as a constable and Cemetery Society trustee and sexton.

Green's grounds were often the site of Franklin fun. "Every 4th of July we'd have baseball games in Sammy Green's cow pasture and race horses up and down Franklin Road. One year the fellow who was suppose to set off the fire works got into the cider barrel a little too often. He got mixed up somewhere and all of those wonderful fire works went off in a muddle together. It was wonderful!" (Walter Johnston in the All About Franklin Book)

The Germans, Coxes and Greens went about their daily lives as a miller, doctor, farmer and community servant. They left behind parcels of the lives that they led. Did Jane German use the thimble while hemming a dress for one of her daughters? Did she press the hem with the flat iron? Was the wheel hub from a wagon that took the German family to church services on Sunday?

Was the rusty hinge from a door on Dr. Cox's medical office? Did the axe head and chisel help split firewood to warm patients while they waited to see the doctor? Perhaps the milk bottle once sat in the middle of the Green's kitchen table, after all, there were seven children to feed!

The families that lived on the green now view it from the cemetery. All are buried on the sandy hill. We can only speculate the stories behind the items that they left behind. And, they can wonder about our curiosity!

## Corunna Founder's Day

The Village of Corunna celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary on September 6, 2008. While planning the event, someone discovered a map of the Village of Franklin in the basement of the library. Further inspection revealed the name of Ebenezer Raynale in the corner of the map.

Ebenezer, a Vermont native, arrived in Franklin in 1828. He was the first doctor and first post master in our village. He married Eliza Cassidy and raised five children. One son, Spencer, became a lawyer. He moved to Corunna.

The connection . . .

Corunna officials had made the connection between the Raynales. Although they had no idea why the map was in Corunna, they wanted to return it to Franklin. Bill and Ann Lamott, representing the Franklin Historical Society, accepted the map in a ceremony. In return, the Historical Society presented the Raynale genealogy to the mayor of Corunna.

The two villages will be forever connected to one another.



## Read'in and Writ'in and 'Rithmetic 1828-2008

One hundred eighty years ago, the first school opened in Franklin. It was a double log cabin built south of the Broughton House on land donated by Elijah Bullock. The log school house was soon outgrown. A frame building was erected on the east side of Franklin Road. It is currently a private residence.

About twenty five years later, the Brick School was built at the top of the hill to accommodate the increase of students. In the winter of 1922, it went up in flames. While the fourth and last school was being constructed, children attended classes in the church and in a meeting room above the Brick Store (Market Basket.)

There were some pupils who were not unhappy to see the school burn. It meant that Arnold, son of George Bingham, and his friends would not have to catch skunks and bathe themselves in the terrible odor so the teacher would send them home!

Some thought it was a blessing that the fifty three year old school burned. Township people argued over the choice of rebuilding the school on the same "sand burr" lot where it stood before the fire. They said the small lot had no playground. Because of the possibility of rains washing the schoolyard away, a heavy retaining wall had been built along Franklin Road.

The Franklin School District No. 3, Southfield Township, joined the Birmingham Public schools in 1945. This building closed as a public school in 1979 and is now the site of The Dar Al-Huda Private Islamic School.

## Peer into the Past

Pictured in the windows above the Market Basket door are memories of the Brick Store. A drawing depicts how it appeared in 1900. Successive photographs tell the story of its transition.

Framed on the walls of the Franklin Grill are prints of the past. Look for the Franklin Community Band organized after the Civil War, the Congleton Buggy Works and the Broughton House (Village Hall.)

All of the prints may be purchased from the Franklin Historical Society. For inquiries, leave a message at the museum: 248-538-0565.

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## Winterfest!

Winterfest activities will be held on Saturday, December 6th. The Historical Society will be selling roasted chestnuts near the Yanke Jewelry shop starting at 2 P.M. Be sure to check out the old fashion wooden toys. They make great holiday gifts!

## A While Ago In Franklin

It was a common and necessary practice in rural villages to recycle old buildings. Farmers and carpenters moved and renovated whole buildings no matter what their former use. If a house or shed was not immediately usable, the men piled timbers in fields and saved them for another time. The Franklin library is a building that has seen many uses. (All About Franklin Book)

2009 Franklin Historical Society  
Membership Info Inside

[www.franklin-history.org](http://www.franklin-history.org)

FRANKLIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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