



# Royal Oak Historical Society

Fall 2017

royaloakhistoricalsociety.org

## 78th Annual Fundraiser Dinner "Birds of a Feather Flock Together"

By Gloria Moran Harper

The Royal Oak Historical Society's strength is in its numbers of enthusiastic, dedicated, and committed members — the more birds that flock together — the higher the organization soars.

This year, the flock will gather on Friday, Oct. 20 for the society's 78th Annual Fundraiser Dinner at Pasquale's Restaurant, 31555 Woodward Ave.

The organization is planning a wonderful meal, along with its regular features, including a silent auction, a trivia game, and the evening's program, which will include the election of new board members and award presentations.

The popular trivia challenge, devised by Bob Muller and Cas Swastek, is in its third year.

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with a social hour and silent auction bidding, followed by dinner at 7 p.m. and then the program. Ticket price remains at \$35 each and includes an annual membership for the Royal Oak Historical Society. In addition to the dinner, soft drinks and coffee are included and cash bar served directly to your table.

Tickets can be purchased at William Sullivan & Son Funeral Home, 705 W. 11 Mile Rd.; Frenz & Sons Hardware, 1010 N. Main St.; the ROHS Museum, 1411 W. Webster Rd. (at Crooks Road); or on Paypal — [royaloakhistoricalsociety.com](http://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com); or from any board member. Tickets are also available at the door.

Pasquale's has a ramp to accommodate wheelchairs and walkers and an elevator to the restaurant's lower level where the festivities will take place.

Come gather and flock with us!

### Royal Oak Historical Society Board of Directors

President: Deb Anderson

Vice President: Jay Dunstan

2nd Vice President: Bob Muller

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Treasurer: Mike Frenz

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Muriel Versagi

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John S. Schultz

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# ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## ANNUAL DINNER

**6PM** | **FRI**  
**DAY** **OCTOBER 20**

*Pasquale's*  
31555 WOODWARD AVE

### **EVENING PROGRAM**

Social Hour (Cash Bar) - Meet & Greet - Silent Auction

**7PM**

Buffet Dinner

**7:30PM**

Induction of ROHS Officers and New Board Members  
Presentation of Morrison, Bowman and Spirit of Royal Oak Awards  
Special Trivia Quiz (includes Bob Muller's Local Quiz)

### **TICKETS**

**\$35** / IN ADVANCE   **\$45** / AT THE DOOR

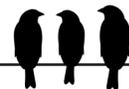
LIMITED AVAILABILITY

### **AVAILABLE HERE**

Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Home | The Royal Oak Historical Museum  
Frentz & Sons Hardware | Paypal on the Royal Oak Historical Society website  
Or from any board member



**ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY.COM**



# Remembrances of Royal Oak

## Swamp Oaks and Trading Posts

Excerpted from *Images of America: Royal Oak*.

By Maureen McDonald and John S. Schultz (ROHS Board Member & Editorial Board Consultant)

Meticulous records bound in leather volumes, handwritten shards of yellowed paper, and rare photographs chronicle the migration of settlers to marshy lands filled with swamp oaks. A surveyor to the governor of the Michigan Territory told Lewis Cass the land was incapable of cultivation. After his visit, the wagons began hauling pioneers, and steam engines followed.

The earliest settlers — largely on Thirteen Mile and Crooks Road — struggled mightily to claim a place in the history books and earn enough dollars to keep their families alive with roofs overhead. Hardy people endured the Panic of 1819, a depression that occurred over

too-rapid, too costly land sales at \$2 an acre.

Yet the promise of wide-open land was especially enticing to New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians. The Erie Canal opened the Midwest, a 363-mile waterway that drastically cut shipping costs. “The Canal’s impact over the first five years was not that spectacular, but after 1830, thousands of settlers invaded Michigan’s Lower Peninsula via this waterway,” writes Arthur Hagman in the 1970 Oakland County Book of History.

Sherman Stevens, the railroad entrepreneur, laid out the little village and railway station in 1836.

By 1876, the area had railroad

company buildings, a steam sawmill, three blacksmith shops, one hotel, three general stores, one millinery store, two drug stores, two

*A surveyor to the governor of the Michigan Territory told Lewis Cass the land was incapable of cultivation*

physicians, four churches, a town hall, and the handsome schoolhouse of District No. 6. Its first newspaper was the Royal Oak Experimental in 1876, according to the 1977 History of Oakland County. The village was incorporated in 1891 by a decree of then governor Edwin B. Winans. Charles Allen, deemed the “father of Royal Oak,” circulated petitions and championed the vision that endured long after his death in 1934.

Here is how a town was born.

*Images of America: Royal Oak* is available at the Royal Oak Historical Museum or by contacting John S. Schultz at [jsschultz11@gmail.com](mailto:jsschultz11@gmail.com).

### About John S. Schultz

*John S. Schultz has lived in Royal Oak for nearly 40 years. He was most recently managing editor of DBusiness magazine, part of Hour Media. Previously, he was a bureau chief for The Detroit News; a former assistant managing editor at The Daily Tribune; and the founding editor of the Mirror of Royal Oak.*



*Woodward Avenue before the railroad tracks were moved to downtown Royal Oak.*

*Courtesy of Royal Oak Historical Society Museum*

PHOTO GAME: Photo A: Washington Square Building Photo B: Trattoria Da Luigi  
Photo C: Above Lily's Seafood Photographs by Bob Muller

# Royal Oak Then & Now

## The Grand Leader Department Store

*By John Maurice, ROHS Facebook Editor*



*“Then”: Second & Main, Grand Leader Department Store, May 1940*



*“Now”: Second & Main, Andiamo's Restaurant, September 2017*

This edition of Royal Oak Then & Now looks at the northeast corner of Main Street and East Second Street. The “Then” photo is from May 1940, when the building was occupied by the Grand Leader Department Store on the first floor. The Grand Leader was the “go to” store in Royal Oak for clothing for men, women, and children. You can also see that the WPA (renamed from the Works Progress Administration to the Works Projects Administration in 1939) occupies the second floor. The WPA would be disbanded in 1943 due to

WWII. You can see part of the former police station at the rear to the east of the building where the library parking lot is today. Today this corner is occupied by Andiamo restaurant and Toyology with offices on the second floor.

*Then photograph: Courtesy of the Royal Oak Historical Society Museum*

*Now photograph: Google Maps*

## ROHS Cartoon Vault 'Go ahead punk...'

By Dan Saad,  
ROHS Board Member



*The Daily Tribune – May 8, 1984*

“... make my day.” An iconic film quote, from an iconic film character that seemed perfectly matched to Oakland County’s emerging political icon 33 years ago. In 1984, L. Brooks Patterson, then the Oakland County prosecutor, promoted his petition to place the death penalty on the Michigan ballot with Harry Callahan-like zeal. Like Dirty Harry, Brooks also used his unique sense of humor to dismiss those who didn’t share his point of view (he still does). I’m happy to say that Brooks requested the original of this cartoon, and his appreciation for this political jab was the beginning of a long relationship during which he appeared in my Daily Tribune cartoons, as both prosecutor and county executive, for nearly two decades.

*Dan Saad was the editorial cartoonist at The Daily Tribune from 1983-1999. He still draws editorial cartoons regularly for Crain’s Detroit Business. He is a Royal Oak resident and member of the Royal Oak Historical Society Board of Directors. Dan’s Cartoon Blog: <http://saadcommentary.blogspot.com/>*

## Curator’s Corner

By Muriel Versagi

### COMING EXHIBITS

## Fine Arts Show & Sale October 1st

The South Oakland Art Association is holding their Fourth Annual Fine Art Show and Sale at the Museum. Its “Meet the Artist” Grand Opening will be from 2-5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 1. Refreshments will be served. Come meet and chat with the artists. View a wide variety of oil, watercolor, and acrylic paintings, along with sculptures and pottery artwork.

## Spic & Span

The Museum will be closed for three weeks starting Oct. 2 while the Art Show is taken down. The society is looking for volunteers to join ROHS members to clean the museum. Help is needed to clean windows, floors, walls, corners, under display cases, and other areas. Come help from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 28 and Saturday, Nov. 4. We will order pizzas on both days. We’ll be sending an email to sign up for an hour or two, so watch for it.

## Christmas on Display

The holiday theme this year is “Christmas through the War Years.” Each of the Christmas trees will be accompanied with a mannequin or two in the military uniform of a particular war. The Christmas Preview Party will be from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, Nov. 17. As usual, the annual fundraiser is \$10 per person. Christmas cookies, punch, coffee, and other goodies will be served. No pre-registration is required.

Currently, the museum does not have a donated WWI uniform, but does have a metal military trunk that belonged to Claude Albertson. It was shipped back to Royal Oak from Paris in 1918. We are fortunate to have a photograph of Claude in his uniform and will be on display. Each vignette will have a Christmas tree decorated in the period of the military uniform as well as bags and boxes from local stores. Display cases will be filled with the merchandise from our local Royal Oak stores, such as Montgomery Ward, Kinsel’s, Neisner’s, Fields, and Winkelman’s.

Santa Claus will be taking toy orders from children on Saturday, Dec. 2. Watch the museum’s website ([royaloakhistoricalsociety.com](http://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com)) for more info about the Christmas exhibit. The exhibit will close Jan. 13, 2018.

## Play the Photo Game

# 3 Windows

By ROHS Board Member Bob Muller

Can you identify which Royal Oak buildings have these unique architectural details?  
(Answers on page 3)

**A**



**B**



**C**



## What's Going on at the Orson Starr House?

The Orson Starr House is a Michigan farmhouse that was originally constructed about 1845. Located at 3123 N. Main St., one block south of 13 Mile Road. The house is owned by the City of Royal Oak and is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, from 1- 4 p.m. or by prior arrangement. Additional parking is available two doors to the south at the Salvation Army Citadel.

This house was occupied by the Starr Family for nearly 100 years, one of Royal Oak's pioneering families. Open houses and tours are provided by the members of the Orson Starr House Guild, a volunteer committee that organizes special events at the monthly sessions.

***Admission is free, although donations are always welcome.***

## Annual Museum Auto Show a Hit



*Above: Some of the many classic cars at the show August 5, 2017*



*Left: Former automotive designer Bill Robinson checks out a Ford Atmos concept pedal car from The Rastall Collection*

*Photographs by Mike Frenz*

## Royal Oak History Out in the Community

Hello, Historical Society,

I just wanted to thank you again for your help with getting images to use at the new Royal Oak Emergency Center. I have attached photos of what they look like installed. We ended up being able to use four or five of your photos. I also included a photo of the plaque we put next to them recognizing your society.

Thanks again.

Kristine DeBus, LEED AP ID + C, NCIDQ  
Senior Interior Design Project Manager,  
Space & Capital Planning  
Beaumont Health  
PDS Building  
Royal Oak, MI 48073





Royal Oak Historical Society  
1411 W. Webster Road,  
Royal Oak MI 48073  
248-439-1501  
royaloakhistoricalsociety.com

## Royal Oak Historical Society – Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Individual: \$20 \_\_\_\_ Family: \$30 \_\_\_\_ Supporter: \$50 \_\_\_\_

Century: \$100 \_\_\_\_ Club: \$200 \_\_\_\_ Premium: \$300 \_\_\_\_ Benefactor: \$500 \_\_\_\_

Mail your check to: Royal Oak Historical Society  
1411 W. Webster Road, Royal Oak MI 48073

*Dues also are payable online at [royaloakhistoricalsociety.org](http://royaloakhistoricalsociety.org). Click on the Membership link and you may pay your dues online or subscribe and have your dues paid automatically annually. For more information about membership levels and benefits, visit the website. Thank you in advance!*