

What Would We Find From 1866

(EDITOR'S NOTE: One of the highlights of last year's Farmington Founders Festival was the burying of a time capsule to be unearthed in 2025. Since no such event is scheduled for this year we thought that we might turn the tables. With this in mind we asked Festival co-chairman Harley Walters, who is a life-long resident of Farmington, to let his imagination run free and tell us what we would discover if a time capsule from 1866 were opened.)

BY HARLEY WALTERS
One of the features of the Farmington Founders Festival last year was the burial of a 100 year time capsule. There won't be too many of us here when it's disinterred but the resurrection should be more interesting than the burial.

Through the cooperation of City Clerk Treva Quinn, I have had the opportunity to delve into the records of her counterpart John A. Fairfield, recorder of the Village of Farmington in 1867. These records are all in faded long hand and the ledger must have been at his home to escape the fire of 1870, when most of them were lost. I believe these writings will furnish some idea of what a capsule of that time would have contained. There certainly wouldn't have been any mention of jet planes, radio, television, automobiles or supermarkets. Farmington was only about 40 years removed from a wilderness at that time.

Some of the Rules, copied verbatim, governing the Council adopted May 8, 1867, and some ordinances will furnish a clue to what living was like in this farming community. We know the sidewalks were wood, the roads were dirt and the industries were wagon shops,

blacksmith shops and water power grist mills. Rules concerning the Village President included: He shall preserve order, maintain decorum and execute the rules adopted for the government of the council; He shall appoint all committees, except the Council shall otherwise order; He may vote on all questions except appeals from his own decisions; Every motion or resolution shall be reduced to writing if the President or any member shall request it.

A majority of the members elected to the Council shall constitute a quorum but a less number may compel the attendance of absentees.

(THERE WERE many meetings adjourned for the above reason. Could there have been a distraction, such as fighting the Civil War over again at the Village bar or was it the dark streets on cloudy nights?)

A motion to adjourn shall always be in order and the motion to lie on the table shall be decided without debate. The rules of parliamentary practice contained in the Jefferson Manual shall govern in all cases in which they are not inconsistent with the 20 rules and orders of the Council Substitute Cushings name in place of Jefferson.

May 11, 1867 ordinance by Common Council, Village of Farmington: That all swine, horses, mules, geese, meat, cat, and other animals are prohibited from running at large in the streets, lanes, alleys and other public places in the Village of Farmington.

Provided that cows giving milk are exempt from the above prohibition from the hours of

six o'clock in the forenoon until half past eight o'clock in the afternoon during the months of May, June, July and August.

And from six o'clock in the forenoon until seven o'clock in the afternoon during the months of September, October and November in each year.

1869 - It is ordained by said Common Council that no person or persons shall run or trot any horses or other animal over or along the streets, lanes or alleys of said Village or within the limits thereof at a rate of speed which might endanger the safety of any person. There being under penalty of five dollars for each and every offence.

1892 - The tax roll 1846, taxes paid by work on the streets \$139.84.

On motion the marshal to notify parties with stallions that they must go elsewhere than the Hotel barn.

On motion that the street commission be instructed to clean the sidewalks of all residence owners, when said sidewalks remain uncleaned at the rate of 15 cents per foot.

May 8, 1895 - James J. Webster, clerk. On motion of Trustee Parker an ordinance for the licensing of Hawkers and Peddlers within the corporate limits of the Village of Farmington.

1892 - N. H. POWER of the Ways and Means Committee offered the following resolution. Resolved that there be levied upon the taxable property of said Village for the year 1893 the following sums and for the following purposes to wit: For highway purposes, \$300; general \$100 and further the sum of \$1 as a poll tax on each male inhabitant of said Village between the ages of 21 and 50 years not exempt under the laws of the state from payment of such tax. Which said resolution was adopted by a unanimous vote.

If there had been a time capsule buried 100 years ago, you might have a better idea about its content when it was opened at the Farmington Founders Festival July 29, 29 and 30. It would have been just musket and cannon balls or a moth eaten scalp and a piece of Johnny Cake.

We had a government, whose members are sometimes lazy or absent but wouldn't their excuses have been different too, than a traffic jam on the freeway?



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