

# Vintage

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spring on the east 40 acres of James Boorn's land was used for the slaughter house and leather tanning business.

James Boorn's wife, Olive Pettibone, was related to the Pettibone family who had farms along what is today 12 Mile Road. One Pettibone house is in the Farmington Hills Historic District.

James Boorn built the house that stands on the east side of

Halsted Road about 1830. It replaced an earlier log house that stood on approximately the same spot.

## Boorn-Halsted marriage

James and Olive Boorn's daughter married William Halsted. They lived in Plymouth, Mich., then Bavaria, N.Y. Their son, Harvey, and his wife, Mary, came back to Farmington in 1863 to help out Harvey's grandfather.

Harvey Halsted inherited the 80 acres of the Boorn farm in 1869.

After the Civil War, fruit growing became popular in Michigan. Harvey Halsted planted orchards on the farm. The apples that were grown on Harvey Halsted's farm were taken by horse and wagon to the railroad in Novi where they were shipped out.

Harvey Halsted and his wife, Mary, had two sons, Charles and James. As the Halsted farm prospered, various farm buildings were constructed.

Among the buildings on the farm were a brick apple storage building. It was built close to the road that ran down the center of the farm. A horse and wagon could be driven through the doors into the storage area.

The brick storage barn was built in 1891 by a Mr. Davis. When Charles Halsted married Grace Green in 1891, living quarters were built over the storage barn.

Eventually Charles and James Halsted operated a successful apple growing business on their great-grandfather's 80 acres. They added 160 additional acres of apples. The Halsted special-

ized in steel red apples.

By this time farming had become more specialized. A wholesaler, Tommy Smith from Chicago, purchased the apples. His company sent in their own men to pick the apples and place the apples in barrels, according to size.

## Apple pickers

The apples were shipped out by rail from the station in Novi and sold all over the world. The apples that the "commission men" didn't take were picked by the Halsted and taken by horse and wagon over the Grand River toll road to be sold in the farmers' markets in Detroit.

Trucks later replaced the horse and wagons and Grand River was no longer a toll road. It had a gravel surface and was later paved.

The late Dr. Lee Halsted was born in the apartment above the apple barn in 1908. He commented in numerous interviews how he didn't like picking apples. He became a doctor instead of a farmer.

After World War II, the family farm was no longer profitable. It was divided into 10-acre plots and sold.

Dr. Halsted was a family doctor who made house calls. Sometimes in the early practice, he delivered babies at home. In 1981, he told the Farmington Historical Society how on one occasion he was delivering a breech baby in the bedroom of a



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DECKER

**Big barn:** This Halsted family structure is across the street from the Boorn residence.

farmhouse. The father of the child walked into the room. This was when the doctor was turning the baby. The father walked over to an incubator filled with eggs in a corner of the room and turned over the eggs.

In rural Farmington and vicinity, Dr. Halsted got to his patients through good and bad roads. As Farmington grew, Dr. Halsted continued to serve the community. In later years, he even cared for the children of his original patients.

Farmington was lucky that Lee Halsted didn't like picking apples.

Ruth Mochlin is a local historian and author of "Heritage Homes of Farmington."



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL DECKER

**This old house:** A side view of the house built by the Boorn family around 1830. It replaced a log cabin originally built on the site. The stone chimney was a later addition.

# Chat room

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processor, I apparently hit a wrong key. Immediately the screen flashed several hostile, in-your-face error messages resulting from the confounded unit coming up and causing me to do the same. In desperation I believed for my husband, a man of superior computer skills. Brown deeply furrowed, he stood there musing the situation when my eldest son sauntered past, casually inquiring, "What's the problem?"

## Computer wizardry

Then, through a lightning-quick series of moves, completely restored my screen. I was in awe. My husband gaped through a closed mouth. We still don't

know what the kid did.

I have learned that there are some things I will probably never be the type to understand. On a musical note, I fondly recall three years ago one of the boys begging us to play oboe in the school band, the only catch being this was among the instruments requiring private lessons. Eventually he seemed to have a proclivity for the oboe, so we embarked on the rent-to-own thing (also known as arranging for a second mortgage).

Just getting over the halfway mark with payments, our son now informs us he doesn't like it anymore and wants to quit band. He insists we are being cruel, selfish, and perhaps even abusive,

forcing him to take lessons and practice, now against his will. But as we told him, you never can tell. If the economy ever takes a severe nosedive, an oboe player just may be in demand...

And then there was the child who pleaded for piano lessons for at least two years, promising dramatically he would practice every day and that we would never have to bug him. Thinking he was not serious and a bit too young to start, we waited. Then last fall, we signed him up. As soon as we did, he lost interest and insisted, "I never wanted to play." He liked the stickers the teacher used as incentives, though.

## Instruments and pets

From my experience, musical instruments are accorded about as much enthusiasm as a 6-month-old pet. But that's a topic I must save for a lengthy book.

If the shoe fits... For a long time I would restrict sharing this story with only my most intimate confidantes. Yet I discovered after a while that other moms were willing to bare their soles as well. Some time ago, I decided my son's gym shoes were starting to look shabby even though he had never complained. I took him to a shoe store, and strolling through the aisles eyeing all the beckoning footwear, he found a couple of styles he liked.

While measuring his foot, he asked me if we could buy a bit bigger shoe, as the old ones were "a little tight." His foot measured to be a size 10. I looked at the old pair and they were size 7!! How could this happen?! If I wear a shoe that's a half size too tight, I suffer and moan about it. And here this kid was wearing Cinderella-size shoes for months. Talk about feeling like a heel!

Another of my children seems to go through a pair of shoes every month. He's the same one whose lacers are always untied. I have threatened to buy and make him wear Big Bird bow-ties if he doesn't keep them tied, but to no avail. He still plays each and every basketball game with laces trailing.

I have decided that perhaps it

will improve his coordination having to leap over them to avoid tripping. Yet he just may inadvertently become more nimble after all.

In raising children, I have learned to put my best foot forward and go with the flow. Children are great teachers, though the lessons are frequently confusing and rarely easy. I have come to realize they often teach me how little I really know, demonstrate the blatant gaps in my knowledge base, and take me to worlds I never dreamed of. Almost effortlessly they provide the balm of laughter and compel one to "lighten up."

Just one question remains: Am I up for the challenge?

Kathie O'Donohue lives in Farmington Hills.

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