

Editor sets pace for the Enterprise

It was Nov. 2, 1888. A proud Edgar Bloomer sat back in his desk chair and looked at the first edition of the Farmington Enterprise.

He skimmed the pages and looked at articles and advertisements. It had been a struggle, but the first edition was out.

It has been nearly 92 years since Farmington's own paper hit the streets. Since then, it has chronicled the history of a proud community.

Sitting in front of an electric typewriter or computer terminal, surrounded by 20th-century technology, the modern journalist wonders how Bloomer would feel about today's newspaper.

Although the name has changed and the format has been reworked to meet the needs of contemporary readers, the Farmington Observer is proud to trace its lineage to the Enterprise.

AS a matter of fact, the Enterprise name had such an impact that many persons today still refer to the Observer as the Enterprise.

Bloomer was 33 at the time he rushed his first edition off the press and onto the streets. He remained with the paper until 1898, when he moved to Sparta and consolidated the Sentinel and Leader newspapers. He died in 1909.

But Bloomer began a tradition of community journalism which still exists today. He believed in publishing a newspaper that would serve the interests of the Farmington area.

Much of what he wrote in that first edition is pertinent today.

"It is fair to judge of the intelligence of a community by the character of the paper it supports. . . . What we wish then is that each one, when anything new or interesting comes to his knowledge, should report it to the editor. We will seek to make this paper a permanent journal of progress."

A blank space reserved for an advertisement by Fred Warner was explained when Bloomer said Warner was too busy to make up the copy.

The mind wanders. Was Warner even then out campaigning? His political efforts eventually took him to the governor's chair in Lansing.

He was the only Farmington resident ever to achieve such high political office. His large, white home still stands on Grand River west of Farmington Road as a tribute to his legacy.

The state has placed a historical marker in front of the home to remind residents of Warner's duty.

Politics, indeed, was a topic of the day, as revealed in another short article.

"The Farmington Democratic Club, headed by the Redford Band, attended the great Democratic meeting at Pontiac," it reads.

Obviously, objectivity wasn't what it could have been.

For those who wanted to spend time in a more leisurely fashion, they could participate in a singing convention at Bell Branch, which was being conducted by C.H. Smith. A concert would wrap up the event.

It also revealed that William Maiden sold his 109-acre farm in Southfield to Carl Rostow for \$4,000.

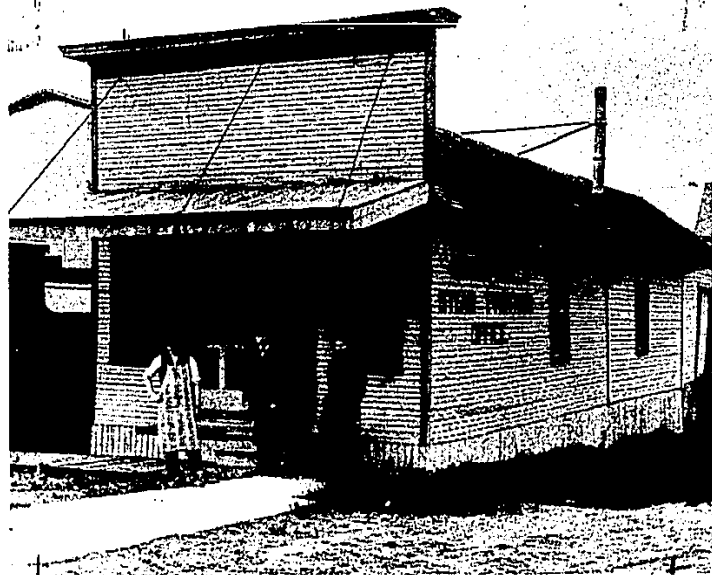
Although the world ran at a different pace, tragedy was still part of the scene.

Anne Dewaters found the world situation to be untenable enough to put a .38 caliber revolver to her chest and pull the trigger. At press time, she was in critical condition.

W.R. Anderson broke his neck while pitching cornstalks, and James Clark, "while maddened by drink," cut his mother's throat. It took two officers to arrest him.

At the beginning of the century, Walter Ricards took over as Enterprise editor. But the competition was stiff. He explains in his own words:

"It ended for men when I broke down from overwork and was so sick that I had to throw in the towel and call in my competitor to buy the Enterprise at his own price."



Early employees of the Farmington Enterprise stand in front of the office, which where Jerry's Bookstore now stands on Farmington Road, just south of the Baskin Robbins ice-cream store.

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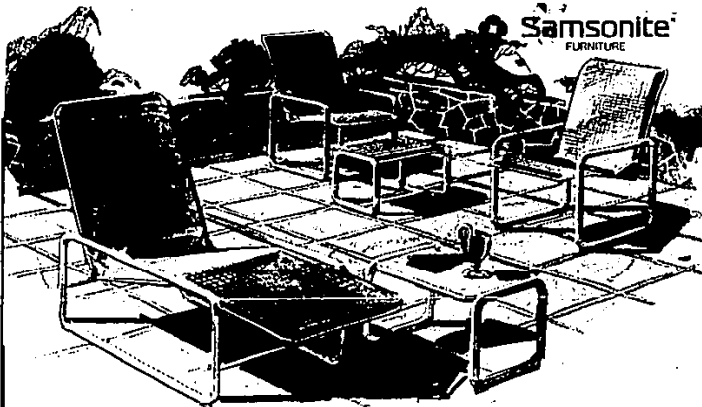
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