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# Tape recorder saves history of Farmington

By HV SHENKMAN

After getting a list of historical homes from the Farmington Historical Commission, Louis Gilson, a retired Farmington teacher, took along a tape recorder and went to the designated homes for an interview.

He talked to people and asked their permission to tape their conversation. He interviewed residents in their 70's, 80's and 90's and turned the tapes into the Historical Commission. He carried the chat on a friendly, casual basis and asked them what they remembered of Farmington.

He was told by witnesses about the Farmington fire in 1872 when many stores were burned down, until a volunteer brigade put it out. Gilson found out from an old farmer how the roads were built. There were just mud roads. The wheels would get stuck.

FRED M. WARNER, the owner of a cheese company in Farmington became the Governor of Michigan in 1906.

Gilson, who moved to Farmington in 1945 learned about the Power family who settled in the valley and set up lumber mills, and about one of the pioneers, Boisford, after whom a hotel and restaurant are named.

In early 1889, W. K. Armstrong advertised "A full line of staple and fancy groceries, fruits and vegetables. Also headquarters of Post Cards."

Advertising of that nature may sound somewhat strange today but in those days it was the trend. "Lewis E. Davison is the most reliable place to get your next new harness or have your old one repaired. Why? Because you get your money's worth."

Or, "It's better to know me and not need me, than to need me and not know me, for we'll both lose money if you don't deal at Davison's. Stop in anyhow and let's get acquainted. Remember we do fine shoe repairing."

"Owen House—steam heat, electric lights"

"Bell long distance tel. No 7—2 rings"

"Rates 1.50 and 2.00 per day Livery barn in connection."

"H.G. Higby horse shoeing, carriage and wagon work, a specialty."

"Maas and Crigar—a full line of choice meats, oil paints and brushes."

A DOUBLE SERVICE was offered by the Lamphere House: "Board by

day or week with a feed barn in connection."

"If you really want a perfect automobile, ride, drive out Grand River, the direct road to Oakland County's famous lakes and then too, there is park and garage."

"A large clean, airy, new steam heated building where you can have all repair work done immediately by competent machinists. Gasolin handy and vulcanizing done while you wait, oils, spark plugs, batteries, inertubes, tires and accessories. Try it also for car storage. Prices always reasonable. Park Garage C.R. Ely Proprietor."

"A prescription for every ailment. We so implicitly believe in the superiority of value of those prescriptions that we sell them to you with our distinct and personal promise that if they do not substantiate in every particular the claims made for them or if for any reason they do not give you entire satisfaction, we'll cheerfully refund your money."

"L.F. Schroeder adv. Drover & Butchering a specialty if it is ice you want let me know I'm the ice man."

"L.N. Tupper M.D. Office hour 1-3 p.m. except Sundays."

GILSON claims that in those days people were busy working and had no time to get sick.

The River Rouge was not in the same place. It was moved to the area where it is now—located for convenience of the travelers and it was easier to operate.

Gilson says that there are less than a half dozen Indian families left in Farmington. There is a tree on Gill and Nine Mile Road with an Indian marking that shows the tree is 320 years old. It indicates where their trails went but no direction. The area was a hunting area.

NEW FARMINGTONIANS have a chance through the Farmington Historical Preservation Commission, (whose goal is to perpetuate the historical values) to contribute and make Farmington even a greater city.

Gilson gave all tapes and cassettes to the Historical Commission and they may be borrowed by the public.

A son of a blacksmith, Gilson lives with his wife Blanche. They have been married for 46 years and they have 2 children and 11 grandchildren.