

Pettibone house holds romantic memories

Once the Farmington Pioneer settlers had a successful farm, they improved their houses to reflect their new status.

One of the homes is the Pettibone house, an elegant Victorian structure on 12 Mile



Ruth Moehman

Road in Farmington Hills. Home to various members of Farmington pioneer families, it is also the site of two romantic stories.

One was told by the late Robert Cook, a Farmington genealogist. The other was related by the late Alice Jones Bigelow, granddaughter of the Pettibones.

Before the Civil War two good friends, John Pettibone and Charles Butten, who lived on neighboring farms along 12 Mile Road, fell in love with the same girl, Kate Simmons. She had lived in Franklin with her family since 1841, when she was six years old.

The Simmons family traveled from Chatham, New York on the Erie Canal. Kate's father was a farmer who also taught school in the winter where Kate attended.

Faced with the attentions of two suitors, Kate chose John Pettibone. They married on New Years Day 1853. Charles didn't marry for a long time after. Kate and John made their home in the Pettibone house in 1867 where they raised four children, three boys and a girl. They added the front Victorian section of the building around 1880.

In tracing the Pettibone house's history, an 1872 farm map shows two houses on the farm. One belonged to Levi and Hulda Pettibone and the other to their oldest son, Judson and his wife Emeline. John was the youngest of the Pettibone sons.

Judson built the first part of the Pettibone house in 1861; John and Kate built the front or Victorian part.

In 1889, they sold the Pettibone house and farm, where John had raised grain and fruit, and did some dairy farming. The couple moved to the Botsford House on Botsford Hill, where they continued to farm.

In 1908, they retired to Farmington Village and lived on Grand River, selling home-grown produce for a number of years. Kate Simmons Pettibone lived to be the oldest woman in Farmington. She continued to live in her house on Grand River visited by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchild, as well as many friends from the community.

When she died in 1931 at the age of 93, her life was noted in the local and Detroit newspapers.

ANOTHER LOVE STORY

The other romance attached to the Pettibone house that we know about involved Isabelle Pettibone and Hamilton Jones. She was one of Judson and Emeline's four children.

When Belle married Hamilton in 1866, he built a house for her across the road from her parents' farm. They had two children.

When Belle died at the age of 33 in 1881, Hamilton gave up farming. He moved to Novi and was in the general store and hotel business.

Hamilton eventually remarried. He turned his farm over to young Judson Jones who was Alice Jones Bigelow's father.

The next owners of the Pettibone farm were the Schroeder family.

Frederick and his wife Rachael purchased the farm in 1888. The next owners were August and Lucy Schroeder. The Schroeders were potato farmers. In 1942 the Pettibone-Schroeder farmlands became the Schroeder Farm Subdivision.

The farmhouse was a residence. It became an historic district and then was used as an office building.

Ruth Moehman is a resident of Farmington Hills and local historian.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

KID STUFF

Little Me

Stories and hands-on fun for children ages 16 months to 2 years (with adult) 10:30-11:15 a.m. Mondays, through Nov. 25, at the downtown Farmington Library.

Learning Activities

The downtown Farmington Library offers learning activity centers 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesdays, through Nov. 26, for children ages 3-5 and 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays, through Nov. 27, for children ages 2-3. Activities will include stories, reading readiness and crafts.

Baby Time

Babies up to 16 months can enjoy stories, rhymes and songs 10:30-11:15 a.m. Thursdays, through Nov. 21, at the downtown Farmington Library.

SALES/SHOWS

Holiday Greens Sale

The Hill & Dale Garden Club will hold its 15th annual Holiday Greens and Poinsettia sale 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23, at the Vaguzzi Visitors Center in Heritage Park. Advance orders may also be made by Friday, Nov. 8. Call Stacey at (248) 426-9037 or Barbara at (248) 737-5505.

Christmas Fair

Hope Lutheran Church in Farmington Hills will host an Alternative Christmas Fair 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 16. More than 20 local and international charities will set up booths and offer interesting and distinctive gifts with the proceeds benefiting the charities. The church is at 39200 W. 12 Mile.

Hanukkah Boutique

Jewish Women International will host a Hanukkah boutique at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, in the

Laurel Woods Clubhouse, at 12 Mile and Lahser in Southfield. Call (248) 660-3510.

Scandinavian Bazaar

A Scandinavian bazaar will be 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Finnish Cultural Center in Farmington Hills. An assortment of Scandinavian foods, jewelry, gifts, linens and cookbooks. The Finnish Center is at 35200 W. Eight Mile between Farmington and Newburgh roads.

CLUBS

Farmington Artists

The Farmington Artists Club will meet at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Danielle Bodine will present a review of her slides showing her style in basketry weaving and designing of sculptured objects and fibers.

North Women

The Women of North Farmington will meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. Monday, Nov. 11, at the Longacre House in Farmington Hills. The speakers will be Chrissy Deming, a nurse from Karmanos Cancer Center, and Vickie Karas, a cancer survivor, who will speak on women's health issues.

Newcomers/Neighbors

The Newcomers and Neighbors Club of Farmington Hills will host a November Social at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 13, at the downtown Farmington Library. All are welcome.

Hill & Dale

Hill & Dale Garden Club will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 14, at the Vaguzzi Visitor's Center in Heritage Park. Guest speaker Jackie Walley will discuss herbal cosmetics, fragrant oils and potpourri.

University Women

The Farmington Branch of American Association of University Women will hold its annual talent auction at 7:45 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20, at the downtown Farmington Library. Special foods, gourmet baskets, bridge and dessert, trips, hand knitted or made items by the members will be auctioned off. Call (734) 591-0161.

POTPOURRI

Pancake Breakfast

Boy Scout Troop 110 will host a pancake breakfast 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 10, at Our Lady of Sorrows Church Hall in Farmington. Proceeds will benefit the troop and the South Oakland Shelter in Royal Oak.

Wizard of Oz

Our Lady of Sorrows presents Wizard of Oz at 7:30 p.m. Thursday-Saturday, Nov. 14-16. Call (248) 476-0977.

Publish Your Book

In recognition of National Writing Month, Farmington Public Schools presents How to self-publish your first book 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 19. For location and registration information, call (248) 489-3333.

Preschool Auction

Garfield Co-op Preschool will hold its annual dinner auction at 5 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 9, at the American Legion Hall, 31775 Grand River in Farmington. Buffet dinner begins at 5:30 p.m. Cash bar is available. For more information, call (734) 462-0135.

Artist Exhibit

Watercolor artist Jim Patterson will display his artwork Nov. 19 to Dec. 20 at the Farmington and Farmington Hills City Halls.

Stronger Women

Faith Covenant Church in Farmington Hills presents *Do You Want to Be a Stronger Woman?* 7:30-11:30 a.m. Thursday mornings through Nov. 21. This program for women offers aerobics and walking, speakers, crafts, food, fun and fellowship. Baby-sitting is available. Call (248) 661-9191.

CLASSES

Gift Jars

Farmington Public Schools will offer a class on how to make festive gifts in a jar on Thursday, Nov. 21. For time and location information, call (248) 489-3333.

Stress Management

Assess your current stress level and explore techniques for handling stress, panic attacks, anxiety and insomnia at 7 p.m. Monday, Nov. 11, at Botsford Center for Health Improvement, 39750 Grand River in Novi. To register, call (248) 477-6100.

Smokers First Aid

Oakland County Health Division's Health Education Unit is offering quit-smoking classes to help smokers kick the habit noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, at Providence Medical Center, 30055 Northwestern Highway, in Farmington Hills. Call toll-free (877) 345-5500.

Painting Classes

Painting classes are available through the Farmington Hills Cultural Arts Division. Call (248) 473-1857.

Acoustic Guitar

A five-week acoustic guitar class for beginners and intermediates begins Saturday, Nov. 9, at the Costick Activities Center in Farmington Hills. Call (248) 473-1857.

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