

## **Royal Oak Historical Society**

### **S.S. Kresge Photograph Album, 1929-1963**

*Accession #:* 2023.023

*Extent:* .25 cubic feet

*Creator:* S.S. Kresge Company

*Access Restrictions:* The collection is open for research, though monitored use is required due to the condition of the album. Reference photographs can be taken with a personal camera or Ipad.

*Preferred Citation:* S.S. Kresge Photograph Album, Royal Oak Historical Society

#### ***History:***

Kresge, a Detroit-born dime store, was founded in 1899 by **Sebastian Spring Kresge** and his friend and partner J.G. McCrory. They opened two five-and-dime stores – one each in Detroit and Memphis. By 1907, Kresge had bought out McCrory. He then partnered with his brother-in-law Charles J. Wilson for seven years, during which time they opened Kresge & Wilson stores in seven cities. In 1912, Kresge incorporated the company in Delaware under his own name as the S.S. Kresge Company, and became president and chairman of the board. He reincorporated in Michigan four years later.

In January 1929, ground was broken for a new store in Royal Oak, located at the southwest corner of Washington and Fourth, next to the location of the new Montgomery Ward store. The F.R. Patterson Construction Company was the contractor for both buildings. The Royal Oak store was the 526<sup>th</sup> store in the Kresge chain and featured two floors with a basement-level merchandise storage. The first floor contained two separate stores – one was a dollar store and one a five-and-dime (stores #530 and #1090). Above the first floor were clubrooms, rest rooms, locker rooms, and a restaurant for the “salesgirls” as part of the company’s employee welfare program. Construction was completed by April 29, 1929. In 1936, additional space was acquired by annexing the former Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company. Both stores were completely modernized with new fronts and modern structural glass signs.

#### ***Scope and Content:***

This photograph album contains construction photographs beginning in February 1929, taken by the Detroit photographers, Spencer & Wyckoff. Included are street scenes as well as exterior and interior photographs. Additional images of the building were taken in 1933, 1936, 1946 and 1963 by Smart’s Studio in Royal Oak and Lens-Art Photographers.