



Royal Oak Historical Society

March 2015

www.royaloakhistoricalsociety.com

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TERMS EXPIRE OCTOBER 31, 2015

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TERMS EXPIRE OCTOBER 31, 2016

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Museum Curator—
Muriel Versagi

*Newsletter Editor: Trish Oliver
Production: Deb Anderson
Mailing: Muriel Versagi*

Memorial Day Pancake Breakfast

Monday, May 25, 7 a.m.-noon

At Farmers Market

All You Can Eat—

Adults \$6; Children 10 and Under \$3

Come Join Us Before or After the Parade — Rain or Shine!

Classic Car Show

Saturday, Aug. 1, at the Museum

Rev up for Michigan Automobile Heritage Month!

More Details in Curator's Column

Curator's Corner

By Muriel Versagi

Volunteer Adair Calder and I had been hoping and praying for someone who wanted to work in our Museum library. Adair had been trying to create order in the library and was a little frustrated.

Then Cynthia Flack walked in one Saturday and asked if we needed a volunteer. I took her on the tour and explained we needed a librarian. Cindy is a recently retired elementary school teacher. One of the things she did was to create a library in a school that did not have one. Cindy immediately took on the position and has worked every Tuesday and Thursday since. Another "Angel" added to our ranks!

As you all know by now, ROHS Treasurer Mike Frentz (Frentz Hardware Store) has been our webmaster for the last couple of years. The next time you visit the site, please click on the links. For example, if you click on Hermann's Bakery, it will bring you to that website. The businesses we have links to have given generously in many ways to *your* Museum.

One of the links takes you to "Family Histories." As you read down the page, you will come to a listing of family names. All of those family stories are in three-ring binders in our Museum library. Come sit at George Dondero's 105-year-old desk and read a few.

Our *Lumber Barons* preview party was so much fun. About 70
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Curator's Corner:

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people were at the Museum to talk to John Erb and his wife; George Erb's daughter Susan Erb Torpley; the Lawson brothers, Jim and Steve, and their wives; and Grace Kidder Perkins and her son Paul. We have pictures on our website, and the city's Facebook page has others from that evening.

We often have what I like to call "Mini Reunions." One took place when Chuck Button was telling Paul Perkins about how Paul's Grandpa Kidder helped him store a boat his dad didn't know he had. As he introduced himself, Grace said to me, "I had a Chuck Button in my 7th grade class...it couldn't be him." When I urged her to ask him what school he had gone to, he said, "Jane Addams," and Grace said, "Oh my, you were in the first class I taught!" Another Historical Society member, Mary Chisholm, was talking to board members Aaron Dorn and Phil Lewan. Mary had taught both of them in first grade ... and now Phil teaches Mary's grandchildren in Troy!

As a result of this very impromptu "preview party" fundraiser, we were able to raise enough money to almost completely pay for our recent elevator repairs.

Another "Mini Reunion" occurred at Christmas. Bill Sullivan's son Brian brought his daughter to see Santa; another visitor, Mark Schneider, also brought his son and daughter. I introduced Bill and Mark ... and it turns out Brian and Mark went to high school together! Mark also set up our Facebook page about three years ago. Since he is busy now as president of the Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, Aaron Dorn has been keeping the Facebook page current in his stead.

Our Museum is becoming a resource center. A young woman working on her Master's of History at Bowling Green came in to do research on Father Coughlin, as did another young man who is writing a book about him. A former Royal Oak resident living in Utah is

writing a book about growing up in Royal Oak and asked for pictures and information about where certain stores were located. The Birmingham Historical Society sent two employees to gather information about Woodward Avenue from 10 to 14 Mile Road. They are putting together an exhibit about the corridor from Detroit to Pontiac. The City of Royal Oak and the library send in residents who want information on their houses. Sometimes we can help...sometimes not.

Also, we are becoming the place to rent for special functions. Water Works Theatre has held fundraisers at the Museum for the last two years. South Oakland Art Association has rented the Museum for the last three years for 3 or 4 weeks in October to hold their show and sale of local art. We also have Scout troops who visit after school or on Saturdays to earn their "History" badge. Last fall, we had four classes of Northwood second-graders walk to the Museum after school for a tour. It is a fun place for kids. We have "hands-on" activities for them — and we let them ring the "Starr Bells" — what a noisy place it gets to be!

This year we are pleased to have three class reunion receptions at the Museum. The ROHS Class of 1950 is holding their 65th, the Class of 1955 is holding their 60th and the Kimball Class of 1965 is holding their 50th reunion with a pre-party at the museum.

THE CAR SHOW! This year we are going all out to open the month-long celebration of Michigan Automobile Heritage Month. The Classic Car Show will be held Aug. 1 at the Museum. The First Congregational Church has graciously given us permission to use their parking lot - which is why the registration fee is a little higher- \$20 per car - as we split the fee with the church. Look for more details as we get closer to the event. Our "Woodward Memories" exhibit will be up with a lot of new photos - and possibly the slot car racetrack will be back. The exhibit will run from Aug. 1st to the middle of September.

The Royal Oak Historical Society Museum

Presents

THE "LUMBER BARONS" OF ROYAL OAK

An exhibit of the families who helped "build"
Royal Oak and the surrounding communities.



— WHAT YOU WILL DISCOVER —

- What the lumber yards looked like in the beginning
 - Some of the early family member's photos
 - Family genealogies
 - Who married who
 - and so much more...

January 31st thru July 18th, 2015
Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays
1:00pm to 4:00pm



Royal Oak Historical Society Museum

1411 Webster, Royal Oak, MI 48073
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248-439-1501



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***Royal Oak Historical Society
Membership Application***

Name _____
Address _____
Email _____

Individual: \$10.00 _____ Family: \$18.00 _____
Donor: \$25.00 _____
Benefactor: \$50.00 _____
Seniors: 60+: \$8.00 _____

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

*Dues are also payable online through our
website www.royaloakhistoricalsociety.com.
Click on the membership link. You can pay your
membership dues or subscribe to have your
dues automatically collected annually.
Thank you in advance!*

**Save the Date!
Town Hall Talk**

**Red Run: The Ghost River
of Royal Oak**

**Presented by Bob Muller,
Royal Oak Historical Society
Board Member
May 6th, 7:30 p.m.
Royal Oak Middle School
Auditorium**

*The history of the river system
that ran through
Royal Oak and is now gone....
where it ran,
what happened to it and what
can still be seen.*