

# Retell Township History

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high schools, and a Lutheran grade school.

**DURING THE 146 years**, there have been many changes in transportation.

Shank's mare, horseback, horse and buggies, stagecoaches, and wagons were all used on the trails, dirt roads and the plank road, Grand River. Toward the end of the 19th century, the stage coach line was disbanded, and the first big event of the new century was the start of rail service in 1900 by the Detroit-Northwestern Railroad, an interurban line.

A power plant was located where the LaSalle Winery is today, at Grand River and Orchard Lake Rd. Across the street were the car barns where cars were repaired and stored. This was the junction for the Orchard Lake Rd. line to Pontiac, and all cars stopped for inspection. The interurban service was discontinued in the 1920s, when the "horseless carriages" took over.

Today, Farmington has a fine network of roads, with two Interstate highways, I-96 and I-696, running through the area, and a third one in the planning stage for the western edge of the township.

Taverns, as meeting places and places of entertainment, played a big part in the lives of the early pioneers. Later, as stage coach lines were established between Detroit and Lansing, the inns provided

food, shelter, entertainment and rest for the travelers and animals.

Some of these were the Walker Tavern, later the Wixom Inn, the Philbrick Tavern, the Owen House, the Grace House and Botsford Inn. All are gone except the latter which, under the ownership of John Anhalt since 1931, has had two large additions to the original building.

A State of Michigan historical marker was erected in front of the building, the wording of which is:

"This historic inn, the oldest in Michigan, still providing food and lodging was built as a home in 1836 by Orrin Weston. In 1841 it was converted into a tavern by Stephen Jennings. Known as the Sixteen Mile House, it was the stagecoach stop here in Clarenceville on the Grand River Plank road, which followed an Indian trail that went on to Lake Michigan. Milton C. Botsford in 1869 acquired the inn. It became a popular meeting place for farmers, farmers and travelers to and from Detroit. Henry Ford, who had first seen the inn while courting his future wife, Clara, in a horse and buggy, purchased the inn from the Botsfords in 1924 and restored it. The Fords operated it until 1951."

**FARMINGTON'S ONLY** hospital, the Botsford Hospital, a modern five-story edifice, is located behind the inn. For some years, a branch of the Children's Hospital of De-

troit for Crippled Children had its facilities near Tuck Rd. and Grand River. But with the development of the Salk vaccine which has almost eradicated polio, the hospital was closed.

In 1968 a group purchased it and has transformed it into a modern, model nursing home. Another nursing home in the township is the Kendallview Convalescent Home on 12 Mile Rd., which is housed in a large, homey, Victorian-styled, gingerbread-decorated house which was built around the turn of the century on the Davis farm.

A new, modern facility, the Williamsburg Convalescent Center on Middle Belt near Eight Mile Rd., opened in late 1969. So, with the facilities that are also available in the city of Farmington, our community has well-run places available for our ill and aged.

**DURING THE Civil War**, Farmington was on the northern branch of the Underground Railroad. It was used only when "direct passage to Detroit was blocked by the watchfulness of slave hunters."

The chief operators were Quakers and were closely related by marriage, namely Nathan Power, Ira Power, Ethan Lapham, George Wilber, Elsie Roberts and Abraham Moore.

Wellington Hullin, better known as "Pete, the TV Man," and who resides on 11 Mile Rd., came to Farmington as a child of four, to live with his

Aunt Mary. His great-grandparents, Aaron and Ellen Wilson, escaped slavery through the northern branch, passing through Farmington. They were so pleased with the area that they returned to make it their home when they had become Canadian citizens and thus no longer were fugitive slaves.

**FARMINGTON HAS** many clubs, associations, societies and other organizations holding regular meetings.

The oldest of these is the Farmington Lodge, No. 151, F. and A.M., which was chartered on Jan. 30, 1865. They held meetings in rented buildings until the erection of the Town Hall at the corner of Grand River and Farmington Rd. in 1878.

They took a lease for "nine hundred and ninety-nine years" on the entire upper story. When the new township hall was built, the Masons bought the entire old building and have converted it all to their use, keeping the well-known landmark intact for posterity.

Another is the Farmington Historical Society which was organized in 1962 for the purpose of collecting, organizing, and disseminating historical information and artifacts of this area. It was instrumental in the validation of Farmington's claim of holding the first Quaker meeting in the State of Michigan and the erection of a state historical marker attesting to that fact.

The history of the township and membership of its organizations and activities are inextricably meshed with those of the City of Farmington and the villages. They all work together in many activities, notably the Founders Festival Days which are held on the last Thursday, Friday and Saturday of July, culminating with a big parade on Saturday.

These days are reminiscent of the celebration of Farmington's centennial in 1924, during which a centennial ball was held, a huge outdoor pageant was presented by all the school children, a parade was held and many reunions took place.

The latest joint project has been the establishment of the Farmington Community Center at the southern edge of Quakertown on Farmington Rd.



**SUCKERS & PEANUTS** - The Dettmeyer Boys of Farmington will be operating a game booth and selling candy suckers and peanuts in the Downtown Farmington Center area during all three days of the Festival. Pro-

ceeds are used for scholarships and club activities. Making the first sale are (from left) Gary Geha, Alan Ackroid, Jim Lough and Charles Horwell. (Ever photo)

## Festival Calendar Of Events

### THURSDAY, JULY 23

**QUEEN CONTEST:** Finals at Elks Club, judging 5-6 p.m. Motorcade at 8 p.m. down Grand River to Chrysler Show Boat in Downtown Center by 8:15 p.m.  
**CONCERT:** Franklin Village Concert Band from 7:15-8:15 p.m. at Downtown Center followed by musical entertainment at 8:30 p.m.

**SQUARE DANCE:** Starting at 9:15 p.m. in Downtown Center.

### FRIDAY, JULY 24

**PET SHOW:** At Farmington Plaza, Grand River and Mooney, 2 p.m.  
**ART SHOW:** By OCC students, at Orchard Ridge Campus, 4 p.m. until dusk, modern music at amphitheater.  
**CONCERT:** By Farmington Community Concert Band, 7-8 p.m. at Downtown Center.  
**THRESHERS' DINNER:** Old fashioned Threshers Dinner from 5:30-6:30 p.m. in Farmington Masonic Temple, Grand River and Farmington Rds.  
**PUPPET SHOW:** Puppet Show sponsored by Farmington Jaycee Auxiliary, at city hall with shows at 10 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m.  
**FIREWORKS:** Giant Fireworks Display starting at 8:30 p.m. at Farmington Rd. and 12 Mile.

### SATURDAY, JULY 25

**ART DISPLAY:** Sponsored by Farmington Artists Club on city hall lawn, all day.  
**PARADE:** Starts at Grand River Drive-in at 9:30 a.m. After parade, trophies will be awarded and performances by participating groups at the Downtown Center.  
**ROAD RALLY:** Sponsored by Rally Club of Michigan and Town & Country Dodge, registration limited and a fee charge. 50-60 cars expected at rally which starts at 1 p.m.  
**SKY DIVING:** Sky diving competition from 1-5 p.m. (continuous) at 12 Mile and Farmington Rds.

### SUNDAY, JULY 26

**CONCERT:** Max Davey Singers will present concert starting at 4 p.m. on grounds of Farmington Community Center. Bring blankets or folding chairs. No charge.

### ALL THREE DAYS

Featured all three days of the Festival are: sidewalk sales and concessions in shopping areas; Elks On Roast in Downtown Center; carnival and helicopter rides at Demery's from 10 a.m.-10 p.m.



**HOT & GREASY** - There's nothing better than hot corn-on-the-cob, greasy with butter. A Farmington lad gets his fill during the 1969 Farmington Founders Festival. The corn is a favorite accessory with the Ox Roast sponsored by the Farmington Elks on all three days of the Festival in the Downtown Farmington Center. (Ever photo)

## SALE

SEE YOU AT THE FARMINGTON PLAZA  
PET SHOW FRIDAY, JULY 24, 3:00 P.M.

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2-DOOR HARDTOP

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2-DOOR HARDTOP

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