

'The Town That Time Forgot'

Franklin Reflects A Proud Heritage

By NITA HARD
Special Writer

The history of this small town is as hard to define as its irregular topography. Much of Franklin's early history is intertwined with the development of Southfield, Bloomfield and Farmington townships.

Two men, Dillucena Stoughton and Elijah Bullock, bought big sections of land in 1824 and 1825, as soon as the territory was open. In 1828 the area became officially identified as Franklin with the establishment of a United State Post Office.

On Sept. 19, 1928, Dr. Ebenezer Raynale was named first postmaster, with the office housed in the log cabin dwelling of Dorus Morton where the young unmarried doctor was a boarder.

A LOG CABIN school house was also erected in 1828 and it wasn't long before families began to settle there. A public meeting house was built in 1830 and a store was built by Dr. Raynale to be operated by a William Houston, said to be from New York.

Next came a shoemaker, Harvey Lee. Bullock built a tavern and a second tavern was opened by Dorus

Morton in 1833 as an addition to his loghouse and post office.

When Peter Van Avery, Sr., moved out to Franklin in 1837 things really started to hum. He built a mill, a distillery and a potashery.

By 1877, Franklin had a church, a schoolhouse, a temperance hotel, two flour mills, three general stores, a drug store, hardware, tin shop, four blacksmith shops, shoemaker and two wagon shops.

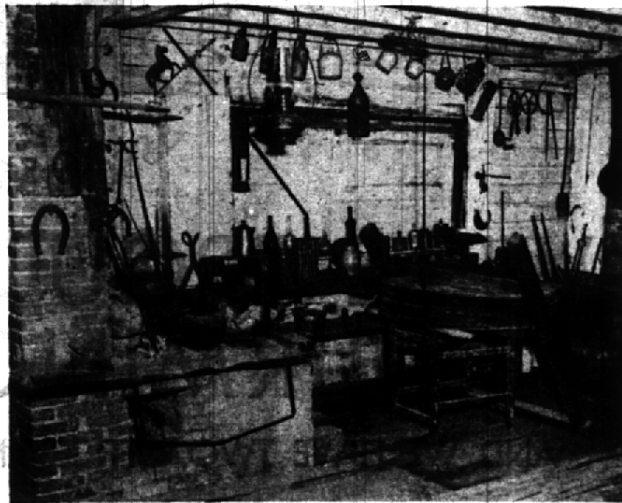
'TIS SAID that destiny chose to favor Birmingham, rather than Franklin.

In the beginning of the development of the territory, the two settlements were of like size, but the Grand Trunk Railroad provided Birmingham with that vital link between Detroit and Pontiac, and Franklin fell to the wayside.

Then, in the early 1930's, Franklin got George Wellington Smith, and modern history has no choice but to admit that this made a big difference to the present character of Franklin.

The young ambitious land developer from Detroit selected the quiet little rural town of Franklin to fulfill his dreams.

HIS DEEP conviction that the charm and natural beauty of the area should be rigidly controlled by building restrictions and architectural standards has given Franklin its present prestige.



INTERIOR OF EARLY FRANKLIN BLACKSMITH SHOP

Forge and bellows were used by George E. Coulton.

TODAY, Franklin has a home-rule government, incorporating to be self-governing in 1953 and its present school, housed in a building built in 1922, was accepted into the Birmingham School system in 1945.

The Spiritual side of Franklin has been cared for under several roofs, beginning with a log house built in 1831.

THE FRANKLIN Library has existed since 1837 and has always occupied the same home, but changed landlords.

History tells us Franklin had a brass band in the good 'ole days. Franklin has a 22 member band

today, which plays at all official functions.

Until 1953, theater played a minor role in Franklin's cultural experience. However, with the birth of the Franklin Village Players who gave their 22 production this spring, theater is here to stay.

IN 1956, JUNIOR Players was organized for the teen-agers of the village.

The Franklin Community Association, organized in the 1930's now serves the community to promote recreation and social projects.

The village now has a first-class post office, built in 1960, and pro-

vides residents with house-to-house mail delivery. William Jones has been postmaster for 26 years.

The town has no cooper shop now, but boasts a gas station, a hardware, two beauty shops, a barber, a grocer, a professional building for medical services, an antique and furniture shop, a knitting shop, a bank, a gift shop, three real estate offices and a tea room, cleaners and a dress shop.

MONEY, GOOD taste and sentiment have played a big hand in remodeling the faces of many structures, but beneath their well-painted exteriors, the nostalgic can find shades of the past still clinging.

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VILLAGE'S BERT WOOD TRACES FRANKLIN'S HISTORY

Historian's "Franklin Yesteryear" relives past.

Meet 'Mr. Franklin'—Historian Bert Wood

By BARBARA UNDERWOOD
Special Writer

Bert Wood, affectionately and officially known as "Mr. Franklin," can trace his family back as far in the history of the village as any other resident still living here.

Wood's great-grandfather, Daniel Wood, came to Franklin from New Hampshire in 1825, bringing with him his wife and family, which included a son, Cyrenius, then three years old.

Some years later, Daniel went on westward, but Cyrenius, who was about 15, was already working in the community and stayed to make it his home for his entire life. He married Mary Wallace and they had two sons, William and Milton.

THE FAMILY homestead was

on the site of Franklin Hills Country Club, and a second farm they owned was at 14 Mile and Orchard Lake roads. William was Bert Wood's father. The brothers, William and Milton, owned the Wood Brothers Stock Farm, specializing in trotting horses.

Bert Wood also had a younger brother, James D. Wood, former justice of the peace and supervisor in Southfield Township, who died in 1955. Bert Wood and his wife, who died in 1924, had three daughters.

AS FRANKLIN'S dedicated historian, Bert Wood, a spry and sprightly 85 years old, has preserved many memories of the past in Franklin Village in his book, "Franklin's Yesteryear."

ADVANCED ARCADIAN BEAUTY

Village Founder Had A Plan

By MARY LUPTON
Special Writer

"The Town That Time Forgot" would be matched with "Franklin" by most Michigan adults, but few of them now remember where the slogan originated.

In May, 1920, George Wellington Smith took his family for a drive through the peaceful Franklin countryside. They were captivated by the beauty of the region and bought land and a home from Gaylord W. Gillis.

IN HIS business travels, Smith had seen new subdivisions that were being built with as little as 60-foot frontages and with no concern for appearance.

Busy with his construction work, Smith still found time to begin building a dream, to develop the Franklin area without spoiling it. He began buying land near his home.

"It was a unique idea. It did not embrace 'cityfication', but on the contrary, the Franklin Village idea was to advance its Arcadian beauty," Smith recalls.

He recorded the first plat in 1925, known as "Franklin Villas." Instead of the standardized lot, the lot sizes were varied to enhance the overall appearance and averaged an acre in size.

LONG BEFORE zoning boards had become accepted features of urban living, Smith protected his new subdivision with rigid restrictions on architecture, cost and location of buildings.

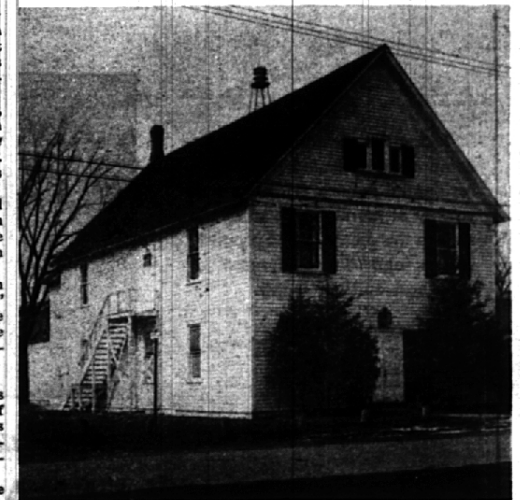
One of the early ads included the line "so thoroughly does Franklin preserve the quaint charm, peace and contentment, and simple loveliness of bygone days that it has been rightly called 'The Town That Time Forgot.'"

Soon the slogan became so well known that Smith received a card which had been mailed in New York only two days before. The address on the card was only "The Town That Time Forgot," Michigan.

THE VALUE OF homes in the area gradually increased. Smith's original real estate office was sold to Franklin and is occupied by village offices and a library.

Since the first platting of Franklin Village, Smith has added adjoining farms to the development for 17 years.

Detroiters still enjoy the traditional Sunday drive to Franklin because it still appears to be "The Town That Time Forgot."



FRANKLIN COMMUNITY HALL IN JULY, 1954

A fire in 1958 destroyed most of the building.