



Royal Oak Historical Society

SPRING 2017

www.royaloakhistoricalsociety.org

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ROYAL OAK: 'THEN AND NOW'

By ROHS Facebook Editor John Maurice

This month's "Then and Now" photos show the northwest corner of Fourth and Main Streets. The "Then" photo is from 1915 and shows a horse-drawn cart traveling south on Main with the requisite shovel-man moving along with the cart. A streetcar is visible coming east on Fourth Street, and in the distance, you can see the sloped roof of the former Royal Oak train station with a passenger train stopped and ready to embark on its trip north. The Smith Crampton hardware store had just opened and is seen just past the motel sign on the right hand side of Fourth Street. The store was torn down and replaced by the current buildings in 1946. The Washington Square building had not yet been constructed.

Make some Memorial Day Memories!

Enjoy a pancake breakfast to benefit the Royal Oak Historical Society with friends and family at the Royal Oak Farmers Market and then walk the annual Parade. See details on pages 6 and 7.



'THEN AND NOW' continued from page 1

The “*Now*” photo shows how little this corner has changed in the last 102 years. As much has changed around it as Royal Oak has continued to evolve through the years, the building remains relatively unchanged from the early Royal Oak days.

Strangers in a Box

By Pam Harazim

Come look inside this drawer,
In this box I've often seen,
At the picture, black and white
Faces proud, still, serene.

I wish I knew the people
These strangers in the box,
Their names and all their memories
Are lost among the socks.

I wonder what their lives were like.
How did they spend their days?
What about their special times?
I'll never know their ways.

If only someone had taken time
To tell who, what, where and when,
These faces of my heritage
Would come to life again.

Could this become the fate
Of pictures we take today?
The faces and the memories
Someday to be tossed away?



Make time to save your pictures,
Seize the opportunity when it knocks,
Or someday you and yours could be
“The Strangers in the Box.”

Remembrances of Royal Oak

The Ridges of Royal Oak and Oakland County

Submitted by ROHS Board Member John S. Schultz

The following is a part of a remembrance of Royal Oak read by R.A. Parker, president of the Oakland County Pioneer Society in Pontiac, to the organization on Feb. 22, 1921.

For the full text of the report, visit the Royal Oak Historical Museum library. Also, if you have a story to tell about growing up in Royal Oak, visit the museum for details for telling your story.

Royal Oak, as is well known, is the southeastern township in Oakland County.

This part of Oakland County is traversed by gravel and sand ridges that were ancient lake beaches and are substantially parallel with the general course of the Great Lakes and the Detroit and St. Clair rivers.

In order to appreciate the relation of that part of the State to the pioneers of Oakland County, it is well to understand the topographical character of these ridges and the influence they have had upon terrain and its settlement.

One of the highest of these ridges is that traversing the Village of Birmingham and reaching on a line northeast by east to the Village of Rochester. Some fifty feet lower than this ridge is a parallel ridge passing through the northwest corner of Royal Oak Township,

continuing northeast through the Township of Troy, and southwest thru Southfield Township. Between two and three miles south of this ridge, and substantially parallel to it, is a sand ridge passing thru Section 16 in the Township of Royal Oak, and reaching from the northeast part of the township into northwest part of County of Wayne.

This was called the "Johnson Ridge," the name being that of an early settler upon it.

Immediately back of this ridge were extensive marshes made by the damming of the drainage water by the ridge. About a mile southeast and a few feet lower

is another parallel ridge of sand upon which the villages of Royal Oak and Pleasant Ridge are situated. Between these two ridges is a marsh also made by the damming of the drainage waters. Further southeast on the general slope are other ridges that had more or less effect on damming up and rendering swampy the intervening lands. These ridges and swamps lie on a clay base almost one hundred feet thick which rests on a strata of gravel and boulders above the slate rock. In the northwestern part of the Township borings thru the clay

and gravel develop flowing wells; in the southeast, borings have been followed by violent outpourings of inflammable gas. Some wells show indications of sulphur and salt which undoubtedly come from a stratum of lime and rock salt below the slate. Borings of over 2,500 feet on the Hall place, two or three miles west of Royal Oak Village passed thru clay, slate and white lime into rock salt.

The gas flow from these wells led

These ridges and swamps lie on a clay base almost one hundred feet thick which rests on a strata of gravel and boulders above the slate rock.

people a number of years ago to think gas might be utilized by the City of Detroit and that gas flow indicated oil. The writer was especially interested in this matter and together with a well-borer of Pennsylvania experience, by the name of Barker, and D. Farrand Henry, a civil engineer of Detroit, obtained leases on large tracts of land. But water pressure in the borings cut off the flow of gas to such an extent that the wells could not be depended upon and the enterprise had to be abandoned.

PHOTO GAME: All three photos (A, B and C) are from the same 1926 building just east of Downtown (Bell Telephone Company Building on Williams Street).

ROHS Cartoon Vault

Whistled for Under the Influence

The Daily Tribune – September 3, 1995

Special treatment for athletes seems to have been a part of our culture for decades. In August 1995, the late Bob Probert, a Detroit Red Wings Forward known more for throwing punches than putting the puck in the net, was arrested for operating his motorcycle under the influence and was sentenced to three days in the Oakland County Jail in September. There was a public outcry over the “minor” penalty he was assessed by the court; many felt that since this was not his first offense, he should have served a “major misconduct.”

Dan Saad

dan@dansaadcartoons.com

Pen Points Cartoon Blog:

<http://saadcommentary.blogspot.com/>

Dan Saad is a life-long metro Detroiter and a 45-year veteran of Detroit area media as an editorial cartoonist, writer and a corporate journalist. He and his family have been Royal Oakers for more than 30 years. Dan was the editorial cartoonist at The Daily Tribune from 1983-1999. He still draws editorial cartoons regularly for



Crain's Detroit Business and The News-Herald. In 2017, he earned a Second-Place award from the Detroit Chapter of the Society Professional Journalists (SPJ) for his editorial cartoon work in Crain's Detroit Business. In 2016, he earned the First Place SPJ award for his Crain's editorial cartoons. He also has won two Suburban Newspapers of America (SNA) "Best Editorial Cartoon" awards over the course of his career.

Come Visit the Orson Starr House

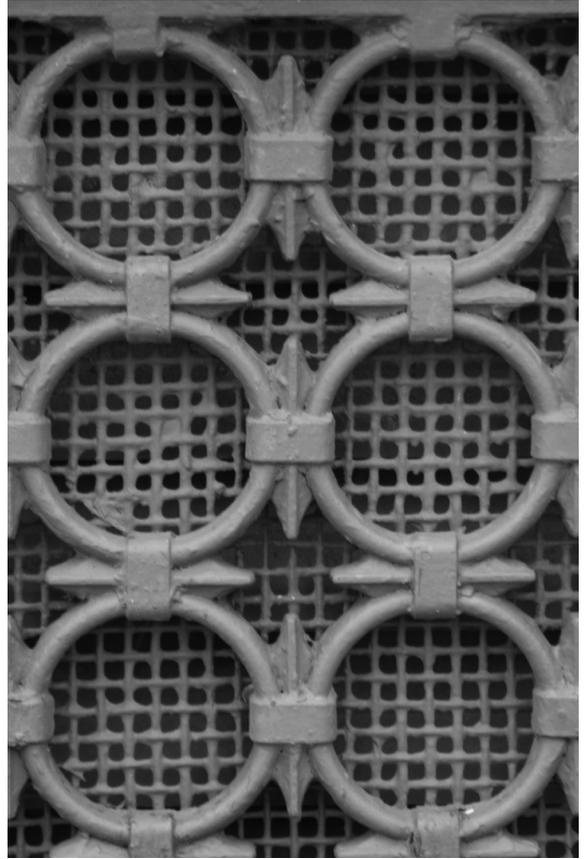
The Orson Starr House is a Michigan farmhouse that was originally constructed about 1845. Located at 3123 N. Main St., one block south of 13 Mile Road. The house is owned by the City of Royal Oak and is open to the public on the second Sunday of each month, from 1- 4 p.m. or by prior arrangement. Additional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



A



B



C

PLAY THE PHOTO GAME

By ROHS Board Member Bob Muller

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

Photos by Bob Muller

Memorial Day Parade Marchers Needed

The Royal Oak Historical Society will again be marching in the Memorial Day Parade Monday, May 29. The Parade begins at 9 a.m. on South Main Street at Harrison (south of Lincoln) and ends at Second Street in front of the Royal Oak Veterans Memorial. Members and friends are invited to join in. Historical period outfits are encouraged.

Contact **Bill Sullivan** at 248-765-2136, or email bsullivan@dosmanos.com for details.

Photo by John DiPaola



Marching in the parade is fun and a great educational experience for all ages.

Thanks For (Supporting) The Memories!

A huge thank you for your continuing support of the Museum.

BENEFACTOR \$500

- Anonymous
- Patt Trama

PREMIUM \$300

- Charles Kirkpatrick

CLUB \$200

- Joann Fisher

CENTURY \$100

- James and Deb Anderson
- Maurice and Betty Anderson
- Don and Adair Calder
- Dorothy Moonen
- Judith Peters
- Tim and Sharon Schafer
- Dorothy Sheldon
- Bill and Cathy Sullivan

Dear Editor:

I just received the latest newsletter (October 2016) and enjoyed the feature on the southeast corner of Fourth and Lafayette and how it has changed.

I remember well when there was a gas station on that corner, and of course the Montgomery Ward store.

I look forward to the next issue.

Thanks,
Gordon Birdsey

Editor's Note: Thanks for the positive feedback! We love hearing from our readers/members!

Donations to the Royal Oak Historical Society are gratefully accepted

Send checks payable to: The Royal Oak Historical Society

1411 West Webster Rd.

Royal Oak, Michigan 48073

Donations are tax-deductible.

Thank you in advance.

20TH ANNUAL!

Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast

brought to you by the

Royal Oak Historical Society

Monday, May 29th from 7AM until Noon

at the **Royal Oak Farmers Market**



*** ALL YOU CAN EAT ***

Adults \$6 Children 10 and Under \$3

Come Join Us Before Or After The Parade

Rain Or Shine!!



**HOLIDAY
MARKET**



Sponsored by
The Holiday Market Royal Oak



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 www.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!