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# A Seed The Quakers Planted

The characteristics of any community is determined by the first seed planted by history.

Personality of the community is molded by the early growth stage underground as the seed sprouts and takes root.

In these early stages, the influences are fewer but more overpowering than the diffuse "climatic" elements which have influence once the town plant breaks through the soil.

**THE HISTORY** of a town, and the effect that past has on what the community is today, is best understood with this analogy of the biological beginnings of a plant.

The plant is nurtured by the grower and thrives according to the favorability of the climate surrounding it during its growth.

But, how hearty the plant is and the general shape it will take was decided under the soil when the seed first germinated.

In Farmington's case, the Quakers planted and some 60,000 persons today reap the harvest.

**FARMINGTON'S** seed was planted by the Quakers in the fall of 1823 when Arthur Power migrated here from Farmington, N.Y.

Power's descendents selected the name of his home town for the place he located in Michigan, but the name of the community is one of the least important contributions the Quakers made to Farmington, Michigan.

**THE DECISIVE** roots emanating from the Quaker seed were:

The Meeting House (church), cemetery, school, craftsmen, and farming as a profession.

These roots determined there would be a central gathering place, which was later to develop into a village and, then, a downtown area.

The forests cleared for farming left large tracts of rural land surrounding core, leaving vacant property for future development into high-class residential subdivisions, shopping centers, and industrial parks.

Without the Meeting House, cemetery, and school, the farmland would have been developed into subdivisions and commercial uses without the creation of a downtown city area.

These roots are of the highest consequence when tracing what makes Farmington unique today from many neighboring communities which lack the advantages of an established downtown center area.

**AFTER THE** Civil War, the Farmington plant broke ground and began to be influenced by non-Quaker, "climatic" factors.

Shortly after the Civil War, the Quaker Meeting House was closed down in Farmington. Industrialization was underway and the subsequent invention of the automobile began to cast the mold which has created today's community.

The main route from Detroit to Lansing was Grand River, a plant road in the 1890s: At the end of the 19th century, the stage coach line was disbanded and, in 1900, the Detroit-Northwestern Railroad, in interurban service, was formed.

The existence of Grand River has had an overwhelming influence on the Farmington area because it influenced the migration route residents to the east would take to arrive in Farmington.

There is a tendency to migrate from Detroit to the suburbs along the main thoroughfares -- Woodward, Grand River, Schoolcraft, Ford Road, Gratiot.

The fact that Grand River was a main artery to Lansing meant a number of Detroiters knew a lot about Farmington in its earlier days because it was a place to stop for the night.

As Detroit began to deteriorate, Farmington was one of the suburban communities into which inner city, Northwest Detroit, and Redford residents moved for "fresh air."

Farmington bloomed earlier than Livonia, Westland, Plymouth Township and Southfield. This head-start meant the growth would take a different form, with advantages and shortcomings.

**IN 1972**, the Farmington area has about 60,000 persons and a mixture of residential structures and neighborhoods, different types of commercial developments, a strong industrial park and strip industrial zones.

Farmington City has a downtown area with historic homes and buildings rich with heritage. Farmington Township is almost fully developed and, in 1973, will vote on cityhood.

Today's Focus looks at Farmington's past, for both the city and township, and relates that history to what the Farmington area is today.

Focus looks at the Quaker seed, the roots, the plant which broke ground, the branches which died and those which grew, the fruit, the pruning, and new branches shooting up.

The plant is still healthy, is growing, and taking new dimensions. But, let us first look at the seed.

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