



ROYAL OAK Historical Society

FEBRUARY 2024 • ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM

The Trailblazer Behind Nellie Davis Pharmacy

By Leslie S. Edwards



Nellie Davis Mandrup-Poulsen, circa 1956, pictured in the Soroptimist Club of Royal Oak scrapbook

Hospital in Birmingham, England, where she remained throughout the duration of World War I. During the summer of 1918, she was assigned to work in the dispensary of the 73rd General Hospital in Deauville, France. Unfortunately, after just three months, Nellie contracted the flu and returned to England to recuperate.

TWO YEARS LATER, Nellie married Albert Henry "Harry" Davies, a toolmaker 20 years her senior. They had one daughter, Helena "Ruth" Davies (1922–2021). The family emigrated to the United States, arriving in New York on Jan. 17, 1923, and followed Harry's brother Sidney to Royal Oak.

In 1924, Nellie began her career as a pharmacist working in Arthur Jackson's drugstore, which was in the First State Bank building at the corner of Third and Main. She bought the store from Jackson in 1927. Two years later, Nellie sold the store to Lee (D.L.) Winter (brother of Ed Winter mentioned above as an early drugstore owner), and on March 1, 1929, she opened her own drugstore at 424 E. Fourth Street (across from the present-day Great Lakes Ace Hardware). This store became the company's headquarters.

WHILE NELLIE'S married name was Nellie Davies, her drugstores used the moniker "Davis." The drugstores had various names over the years — Nellie Davis Drug Store, Nellie Davis Pharmacy, Nellie Davis Prescriptions, and Davis Pharmacy Inc.

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BEFORE THE ARRIVAL of the chain drugstores like CVS and Walgreens, Royal Oak was served by several independently owned pharmacies and drugstores. Some of the earliest included F.M. Brooks & Company Drug Store, Dean's Drug Store, William Merithew's Drug Store, Purdy Drug Store, the Red Cross Pharmacy, Romeyn Pharmacy, and Ed Winter's Drug Store. However, the only one owned by a licensed female pharmacist was Nellie Davis Pharmacy.

Though women have practiced the healing arts and prepared herbal and natural remedies for centuries, female pharmacists were uncommon in the 1920s. According to *The Occupational Progress of Women, 1910-1930* published by the U.S. Department of Labor, there were only 2,161 female druggists or pharmacists in the entire United States in 1910, compared to more than 65,000 men that same year. Twenty years later, the numbers had risen to 4,604 women and more than 100,000 men.

AMONG THOSE FEW women pharmacists was Nellie Elizabeth Davies. In addition to owning the Nellie Davis Pharmacy on Fourth Street and later several others, she was an author, newspaper columnist, artist, and singer and was active in civic and business organizations.

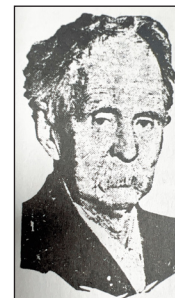
Nellie was the second child of Mary (Southall) and William Henry Worton, born on July 28, 1898, in Staffordshire, England. Two siblings followed. In January 1905, Nellie's mother died, leaving her father to raise four children under the age of 10. Unable or unwilling to care for them, William sent the children to be raised by relatives — Nellie and her brother William Jr. by their grandmother, Eliza Worton, and sisters Gladys and Eunice by their uncle, William Elliott.

Nellie's early education was at St. Anne's, a boarding school for girls in a nearby rural village. In 1915, she matriculated as a pharmacy student at Queen's

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Euchre Night



Coming in April

Watch for details on our website!

ROYAL OAK
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Historical Museum

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royaloakhistoricalsociety.com

(248) 439-1501

Hours: Tues., Thurs., Sat., 1–4 p.m.
and by appointment

UPCOMING EXHIBITS

March

Geology and Topography of Royal Oak
from the Ice Age to the Present Day

Late Spring

The Railroad and Its Effect on
Royal Oak's Development

*All photographs, artifacts, and archival
materials are from the collections of the
Royal Oak Historical Society unless noted.*

President's Message

BY TOM TOGGWEILER

Dear Members:

I WOULD LIKE to introduce myself as the new president of the Royal Oak Historical Society after serving nearly 10 years as a board member. I grew up in Royal Oak and am a graduate of Shrine High School. I left to go to college but returned in 1986 to buy my first home. I am excited about my new role as president to continue the importance and significance of this organization to the city.

This year brings many changes to our organization with the addition of new board members Judy Davids, Jim Ellison, and Al Carter, along with some additional changes to our board committees. Among them is John S. Schultz as the new editor of our quarterly newsletter, joined by contributors Ellen Kehoe, Don Drife, Leslie S. Edwards, Don Callihan, and Judy Davids.

We are planning several events in the coming months, including a Euchre Night in April to add to the successful speakers program open to the public on the second Friday of each month. We are also planning to hold a "members only" event every three months. The topics picked for these programs include interesting snippets about the people and events as our city has evolved over the years. The community-wide Pancake Breakfast on Memorial Day and Car Show in August remain on our calendar. Check our website — royaloakhistoricalsociety.com — for topics and dates. Additionally, there will be several displays and exhibits throughout the year, with the speakers program often related to the content of these exhibits.

OUR ANNUAL DINNER was held in October at the First United Methodist Church and was attended by nearly 90 people. We would like to thank all who celebrated with us and appreciate their support. We honored the tenure of our long-time curator, Muriel Versagi, who retired from her position. We will miss her contributions and her years of service to the organization. We are very excited to have longtime museum volunteer Johanna Schurrer at the helm as our new curator and exhibit coordinator. She has already been instrumental in bringing many fresh ideas to our organization. I want to give a special thank you to all our volunteers working at the museum. In 2023, well over 4,000 volunteer hours were spent by our dedicated volunteers and staff. The efforts put forth by these people are admirable and so much appreciated.

Three events were conducted at the museum in December, including assisting the Royal Oak Residents for Royal Oak Facebook group to collect toys and gifts for the kids at the Judson Center for the holidays. We also screened the movie "The Polar Express" for our young visitors and had Santa arrive on Dec. 16 in his adopted sleigh — a fire truck from the Royal Oak Fire Department. The look on the young faces when Santa rode in on the fire truck with flashing lights and sirens blaring was a great reminder of how magical the season can be.

We set out on a program called "Opening Doors to the Past," with the goal of replacing our entrance doors to comply with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

WE ARE PROUD to have had hundreds of donations from our members and friends in 2023. A heartfelt thank you is extended to all for thinking of our group in this way. We received donations from Meijer Inc. as well as from the William Sullivan family in memory of our longtime board member Bill Sullivan who passed away in 2023. Those gracious donations helped fund the purchase of a new sound and video system and new folding chairs for use at our speakers programs. Also, the Royal Oak Police Department chose the Historical Society as the charitable organization to receive the proceeds of its annual golf outing. Our sincere appreciation to all those who help sustain our organization.

We wish to extend a wholehearted invitation to Royal Oak residents and others to visit and support the museum from 1–4 p.m. Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Our organization is committed to preserving our past with new exhibits and programs which educate young and old about our cherished history.

Curator's Corner

BY JOHANNA SCHURRER

IN EARLY 2023, I became the new curator after Muriel Versagi's retirement. I had been a volunteer at the museum for 20 years, primarily working on exhibits as well as assisting Muriel with other tasks. I am looking forward to the challenges of my new role in continuing to maintain and improve our museum.

During the past year, the large Abraham Lincoln exhibit was very successful and included Ron Carley, a living historian who portrays President Lincoln. He came to the museum on two Saturdays when the exhibit was open, was well-informed on the history of Lincoln, and answered many questions from the nearly 200 visitors. Our holiday exhibit event featured Santa who arrived on one of the Royal Oak Fire Department trucks and the Royal Oak Children's Choir singing carols. Santa led everyone inside for refreshments and to sit on his knee. Santa will be back in December, so mark your calendars.

This year, we are planning two large exhibits. The first one will be in March and will be accompanied by two presentations by Bob Muller, former president of the historical society, on the geology and topography of the Royal Oak area from the Ice Age through present day. In late spring our exhibit will be on the railroad and how it affected the development of Royal Oak and its downtown. We will also be updating and refreshing current displays using more of our large collection of artifacts and archival material.

THE ARCHIVES AND LIBRARY are also undergoing some changes. We have purchased additional acid-free enclosures and boxes to rehouse archival materials. This has already helped give us more shelf space to store incoming donations. We are also creating better access tools to help volunteers and researchers find the information they are looking for.



Museum volunteers enjoyed Santa's visit Dec. 16. Left to right: Mike Corless, Carol Card, Lee Potter, ROHS president Tom Toggweiler, Santa, curator Johanna Schurrer, Don Calder, Adair Calder, and Pat Burean

Upcoming Speaker Series

Second Friday of each month • 7 p.m. at the museum
\$15 per person • space limited to 40

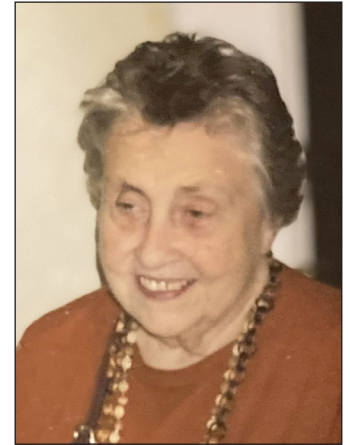
Friday, Feb. 9 — The Polio Vaccine Story, by Don Callihan

Friday, March 8 — The Ice Age in Royal Oak, by Bob Muller

Friday, March 22 — Bonus Talk! — Red Run, The Ghost River of Royal Oak, by Bob Muller

— MEMBERS-ONLY EVENT —

Sunday, March 3 • 2 p.m. • Fifth Avenue Royal Oak
— Our First African-Americans, Our City Airplane, and Our Charm School, by Don Drife



Johanna Schurrer

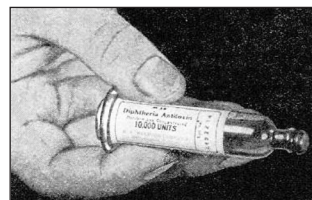
From Our Collections All Aboard

This "Health Ticket" from 1926 was used to promote immunizations and make getting shots fun for young children. Diphtheria vaccinations first appeared in the 1890s but only became widely used in the 1920s. In January 1926, the *Royal Oak Tribune* reported that the toxin-antitoxin immunizations for diphtheria would begin soon in Royal Oak schools.

Measuring 2 inches by 4 inches, this is a ticket for Clifford Ernest Barker, who was 6 years old when he boarded the no-diphtheria train. The little ticket book refers to the physician as the "little traveler's friendly Conductor," and four "stations" unfold, ready to be stamped with the date of arrival.

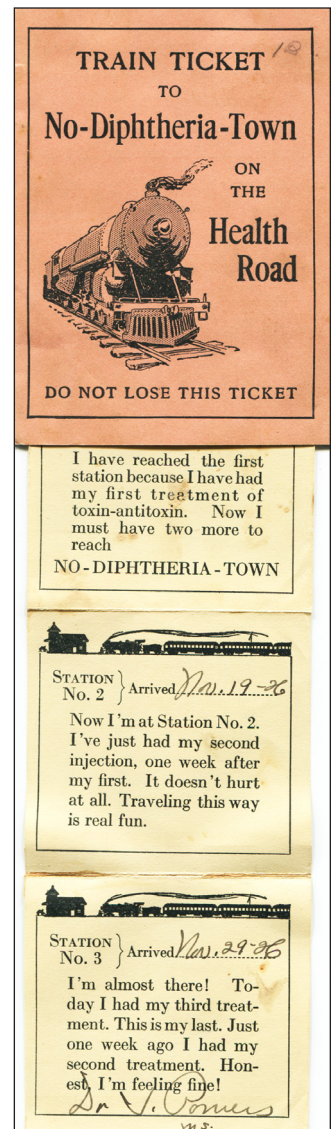
Clifford Barker later graduated from Royal Oak High School in 1939.

— Leslie S. Edwards



Wikipedia.com

Editor's Note: This new feature highlights interesting or unusual artifacts and archival materials from the society's collections at the museum. Leslie S. Edwards has a master's degree in library and information science with a certificate of archival administration from Wayne State University. She has over 30 years of experience in genealogical research and as a professional historian and archivist.



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Nellie Davis • Continued from Page 1

In the 1940s, a second store (short-lived) was opened at 925 S. Woodward (between Ninth and Hudson near what is now the Fagan McManus Attorneys building). Additional stores were located at 3117 W. 12 Mile Road in Berkley, 1729 Crooks south of 12 Mile Road, and 1227 S. Washington. The Berkley store, now the location of Catching Fireflies, was the only drugstore in that city for many years. Each store was a separate entity with its own manager and staff. Henry A. Schwager Jr. (who worked for Nellie for 20 years) was the company's general manager. The pharmacy on Crooks was the first to close in April 1970. Other store locations had previously changed hands or were sold to former employees. In an interview, Schwager cited the changing times and the advent of super drugstores as the reason. "In the old days," Schwager said, "Nellie could open a store for \$600. Today it takes \$80,000 to stock one."

IN MARCH 1935, Nellie divorced Harry citing lack of support.

It was uncontested and Nellie was granted alimony. Three years later, she married Paul Mandrup-Poulsen, a Danish immigrant. Paul became the secretary-treasurer for the company. Nellie's daughter, Ruth, also worked for the business and later pursued pharmaceutical studies at Wayne State University.

In January 1958, *The Daily Tribune* published a story about Nellie. Her philosophy throughout her stores was "we try to impress our personnel with the importance of personal service to our customers, and we urge them to build warm personal contacts." Nellie was a passionate advocate for the role of the pharmacist in the community, and encouraged others, especially women, to consider it as a career. She also developed five medical products of her own and

was involved in their manufacture. She considered "Nele," a feminine hygiene product, to be the best, and it had sales distribution in Detroit, Flint, and Lansing.

Nellie, however, was not only a pharmacist. In addition to being a member of various pharmaceutical associations, Nellie was one of the charter members of the Soroptimist Club of Royal Oak, president of the First Baptist Church choir, and a member of the Bloomfield Art Association and the National Association of American Pen Women. She authored several short stories before publishing two novels under the pen name of Nelle Davis. [Note the change in the spelling of her first name.] Her first novel, *House of Sanctuary* (1938), featured a young female pharmacist — an uncommon subject at that time. *Hilltops Have Sunshine* (1941), her second novel, was a story set in pre-war England.

NELLIE ALSO CARRIED her pharmacy work into the fine arts and created still-life paintings of the tools of her work. Her oils were so unique that in 1955 a Long Island druggist ordered one titled "The Apothecary Shop" for his store.

In 1952, Nellie was honored as "Brand Name Retailer of the Year," the nation's highest award in the drugstore field. The awards ceremony held in New York featured entertainment by Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca before an audience of more than 1,700 guests. The Nellie Davis Pharmacy won the award over a list of 6,000 drugstore merchants across the nation. In 1962, Nellie received the Distinguished Citizen Award from the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, and in 1963 the Bowl of Hygeia Award sponsored by the American Pharmacists Association and the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations to honor "a pharmacist

who has made outstanding professional contributions and has participated in community or governmental activities that reflect well on the pharmacy profession."

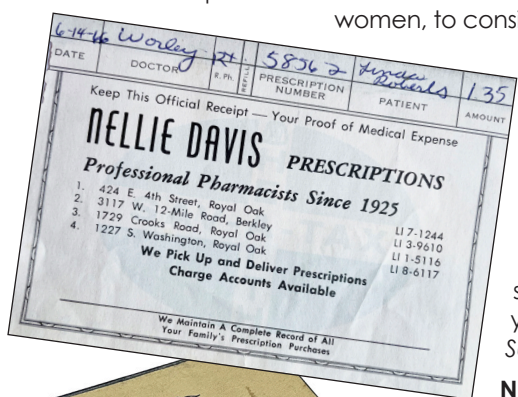
ABOUT 1966, Nellie sold the business to her general manager, Henry Schwager, who continued the Nellie Davis business name into the late 1970s. She and her husband Paul retired to their summer home, Thunderhill, on McCormick Lake in Briley Township in northeast Michigan. She spent the remainder of her life there. Nellie established libraries in the communities of Atlanta, Hillman, and Lewiston, taught art classes for the Atlanta Art Guild, and continued to paint. She also wrote a column in the *Montmorency County Tribune*, "Living, Learning and Reading." In it, she imparted her knowledge of herbs and plants for healing and cooking, told news of local libraries, and wrote of the importance of libraries and access to books. "One of our greatest privileges is being able to read without censorship ... one is never too old to learn and the learning process is never boring."

Nellie Davis Mandrup-Poulsen died at age 97 on October 13, 1995. The newspaper lauded Nellie's "knowledge of natural herbs and plants reflected something much greater than the usual 'how-to' column. It portrays Nellie's own view that any person, equipped with knowledge and an insatiable curiosity, can live a self-reliant, productive life in tune with nature and the world."

Author's Note: Thank you to Michelle Pinson, editor of the Montmorency County Tribune, for information on Nellie's life in Briley Township. Michelle knew Nellie personally and has one of her paintings in her kitchen. She called Nellie "a very interesting lady."



Davis Drug Store home delivery truck, circa 1940



Prescription receipt and box from Nellie Davis pharmacy

Nellie and Paul Mandrup-Poulsen's house at 602 S. Connecticut is profiled on Page 5

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, co-author of *Images of America: Royal Oak*, at jsschultz11@gmail.com.

Nellie Poulsen House

602 South Connecticut Avenue

English Manor House Built in 1928

SURROUNDED BY very little land, a house on the corner of South Connecticut and East Sixth streets has a story to tell. It was built in 1928 or 1929 by a Royal Oak builder named Charles W. Chapman; however, he did not finish building the house because he ran out of money during the Great Depression.

The house stood open to the elements for several years. We don't know who finished it, but according to the 1940 *Polk City Directory*, Paul M. Poulsen and Mrs. Nellie Davis lived in it. Davis was a well-known druggist with several stores in this area and was president of the Nellie Davis Pharmacy, Inc. Poulsen, a native of Denmark, served as secretary-treasurer for the company. The store located at 424 East Fourth Street was known as Davis Drug Store.

Although the address is on Connecticut, the front door faces East Sixth Street. You walk up two steps to the door that has an arched stone overhead.

Two interesting light fixtures are on each side of the door. An aesthetically pleasing weeping cherry tree blooms next to the door in the springtime. The windows are

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Valentine's Day Through the Years

By Judy Davids



This pre-1950s foldout valentine belonged to the mother of ROHS secretary Kelly Muller.

VALENTINE'S DAY is the day of days for lovers. Here's a peek at how folks celebrated this special day in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s.

In the Roaring Twenties, people loved to celebrate in fancy ways. They exchanged beautiful cards with pretty designs, ribbons, and lace. Couples also gave each other poems and started the tradition of heart-shaped boxes filled with chocolates. The 1920s were all about having a good time and expressing love in playful and exciting ways.

Even during tough times, people have always found unique ways to express love. In the 1930s, the country was in the depths of the Great Depression, which made life hard for many people. Valentine's Day became a chance to share affection without spending a lot of money. According to *The Daily Tribune*, elementary school students during this period were taught how to make simple homemade cards, write legibly, and address envelopes correctly.

THE 1940S unfolded against the backdrop of World War II. Valentine's Day took on new meaning as the war separated loved ones. Letters exchanged during this time were adorned with patriotic symbols, demonstrating love amid challenges. Limited resources prompted the popularity of thoughtful gifts like scrapbooks and handmade jewelry, emphasizing sentiment over expense.



"Joan" from Whittier Elementary had a box of make-your-own valentines.

Try This 1930s Spell

According to *Daily Tribune* columnist Lillian Campbell, sometimes wishes are granted by St. Valentine. In 1934 she claimed this worked: 'Write your wish very small on a piece of thin paper and roll it in a little piece of clay. Throw it into a bowl of water. If the paper escapes and comes to the surface — without any help from you — you will get your wish.' — Feb. 13, 1934.

Homes & Buildings • Continued from Page 5

casement style. There are three chimneys; the one facing East Sixth Street is covered with fieldstone from the ground to the roofline.

Perhaps the most unique feature of this house is that, incorporated into the design of the chimney that faces Connecticut Avenue, are three casement windows that open. Two of them are at ground-floor level while the third is located at the second floor. The chimney is covered with ivy. There are double gables facing East Sixth Street.

THE BRICKWORK is also interesting. It is dark red reclaimed brick and rubble from one of the demolished Ford factories. Protruding bricks at random intervals, perhaps just a whim of the bricklayer, earned the nickname "The Original Climbing Wall."

The site was originally planned to include the lot to the south and the two lots to the west, which would have been quite an estate. Those lots were eventually sold off.

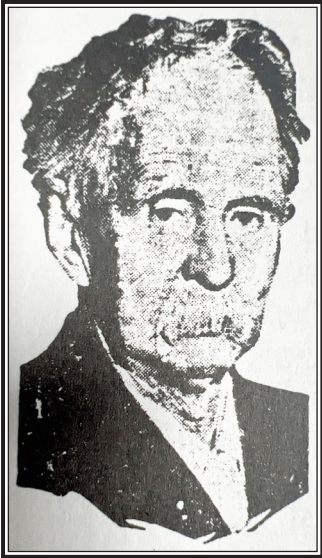
Jorgen Mandrup-Poulsen lived in the house first as a renter from 1949 to 1964, at which time he became the owner. He has been the caretaker of the house and its heritage to the present day.



Unique chimney with three windows

Charles A. Allen, the 'Father of Royal Oak'

By John S. Schultz



The Daily Tribune

Charles A. Allen

CHARLES A. ALLEN is a name that few may recognize when talking about Royal Oak history, but he is known as the "Father of Royal Oak" for his singular efforts in the incorporation of the Village of Royal Oak in 1891. He helped this hamlet grow from a settlement of about 300 to a residential city of nearly 23,000 when he died.

February marks the 90th year since his passing. Mr. Allen died Feb. 3, 1934, at age 83 at his home at 620 S. Lafayette. He had been ill for four weeks following a heart attack.

Charles was the son of Courtlin and Saline (Campbell) Allen who moved to Michigan from Tennessee. According to the book *Royal Oak, Michigan, The Early Years*, compiled by Owen A. Perkins, the Allens were among many others from the south who headed north when it was evident that war was going to break out between the North and the South. Courtlin co-owned a grocery store with a friend who was a Southern sympathizer and Courtlin's allegiance was with the North, so he sold his interest in the store; he and his wife and their four children, three boys (including Charles) and one girl, headed north in 1861.

The family first moved to Oxford, then in 1865 to the small hamlet of Royal Oak in Royal Oak Township, coming by ox cart down Woodward Avenue when it was a plank road. They settled on a farm between Woodward and Lafayette avenues and between Fifth Street and Lincoln Avenue. They would later move to a home on the northwest corner of Fifth Street and Washington Avenue. Courtlin was a carpenter and young Charles followed in his footsteps. Together they were responsible for building more than 100 homes in Royal Oak over the years.

Charles was married on May 12, 1874, his 24th birthday, to Miss Flora Marshall. She had moved with her family to Royal Oak from Monroe in 1867 when she was 12 years old. The Allens had only one child, Eva Maude, who was born Aug. 10, 1879. Sadly, the infant daughter died on Sept. 24 of the same year.

IN EARLY 1891 as the settlement began to grow, Charles Allen, with a desire "to have better streets, also sidewalks and street lights," initiated the petition for incorporation of the small hamlet of Royal Oak as a village. He worked alone and went home by home for many weeks, carrying all the petitions for the proposal in his pockets to secure signatures of the few men who were qualified voters in the community of about 300.

The proposed organization of the village was a lively topic of conversation and was discussed in stores, at the post office, and wherever the villagers gathered. The proposal was not a sure thing and was met with some opposition from those who believed it would increase the tax rate. The opposition circulated a petition, but it never moved forward.

On Feb. 24, 1891, Democrat Arthur R. Tripp announced he would sponsor a bill in the Michigan House of Representatives "to incorporate the village of Royal Oak." The next day, House Bill No. 806 was introduced. After a few weeks, the bill was approved by the House and later the state Senate before being sent to Gov. Edwin B. Winans, who signed it on March 18 incorporating the Village of Royal Oak.

Less than two weeks later on March 30, village officers were elected. Allen, a lifelong Democrat, was elected to the first council of village trustees as township clerk. The next year he was elected president of the village for a two-year term and was re-elected in 1899. In 1906, Allen was appointed president to complete the term of Joseph H. Burgess and then served as president again in 1907-1908. He retired from politics in 1909 though he retained an active interest in public affairs until his last illness. He visited the businesses downtown almost daily, always ready to stop and discuss current problems. Allen was also a charter member of Royal Oak Lodge No. 464 Masonic Lodge organized in 1912.

WHEN ROYAL OAK INCORPORATED as a village, boundaries expanded to Catalpa and Gardenia to the north, 10 Mile to the south, Knowles to the east, and Oakdale to the west. Fourth and Main was the village hub. There was a town hall and a bandstand. On the northeast corner were a restaurant called "Sarah Hall Warm Meals," a saloon, and a blacksmith shop. Village residents and farmers purchased goods at a general store on the southeast corner. On the same side of the road at Fifth Street, travelers stayed at the Eagle Hotel. A Baptist church was located at Third and Main.

From 1914 to 1918, Allen served as Royal Oak postmaster. By then, the postal business had so increased that a separate building was rented next to Jacob Erb's store (which housed the post office). During the next few years, streets were permanently named and houses were required to display numbers so that postmen could make house deliveries beginning Nov. 8, 1915. Previously, residents nailed hinged, lidded boxes to posts along the mail route.

Allen's funeral was held Feb. 6, 1934, and the pallbearers were Royal Oak Mayor H. Lloyd Clawson, Harry Brooks, William Beltz, George Mathieson, City Clerk R. Bruce Fleming of Royal Oak, and Gene Allen of Detroit. He was buried in Royal Oak Cemetery. Allen's wife, Flora, died of pneumonia March 29, 1946, at age 90 in Clarksville, near Grand Rapids. She was also buried in Royal Oak Cemetery next to her husband and infant daughter.



Charles Allen family home at 620 S. Lafayette

Stories Behind the Gravestones

BY DON DRIFE



Welcome and Mary Campbell Farmed 800 Acres

WELCOME CAMPBELL was born in Paris, New York, July 20, 1810. His family moved to Chili, New York, four years later. There he learned the cooper's trade (the making of barrels and casks) from his father and then came to the Territory of Michigan in 1834. He brought his father, stepmother, and sister to Michigan in May 1835. By 1837, he had saved enough money to buy 117 acres of land near Oxford. He added an adjoining 80 acres in 1839. The area was known at first as "Campbell's Corners" and later called Oakwoods; today it does not appear on any map.

Welcome Campbell married Mary J. Cheney (1824–1911) on June 9, 1839. They had 10 children — five sons and five daughters. To supplement his farmer's income he continued in the cooper's trade, participated in lumbering, and operated a small store — including a lumberyard — in Pontiac. By the 1850 U.S. Census, Welcome Campbell is listed as owning 140 acres in Royal Oak Township. His farm expanded until he owned around 800 acres between Nine and Ten Mile roads on both sides of Hilton (Campbell) Road. The farm is described in the *History of Oakland County, Michigan 1817–1877* as "one of the very best farms in the township," with "maple-trees for shade on both sides of the highway."

ALTHOUGH CAMPBELL ROAD is named for the family, Hilton is the official name of the road that runs through the area of the old farm. Later in his life, Welcome sold part of the land, and the remaining land was divided among his seven living children. The 1880 U.S. Census lists Welcome as a "retired farmer" living with his wife Mary and son John. He kept bees on a 10-acre parcel just west of the unincorporated village of Royal Oak, producing beeswax and "annually about two tons of honey."

The *Birmingham Eccentric* and *The Milford Times* reported that on Wednesday, Oct. 15, 1884, before going to bed, Welcome "tried to better the stovepipe, and in so doing left a

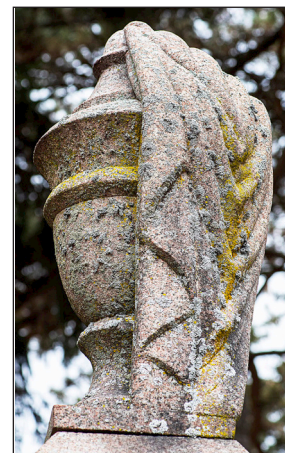
large crack in one of the joints." Coal gas (carbon monoxide) escaped during the night and he and Mary were asphyxiated. The coal finally burned down and by Friday morning enough fresh air leaked into the house to revive Mary. She managed to crawl outside and find a neighbor who sent for Dr. H.K. Lathrop and the couple's son, Dr. John L. Campbell. "Mr. Campbell [was] in a state of profound insensibility, and body very cold, no pulse, in fact not much evidence of life left." After three or four hours he began to revive and 30 hours later his mind cleared up. He and his wife had

no memories of the event except Welcome recalled dreaming that his wife left him. They both fully recovered.

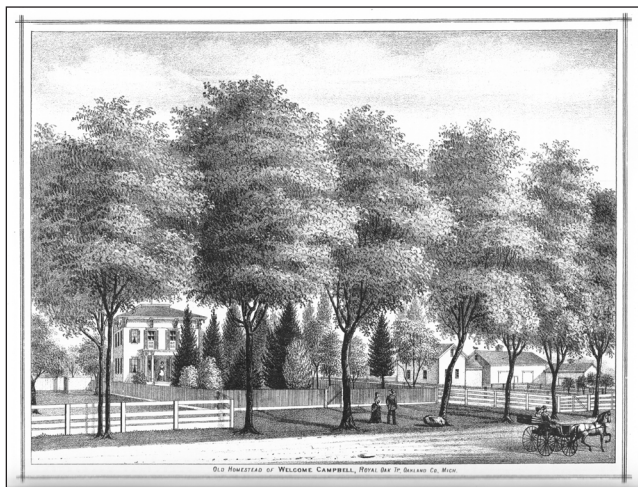
FOUR YEARS LATER, Welcome died in that house on Nov. 11, 1888. Mary was living in Royal Oak with her son David Levi Campbell and his wife Julia Benjamin Campbell when she died on Feb. 18, 1911.

Welcome Campbell and his wife Mary are buried on the edge of the center drive in Section A of the Royal Oak Cemetery. Their grave marker is an ornate granite monument topped with a draped urn, which represents the shedding of earthly garments no longer needed in eternal life. Eight of their 10 children are buried close by.

This series highlights people buried in Royal Oak's three cemeteries as we approach the bicentennial of Royal Oak Cemetery in 2026. If readers know of other information on the featured person, please send it to editor@royaloakhistoricalsociety.org.



Illustrations above and below from the *History of Oakland County, Michigan 1817–1877*



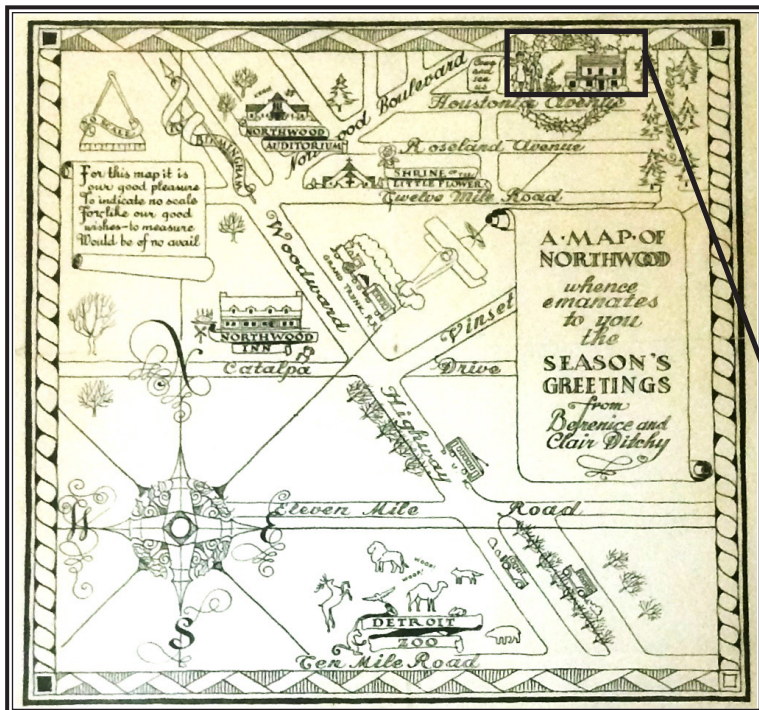
Royal Oak Then & Now

BY JOHN MAURICE

CLAIR WILLIAM DITCHY of Royal Oak was an internationally renowned architect with a career that spanned the 20th century. Ditchy's name may not be well known now, but many buildings that he designed can still be found around our city and across metro Detroit. Among them are the Royal Oak Department of Public Service building at 12 Mile and Campbell that was built in 1944, William Beaumont Hospital built in 1955, and Shrine Grade School and convent at 12 Mile and Woodward built in 1938. He also designed the recently demolished Royal Oak police station that was built in 1964. Beyond Royal Oak, Ditchy designed the Alice Crocker Lloyd dormitory at the University of Michigan, units of the Brewster-Douglass and Parkside housing projects in Detroit, and Highland Park General Hospital.

Clair Ditchy began his career working with famed architect Albert Kahn in 1918 and eventually started his own architectural practice in 1921. He was very active in the American Institute of Architects through the 1950s, serving as president, vice president, and secretary at various points. He was a prolific speaker and writer, remaining active in architecture and leading his own firm until his death. At the time of his passing, he was designing the Manresa Jesuit Retreat House in Bloomfield Hills.

Then 1928



The **Then** map is a drawing depicting the Northwood subdivision and the surrounding area with a line leading to 1630 Houstonia Avenue. But this is no ordinary map — it was drawn as a Christmas greeting card in 1928 by Clair Ditchy and his wife Berenice. The couple lived at this Houstonia address from the 1920s until his death on July 31, 1967.

The wonderful map in the **Then** photo is titled "A Map of Northwood whence emanates to you the Season's Greetings from Berenice and Clair Ditchy." In the upper left there is a note stating, "For this map it is our good pleasure to indicate no scale for like our good wishes — to measure would be of no avail."



Enlarged detail of the Ditchys and their home on Houstonia

At the upper right-hand corner is a depiction of Mr. and Mrs. Ditchy along with their house and the greeting "Come and see us." The drawing of the



Now

home on the 1928 **Then** map is very similar to how the house looks in the **Now** photo. The only difference is the second-story addition at the left side.

Bisecting the map from the lower right corner to the upper left is "Woodward Highway," paralleled by the "Grand Trunk R.R." Also depicted are the Detroit Zoo, Northwood Inn, the original Shrine of the Little Flower church, and the Northwood Auditorium that stood on Woodward a bit north of the church.

Clair Ditchy was a famed architect who lived right in our midst. Although this only scratches the surface of his contributions, looking deeper into his portfolio is to look into the history of our area.

THEN map from the collections of the Royal Oak Historical Society
NOW photograph from Google Maps

Looking Back

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

What was happening in Royal Oak...

50 years ago — 1974

ROYAL OAK SCHOOL BOARD members polled indicated today there is no doubt the school district will hold another tax vote in the near future, the only question is when and for how much. Board members could decide those questions at the next meeting (Feb. 6).

About 21 percent of the district electors turned down four tax proposals Tuesday. Under state law, the district could hold another special election in mid to late March and again at the annual school election in June.

THE PRICE OF CLARK GASOLINE jumped 5.7 cents a gallon on Saturday (Feb. 2). Total Oil Co., also joined six other major brands who have increased their prices this month. A gallon of Total gas Friday went up 2.5 cents. The increase put the price for a gallon of regular Clark gas at about 50 cents, and a gallon of regular Total between 49.9 cents and 55.5 cents, based on a random survey.

60 years ago — 1964

A SEVEN-YEAR BUILDING PROGRAM of one of Royal Oak's oldest churches, First Congregational, will end Sunday (Feb. 2) with the dedication of its sanctuary at the 7 p.m. service. Organized in 1842, the congregation first met in a Baptist church, then in a school house, and later in a Methodist church. It moved into its own building on Aug. 28, 1867, near the corner of what is now Main and Fourth. Incorporated in 1906 under the laws of Michigan, the church moved to Center and Third until 1955 when the present building program was started. The first structure at the present site on the triangle of Northwood, Crooks and Webster was dedicated in 1956. It included a social hall to seat 400, kitchen, heating plant, youth room and classrooms for the Sunday school department.

70 years ago — 1954

THE MAN WHO GAVE CHILDREN the story of "Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn" will have his name placed on Royal Oak's new northeast grade school. It will be called Mark Twain school, said Eugene Land, chairman of a committee of school board members who made the choice. "We considered names of poets and presidents," said Land, "and finally decided the inspirational value and esteem in which Twain's stories are held made this a fitting name." Twain is really a fictional name — pseudonym for Samuel L. Clemens, a Missourian who grew up on the Mississippi River. The school is now under

construction, just east of Campbell several blocks south of Fourteen Mile, the north city limit of Royal Oak, and will take pupils from the overcrowded Oak Ridge school.

THE ROYAL OAK CITY DOG license ordinance, giving the city the power to license and control dogs and dog kennels, was passed by the city commission in revised form. Although the act was given immediate effect, licenses cannot be issued for at least 10 days or until the application forms and tags are secured. The license fee is established at \$1 for each male dog and \$2 for each female dog licensed before the penalty date of March 1. Persons harboring six or more dogs are considered as operating a kennel. The fee for kennels harboring up to 10 dogs is \$7.50 and for 11 or more dogs is \$15. Dogs running at large must have tags, and unless they are immunized from rabies, they must be on a leash and must be muzzled.

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50 Years Ago — 1974 Data-Checkers Replace Standard Cash Registers

Gone are cash registers at the Wrigley store on Telegraph in Bloomfield Township. They are now called "Data-Checkers" equipped with electronic produce scales and hooked into a computer elsewhere in the store. A light display flashes price to the customers. The Bloomfield Township's Wrigley's is the first supermarket in Michigan to install the new checkout system and soon will be part of all stores.

The machines are the forerunners of computerized equipment which will automatically "scan" a coded strip printed on each item and record the correct price on the sales slip and in the computer. Additionally store manager Peter Ruggirello can find out his total sales figures at any time of the day and the coding system will also help employees keep record of inventories.



Essie Carter of Detroit, a clerk at a Bloomfield Township supermarket, checks out a customer on a new computer terminal replacing the old cash register.

70 Years Ago — 1954 Thin Mints Introduced



SOMETHING NEW! Intermediate Girl Scout Jane Pickens of Whittier school, Royal Oak, nibbles at the new Girl Scout cookie, a chocolate-covered mint delicacy, which goes on sale today (Feb. 15). The mint wafer as well as the crème sandwich type may be ordered this week from the Scouts. Proceeds will go for camping facilities in South Oakland County.

80 years ago — 1944

BEGINNING WEDNESDAY (Feb. 29) it will no longer be necessary to turn in used collapsible tubes to purchase new tubes of shaving cream or toothpaste, John D. McGillis, regional salvage manager of the War Production Board here, said today. For the past year most collapsible tubes have had no tin content, McGillis explained, and therefore have no salvageable material. However, McGillis urged that many old tubes manufactured before 1943 still accumulated in medicine cabinets be turned in to any authorized collection agency. McGillis said the tin shortage was "by no means overcome."

"**A BUNDLE OR MORE** from every home" is the slogan of Royal Oak's Emergency Waste Paper curb collection, set for Saturday. Every home not having paper at the curb that day is to be canvassed by the Boy Scouts. They will work ahead of the DPW collection trucks to bring out all possible waste paper.

90 years ago — 1934

ONE OF ROYAL OAK'S best-known landmarks, the wooden barn on the south side of the Erb homestead at the northeastern corner of First (Eleven Mile) and Main streets is being torn down today. It will be replaced by a garage, built from much of the material of the old barn.

VOTING IN THE DAILY TRIBUNE'S straw ballot on sale of liquor by the glass continues to be heavily against the proposal. The total to date:

For sale by glass: 210 Against: 1,471

A dramatic incident in connection with this vote was the death of a Royal Oak woman only a few hours after she had signed the ballot and before it had been counted with today's vote. She was opposed to the sale by the glass. All residents of Southern Oakland County are invited to vote in this public opinion.

95 years ago — 1929

TWO STEAM SHOVELS are now at work in the excavation for the Montgomery Ward and the S.S. Kresge stores at the southwest corner of South Washington and Fourth Street. The two buildings are to be completed by April 29, this being the date fixed in the contract for the Kresge building, officials of the F.R. Patterson Construction Company, general contractor for both buildings, said the Montgomery Ward store will be ready about the same time.

ELIZABETH D. WATT has the unique distinction of being the only member of the January graduating class of Royal Oak High School who, in her 11 years of school life, was never tardy. Watt also excelled in scholarship, ranking in the top third of her class.

100 years ago — 1924

VOTERS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 6 — largely with the present boundaries of the city of Royal Oak — will express themselves at a special election on Wednesday, Feb. 6, on the proposal to issue \$250,000 in bonds to build a new Union school in place of the old structure. The board of education has long said that the old building was outgrown and unsafe and unsanitary. Nearly 600 patrons of the school presented a petition asking for immediate action on the unsatisfactory situation. The result has been the completion of plans and submission of them to the voters for their approval on Wednesday.

THE BALDWIN THEATRE established a new attendance record for southern Oakland County on New Year's Day, when 3,147 persons saw the excellent production of "Little Old New York," starring Marion Davies.

Looking Back entries are taken directly from historical articles printed in The Daily Tribune and in some cases the actual wording is used to convey the language, wording, and punctuation of the time.

100 Years Ago — 1924
No Sunday Dances

AFTER QUITE A CONTROVERSY between Oak Ballroom officials and interested citizens, the Royal Oak city commission has decided against allowing dances on Sunday. In a statement to the Royal Oak Tribune, Harry Anderson, one of the owners of the Oak Ballroom said, "We wish to apologize to the patrons of the Oak Ballroom for being unable to open on Sunday, Feb. 3, as we advertised in last week's paper. The greater majority of the people of Royal Oak and vicinity now go to Detroit on Sunday for their pleasure and as we had a great many requests for Sunday evening dancing parties, we decided to open Sundays."



"We notified Mayor Miller of our intentions and he in turn got in touch with the city commission who ordered City Manager Beauvals to close us up. Mr. Beauvals then informed me that if we attempted to operate the police would close us up and make arrests.

"As we did not wish our patrons to suffer the indignity of police interference, we remained closed. As dancing is clean and healthful amusement and also one of the most popular, we ask why this discrimination is law enforcement."

ACCORDING TO STATE LAW, "No persons shall keep open his shop, warehouse, or workhouse, or shall do any manner of labor, business or work, or be present at any dancing, or any public diversion, show or entertainment, or take part in any sport, game, or play on the first day of the week. The foregoing provisions shall not apply to works of necessity and charity, not to the solemnization of marriages. And any person so offending shall be punished by fine not exceeding \$10 for each offense."

The other side of the affair is best told in the words of the Rev. Jerome E. Webber, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church:

"It is a demonstrated fact that the proper observance of the Sabbath has attributed to the peace and solidarity of the nation. It is also essential to the moral life of any community. The neglect of this day of rest from the usual activity of the week, will sooner or later affect the moral life."



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Newsletter printed by: IMAGE PRINTING, 1902 Crooks Road, Royal Oak, MI 48073 • (248) 585-4080