

# Drake Road relics clues to area's past

By Janice Tigar-Kramer  
Special writer

A collection of old bottles that offers clues to the area's history is on display through April at the Farmington Community Library's downtown branch, 2300 Liberty.

Visit during regular library hours.

The bottles, some dating to the turn-of-the-century, were uncovered during summer 1988 when Drake Road was paved between 11 and 12 Mile.

The Sleepy Hollow area — a quaint, historic district of Farmington Hills — still includes four old homes that probably are the source of many of the discarded bottles.

- the Mark Arnold House, built about 1837.
- the Frank Steele House, built in the 1850s.
- the Elliot Sprague House, originally a store built in the 1940s.
- the miller's cottage, a small house once occupied by the miller of the Fernhurst-Hardenbergh gristmill that operated in Farmington Township from 1827 to 1936.

"WE HOPED to find the cornerstone of the miller's cottage during the construction," said Farmington Hills councilwoman Jean Fox, who was mayor during the road work. "But when the crew began to find bottles, I said 'save them.'"

About two-dozen bottles, most in their original condition, were retrieved by Ron Hulslander of the city's engineering department and the construction crew, which took extra effort to spot and recover old glassware.

Since towns didn't have garbage pick-up years ago, it was customary for people to toss bottles in streams or bury the empty glassware in a central place outside their homes. So when the Drake Road project began, workers ex-

pected to find buried bottles and other relics.

"Because the area is old, we were on the lookout for bottles, old tools, anything," Hulslander said. "Sometimes, we'd stop the machinery to pick up something."

RUTH ROTH Mochlman, Farmington Hills Historic District Commission chairwoman, and Tom Baisell, the city's public services director, catalogued the bottles and, in some cases, cleaned off 150 years of cake-on dirt. For the sake of authenticity, some jars and bottles on display still contain traces of soil and gravel.

Mochlman took over the job of identifying each bottle. Letters on the bottom of each piece tell which glass company made the bottle.

Other clues, such as the lip, collar or pontil mark, help to reveal the approximate age of the glassware. The lip and collar are found at the opening of the bottle; the pontil mark is a scar left on hand-blown glass from the pontil rod.

The display of 21 bottles, a veritable collection for history's sake, also tells something about the eating and drinking habits of the locals.

A whiskey, or bitters, bottle from the turn-of-the-century, was traced to the J.H. Watkins Glass Co. The pontil mark is visible. Another liquor bottle was made by Bell Jar, the manufacturer of fruit jars. A dark green champagne bottle from Owens-Illinois Glass Co. dates to the 1930s.

OTHER FOOD containers include an olive bottle made between 1920 and 1964 by Hazel-Atlas Co. of Wheeling, W. Va., and a pie-jar made for the J.J. Heinz Co. by Owens-Illinois sometime between 1929 and 1954.

A fruit jar made by Fairmount Glass Work of Indianapolis, Ind., could be about 45 years old.

A Farmington Dairy cream bottle made of thick, clear glass was traced to the 1920s or 1930s, when Joseph Himmelspach operated the dairy on Gill Road. The collection includes other dairy containers

with embossed letters and a Horlick's malted milk bottle that may date back to 1920.

Besides food and drink containers, the collection includes a cobalt blue Bromo Seltzer bottle made by

the Maryland Glass Co. In the late 1950s, a bottle that once contained horse medicine and a hand-blown jar that held a poisonous liquid.

Though Mochlman isn't sure if the Drake Road relics have any

monetary value, she is sure they are priceless pieces of history.

"We have more than a small part of our local history," she said. "The collection reveals a part of Michigan's history, too."



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

Old bottles unearthed during a Drake Road paving project provide a glimpse of turn-of-the-century life in Farmington Hills' Sleepy Hollow historic area.

## Meadow Brook Music Festival memories can bring tickets

Spring returns this week! And those warm seasonal winds again beckon Meadow Brook memories.

It's that time of year when we ask our readers to recount their fondest memories of the Meadow Brook Music Festival, which brightens the core grounds of Oakland University in Rochester Hills each summer.

Almost as special as the music

program itself are the memories of festival goers, many of whom like to call themselves "Brookies."

Send your reminiscences to us by Friday, April 19. We'll consider printing them in the Meadow Brook Music Festival special section we'll publish Thursday, May 30.

Submissions will be subject to editing. Because of limited space,

please keep your memories to 300 words or less.

Writers whose special moments are published will be our guest at the concert of their choice this summer.

In submitting your memories, include your name, address and daytime phone number. It's fine to include a favorite photo. Just make sure it will reproduce. We'll gladly

return it.

Send your warmest reflections of life in the pavilion of stretching out on the grassy hillside to:

Meadow Brook Memories, c/o Special Sections Editor, Editorial Department, Observer & Excite Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150.

— Bob Sklar  
Assistant managing editor

## Artist to be guest at art gala

An Evening with Al Loving, a benefit for the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, will be at 7 p.m. Saturday, April 6, at the Townsend Hotel of Birmingham.

The event will include dinner, music, wine and cash bar, followed by a lecture and presentation by Loving, an internationally recognized artist.

Loving, originally from Detroit, now lives and works in New York City. He will be in town to judge the Michigan Fine Arts Competition at

the Art Association. The competition opens April 13.

A portion of the proceeds from the sales of 10 of his original monographs will benefit the renovation and expansion of the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association.

Tickets for the benefit are \$75 per person, \$50 of which is a tax-deductible gift to the Art Association. For information and reservations, call the Art Association, 644-0866, Monday-Saturday.

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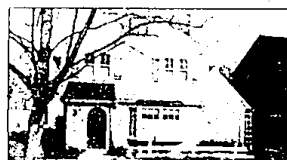
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### CITY OF BLOOMFIELD HILLS

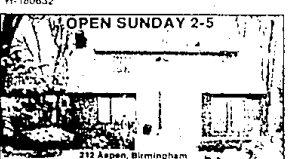
Borderline colonial with extensive custom woodwork throughout and attention to detail. First floor master suite, large family room, walk-out to lovely pool and terrace. \$635,000 H-176625



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2341 Kermway, Bloomfield Hills (N. of Long Lake & E. of Kensington)

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