

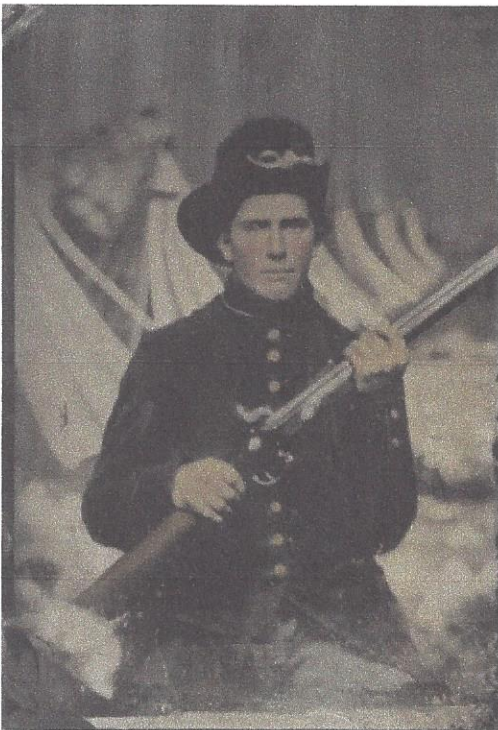
2019 March Franklin Historical Society Newsletter

Saturday April 13th, 2019

The above date is the next Franklin Historical Society's membership meeting at the Franklin Public Library 9151 West Loomis Road starting at noon in the Fadrow room. We will start with a special program opened free to the general public followed by our membership meeting with a short break between for some food and beverages.

The Franklin Historical Society presents

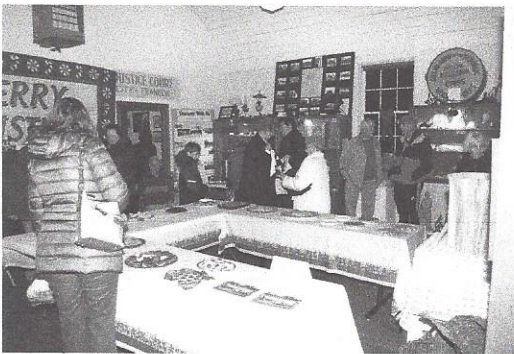
The "Waukesha Regiment" - 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry program by Kent Peterson from the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The program will last about one hour and Mr. Peterson will join us in uniform during our break to answer any further questions you may have.



In October 1862 the 28th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, often known as the "Waukesha Regiment" was sworn into United States military service. Most of these young men were farmers and laborers, and immigrants or the sons of immigrants, who were not much aware of the causes of the Civil War, as much as they were firmly committed to keeping the Union intact. They spent most of their three-year term of service in Arkansas, as part of the "trans-Mississippi" theater of the Civil War. When they were mustered out in August of 1865, they had not been in the thick of

action, but they had done their duty and returned with memories enough to last a lifetime. This presentation by Kent Peterson, a descendant of one of the regiment's soldiers, highlights regimental history, soldier's stories and post-war activities by its veterans. Please join us on Saturday April 13th.

2018 December Christmas Program Pictures



Not the best weather, yet a good turnout and a wonderful program

FROM FARMLAND TO SKI HILL: THE HISTORY OF THE ROCK SPORTS COMPLEX

There are only certain areas around the state that can boast a ski hill within their boundaries and Franklin is one of these places. For miles around it can be seen from its location on 76th St. and Rawson Ave. along Crystal Ridge Dr.



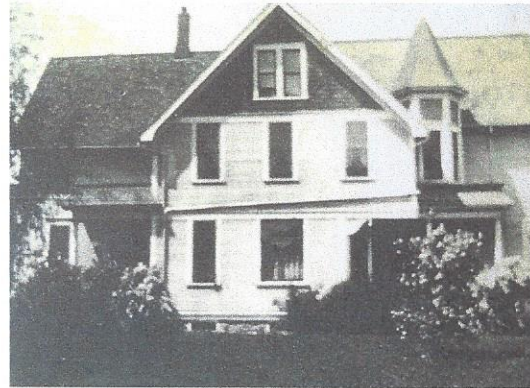
A landfill becomes a ski hill development.

The land was not always the site of a ski hill but evolved as the years went by. For over 100 years the land was used for farming, then it became a gravel pit, later a landfill and eventually a recreational area as it is today.

At first when Franklin was part of the Wisconsin Territory land at that location was for sale by the government. Through the years ownership changed several times and then in 1903 John Tretow purchased the 80 acres of land that is now part of the ski hill. It would be his descendants who would be the last families to live on the land.

When Tretow died in 1905 his son and wife, John and Henrietta Tretow, inherited 40 acres of the property and his daughter Wilhemina and her husband would continue to work and live on the other 40 acres. Even after Henrietta's husband died suddenly in 1929 the family continued to live on their part of the farm and work the land. Son Alvin Tretow had a roadside stand and produce business on the corner and many a motorist out for a Sunday ride from the city or for a trip to Wind Lake and beyond would stop at the stand to buy fresh produce.

In the intervening years and when a few members of the family still lived on the property, gravel was extracted from the land. All that remained after the gravel had been totally removed were the large holes in the earth. By the early 1960's the property was sold to a private corporation and remaining family members moved elsewhere. The large Victorian house that stood on the corner and the farm buildings were then torn down.



Tretow family home in the early 1960's.

The corporate owners held onto the property for a while, but then they later sold it to the State of Wisconsin.

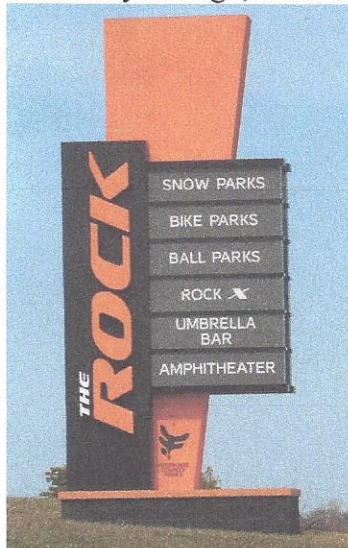
By 1973 Milwaukee County purchased the property from the state and it became a dump site. Because of those large holes in the earth it was decided that one of the gravel pits would be used as a landfill. Four million yards of solid fill ---dirt, asphalt and concrete, including old streets, paving bricks, the Schlitz Brewery, Deaconess Hospital, West Allis Central High School and the Heil Co. buildings form the base of the ski hill and snowboard area.

In the early 1970's the City of Milwaukee was delivering separate truckloads of waste and garbage to the site, which created a problem for the environment. According to retired Franklin City Engineer John Bennett, the truckloads of waste and garbage were not sorted well and loose garbage began to litter the area. In response, the Franklin Police Dept. tried to stop the trucks from entering the dump site. This resulted in long lines of trucks being backed up along the highway because they could not get in to unload. The county then issued an injunction stopping Franklin from holding up the trucks. Eventually this problem subsided when dual collection began.

Because of the many loads of waste and garbage that came to the site, the hill began to increase in height. Turning the hill into a ski area was the dream of John Kaishian, who was the former owner of the Hales Corners Speedway. He wanted there to be something for kids to do in the wintertime and to give them an opportunity for physical activity.

As a child Kaishian would go horseback riding around the ski hill area. He remembers the two gravel pits and between them a hill. In 1988 Kaishian signed a lease with Milwaukee County, the owner of the land, so that he could operate the property as a ski hill. From that time on and depending on the snow cover the ski hill was open for business. Kaishian and Midwest Developments had a 25-year lease on the property that expired in 2008. Since then the lease was being renewed on a year-to-year basis.

A few years ago, the Milwaukee County Board endorsed a proposal for an expansion



“The Rock” and its sports offerings.

of the ski hill area. Mike Zimmerman, developer and founder of the Rock Sports Complex was given a 25-year lease with Milwaukee County to redevelop the land. Baseball diamonds have been added, the ski hill updated and BMX bicycle trails put in. The multi-use sports complex is now a large entertainment complex with snow tubing, baseball and fast-pitch softball camps, batting cages, a summer concert series and an umbrella bar for outdoor beverage service.

With the opening of the Rock Sports Complex it is hoped that the youth of Franklin will be encouraged to stay in their own community for recreational needs. The City of Franklin is also hoping this creates new opportunities for commercial development and a welcoming site to people entering Franklin from its northern border.

The story you just read was from author Judy Scherrer's **"FOOTPRINTS OF FRANKLIN"** book published by the Franklin Historical Society. With the new baseball team the Milwaukee Milkmen, and the new ball park coming to Franklin along with other commercial developments a review seemed appropriate.

Barn Museum Update

A contract has been signed with Vesel Contractors of Caledonia with a down payment made, payment schedule and completion date requirement to begin the construction of the Franklin Historical Society's barn museum building. The foundation for the building has been completed.

The owner Eric Vesel has been involved with this project for years. He is passionate about barn reconstruction. He has been an incredible help for the FHS to find donations and deep discounts of materials and equipment rental that has made it possible for our budget to finish this year. **Thank you Eric!**

The goal is to have a grand opening of the barn museum on the Fourth of July during the city's civic celebration. There will be much work to do moving and preparing farming equipment and other artifacts that are currently in storage. It will actually take several years of careful planning to properly display the barn as a living museum. To that end fundraising must continue.



The truth is that the constant increase in cost for the construction of the project has left the FHS in a tight financial position. So efforts to find additional funds and control costs not only for the barn museum but also our normal operations are more important than ever.

Pictured above is the foundation work for the barn museum in the fall of 2017. The fact that the barn museum had to be built to commercial building standards was always the great challenge of the project.

Franklin Library Community Book Sale May 11 to 15



Beginning Thursday evening May 8th through Saturday May 11th the Franklin Public Library will host its spring Community Book Sale in the Fadrow Room of the library. This is truly a community sponsor event for volunteer organizations such as the Franklin Historical Society, Franklin Noon Lions Club, Franklin Lioness Club, Franklin Lions Club and library volunteers with help from library staff do the sale.

The funds raised are used to expand the library's educational and entertainment programs. Last year's sale was a huge success. I would ask FHS members and readers of this newsletter to volunteer. The sale requires hundreds of hours of set up and coverage. Right now you can help by donating books, CD's and other audio visual items directly to the library. You can call Jim Luckey at 414 -421-6539 or email luckeyjim@yahoo.com or call the library at 414-425-8214 for details and find a time you can help. Thank You.

Please visit our website www.franklinhistory.net for information about FHS activities and read about the history of Franklin along with many interesting stories and pictures. Also "like" us on our face book where you will find the most current information about the FHS.

Membership support is greatly needed this year. On the envelope on your newsletter by your address is the date your membership expires. Renewal letters are mailed out to all non-lifetime members. Please continue your support and if possible come to our annual meeting Saturday April 13th.

On the day before Easter **Saturday April 20th** the FHS will have our historic buildings open for touring right after the Franklin Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt that starts at 10 a.m. Stop by to see the excitement of the children hunting the eggs, and maybe with some cooperation from Mother Nature you might see some progress on the barn museum.

The **FHS Whelan School Program** will begin its 11th year of operation April 25th with currently twenty classes registered. The program will be expanded upon the completion of the barn museum.

Jim Luckey - President FHS