

The Cranford Centennial Revisited



Where were you in 1971? Thirty-five years ago Cranford, incorporated in 1871, celebrated its centennial. It was a year of exciting and spectacular town-wide celebration.

Months ahead of time a Centennial Committee had been appointed to plan and coordinate the “Kick-Off Meeting” by the Historical Society, the “Ball of the Century” (more than 2,000 attended), the Centennial Dinner honoring former Mayors, concerts, the River Carnival (which drew 10,000 spectators), the Centennial Parade, and a number of other celebratory activities.

The planners quickly decided that a special symbol was needed for the big event, and a Centennial Design Committee was created, with George Bischoff as Chairman. The design group decided to open competition to Cranford students.

The first prize in the competition went to Ricky Rodman, a ninth grade student at Orange Avenue School, for his simple but eye-catching design. The winning symbol was a stylized number 100, underlined by an arrow pointing forward, with the single word “Cranford” underneath. First prize earned Ricky a \$25 savings bond and a Polaroid camera.

Even more important, young Mr. Rodman saw his handiwork displayed everywhere—in shop windows, in advertisements, on signs, on the railroad overpasses, and attached to automobile license plates, *The Citizen and Chronicle* displayed it at the top of page one during much of the year. And perhaps most important of all was the flag or banner, a standard bearing the symbol of the Cranford Centennial Year colored in blue and gold. They were everywhere.



Faded, ragged and forgotten

Then came the New Year and the celebration concluded. The Centennial symbol disappeared from stores and advertisements and the newspapers. The Centennial Flags were folded up, put away, and forgotten. It was over.

In a few short years, young Ricky Rodman graduated from Cranford High School and—what? Did the field of advertising beckon? Did he become a designer? A flag maker? A centennial consultant? No, none of the above.

Today, Dr. Richard B. Rodman practices dentistry at 15 Eastman Street in Cranford.