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Farmington remembers market crash

By MARY GNIEWEK

What were Farmington headlines when the stock market crashed?

The Farmington Methodist Church celebrated its 100th anniversary. Farmington High was gearing up for its presentation of the annual school play, "When's Your Birthday." And Stanley F. Smith doubled the space of his drugstore, the Farmington Drug Co. Those were the biggest stories in the Farmington Enterprise newspaper on Oct. 31, 1929, the first edition to hit the newsstands after the stock market crash. That crash occurred 50 years ago today.

"Not a lot of people here played the stock market, so it didn't affect people much," recalled Farmington Hills city clerk Floyd Cairns, who was a student at Farmington High in 1929.

"The impact was felt here in 1932. That's when the banks went under. And that's what I remember most."

In 1929, life in Farmington marched on without much local publicity generated from the crash. Just a single editorial reprinted from the Toledo Times appeared in the first post-crash Enterprise newspaper.

Headlined "Sucker Trimming," it blamed the crash on "the technic of Wall Street."

"The market hasn't a chance to follow a natural course," it said. "Tons of literature are sent out daily by the street to stimulate action. The sucker list supplies the names and the brokers see to it that none of the easy marks are overlooked."

STILL A predominantly rural community, Farmington in 1929 had 131 farms — a fact which Cairns thinks helped ease the destitute condition which wrenched the rest of the country. "Because of the farm, we had food," Cairns said. "We just had to buy the staples, like sugar and flour."

The rural community was also a lifeline for Wellington "Pete" Hullin, a member of the first black family to settle in Farmington.

Hullin lived with his great aunt Mary Wilson and cousin Claude Wilson, an Oakland County sheriff, on a five-acre apple orchard near Orchard Lake and Eleven Mile roads.

Today, at age 70, Hullin still works out of his home as a television repairman. "I trapped animals — raccoons, mink, and weasels. I'd skin them and dry them on the chicken coops," he recalled of the Depression days. "And I'd work for a dollar a day helping farmers in the area."

Hullin remembers neighbors who couldn't pay their bank notes and had property repossessed. He remembers chopping lots of wood which didn't burn well.

"Really, though, I had good luck. I worked for myself since I was a kid."

Hullin said he took his money out of a local bank because of a warning from a friend's father that the bank would go broke.

When the Farmington State Savings Bank closed in July, 1931, and the People's State Bank closed later that year, Cairns wasn't as lucky.

"I LOST \$40 in one bank and \$20 in the other," he said. "For me, that was like the end of the world. I'd been saving pennies for years."

In addition, Cairn's parents, Archie and Sarah, lost \$300 in savings.

"My family put the earnings for the month from the milk route business and the farm in the bank the day before it closed," he said.

"There was no money to pay anyone. We owed for gas and repairs on a truck, which was just fixed. The check bounced."

Cairns remembers that his farm on Farmington Road south of Fourteen Mile was the site of many family get-togethers during the Depression.

"Family ties were closer then. We didn't have money to spend on entertainment."

"My mother had seven brothers and sisters. They all lived near us. We'd have a big party every couple of weeks. We played cards, danced, ate sandwiches and cake."

BOB COOK's family were Farmington city-folk, but they weathered the Depression years despite some lean times.

Those were times when unemployed persons from Farmington marched on Pontiac to protest the system of poor welfare relief. The legal aids in the Farmington Enterprise were full of mortgage foreclosure sales.

Several prominent Farmington businessmen, including three bank directors at Peoples State Bank, died within an eight month period.

A father of 11 children lost his job at a gas station on Twelve Mile and Northwestern Highway, and three of his sons were arrested for beating up the new attendant. A Farmington mother of six, the youngest only 14 months old, was put on two years probation for passing bad checks.

"It was really tough when the banks folded," Cook, 71, recalled.



A quick blaze

Fire officials are investigating the cause of a house fire which occurred in an abandoned structure on Stocker, just west of Farmington

Road. The blaze was reported at noon last Thursday. (Staff photo by Randy Borst)

How teachers prepare retarded for coping in the working world

By MARY GNIEWEK

Educators at the Farmington Training Center have just completed a new assessment program which rates strengths and weaknesses of mentally impaired students so teachers can better prepare them for independent living.

The assessment model, the first developed in Oakland County, was unveiled at Tuesday's Farmington School Board meeting held in the Farmington Training Center, a cross-district school for mentally handicapped students.

The goal of the assessment program, which is funded by Title I federal money, is to assess each mentally impaired student and present a complete profile to the student's teacher.

Assessment coordinator Karen Gaskill just completed assessments of two severely mentally impaired students from Cloverdale School in Farmington. She said 24 evaluation sessions

can be completed each year.

The pre-occupational assessment program measures the potential of mentally retarded students in three areas: the ability to perform skills like handling money and personal grooming; work skills training in handling industrial and household tasks; and work adjustment training in a simulated workshop.

Mrs. Gaskill said the program takes four weeks to complete for severely mentally impaired students, and two weeks for trainable retarded persons.

"THE IDEA is to conduct a thorough investigation to send to the teacher," said Fred Parker, Farmington Training Center supervisor. "The first two were completed Friday."

"We'll grow by leaps and bounds."

The Farmington Training Center is one of four such schools in Oakland County. It services trainable mentally retarded residents of Farmington, the Clarencville school district, South

Lyon, Novi, Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills.

The center was established three years ago when Oakland County officials decided to decentralize students from the Oakland Training Institute, so they could attend schools closer to home.

In addition to the training center here, Cloverdale School at Farmington and Freedom roads services severely mentally impaired students.

Parker thinks Farmington was chosen as a center for mentally handicapped students because of "its sensitivity to special education needs."

The program is funded entirely by county and federal funds.

"This is their regular secondary school," Parker said about the 130 students who daily attend the Farmington Training Center.

The school is subdivided according to age. Fourteen through 19-year-olds attend general academic classes; 19-25-year-olds attend vocational training for

job placement.

There is also an adult education night school program for mentally retarded adults. Students come from foster homes for courses in basic reading and independent living.

THE TRAINING CENTER is housed in the former Farmington Junior High building at Warner and Thomas roads.

"We love being downtown," Parker said.

"The students walk through the downtown area, they shop. The sales people have been super."

"Our youngsters are well-behaved."

The vocational education program has grown from one teacher, one aide and 15 students in September 1976 to a staff of 11 professionals and more than 60 students today.

Farmington Training Center graduates are employed in such businesses as Burger King, Precision Coating, Kmart and Bill Knapp's restaurant.

Businesses awarded for beautification efforts

Everything's coming up prizes for the Farmington Beautification Committee.

At their recent 11th annual awards luncheon, the committee recognized the beautification efforts of local businesses, industries, churches, apartments and individuals.

Plaques and honorable mentions were given to those businesses which kept their premises clean throughout the year.

Beautification Committee members divided up Farmington into sections and patrolled to spot the corners which were improving property and taking care to present a beautiful facade to the city.

Plaques were given to the following businesses: Burger Chef, Burger King, Castle Inc., Design Builders Inc., Drake's Professional Center, Everything Else Shop, Farmington Parish Credit Union, First Farmington Savings & Loan, First Federal Savings of Detroit, Gordon W. Meyers, Associates, Heeneys-undquist Funeral Home, L.H. Sampson Co., Lawrence Meyer Florist, Merritt, Cole & McCallum, Metropolitan Center Office Building, National Bank of Detroit - Main Branch, Oakhill Nursing Home, Plaza Pet Complex, Professional Plaza, Tektronix Inc., Thayer-Rock Funeral Home, United Northwest Realty Associates.

The following businesses won honorable

mention: Farmington Lumber Co., Farmington Racquet Club, Genex Inc., Dr. Walter C. Delattia, Harp Chiropractic Clinic, Lane-Reibe-Weiland Architects, Dr. Bernard Masson and Metropolitan National Bank of Farmington.

ALSO WINNING the honorable mention are Michigan Osteopathic Association, National Bank of Detroit-Lakeview Branch, Mr. Kwik-Copy, Poly-Tech Industries Inc., Professional Park, Ray Interiors, Ricard's of Farmington.

An industry plaque was given to the American Screw Co.

Honorable mentions to industries were given to: Jaycee Sales Inc., Mechanical Manufacturing Co., Wolverine Flexographic Co.

The following churches received plaques: First Church of Christ Scientist,

Our Lady of Sorrows, Salem United Church of Christ.

The following churches received honorable mentions: First Baptist Church, St. Gerald's Roman Catholic Church, St. John's American Lutheran Church.

An auto service facilities plaque was given to Ole Tolt Shell Auto Care.

An auto service facilities honorable mention certificate was given to Bruce's Shell Auto Care.

The following apartment complexes were awarded plaques: Anderson Apartments, Jamestown Apartments, Kingslane Apartments, Kingslane Co-Op Apartments, Valleyview Condominiums, Wynset Condominiums.

The following apartments received honorable mention: Farmington West Apartments, Kensington Manor Apartments, Parkview Apartments.

The following community buildings

received Plaques: Farmington Community Library on Liberty, Farmington City Hall.

THE FOLLOWING received plaques for renovation and improvement: Farmington Board of Education, Farmington Center Co., Farmington Holding Co., the 4th District Court, Warren's Corner, Winston's Olde Town Pub.

Honorable mention for renovation and improvement went to the following: Capitol Tire Inc., Real Estate One Inc.

A special section plaque went to the Huron River Hunting and Fishing Club.

The following sidewalk-store front businesses received certificates for their efforts at presenting a good looking facade to the public: Bolinas Reef,

Bon Ton Shoppe, Contemporary Awards, Detroit Edison, Diamond Boutique, Framery One, Focal Point, Golden Fleece, Greg Shoes, Hinkle's Fabrics, The Hair Salon, Hadley's Fashions, Pier 1 Imports, Pixieland, Winkelman's.

A certificate was given to the Drake's Shopping Center.

Good Neighbor Awards were given to the following: Ed Balden, Chatham Hills Homeowners' Association, Executive Office Supply, Church of the Latter Day Saints, David Shortt, Farmington Eagle Scout, City of Farmington Department of Public Services.

The awards program was put together by the Beautification Committee with chairwoman Jackie Steuer and awards chairwoman Carol Kurth.

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Seminar planned

All residents interested in learning how to get their news out to the public are invited to attend the Farmington Observer seminar. Slated for Nov. 1 at 7:30 p.m. at the 12 Mile Library, the seminar will feature presentations by the staff, questions and answers and a brand new slide presentation on today's community journalism. Be sure to fill out the coupon and bring a friend. It's free. Refreshments will be served.

Construction worker killed on job site

Rick Jenkins, a 22-year-old construction worker from Hazel Park, was killed Thursday when he was buried alive in a 12-foot deep excavation trench which collapsed while he was working on Twelve Mile Rd. east of Orchard Lake Rd.

Farmington Hills fire officials used air chisels to dig Jenkins from the trench. However, he was dead at the scene.

Fire Chief John VanDeVoort said an investigation into the accident is still incomplete.

inside

WE GET LETTERS
And we love it. This edition the Farmington Observer features an entire page of letters from the public. Among the topics discussed is the Jaycee ban on women members, the real estate market and relief for senior citizens in paying for heating bills. Turn to Page 58.

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