

## Mrs. Gildemeister tells of mill founding

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shopping center, was the site of the annual circus.

In those days the major circuses came to town for one-night stands and Farmington was the mecca for the entire countryside when the big tents went up.

One of her prizes, though, is the organ in the attractive little living room.

Never a day goes by that she doesn't spend at least an hour playing many of the hymns she once played as the organist in the church.

"I find it is a great way to relax and relieve what many persons living alone might call boredom," she went on, "and I play any time of the day or night."

"The other morning, rather early, I arose and had a desire to play a bit. So, I closed all the doors and started at the keys. Soon I heard what I thought was handclapping. I opened the door and, sure enough, there stood a group of youngsters on the front lawn applauding."

Another fond memory that comes drifting through the years is of her school days.

"We went to class," she recalled, "in a room that had a big, pot-bellied stove." And then with a gesture, she went on. "We all drank out of the same dipper."

It is the old flour mill that holds the fondest place in her memories.

It was owned by three generations of the family and during its day boasted three different names. First, it was The Farmington Roller Mills. Then, it was changed to the Gildemeister

Flour Mill and in its last days was the Farmington Flour Mills.

The mill was built in 1895 and Mrs. Gildemeister laughs when she recalls that the annual taxes were \$4.66.

When her husband took over the mill he specialized in what became known in the trade as Peerless Flour. And as she sat there, living again in memory, Mrs. Gildemeister related that the company took pride in the fact that it milled 50 barrels of flour each day.

"And business was so good that my husband was one of the first men in the city to own an automobile."

## Police plan firearms demonstration

Farmington Founders Day Festival activities will include a firearms demonstration at the Farmington Police Pistol Range on Friday and Saturday, July 26 and 27, at 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. The range is located off Grand River behind the Star Cutter Plant (White Motors) just southeast of 10 Mile Road. The demonstration will include trick shooting with automatic weapons and shotguns.

In addition, there will be a firearms display from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Kendlewood Shopping Center, 12 Mile and Farmington Road. The display will be handled by the Farmington Hills Police Department.

The mill had an odd beginning, too. It was built at the request of the farmers who wanted some place close to home where they could deliver their grain.

The mill was founded by Louis Gildemeister, her father-in-law, and Mrs. Gildemeister explained the downfall of the mill until the day came when it had to be sold.

"When we were making Peerless flour," she said, "the women used to do their own baking—bread and cakes and cookies and business was brisk.

They don't do that any more. Now, the women go to market and get their baked goods, bread and cakes and cookies, and they no longer have much use for flour in their homes. So, little by little, business dropped off."

It was a great landmark in its time and furnished Farmington with a great day in 1945 when it celebrated its golden anniversary. For the occasion folks came from miles and miles around to pay homage to the place that meant so much to them in their youth.

The old mill is gone now. Modern day business establishments have taken over the site. But, with the coming of the annual Founders' Festival, it is certain to be a topic of conversation when the old timers gather for their sessions of "remember when".

And the widow Gildemeister will be in the thick of it recalling the days when the loads of grain, pulled by teams of horses pulled up to the old mill, and a person could get a ride on the DUR, all the way to downtown Detroit, for 25 cents.



HORACE A. GREEN served as the first Worshipful Master of the Masonic Lodge (town hall at Grand River and Farmington) when the Masons decided to move into the newly constructed township hall. Masonry in Farmington dates back to 1863; Oliver B. Smith was first master.



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