

# ISCHUA VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## WHAT YOUR GREAT GRANDPARENTS DID FOR FUN

Have you ever wondered what people did for fun in Franklinville early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century? Believe it or not there were two movie theaters here. The Gem opened in 1907 and featured one reel and an illustrated song. There were three reels every week and alternated every evening. By 1914 there were three reels per night and sometimes more. Pictures were never run a second time.

By 1913 the Adelphi Theater opened on the corner of Church and Elm. Today it is the Village Restaurant. By 1914 both theaters were merged under one management. The Gem was open on Saturdays and The Adelphi on weekdays. There were 150 seats in The Gem and 300 in The Adelphi. The player piano from the Adelphi belongs to the Ischua Valley Historical Society and can be seen in the Miner's Cabin at 9 Pine Street.

There was an opera house that seated 600 in Morgan Hall. Today it is the Franklinville Town Hall. Minstrel shows, local talent competitions, traveling troupes, plays, school exercises, lectures, meetings and political events were held there.

The Franklinville Coronet Band was organized in 1908 and by 1914 there were 16 members. Occasionally they gave minstrel shows to raise money to buy music. They gave public concerts in the Park Square on Saturday evenings during the summer.

There were many organizations open to interested members such as the Masons, I.O.O.F., Order of the Eastern Star, The Gradus Club, Util Doci Club, Women's Relief Corps, Camp-Fire Girls, Boy Scouts and various veterans' organizations just to name a few.

The Franklinville Amusement Company, located on Church Street, featured a 50 x 125 foot roller rink that was open on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings. This hall could also be rented for dances, parties and basketball. It contained bowling alleys, and a billiard and pool room.

The Blount Library and several other small libraries provided reading material for citizens of Franklinville. Seven churches were located in the area and boasted large memberships. They also provided events for socializing. Summer was a time for fishing and picnics. Everyone looked forward to the Annual Franklinville Fair held in the late summer. Winter was a great time for ice skating, sledding and sleigh riding. Families and friends enjoyed visiting each other for evenings of eating good food, listening to music on the phonograph, sing-a-longs at the piano or organ found in many homes, looking at stereoptic slides, playing cards and games or just sharing conversations. Although television had not yet been invented, our ancestors had many opportunities to enjoy life.

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Curator of The Miner's Cabin