



ROYAL OAK Historical Society

FEBRUARY 2023 • ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

Royal Oak's Link to Abraham Lincoln

By John S. Schultz

GEORGE DONDERO WAS AMONG the most prominent figures in Royal Oak history and as many know, he was the first mayor of Royal Oak, elected in 1922 when Royal Oak first became a city. Prior to being elected mayor, he served as the village attorney for 10 years and was assistant prosecuting attorney for Oakland County in 1918 and 1919. He also served on the Royal Oak School Board from 1910-1928 and was president for several years. He went on to become a congressman, first elected in 1932, and served 24 years in Washington, D.C.

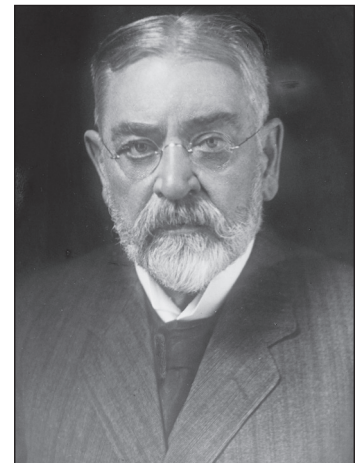
What some may not know is George Dondero was captivated with the life of President Abraham Lincoln. It's been said that when Dondero was 8 years old, he became interested in everything about Lincoln — an interest that never faded throughout his life.

In an interview in *The Daily Tribune* on March 1, 1986, Robert Dondero, the son of George Dondero, said his father not only admired Lincoln but also tried to pattern his life, values and principles after Lincoln's. "Like Lincoln, Dad grew up poor," Robert said. "Like Lincoln, he raised himself up from his bootstraps. He told me he'd do anything for an honest dollar."

As part of his curiosity about Lincoln, George Dondero traveled across the country collecting information, speeches, news clippings, photographs and artifacts on anything to do with the 16th president of the United States.

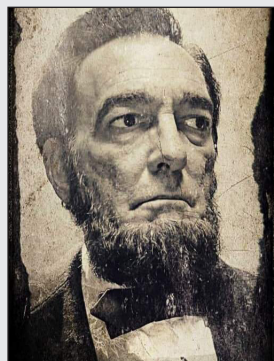
In 1923, he had the opportunity to travel east to interview Lincoln's only surviving son, Robert Todd Lincoln, who was living in Manchester, Vermont. Robert Todd Lincoln had become a business lawyer and served as U.S. secretary of war from 1881 to 1885. He also was U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom from 1889 to 1893.

After the visit, George Dondero and Robert Lincoln exchanged letters. They became friends and regularly kept in contact until Lincoln's death three years later on July 26, 1926, at age 82.



Robert Todd Lincoln photograph
courtesy of Wikipedia

Photographs of George Dondero (left) and Robert Todd Lincoln at their approximate ages when they first met in 1923.



Photograph courtesy
of Ron Carley

LINCOLN, THE MAN

His Early Life and His Political Life

February 11 – March 31

A preview party and the opening of the exhibit will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 11 with special guest Ron Carley (pictured), a living historian and President Lincoln presenter. Cost for the preview is \$10 and light refreshments will be available. There is no cost for attending the exhibit after Feb. 11, however donations are encouraged.

Three years after Robert Lincoln's death, George Dondero went to visit Lincoln's widow, Mary Harlan Lincoln, in Vermont. Beyond giving his condolences, Dondero had an interest in obtaining a historic letter Mary Lincoln had in her possession, written by Grace Bedell on Oct. 15, 1860. Bedell, who was 11 years old at the time and living in Westfield, New York, sent the letter to then presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln.

In the letter, she urged him to grow a beard because she thought his face was too thin

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ROYAL OAK
Historical Museum

1411 West Webster Road
Royal Oak, MI 48073

royaloakhistoricalsociety.com

(248) 439-1501

Hours: Tues., Thurs., Sat., 1–4 p.m.
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CURRENT EXHIBIT

LINCOLN, THE MAN

Abraham Lincoln's Connection
to Royal Oak

Feb. 11–March 31

All photographs courtesy of the Royal Oak
Historical Society unless otherwise noted.

President's Message

BY BOB MULLER

TWELVE YEARS AGO, we moved into the decommissioned fire station and made it into the Royal Oak Historical Museum. Much consideration went into what we would put into the donated display cases and how often we'd create exhibits. The regularly changing displays make our museum unique in the area.

While the exhibits are what we're known for, the behind-the-scenes magic takes place upstairs. Our volunteers put the exhibits together on a group of six wobbly tables — which our board also used for its meetings; maneuvering around the 24 table legs hasn't always been easy. To improve working conditions, we recently custom built a 12 by 4 foot work table.

In addition, the original 13 by 10 foot fire station bathroom with its 12-foot ceiling, three large sinks, a toilet and bathtub had served as an overstuffed storage room. Board member Mike Matthews-Pennanen cleared it out in order to transform



The upcoming Lincoln exhibit in development on the new custom-made work table.



it into a well-organized storeroom. We have slowly been assembling 10-foot-tall shelves for it.

Over the next year, we will continue to renovate the second floor into a quality work area to better support our dedicated volunteers.



The former fire station bathroom in transition to an additional storage area.

Homes & Buildings in Royal Oak

EDITED BY JOHN S. SCHULTZ

In each newsletter, the Royal Oak Historical Society features stories on historic homes and buildings in our city. The selections come from the book *Royal Oak Images, Yesterday's Charm Today's Treasures* (Roundtable of Royal Oak Historical Organizations, 2006). A second edition of this book is in the works.

We encourage other Royal Oak residents to share the history of their home for possible publication. For more information, contact John S. Schultz at jsschultz11@gmail.com.

Hennessey House

312 Potawatomi Avenue

Queen Anne Revival Built in 1924

THIS HOUSE WAS BUILT in 1921 shortly after Royal Oak became a city. The Assessor's Office dates the house to 1924. Its location is in Potawatomi Manor Subdivision on a lot 96.60 feet by 117.95 feet. The living space is 1,592 square feet.

Many changes of ownership have taken place as well as upgrades and alterations to the house. Its style may best be described as a Queen Anne Revival with a truncated shape because the hipped gable rises vertically half way to the ridge, and then the roof inclines backward from that point. Two other gables are at opposing ends of the roof close to the line of truncation.

The first story is of painted white brick, with natural, weathered cedar shake shingles which extend to the height of the hipped roofline. Contrasting colors and wood shingling along with bay windows are a prominent feature of this style of architecture. The bay window displays three eight-paned stationary

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Royal Oak's Link to Abraham Lincoln • Continued from Page 1

and that whiskers would gain him more votes. She wrote: "All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be president."

Dondero asked Mrs. Lincoln if she knew of the little girl's letter. Mrs. Lincoln said she had the letter; she showed it to him but would not give it to him to keep. Instead, she asked if he would deliver it to Grace, who was then 81 and living in Kansas.

Dondero agreed and wrote to Grace Bedell Billings, who had long ago married a Civil War veteran, George N. Billings, and made arrangements to bring her the letter as Mary Lincoln had requested. Grace wrote back and said, "It seems quite wonderful that the letter written almost sixty-nine years since should yet be in existence."

She also wrote a comment that surprised Dondero: "I think you should retain it if you really wish, with my thanks for your interest in it." Dondero gratefully accepted the gift, but still made the trip in November 1929 to Delphos, Kansas, to show it to her.

The original letter stayed in the Dondero family for many years, and when George Dondero died in 1968, it was passed down to his two sons: Robert Lincoln Dondero and Stanton Grant Dondero. Robert Lincoln Dondero had been named after Robert Todd Lincoln, while Stanton was named after President Ulysses S. Grant and also President Lincoln's secretary of war, Edwin Stanton.

Robert Dondero said his father used the letter for years in countless speeches he gave about Abraham Lincoln to groups and organizations. "He particularly used it in his talks to schoolchildren, trying to impress upon them that you are never too young to have an influence on someone," he said.

The letter was subsequently given to the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library. Many of the other Lincoln artifacts and information collected by George Dondero are now the property of the Royal Oak Historical Society, including an authenticated Abraham Lincoln signature.

The signature was found in 2006 while historical society volunteers were going through the collection. It was on a Civil War soldier's discharge papers, which were signed "A. Lincoln" and dated Jan. 16, 1864.

When the signature was discovered, it received some media attention. Museum curator Muriel Versagi flew to Springfield, Illinois, where Lincoln lived and practiced law, and was filmed for an episode of the PBS program "History Detectives." Tukufu Zuberi, one of the history detectives, determined the signature was authentic, and the episode shed new light on Confederate soldier John Ennis, a member of the Kentucky Cavalry who was captured in Tennessee and sent to Camp Douglas near Chicago.

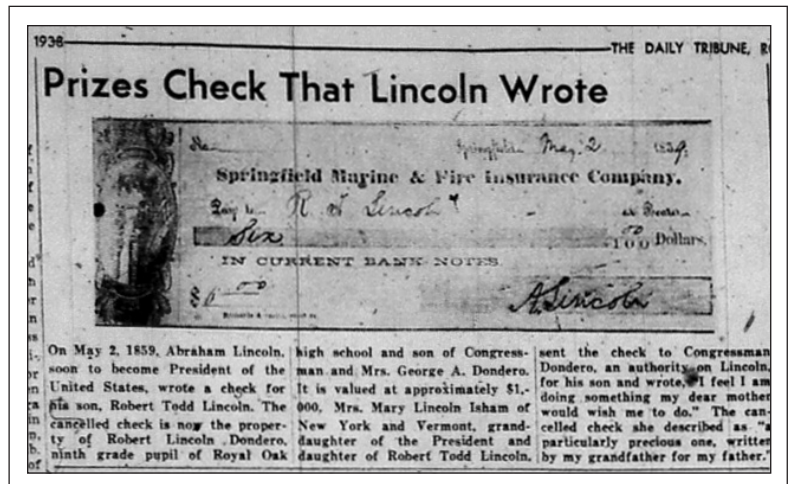
Versagi said Zuberi confirmed suspicions that the signature was penned five days after a U.S. senator submitted a joint resolution for a constitutional amendment to abolish slavery.

Ennis came from a wealthy family. He joined the Confederate Army at age 17 and served as a private before his capture. Camp Douglas had the highest mortality rate of all Union prisons. About one in five prisoners died from overcrowding, unhealthy conditions, inadequate food and brutality. Ennis was 19 when his congressman wrote to President Lincoln and asked for his release from terrible prison camp conditions.

Lincoln obliged, writing in the lower left-hand corner of the letter: "Let John S. Ennis take the oath of Dec. 8, and his discharge."

The letter was turned over to a military officer who was assigned to arrange Ennis' release during the harsh Chicago winter of 1864, when 1,091 prisoners died in four months at Camp Douglas.

One other notable item in the Dondero collection is a framed \$6 check that Abraham Lincoln gave to Robert Todd Lincoln when he was 16. The check later was given to George Dondero, who had it framed and in turn gave it to his son, Robert Lincoln Dondero, when he was 16. It remains in the Dondero family.



Photograph courtesy of The Daily Tribune

A 1938 photograph shows a check for \$6 written by Abraham Lincoln to his son Robert Todd Lincoln. A Lincoln family member gifted the check to Congressman George Dondero so he could in turn present it to his 15-year-old son Robert Lincoln Dondero.

THE LETTER THAT CHANGED THE FACE OF LINCOLN

Here is the text of the letter that the young Grace Bedell wrote to Abraham Lincoln on Oct. 15, 1860. George Dondero owned the letter for many years. Upon his death, his family gave it to the Detroit Public Library. Lincoln's running mate, Hannibal Hamlin, is mentioned in the letter.

Westfield, Chautauqua Co. N.Y.

Oct. 15, 1860

Hon. A.B. [sic] Lincoln

Dear Sir:

My father has just home from the fair and brought home your picture and Mr. Hamlin's. I am a little girl only eleven years old, but want you should be President of they United States very much so I hope you wont think of me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am, if so give them my love and tell her to write me. If you cannot answer this letter, I have got 4 brothers and part of them will vote for you any way and if you will let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you, you would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be president. My father is going to vote for you and if I was a man I would vote for you but I will try and get every one to vote for you that I can. I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty. I have a little baby sister, she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you direct your letter to Grace Bedell, Westfield, Chautauqua County, New York. I must not write any more. Answer this letter right off.

Good Bye,

Grace Bedell

Lincoln replied four days later:

My dear little Miss

Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received. I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughter. I have three sons — one seventeen, one nine and one seven of age — They with their mother, constitute my whole family.

As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people will call it a piece of silly affection if I were to begin now?

Your sincere well wisher

A. Lincoln

Lincoln obviously reconsidered, for he grew a beard shortly afterward. By the time he began his inaugural journey from Illinois to Washington, D.C., he had a full beard. The trip took him through the state of New York and included a stop in Westfield, the hometown of Grace Bedell, where thousands gathered to meet the president-elect. Once there, Lincoln specifically asked by name to meet the little girl.

The Feb. 19, 1861, edition of the *New York World* recounted the meeting as follows: "At Westfield an interesting incident occurred. Shortly after his nomination Mr. Lincoln had received from that place a letter from a little girl, who urged him, as a means of improving his personal appearance, to wear whiskers. Mr. Lincoln at the time replied, stating that although he was obliged by the suggestion, he feared his habits of life were too fixed to admit of even so slight a change as that which letting his beard grow involved. Today, on reaching the place, he related the incident, and said that if that young lady was in the crowd he should be glad to see her. There was a momentary commotion, in the midst of which an old man [...] approached, leading his daughter, a girl of apparently twelve or thirteen years of age, whom he introduced to Mr. Lincoln as his Westfield correspondent. Mr. Lincoln stooped down and kissed the child, and talked with her for some minutes. Her advice had not been thrown away upon the rugged chieftain. A beard of several months' growth covers (perhaps adorns) the lower part of his face. The young girl's peachy cheek must have been tickled with a stiff whisker, for the growth of which she was herself responsible."

Bedell recalled the event years later: "He climbed down and sat down with me on the edge of the station platform," she said. "'Gracie,' he said, 'look at my whiskers. I have been growing them for you.' Then he kissed me. I never saw him again."

Grace Bedell Billings died of natural causes two days before her birthday on Nov. 4, 1936, at age 87 in Delphos, Kansas.

Royal Oak Then & Now

BY JOHN MAURICE, ROHS FACEBOOK EDITOR

Then
1941



TODAY WE TAKE A LOOK at a Christmastime scene from downtown Royal Oak. The first photo was taken on December 4, 1941, just a few days before the attack on Pearl Harbor. The photo, showing the west side of Washington just south of Fifth Street, was meant to showcase the latest that Royal Oak had to offer in the way of streetlights and Christmas decorations.

The former *Daily Tribune* building can be seen prominently, as window shoppers take in the wares of the various shops along South Washington. Royal Jewelers and the Modern Housekeeping Shop can be seen to the south, and both of these stores would remain fixtures on South Washington for many years.

This photo would have been taken from in front of the former Washington Theatre. The theater was partially razed in 1984 after a fire, and Stagecrafters at Baldwin Theatre now occupies a portion of that property. (For more information about this block, see Page 9.)

Plenty of shops still line South Washington, and many still utilize the same large display windows as the stores from yesteryear.

Now
2022



Photograph courtesy of Google Maps

Royal Oak Historical Society Underground Railroad Grant

Submitted by Don Drife

The Royal Oak Historical Society is partnering with historical groups from Birmingham, Farmington, Pontiac and Southfield to create a traveling exhibit and interactive virtual map that displays the physical locations and people involved in the anti-slavery movement in southern Oakland County in the 19th century.

The project, entitled "The Underground Railroad and Abolition Movement in Southern Oakland County — Traveling Exhibit and Website," is made possible in part by a grant from Michigan Humanities, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The exhibit will focus on how local Oakland County communities developed a network to help formerly enslaved people elude bounty hunters to reach safety in Canada, and how the physical proximity, transportation and interpersonal connections of those involved may have played a part.

The traveling exhibit and interactive virtual map will be developed after the research has been concluded, toward the end of 2023, and will be available for at least three years.

Volunteer researchers at the Farmington, Royal Oak and Southfield Historical Societies will share their documentation and findings with those of the Oakland History Center (Pontiac) and Birmingham in a one-of-a-kind collaboration that will unite the stories of all five organizations to show their historic connections in the exhibit and interactive online map.

Our research will focus on the Hamer family, freedom seekers who came to Royal Oak Township in the late 1850s. Orson Starr is a possible abolitionist but we will need to document his involvement with the Underground Railroad.



Photograph courtesy of MLive.com

The Gateway to Freedom monument at Hart Plaza in Detroit faces toward Canada.



The Daily Tribune Oct. 26, 1927, article

Model T of farm vehicles. No frills, lightweight but useful, reliable and affordable for the average farmer, Henry Ford boasted it was cheaper to buy and maintain than a horse.

The Fordson plant was in Dearborn near today's Greenfield Village. To use the Interurban, men had to transfer between lines; however, our research found there was no bus service from Royal Oak to the Fordson plant ever established. Fordson tractor production ended in 1928 — not long after the *Tribune* article was published.

Royal Oak: A Ford Town

By Don Drife

The Oct. 26, 1927, issue of *The Daily Tribune* states, "Ford men living in Royal Oak number 2,402. [...] The information was sought after Commissioner James E. Lawson had urged that the city do something to assist in developing proper bus transportation from Royal Oak to Fordson [in Dearborn], so that Ford employees could still retain their homes in Royal Oak if they transferred to the Fordson plan[t]."

The 1928 *Polk City Directory* for Royal Oak lists the population as 21,840, meaning 11 percent of the population worked for the Ford Motor Company. If the average family was a husband, wife and three kids, then one-fifth of the population (4,368) was working males, which calculates to 55 percent of working males serving as Ford employees.

The Fordson tractor was the



The Daily Tribune May 28, 1920, Fordson Farm Tractor ad

William Heman Parker — Royal Oak Native Traveled the West

By Don Drife



Editor's Note: Stories Behind the Gravestone is a new series highlighting people buried in one of Royal Oak's three cemeteries. We intend to collect these notes into a booklet for the bicentennial of the founding of Royal Oak Cemetery in 2026. If readers know of other information on the featured person, please send it to editor@royalookhistoricalsociety.org.

William H. Parker was born December 14, 1853, at Parker's Corner in what is today the city of Royal Oak. He was the son of Asher Bull and Harriet (Castle) Parker and the great grandson of the Revolutionary War hero Ezra Parker. Educated in Royal Oak schools and an academy in Valparaiso, Indiana, he taught school in northern Michigan and Nebraska. He traveled throughout the United States living in Arizona, California, Oregon and Texas but always considered Royal Oak his home.

One of his first jobs was laying out roads in Yellowstone National Park. He accompanied a photographer who produced some of the early photographs of the park's natural wonders. Parker's Peak in Yellowstone, at 10,095 feet in elevation, is named in his honor.

Parker was a hunter and marksman. As a boy, he killed the last wild turkey in the township. A year before he died, he won a shooting match at the U.S. Rifle Range in San Antonio, Texas, against the best marksmen in the U.S. Army. Soldiers shot using then-modern breech-loading rifles, but Parker used Reuben Russell's old Civil War era muzzle-loader. (Reuben Russell was a Royal Oak Civil War era marksman.) They competed on an 800-yard range.

He never married and belonged to no social or fraternal groups. He died in Los Angeles at age 69 on April 6, 1923.

William H. Parker's monument is simple gray granite with no symbols. "TWENTY YEARS A HYPNOTIST" is carved along one edge. We were unable to discover any other mention of his hypnotic abilities. The gravestone is in section "F" of Royal Oak Cemetery, about 25 feet northwest of the "Parker Boulder."



Hennessey House • Continued from Page 3

windows flanked by two narrow ones at the side of the bay. Above the framing of each window is a mini two-paned extra window.

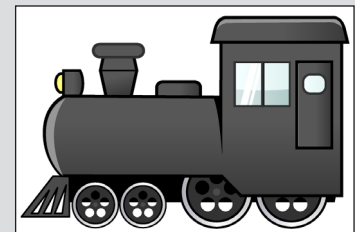
Only once was the house not occupied as a single-family home and that was during the Second World War when the upstairs was used as a duplex.

The Oakland County Register of Deeds lists this subdivision lot #33 as having been transferred by the state to M.A. Dondero in 1943; from Dondero to E.A. Hagen in 1944; from Hagen to P.G. Coates in 1947; Coates to ARCE, then to the Royal Oak Manufacturing Company. Small portions of the original lots were sold to a variety of people until 1977 when the Hennesseys purchased it.

Various additions to the house were done, first by Ernest Hagen in July of 1945 when he completed a frame addition for \$500.00 and next by Proctor Coates who had a garage built in 1959 for \$900.00 by Aldeman Construction Company. At some time, metal awnings were installed on the upstairs windows but have since been removed.

The present two-car garage is joined to the entry of the house by a cedar shake sided breezeway which has eight-paned windows similar to those on the house. In 1998, the old steps, railings and porch were torn out and redone. The three steps are arranged in pyramid fashion to the landing in front of the brightly painted red door. Attractive landscaping of flowers and bushes surround the patio at the bottom of the steps.

This thoroughly charming house has retained its original characteristics for many years under the stewardship of the Hennessey family.



Brooks Coffee Club Article Reprinted by Train Club

We were glad to share Royal Oak history with the Clinton River Division of the North Central Region of the National Model Railroad Association. They reprinted our May 2022 "Remembering the Brooks Coffee Club on Woodward" article by Leslie L. Haight in their October newsletter *Car House*.

Learn more about the association here: clintonriverdivision.ncr-nmra.org

View their reprint of our article here: https://clintonriverdivision.ncr-nmra.org/nav/Carhouse/10_2022%20carhouse.pdf



HELLO EDITOR,

I belong to the Ferndale Historical Society and the Friends of Birmingham Museum. Your publication is by far the most enjoyable and comprehensive! Thank you so much for all the content (especially the photos) and research involved. The historic homes articles are my favorites!

I especially enjoyed reading "The History of the 100-Year-Old Baldwin Theatre" by John S. Schultz in your July 2022 issue and had a question:

What is the address of the location pictured on the front page and page 6? I'm having difficulty picturing what the theater looked like based on its current incarnation. From the photo on page 6, it looks like it's the second building from a corner.

Also, in the mid-1980s, I took Oakland Community College classes at Washington School. It was torn down shortly thereafter and the full OCC campus was erected. Are there any photos of the original Washington School you could share?

Karen E. Breen, Publisher and Editor of Roam, the newsletter for the GMC Great Lakers

Editor's Note: The GMC Great Lakers Club's purpose is to promote the enjoyment and preservation of the GMC Motorhome, produced in Pontiac from 1973-1978. Visit the GMC Great Lakers website at: gmcgreatlakers.org.

OUR REPLY:

Then & Now editor John Maurice and newsletter designer Ellen Kehoe contributed in reply to Karen Breen, passing along information on the location of the Baldwin/Washington Theatre and photographs of the Washington School.

John Maurice: The front part of the Baldwin/Washington Theatre, the portion along Washington, was destroyed by a fire in 1984. It was damaged enough that it couldn't be saved. But the rear part of the theater was able to be saved and is what exists today as the Baldwin Theatre (at 415 S. Lafayette Ave.), home to the Stagecrafters theater group. Where the box office and marquee once stood along Washington is the 18-story retail/condominium building "The Fifth Royal Oak" (at 432 S. Washington Ave.).

Ellen Kehoe: The April 1946 photograph (bottom right) shows that Fifth Street used to be a one-way street connecting Washington and Lafayette. What was then Fifth Street is now a pedestrian concourse that includes the Stagecrafters/Baldwin Theatre entrance.



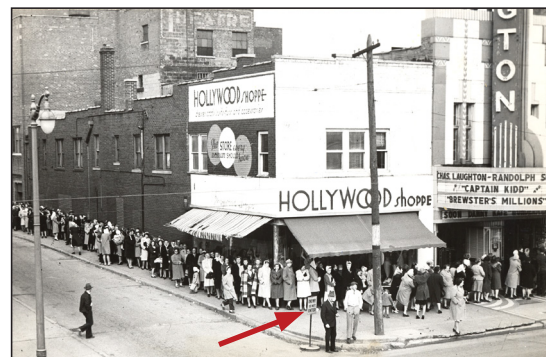
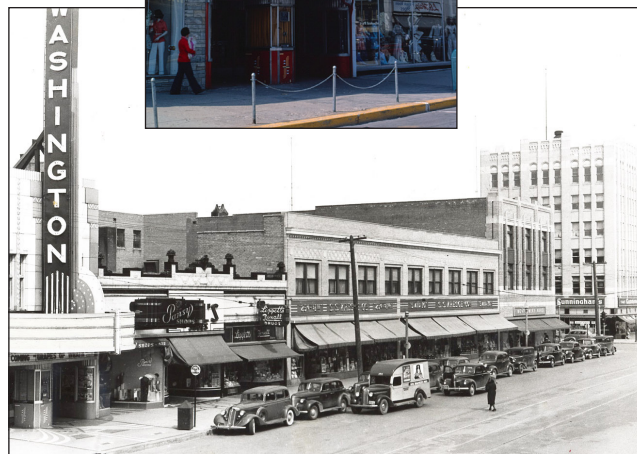
Washington Elementary School in March 1957 and an undated photograph of its gymnasium.

The Washington School at the southeast corner of Washington and Lincoln was a venerable building, and many were saddened when it was torn down. It replaced the Union School, which had been the first substantial school structure in Royal Oak. Designed by well-known architect Frederick D. Madison, the Washington was completed in 1925 with a capacity for 550 students. Peak enrollment was 545 in 1957 and declined thereafter. It was used until 1975 and demolished in 1980 to build the parking structure of OCC. John Maurice recalls that the Washington was a beautiful school building and that the gym was so tiny!



Left: The Washington Theatre in 1976 as it existed until its demolition.

Below: The Washington Theatre block in the 1940s.



This April 1946 photograph shows women lined up for nylons along Fifth Street near the Washington Theatre. Note the "One Way Do Not Enter" sign at the entrance to Fifth.

Looking Back

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY JOHN S. SCHULTZ FROM THE PAGES OF THE DAILY TRIBUNE

What was happening in Royal Oak in February...

50 years ago — 1973

HUNDREDS OF SOUTH OAKLAND residents filled their tanks Wednesday night (Feb. 1) in an attempt to beat the two-cents-a-gallon state gasoline tax hike that went into effect today. Ceil Watkins, Woodward and Hunter Shell Service in Royal Oak, said, "Our tanks were dry except for premium. One fellow waited in line 10 minutes and bought 11 gallons. I said to him, 'You mean you waited all that time to save 22 cents?' He got a funny look on his face." The two-cent

tax was passed by the Legislature last year to raise revenues for road building and mass transit systems.

Most stations were selling regular gasoline for 31.9 cents a gallon and premium for 35.9 cents before midnight.

60 years ago — 1963

A ROYAL OAK PODIATRIST is experimenting in one of the most specialized areas of the surgical field — replacement parts. Surgeons, with some success, are rebuilding parts of the human body literally from head to toe. Russell H. Seeburger, DSC, whose offices are at 2912 North Woodward, is among those interested in the latter end. The result — a product of more than 15 years' work — doesn't look like much. It's a small metal ball-joint made of Durallium that fits over and replaces the metatarsal joint in the foot. He hopes it will provide some relief for those with feet so badly deformed they are unable to walk without extreme difficulty.

70 years ago — 1953

AN ESTIMATED 2,500 PERSONS were lined up for over two blocks this morning (Feb. 1) awaiting the grand opening of the new C.F. Smith Supermarket, 200 Stephenson in Royal Oak. Michigan Gov. G. Mennen Williams, armed with a pair of scissors, cut the ribbon to let eager shoppers through the door.



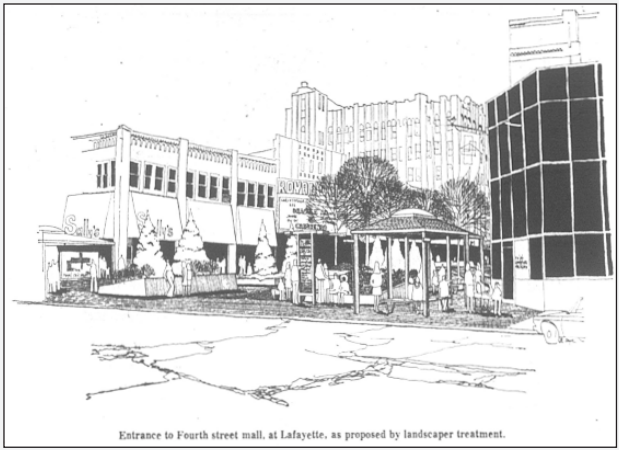
80 years ago — 1943

ROYAL OAK, FERNDALE, BERKLEY and Clawson approved contracts with the Oakland County Drain Commission for disposal of raw sewage through the

1973

Four-Block Mall Proposed to Revitalize Royal Oak's Downtown

An imaginative plan to convert four blocks of the Royal Oak central business district into a more stimulating place was unveiled Tuesday night (Feb. 13). Two blocks of Washington, one on Fourth and one on Fifth Street would lose their prosaic and pedestrian appearance — in favor of the pedestrian. There'd be no space for cars, parked or passing. Instead, the stroller would be soothed, and perhaps tempted to shop with carefully planned combinations of trees, planters, kiosks, benches, statuary, "image" centers, pavement mosaics and "shelter pods."



Entrance to Fourth street mall, at Lafayette, as proposed by landscaper treatment.

Illustration courtesy of *The Daily Tribune*

The whole idea is calculated to create a pleasing environment to bring people to the Royal Oak CBD and to forestall, if not reverse, erosion due to age and impact of outlying shopping centers. It was estimated the cost of the new outdoor treatment would be \$800,000. That would not include the cost of traffic rerouting.

Editor's Note: The mall was never built.

proposed \$1.5 million interceptor tunnel to Detroit. Their action left only Pleasant Ridge and Huntington Woods among the cities not yet signed up, and they will follow suit very shortly. The work on the sewer would start within a week after the agreements had been signed by all the cities and delivered to the county treasurer to be kept in escrow.

ROYAL OAK WILL REMAIN in the same time zone as Detroit. The City Commission last night decided to retain Eastern War Time until Detroit Common Council formally decides to keep "fast" time or to "slow" along with the rest of the state.

Continued on Page 11

1953

TAX HELP. The answers puzzling federal income taxpayers are being provided free — except for the tax — this week and next at the VFW Hall, 214 East Fourth, Royal Oak, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Here Dale L. King, deputy collector for the Internal Revenue Service, assists Ralph M. Good of Royal Oak to prepare his 1952 tax returns.

Photograph courtesy of The Daily Tribune



80 years ago — 1943 continued

PLANS WERE COMPLETE for the registration of more than 100,000 persons in Southern Oakland county next week for War Ration Book Two. The rationing registration will be again handled through the public schools as was the issuance of the first ration book and gasoline coupons.

90 years ago — 1933

FREDERICK D. MADISON, INC. of Royal Oak and W.B. Stratton of Detroit have been selected as architects for the

proposed Royal Oak Post Office, the Treasury Department announced yesterday (Feb. 23). The federal building is to be constructed on the north side of Second Street, between Washington Avenue and Center Street. The date upon which construction will begin has not been announced.

100 years ago — 1923

THE PUBLIC DANCE SITUATION in Oakland County has been called to the attention of Mayor George Dondero by Judge Frank Covert of circuit court and Lea Huey, policewoman. Pontiac has an ordinance that prohibits persons 17 years of age and less from attending public dances unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. As a result, the Pontiac officials assert, many of the young people from Pontiac go to out-of-town dances including ones in Royal Oak, and the girls often are accompanied home in automobiles by young men who are met at dances. These rides to Pontiac are not conducive to the best conduct, according to the county seat officers. Manager P.H. Beauvais reported to the Royal Oak city commission that he personally has visited the dances held here on Friday nights and that none of the dancers appeared to be less than 17 years of age. The dances are properly conducted, he said, and no criticism could be given. Commissioners accepted the report.

STREET PLANNING for the present and future city of Royal Oak was given its first official impetus Monday evening when the city commission on recommendation of City Attorney E.B. Howarth, Jr., instructed Manager P.H. Beauvais and Surveyor E. William Knapp to prepare a sketch showing where future streets should naturally be opened. Howarth declared that, especially in view of the recent annexation and the proposed annexations, Royal Oak should provide for the future by adopting an ordinance prohibiting erection of buildings which would be in the path of streets which should be continued. Thus, the city could legally refuse to issue permits for any such buildings, a thing which it can not now do. Some mistakes have been made in the past, it is admitted, and it is the intention to avoid such mistakes in the future. Condemnation proceedings for street openings, especially when buildings have to be removed, are expensive.

THERE IS ONE PASSENGER automobile for every 6.3 persons in Michigan, according to a report completed today by Charles J. Deland, secretary of state.

The number of pleasure cars increased more than 35 percent in 1922. The total number of passenger cars licensed was 578,980, as compared with 426,984 in 1921. Wayne County had the greatest number of cars with 148,424, as compared with 119,331 in 1921. Keweenaw County ranked last with only 213 passenger cars. The increase in the number of cars was constant throughout the state. Not a single county had fewer cars in 1922 than in 1921.

1923

Better Mail Delivery Expected

Better mail delivery has been reported by Royal Oak businessmen as the result of the investigation undertaken here by John B. Stackpole, assistant superintendent of the division of mails in the Detroit post office, of which Royal Oak is a branch.

The Chamber of Commerce informed Mr. Stackpole that it would be glad to co-operate in every way possible in seeing citizens give possible assistance to the postal force in making for prompt delivery of mail. Mr. Stackpole suggested the following things:

Use full address, street and number. Royal Oak is no longer a village where the postmaster can remember where every person lives.

The outlying districts will get better delivery service just as soon as they put in sidewalks. Postal regulations forbid foot delivery on streets where there are no walks or which can not be reached by walks on other streets.

Put the number of your house where the carrier can see it.

The time limit in which the postal authorities at Washington ruled that every house must have a mail box if it desired mail delivery has expired.



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