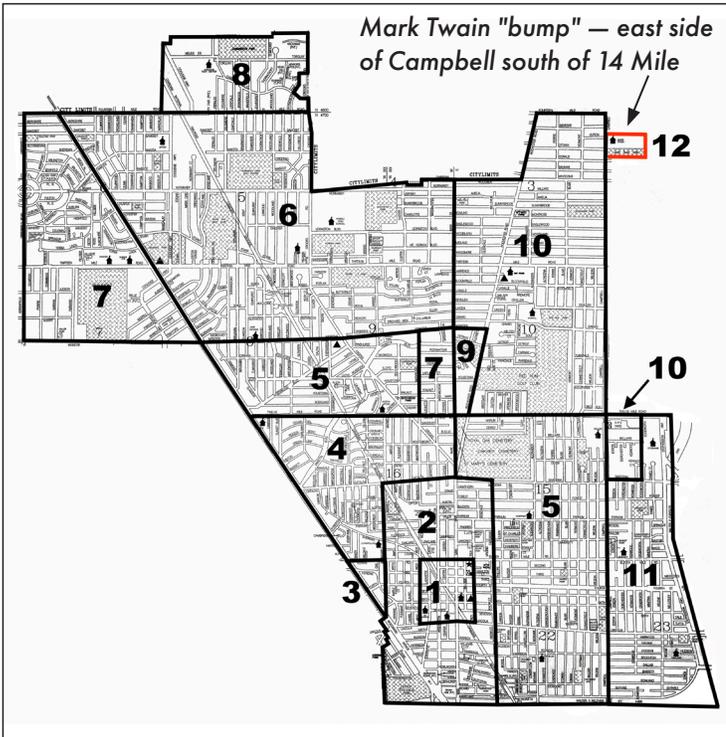




ROYAL OAK Historical Society

JULY 2023 • ROYALOAKHISTORICALSOCIETY.COM



The History of the Mark Twain "Bump"

By John S. Schultz

IN THE MID 1950s, as Royal Oak continued to grow as a city and as a popular community to raise a family, the Royal Oak School District was looking for property to accommodate its increasing population. In that time, eight new schools were built, including six elementary schools (Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Edmund Lockman, Oak Ridge, Alfred E. Upton and Mark Twain), a junior high (Jane Addams, which was also an elementary) and a second high school (Clarence M. Kimball).

For the property for Mark Twain, the school district focused on a piece of wooded area in the northern portion of the city, but it was across the street on the east side of Campbell Road. It was a bit of a "bump" as the section of land did not fall within the city's normal boundaries. (See map at left.) Jabesh Mead originally purchased the land from the Territory of Michigan on April 2, 1825. He cleared and farmed the land for many years, and various other families owned and farmed the property for the next century.

This July 19, 1954, map shows the so-called Mark Twain "bump" (marked "12") on the east side of Campbell Road near 14 Mile Road.

Despite it being "outside" the city limits, the city of Royal Oak and the Royal Oak school district purchased the 22-acre piece of land in Royal Oak Township to have another city park (Mark Twain Park) and an elementary school on the site. The concern of children crossing Campbell Road was not an issue because it was not the major road that it is today.

ANNUAL CAR SHOW! NEW LOGO!
Saturday, August 5

— IN MEMORIAM —
Charles H. "Chuck" Button
November 1, 1940 – May 16, 2023
See our tribute on Page 8.

So, in 1954, the city annexed the area on July 19, after the construction of the elementary school was already underway. Royal Oak Township, which owned the land had no interest in keeping the property because they would have had to provide services for the area and receive no tax revenue.

However, this move had an unintended impact on the creation of the city of Madison Heights since it had filed paperwork with the state of Michigan to incorporate and the boundaries showing the area that would become part of Madison Heights included the "bump." But after much debate, the state rejected the paperwork and the land remained a part of Royal Oak. The next year, on January 17, 1955, Madison Heights was incorporated as a city, and the "bump" was not included.

Remembering Mark Twain Woods

See Page 4 for Pat Wall and Ann Steffy's description and fond memories of this unique wooded area.



Continued on Page 5

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ROYAL OAK
Historical Museum

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Royal Oak, MI 48073

royaloakhistoricalsociety.com

(248) 439-1501

Hours: Tues., Thurs., Sat., 1–4 p.m.
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UPCOMING EXHIBITS

Innovation in Motion:

The History of the Automobile
with the annual

Woodward Memories

Opens August 5

All photographs courtesy of the Royal Oak
Historical Society unless otherwise noted.

President's Message

BY BOB MULLER

THE ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY PANCAKE BREAKFAST held in conjunction with Royal Oak's Memorial Day parade was a great success. The Historical Society and Boy Scout Troop 1627 provided the workers, and the Downtown Development Authority and Holiday Market sponsored it.

The day before was spent getting all the food and equipment moved into the Farmers Market; several of us arrived at 5 a.m. Monday to start mixing batter, getting the grills operating, making coffee, setting up historical displays, getting organized to take tickets and putting butter and syrup on the tables. All needed to be ready to start serving at 7 a.m. Two of us flipped pancakes at seven griddles from 6 a.m. til noon. The kitchen crew mixed batter, poured milk and orange juice into cups, while another team put sausage and pancakes onto plates.

Although last year's attendance was a little light, this year — our second year after the pandemic — we had more than 400 people; not up to the pre-Covid days, but enough to know we're back and looking forward to next year.

At noon we stopped cooking, although we served pancakes and sausages until no one wanted any more. After cleaning up and breaking down



ROHS board members Tom Toggweiler (left) and Jim Ellison serving up pancakes and sausage.

equipment, by 1:30, we were loading vehicles and taking everything back to the museum until next Memorial Day.

This is one of the largest gatherings of people in the city with a great parade and a place for breakfast before and after. Attendees see so many people that they may not have seen all year. Looking over the crowd of happy families and people of all ages from babies in strollers to veterans proudly wearing uniforms, my wife said, "This is Royal Oak at its best."

After all, Royal Oak still has that small-town feel.



**Thanks for these
Facebook comments!**

"A tradition and highlight of the day."

"Best pancakes and sausages and I didn't have to cook!"

"We had a wonderful time there this morning."

"Great food and great time visiting with fellow Royal Oakers!"

Royal Oak Historical Museum Speaker Series

Second Friday of each month

Friday, August 11, 7 p.m. • \$10 per person

Check our website for the topic and speaker.

Granny's Attic Sale — later this summer

Save your gently used items to donate to the sale. Details to come!

Royal Oak Then & Now

BY JOHN MAURICE, ROHS FACEBOOK EDITOR

BUILT IN 1868, the John Almon Starr Home is one of Royal Oak's oldest homes. It sits above one of the last visible remnants of the Saginaw Trail, commemorated by a stone and marker that was erected in 1987. This area of 13 Mile and Crooks Road was known as Chase's Corner in the 1820s through the 1850s and was later known as Starr Corners. The surrounding area up and down Crooks was once populated with Starr family members far and wide. The



Then
1890

Almon Starr home is now 155 years old, but amazingly for its first 100 years, it was owned by John Almon Starr and his descendants. The Starr family were Royal Oak pioneers, at one time owning and farming much of the land south of 13 Mile Road from Main Street to Woodward.



Then
1930s

The city of Royal Oak owned and maintained the house for a short period of time in the 1980s when the Friends of the Almon Starr Historic House was active. In 2019, Hoover & Associates, a financial services firm, purchased the house for its offices and maintains the historic character of the building.

Throughout its long life, the home has remained remarkably true to its origins. The **first Then** photo is from 1890 and shows the house as it originally stood. Back then, there was a second covered porch to the left of the main one, and the south portion of the home stood at one story prior to the dormer being added in the early 1900s.

The **second Then** photo from the 1930s shows the dormer that was added and the main porch which was now about one-third smaller. In the 1970s, the secondary porch was removed, and the house looked similar to how it remains today. Looking closely at the circled area to the left behind the house in the **Now** photo, one can see a tree that is rumored to have been a trail marker tree modified by Native Americans to mark this portion of the Saginaw Trail long before the house was built.



Now
2023

Photograph by John Maurice

Remembering Mark Twain Woods

By Pat Wall and Ann Steffy

ONCE THERE WAS A MARK TWAIN WOODS in northeast Royal Oak. It was nearly four acres of big old trees, shrubs, a vernal pond, a patch of poison ivy and assorted wildflowers. A home to owls, singing frogs, mighty hawks, various kinds of birds, bats, raccoons, rabbits, possums, chipmunks and, of course, many squirrels — and occasionally even some visiting deer.

Residents rode bikes, walked dogs and nature-watched on woodchip paths that Mark Twain students and their parents, teachers, staff and neighbors laid down during many scheduled cleanups of the woods. The dedication and fellowship of many multigenerational participants made for a very cohesive, enjoyable, safe and friendly neighborhood and city. Twain Woods wasn't just about caring for nature; it was about caring for each other and for our community.

The intrinsic value of this area in this particular location of Royal Oak was not fully appreciated until it was gone. Historically, articles had appeared in publications through the years explaining how the woods shielded us from everything east of it — specifically from the noise and pollution of I-75 and the Stephenson industrial corridor. Because of our trees, our neighborhood seemed quieter, healthier and more naturally beautiful.

Mark Twain Woods also provided experiential learning opportunities for the students as the teachers at Twain Elementary embraced the possibilities of classroom adventures in nature's wonderland. First lesson: Stay away from the poison ivy. Students tapped maple trees and boiled the liquid down to make syrup. They made birdhouses, feeders and bat boxes that the Boy Scouts and their parents put up. One Boy Scout earned his Eagle Scout badge by observing, documenting, and upgrading features in the woods. Children learned about photosynthesis — and how to spell it! Interested parents brought wildflowers appropriate to the site and planted them, providing an increase in the variety available that the children could study. An amazing "Earth Window" was made with great care to demonstrate the effect changes in the environment had on the soil, making



Photograph courtesy of Pat Wall

Pat and Jack Wall made the wood sign for the entrance to Mark Twain Woods. They now have it at their home.



Photograph courtesy of Mary Bogush

Mary Bogush grew up in northeast Royal Oak within a block of the former Mark Twain Elementary School. The woods behind the school nourished her childhood and inspired her to earn a bachelor's degree in natural resources from Michigan State University and work as a park naturalist. Here she is at the entrance to the woods with her dogs Teddy and Bungie around 1999.

different-looking layers of soil. These actions fostered a fond connection for all who entered this green cathedral on this small patch of the planet.

Then in 2008, Mark Twain Elementary School closed due to a population drop in students in the district. We were shocked when the day after Twain's "For Sale" sign came down in 2018, the bulldozers moved in, knocking and cutting down trees. Our treasured Mark Twain Woods was gone.

Already there are many people who don't even know there once was a Mark Twain Woods. Those of us who were fortunate enough to walk through its trails will always miss it.

Ann Steffy and Pat Wall have lived in the northeast corner of Royal Oak for 38 years. They each have two grown children who attended Royal Oak Schools, and both authors were active in Mark Twain Elementary School's PTA. Ann is a retired social worker and Pat is a retired RN. They worked in various clinical settings. Their husbands Bill Steffy and Jack Wall were active members of the steering committee to save the woods. Pat and Jack Wall made the entrance sign to Twain Woods from a drawing they got from the principal Norma Hammond.

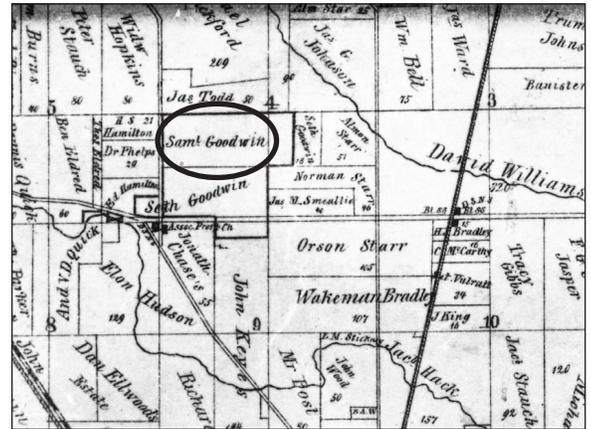
Samuel Blois Goodwin: Second Generation Royal Oak Farmer

By Don Drife



Editor's Note: The Stories Behind the Gravestone series highlights people buried in one of Royal Oak's three cemeteries. We intend to collect these notes into a booklet for the bicentennial of the founding of Royal Oak Cemetery in 2026. If readers know of other information on the featured person, please send it to editor@royaloakhistoricalsociety.org.

SAMUEL BLOIS GOODWIN was born January 9, 1812, in East Bloomfield, New York. He was the son of Cromwell Goodwin and Irene (Thompson) Goodwin. His father came to Royal Oak in May 1824 and brought his family with him. In fact, he brought the first team of oxen to Royal Oak Township. When he arrived in Detroit, there was a strong wind blowing offshore. He used his team of oxen to tow the boat to the dock.



Samuel Goodwin's farm was in the area (circled on map above) that now comprises Royal Oak High School, Tenhave Woods and Quickstad Park.

In 1831, Samuel bought the northern half of his father's 162-acre farm for \$200. He was 19 years old at the time. He married Lucy Olive Rouse in 1833. They would eventually have six children. Samuel purchased an additional 15 acres on the east side of his farm from James Johnson. Royal Oak High School, Quickstad Park and Tenhave Woods now occupy his former farmland. Where Tenhave Woods is today would have been the wood lot where he cut the wood to heat his home and also lumbered trees, so he could build items for the farm.



In 1835, Stevens T. Mason, acting governor of the Michigan Territory, commissioned Samuel as a first lieutenant in the Michigan militia. In 1837, he was stationed along the Maumee River during the so-called Toledo War. Samuel B. Goodwin died at his farm on December 13, 1879, and Lucy died June 22, 1881.



Lucy and Samuel are buried in the southwest corner of section "E" in Royal Oak Cemetery. Their gravestones are gray granite with two floral bookends, marking the beginning and ending of a good life.



Their son Andrew VanTie Goodwin, who was born in Royal Oak, August 12, 1836, is buried with them. His is a limestone grave marker with a wreath symbolizing victory over death. His marker reads: "Andrew V, Son of S.&L.O. Goodwin, Died Nov. 18, 1838." The once upright stone now lies flat on the ground.

Gravestone photographs by Don Drife

Mark Twain "Bump" • Continued from Page 1

Mark Twain Elementary officially opened on Monday, October 18, 1954. Students from the school had been attending half-day classes since the beginning of the school year at Oak Ridge Elementary while construction at Mark Twain was being completed. They went full-time after the school opened. Royal Oak Schools Supt. James C. Covert said the new school was needed to accommodate the increase in home building in the area which added more than 300 students — a 50 percent increase over census figures taken the year before.



Mark Twain Elementary School as it looked when it opened in 1954.

Mark Twain remained viable until 2008 when the city's school population dropped. The school closed (along with Lincoln, Longfellow, Starr and Whittier Elementary schools) and the land was purchased by developers.

The sale of the property also included most of the land that encompassed the popular Mark Twain Park and Woods owned by the city that was adjacent to the school. The portion of the land that was not sold is now Mark Twain Dog Park.

Cruisin' with Grandma on Woodward Avenue

By Brian D. Wake

WE SAT AT A RED LIGHT on eight-lane Woodward Avenue in Huntington Woods.

Vroom! Vrooom! Vroooooom! I looked to the left and saw a twin-H-power 1949 Hudson Hornet with a load of greasers on board with their long DA ("Duck's Ass") haircuts and cigarettes tucked behind their ears or Lucky Strike packs with the red bull's-eye, rolled into the sleeves of their T-shirts.

Vroom! Vrooom! Vroooooom! I looked to the right and spotted in the next lane a green and white, brand spanking new 1958 Chevrolet Bel Air convertible. The driver was the well-coiffed, popular Kay, daughter of one of my dad's medical colleagues, accompanied by three of her friends. I sat sandwiched between them, uncomfortably, in a white 1958 Oldsmobile Super Rocket 98 that had so much horsepower under the hood it was ridiculous.



Photograph courtesy of Hemmings.com

A representative 1958 Oldsmobile 98 model

Before the establishment of the nationwide Interstate Highway System, Woodward Avenue was the main street of southeastern Michigan. It stretched for 27 miles through 11 communities:

Detroit, Highland Park, Ferndale, Pleasant Ridge, Royal Oak, Huntington Woods, Berkley, Birmingham, Bloomfield Hills, Bloomfield Township and Pontiac. This corridor has been linked to the automobile industry for more than 100 years.



Photograph courtesy of Brian D. Wake

Mary Alice Wake, the author's grandmother

"Cruising" swept the nation in the 1950s. After World War II, pent-up demand and a booming economy fueled a car-buying frenzy. To attract young buyers, the industry focused on new styling and, especially, performance. As a result, American streets became impromptu racetracks with young people piling into their cars and cruising their main streets with a sense of freedom, racing when the cops weren't around. Nowhere was this more popular than on the Detroit area's Woodward Avenue.

As an adolescent, I lived about three blocks from this teenage playground and was well aware of the cruising destinations: Ted's Drive-In (restaurant) at Square Lake Road and Woodward, the Oak Drive-In (movie theater) at 13½ Mile Road and Coolidge Highway, the Totem Pole with Teletray Service, Susie-Q Restaurant, Hedge's Wigwam and others.

As a painfully shy, introverted boy, I was not popular with other high school students and seldom experienced the opportunity to cruise. This particular day was not the social breakthrough I had dreamed of. I wasn't driving because I had just turned 15 and had not yet begun driver training, and I wasn't riding with one of my few friends, because none of them had access to an automobile. No, I was riding with my 66-year-old, blue-haired grandma, Mary Alice Wake.

Even as an immature teenager, I understood that I had the best grandmother in the world. She had a heart of gold and expended almost unlimited quantities of love, time and money on all her grandchildren. My growing body appreciated the home-cooked, stick-to-your ribs, stuffed baked pork chops the most, but this evening, we were on the way to Hedge's Wigwam for prime rib, mashed potatoes and orange drink.

Grandma Wake's driving record left a bit to be desired. When she was a girl growing up in the early 1900s, many folks didn't have automobiles, and I doubt that there was formal driver education. As a young woman, she likely left the driving to Grandpa, as was common in those days. Later in life, after Grandpa's illness and then death, she took over the driving duties, but I don't think she ever developed a real feel for it. She drove like a crazed rabbit, not like a sedate older woman.

Twice, after she had parked her car at the curb on a busy street, she lost the driver's side door as she flung it open into traffic without checking for other cars coming up from behind. On another occasion, my grandmother took out a good portion of the back wall of her garage out when she failed to adequately gauge the stopping distance required. When she drove through the display window of one of our local stores, it was the talk of our small town for some time.

Vroom! Vrooom! Vroooooom! As we waited for the light to turn green, I slouched down in my seat, hoping that neither the attractive young women on the right nor the greasers on the left would notice me. Grandma was wonderful, but cruising with her was not the kind of thing I wanted spread around at school.

Continued on Page 8

Francis L. York: Royal Oak's Music Man

By John S. Schultz

IN THE LATE 1890S through the 1930s, Francis Lodowick York was Royal Oak's music man. No one person was more accomplished in the music circles in and around Detroit and beyond than Francis York. He taught piano, organ, musical theory and was a lecturer, writer and composer.

York was also the founder, president and a member of the Organist Guild, Musicians League, Composers Guild and the Michigan Music Teachers Association. He worked with the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts, was an honorary life member of the Founders Society of the Detroit Institute of Arts and was the oldest member of the Acanthus Club, Detroit's oldest literary society. He was also a member of Detroit's Bohemian Club, a group composed of the city's best musical and stage talents.

Well-respected nationally, York was vice president and secretary of the Music Teacher's National Association and was one of the co-founders of the National Association of Schools of Music.

Born in 1861 in Ontonagon, a small town in Michigan's Upper Peninsula on the shores of Lake Superior, York was the son of a minister, Lodowick Clark York. His mother was Frances DeGrace Collester. York was educated at the University of Michigan, where he earned a bachelor's degree in 1882, master's in 1883 and Ph.D. in 1922, all in music.

Following his first graduation in 1882, York traveled to Paris, where he studied organ under Alexandre Guilmant, considered the finest organist of his time. Guilmant was a personal friend of Charles-Camille Saint-Saëns, a French composer, organist, conductor and pianist of the Romantic era.

York returned to Michigan and from 1896 to 1909 taught piano and organ at the Michigan State Normal School's Conservatory of Music, serving as the department head of those instruments for several years. From 1897 to 1900, he also served as the organist at Christ Church Detroit on East Jefferson.



Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia.com

Francis L. York

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JAMES H. BELL, Sec., Box 12, 1013 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Mich.

Photograph courtesy of Ancestry.com

In this advertisement from the Detroit Free Press on October 6, 1918, Francis L. York is listed as president as well as an instructor in several areas.

structured clay tile. The interior of the 10-room, four-bedroom house is detailed in the Arts and Crafts style. The home has had several owners and is still privately owned.

Francis York died on Jan. 13, 1955, at the age of 93. His wife, Mary, predeceased him on Dec. 30, 1947, at age 88. Both are buried at Roseland Park Cemetery in Berkley.

Editor's Note: The May 2019 newsletter included a Homes and Buildings feature about York Place, 130 East Sunnybrook Drive.

Among his most prominent roles was a stint as director of the Detroit Conservatory of Music. He served as the conservatory's president from 1902 to 1927. He composed works for organ and piano, as well as choral pieces that were performed by many orchestras and in churches in the U.S. and Europe.

In 1904, York and Guilmant were reunited at the St. Louis Exposition. The men alternated as the organist on the famed Wanamaker Grand Court Organ, which was considered the largest organ in the world.

He wrote several textbooks, including: *Counterpoint Simplified: A Text-Book in Simple Strict Counterpoint* and *A Practical Introduction to Composition: Harmony Simplified*.

York married Mary Olive Albright on Sept. 6, 1885, in Brighton, her hometown. They had three daughters: Kate Ethel, Satia Frances and Leila Dorothea. Mary shared the love of music with her husband, studied music and was chair of the board of the Detroit Institute of Musical Arts.

Beyond his musical achievements, York is known for the massive home he had built in northern Royal Oak. Constructed in 1914, York Place, as it is known, faces west toward North Main Street rather than north along Sunnybrook Drive. The early Georgian Manor house has exterior walls of heavily rusticated limestone over hollow

Chuck Button Grew Family Business, Enriched City's History

By Mike Frentz



Photograph courtesy of Legacy.com

Chuck Button

Charles Howard "Chuck" Button, Royal Oak Historical Society board member and well-known Royal Oak business owner, passed away on May 16, 2023, at age 83.

Chuck's journey into entrepreneurship and community involvement started in 1960 when he began working at Button's U-Rent-It, a family-owned business founded by his parents. Located on South Washington Avenue, the store became a cornerstone of Royal Oak, offering a wide array of rental equipment to residents and businesses alike. In 1970, when his parents retired, Chuck took the reins, ensuring the company continued to thrive under his capable leadership.

Chuck's interest in preserving Royal Oak's history extended beyond his business. In Bob Scott's article, "Growing Up in Royal Oak," featured on the Royal Oak Historical

Society's website, Chuck is mentioned as a living link to the city's past through his firsthand recollections. He also related the experiences of his teenage years in the Fall 2020 newsletter, available on our website.

Due to Chuck's deep passion and knowledge of Royal Oak's heritage, he joined the Royal Oak Historical Society board of directors in 2018. Chuck's dedication to preserving local history was evident in his tireless volunteering. He spent many hours refinishing the museum's hardwood floors and keeping the shine on the distinctive tile floor in the library.

Chuck's character and warm and approachable nature left a positive impression on everyone he encountered. His legacy will continue to inspire the Royal Oak Historical Society and the community to safeguard and celebrate our shared heritage.



Photograph courtesy of Chuck Button

Chuck Button in 1959 at age 19 at the Totem Pole, a popular restaurant and the southern anchor for cruising Woodward, and just one block from Button's Rent-It. The photograph was taken as a farewell shot as Chuck's next stop was Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri for basic training in the U.S. Army. He says, "The fun of the '50s was about to be history but not forgotten."

Cruisin' with Grandma • Continued from Page 6

She tromped on the gas pedal a split second before the light turned green. The 371-cubic-inch engine with four-barrel carburetor roared to life, generating 300 horsepower. We peeled out, laying 30 feet of rubber. As the vehicle exceeded the speed limit, Grandma eased up on the accelerator, and the guys in the Hornet gave her a "thumbs up" as they passed. Kay gave me a little wave as she blew by. Now I was sitting up straight. Cruisin' with Grandma wasn't so bad after all!

Editor's Note: Brian D. Wake grew up in Royal Oak and graduated from Dondero High School and the University of Michigan and its medical school. He is a retired radiologist and lives in Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. Brian's father, Douglas Wake, M.D. (whose mother Mary Alice was the "cruisin' Grandma"), began a pediatrics practice in south Royal Oak which endures to this day as Royal Oak Pediatrics in Huntington Woods. His mother, Margaret Bryant Wake, Ph.D., founded the Wake Psychology Clinic that was located next to her husband's medical practice from 1966 to 1983.

Another article by Brian Wake, entitled "Grandpa Wake and the Atomic Bomb: A Memoir," details his father Dr. Douglas Wake's service in World War II. It appears on the ROHS website at: royalokhistoricalsociety.com/grandpa-wake-%26-the-a-bomb.

Memories of Dr. Wake

By Don Drife

I remember that Dr. Wake had a swordfish hanging in his waiting room and I think also had a saltwater aquarium. Mother would reward us kids if we behaved at our physicals with him by taking us to B'Wana Don's Pet Store on Woodward after our appointments.



Dr. Wake's prediction that my 5-foot 4-inch-tall mother would have a "family of shrimps" proved wrong unless my 6-foot 4-inch height means I am a very tall shrimp.

For more information about B'Wana Don's pet store, go to: www.ferndalehistoricalsociety.org/people_hunt.html

Looking Back

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

What was happening in Royal Oak in July...

50 years ago — 1973

THE MICHIGAN STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT in June removed two homes from the path of the proposed I-696 freeway in Royal Oak, City Manager Bruce Love said. In a report to the city, Love said the original total of 141 homes and eight commercial buildings in the removal area, seven commercial buildings and 19 homes remain. The project area is on the north side of Ten Mile between Helene on the east and Mohawk on the west. It is the only area in the freeway's path west of I-75 which has been approved for state acquisitions and building removal. The actual freeway construction is not expected for three or four years, state officials said.

SOUTH OAKLAND ADULTS who are movie fans may view a show in Royal Oak at 20-year-old prices for the next week if they get up early. Robert F. Anthony, owner of the Main Theatre at Eleven Mile, said he has set a 75-cent adult admission price for a special 10:30 a.m. showing of *Mary Poppins*, a Walt Disney full-length musical. Youngsters under 16 will pay the same 75-cent admission price. Anthony said the reduced adult price would be a one-week experiment on his part to fight inflation and test interest.

A DELIVERY BOY for a Royal Oak pizzeria told police he was robbed of \$1 at gunpoint while delivering a pizza to 621 Whitcomb in Royal Oak at 12:29 a.m. Friday (July 6). A telephone order to deliver the pizza to the Whitcomb address was apparently false, police said. Maurice Konstantenon, age 16, employed by Siciliano's Pizzeria, said as he approached the Whitcomb address with the order, he was stopped outside by three young men who demanded money.

60 years ago — 1963

ROYAL OAK PLANNING DEPARTMENT is working on a detailed study of the city's 16 largest park sites and surrounding neighborhoods to assist the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in considering possible locations for community swimming pools.

THE ROYAL OAK SCHOOL BOARD borrowed \$2 million for new buildings and classrooms at an "excellent" interest rate of 3.31 percent, the superintendent said. He said the state is nearly a full percent lower than the 4.25 gained on a 1960 loan.

A DEVELOPER is going to get free use of a vacant Thirteen Mile right-of-way in Royal Oak for an apartment house parking lot despite objections of the Royal Oak City Planning Commission. The city turned down the planners' advice and voted 5-1 to allow the building of a parking lot.

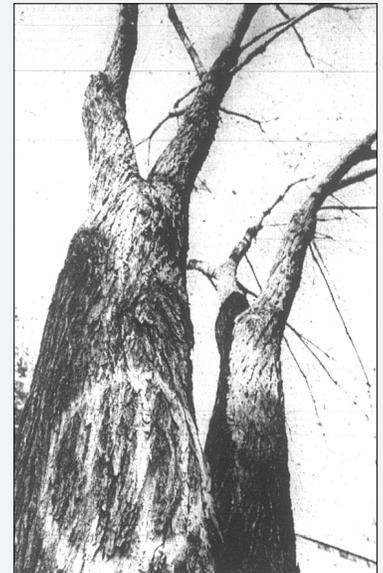
50 years ago — 1973

Dutch Elm Disease Takes Toll on Local Trees

An epidemic of Dutch elm and cottony maple viruses spreading through local communities has so far killed more than 900 trees in Southfield, Ferndale, Huntington Woods and Hazel Park, officials report. Crews from Royal Oak, Pleasant Ridge, Lathrup, Birmingham and Oak Park will begin to assess damage to trees next week. They will begin conducting surveys to determine the number of trees on city property — between sidewalks and the curbs — that will have to come down.

Some of the diseases discovered in the area include: Dutch elm, causes leaves to turn brown and drop off; cottony maple, a white scale appearing on the bark of hardwoods; pod gall, the result of insects attacking the terminal leaves of locust trees; and red spider, an epidemic of insects boring through tree bark.

In Royal Oak, Valentine Martinkovi, assistant director for parks and recreation, said elms on private property will be inspected. Elms on public property have already been surveyed, he added, but said he will not have an estimate on how many trees are diseased until Monday. He said he had not received reports of any other diseases infecting Royal Oak trees other than Dutch elm.



One of the many elm trees in South Oakland County that has fallen prey to Dutch elm disease is on the corner of Vermont and Lincoln in Royal Oak. The three bars in the circle on the tree in the photo indicate that it will be cut down this year.

Continued on Page 10

70 years ago — 1953

TWO ROYAL OAK GIRLS, 14 and 16 years old, were turned over to juvenile authorities when they admitted the theft of \$30 in cash and a wristwatch from a home where one of the girls was babysitting. The theft occurred between 7:15 a.m. and 10:09 p.m. at a home on West Parent in Royal Oak. The girls apparently had faked a burglary attempt. The screen had been removed from a bedroom window to indicate the thief entered through an open window. The girls gave \$11.80 of the stolen money to police. They had used part of the money to buy ballerina slippers and other items.

80 years ago — 1943

THE RATIONING BOARD in Royal Oak is in great need of assistance for the next 10 days and is appealing for voluntary workers to aid in mailing gasoline coupon books. Between fifteen and 20,000 books must be mailed within the next two weeks.

"**FIVE CENTS** here buys a package over there" is the motto of the Royal Oak Lions Club as it starts its campaign to raise money to purchase cigarettes for men overseas.

90 years ago — 1933

THE S.S. KRESGE COMPANY is planning to erect a one-story brick building covering the 40-foot lot next to Kresge 25-cents to \$1 store, 410 S. Washington. The building is to be leased to the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company. The work of the building is to be sub-let to local firms. The Sunkist Fruit Market, which temporarily occupied the structure, has moved to 506 S. Washington.

70 Years Ago — 1953

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OPEN THURS., FRI. and SAT. UNTIL 9 P.M.

90 years ago — 1933

First Steps Are Taken on Construction of New \$750,000 Shrine Church

While more than 2,000 unemployed men filed by the temporary employment office of the Cooper Little Construction company, work on the new \$750,000 auditorium of the Shrine of the Little Flower was actually beginning today (July 10). Men seeking employment arrived at the Shrine, Twelve Mile and Woodward, before daybreak and long lines had been formed at the temporary building to the northeast of the Tolerance Crucifixion Tower when the superintendent on duty at 7 a.m. arrived. It was an orderly, quiet crowd. Men who had been out of work during a long period saw new hope in the auditorium's construction.



An announcement of the Rev. Charles E. Coughlin two weeks ago that wages will be from 60 to 100 percent higher than the current level was eagerly discussed. Preference will be given to applicants living in the parish; however, men with letters from other parishes or other recommendations from private persons will be given consideration only on their own merits. (Editor's Note: The term Tolerance Crucifixion Tower is as written in the original article.)

The largest Catholic church, west of New York, the auditorium will seat 2,600 persons. The tower will serve as an entrance. The church will be built of Vermont granite and Indiana limestone after plans of Henry J. McGill, New York architect, who designed the tower four years ago. The tower, constructed at a cost of \$300,000, was dedicated in 1933.

The auditorium will be of a unique design conceived by Fr. Coughlin and worked out by Mr. McGill. It is to be octagonal in shape with the altar in the center and aisles running to the eight corners.

90 years ago — Continued

A LETTER FOR DELIVERY in the same city or postal area in which it is mailed will require only a two-cent stamp after today (July 3). The rate on letters for outside destinations will remain at three cents. This means any letter mailed in the same area served by the Royal Oak post office and addressed to any place within the area will require a two-cent stamp only.

HEARINGS OF OBJECTIONS to the establishment of a special assessment district on which a tax levy of \$10,000 would be spread for the maintenance of the Royal Oak Township fire department were conducted. The levy is \$5,000 less than asked by the chief of the fire department. The chief set up a budget of \$15,000; \$11,000 for operating costs and \$4,000 for debt service.

100 years ago — 1923

IN LINE WITH THE LEGISLATION being adopted by many of the progressive cities of the country, the Royal Oak city commission has indicated its approval of the proposal to ban fireworks and explosives on the Fourth of July. City Attorney E.B. Howarth, at the direction of the commission, is now working on an ordinance to govern the sale of fireworks in the future. The proposal was brought before the commission by City Manager P. H. Beauvais, who called attention to the enormous loss of life and property, which inevitably attends the use of fireworks on the nation's birthday. Royal Oak escaped this year without any deaths, or serious fires, but a number of persons were burned.

FREE TEXTBOOKS for Royal Oak schools up to and including the sixth grade and the beginning of a night school were authorized by the annual school meeting of District No. 6, Royal Oak, at Monday (July 9) night's meeting. The cost of the free textbooks is estimated at \$3,000 a year and the cost of the night school at about \$1,500. Providing the free textbooks in the lower grades was recommended by Supt. Frank Hendry as a necessary part of the platoon system, which it is declared will reduce by a considerable amount the cost per pupil for Royal Oak school buildings and at the same time, will provide better instruction.

95 Years Ago — 1928

Board Approves of Salary Schedule Proposed By Supt. Hendry

Royal Oak board of education, district number 6, voted last night to sustain the schedule of salaries worked out by Supt. of Schools Frank Hendry, with a few exceptions.

In voting that contracts be offered to the present teachers in most cases the board instructed the superintendent to inform certain teachers, who reside outside of the city, that it is the desire of the board that they live in Royal Oak, unless there is a valid reason for not doing so. The matter will be taken up with these teachers before contracts are offered for signatures.

Mr. Hendry said 151 teachers are employed in the Royal Oak school system.

George L. Brewbaker, principal of the junior high school, was hired for next year at an increase in salary of \$100. His present salary is \$3100.

Homer L. J. Carter, grade supervisor, was also rehired at a \$100 increase, bringing his salary for next year to \$3200. Russell F. Kenaga, in the chemistry department and high school football and baseball coach, was rehired at \$2800. This is an increase of \$100 over his present salary. Coach Kenaga reached his maximum salary for a chemistry instructor year before last with \$2500, but on account of his work as coach, an increase was voted him.

George W. Dyer, science teacher and faculty manager of athletics, was also given a \$100 increase, bringing his salary for next year to \$2200. Like Mr. Kenaga, Mr. Dyer had reached the maximum for his teaching position, but was allowed an increase on account of his work in the athletics department.

Superintendent Hendry reported that he had interviewed several men for the position as machine shop instructor and recommended the hiring of Mr. Mumbroe of Kalamazoo. Mr. Mumbroe offered to accept this position as a salary of \$2000 a year. The recommendation was unanimously supported.

On Our Website

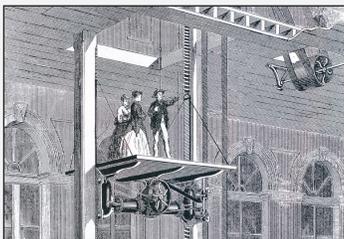
Keep up to date on society and museum happenings on our website — royaloakhistoricalsociety.com — and by following us on Facebook at Royal Oak Historical Society. Missed reading a newsletter? You can find past issues on the website!

Founded in 1939, the Royal Oak Historical Society is a private, non-governmental organization of volunteers. We collect, display and preserve information and objects of Royal Oak's past for current and future generations. Throughout the year we present various special exhibits and provide a venue for other groups and individuals to display their collections.

Donations to the Royal Oak Historical Society are gratefully accepted. Recently, we discovered that our museum elevator required maintenance. This was long overdue and needed to be done to meet state guidelines. Generous contributions from our members and friends helped to cover the expense.

Your donation is tax-deductible, and we will provide a receipt for your records. Go to the link on the [website](#) to donate.

Thank You for Your Support!





ROYAL OAK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Dues also are payable online at royaloakhistoricalsociety.com. Click on the Membership link to pay or set up automatic annual dues payment. For more information about membership levels and benefits, visit the website.