



Royal Oak

Agenda

Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee Meeting

Thursday, June 20, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

City Hall Conference Room 116

203 South Troy Street

Royal Oak, MI 48067

Anyone planning to attend the meeting who has need of special assistance under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is asked to contact the city clerk's office at 248-246-3050 at least two (2) business days prior to the meeting.

Pages

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2.	Roll Call	
3.	Approval of Agenda	
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6.	Historic Preservation Observations in Royal Oak	
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	a. Forest Avenue Presentation by Eric Romain	
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	a. Forest Avenue Presentation by Eric Romain	
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8.	New Business	
	a. Marketing Preservation	
	a. City Website Updates, Corrections, and Additions	
	a. May 20th Work Session of the Marketing Group	
	b. Clio Software and Royal Oak Minutes	
	b. Potential New Work	
	a. WPA Murals at Dondero	
	b. Hartle Property on Sunnybrook	

- c. Frederick Madison (architect) House
 - d. Lockwood Presentation by Eric Romain
- c. Vinsetta Bridges Task Force
 - a. Documenting Existing Bridges
 - a. Laser Scan and As-build CAD Drawings by RAW3D
 - b. Treatment Program: Investigation in Progress
 - c. Town Hall Meeting July 31, 2024 and On-site Event
- 9. Draft Bylaws with Ordinance Incorporated
- 10. Summer Schedule July and August Work Sessions
- 11. Historic Group Reports
 - a. Historic District Commission
 - b. Historical Commission
- 12. Committee Member Comments
- 13. Adjournment



Royal Oak

Minutes

Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee Meeting

May 16, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room 116
203 South Troy Street
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Present: Chairperson Tammis Donaldson
Patrick Andras
Chris Kraska
Jeffrey Ridley
Eric Romain
Leslie Snow
Leo Derdelakos

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Tammis Donaldson at 7:06 p.m.

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda

Moved by: Leslie Snow

Seconded by: Jeffrey Ridley

Motion to approve the May 16 2024 Historic District Study Committee meeting agenda with the following changes: Potential New work WPA Murals moves before Approval of Minutes for special guest Gary Briggs to present; Approval of Minutes Tabled; Historic Preservation Observations Tabled; Potential New Work Lockwood Neighborhood Tabled; was approved.

4. WPA Murals at Dondero

Gary Briggs former Royal Oak School District Board of Education President and Member. Mr. Briggs was serving as president and part of the leadership to Save the Murals. Mr. Briggs detailed the timeline and process for the restoration and installation of the murals in the auditorium at Royal Oak Middle School (then Dondero High School) between 2003-2005.

5. Approval of Minutes

Tabled during Approval of Agenda.

6. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

7. Historic Preservation Observations in Royal Oak

Tabled during Approval of Agenda.

7.a Lost

7.a.1 Forest Avenue Presentation by Eric Romain

7.b Endangered

7.b.1 Forest Avenue Presentation by Eric Romain

8. Unfinished Business

8.a Historic Context Report Status

Staff Liaison Schwanger read emails received from Chronicle stating they would deliver the Historic Context Report on Friday May 17, 2024. This is not the first date the City has received for the delivery of the HCR and SL Schwanger and Chair Donaldson will keep HDSC members updated.

9. New Business

9.a Marketing Preservation

9.a.1 City Website Updates, Corrections, and Additions

9.a.1.1 May 20th Work Session

Work session will begin at 5pm in conference room 116. SL Schwanger let members know she will be there at 5pm and stay as long as members want to continue to work. HDSC members can arrive later if they need. She will have her laptop. Chair Donaldson suggested to members if they have laptops to bring as well.

9.a.2 HDSC Google Drive Review: Single Sign Up

No progress to report. Will be part of the Monday May 20th work session - Leslie Snow will be available to address this at the WS.

9.a.3 Clio Software and Royal Oak Minute

Jeff Ridley presented the work he has done on the Clio Website Software. It is a free third-party website software which we could link to the city's website on the historic pages. Jeff had prepared a page using the Orson Starr House Museum Historic District. The page displays a picture, short description, map and has ability to create and track attendance at events, especially helpful as the OSHM hosts events conducted by the Historical Commission including Sunday

Open Houses; Civil War Day; Holiday Open House; and Ghost Tours. The HDSC can utilize this site to better share and showcase our historic properties via social media. Jeff also shared a sample “Royal Oak Minute.” Members gave feedback to tweak for next time.

9.b Potential New Work

9.b.1 Hartle Property on Sunnybrook

Nothing further to report as no progress has been made on the research for this property or adjoined in a historic district with surrounding properties to meet the criteria for designation. A site visit will be scheduled for the summer or early fall.

9.b.2 Oakwood School

The school district seems to be conducting their own celebrations for the school and has not sought the input of the HDSC.

9.b.3 Architect Frederick Madison House on Woodcrest

No progress as the property owner has not reached out after the letter was personally delivered. Patrick Andras will follow up.

9.b.4 Lockwood Neighborhood

Tabled as Eric Romain had to leave the meeting early.

9.b.4.1 Presentation by Eric Romain

9.c Vinsetta Bridges Historic District Task Force

9.c.1 Treatment Program Update of Investigation and Process

SL Schwanger reported she has the invoice approved to have RAW 3D conduct the study which will include: 3D laser scanning, scan registration set-up, and 2 D Auto CAD drafting for all four bridges. The RO Civic Foundation is offering \$2000 grants (the study cost is \$2950) and SL Schwanger will be applying to recover the majority of the costs if the grant application is successful.

Chair Donaldson gave a summary on the task force May 7th visit to the bridges which the study was discussed and follow-up will include a town hall meeting with the neighborhood once the study is completed. Many neighbors stopped to ask why the group was at the sites and offered support for the bridges. Historic District Commission member Paul Bastian uses software to generate mailing lists and will create the list for the town hall meeting. The Task Force would like to have an event at one of the bridges, possibly including an historic vehicle, some time this summer. Leslie Snow will prepare a draft of a compact designation report to be shared with attendees or those interested in the rehabilitation.

9.d Michigan World War II Memorial Historic Trail

SL Schwanger showed an example of the Farmington plaque that has been presented. She asked Chair Donaldson to have the group research sites in Royal Oak which would qualify. This may include manufacturing plant sites; or significant events such as celebrities doing War Bond Drives; prominent government programs.

10. Historic District Study Committee Ordinance and Bylaws

SL Schwanger will prepare a draft of the model bylaws approved by the city commission and provide to HDSC members via email to discuss at the June meeting. Many of the provisions called for in the model bylaws are already in place in Municipal Code Chapter 82 Historic Preservation.

11. Summer Meeting Schedule

Discussed conducting meetings or work sessions or combination of both over the summer months. Currently three meetings are scheduled: June 20; July 18; and August 15. The schedule will stand as it is and meetings will change to work sessions as needed.

12. Historic Group Reports

12.a Historic District Commission

Chair Donaldson reported earlier regarding the Vinsetta Bridges Historic District Task Force which is comprised of three members of the HDC and three members of the HDSC. She and Chris Kraska attended the April 18th HDC meeting to discuss the task force objects.

12.b Historical Commission

Patrick Andras invited everyone to attend Civil War Day on Saturday May 18th at the Orson Starr House Museum. There will be reenactors; two Civil War era cannons on the display; band will play from 1 to 3pm. Members of the historical commission and historical society working group will meet with Susan Barkman, assistant to the city manager, regarding the potential merger of the two groups. The HC would be dissolved with the HS managing both properties as a private 501(c) 3. Many topics to discuss with the primary concerns of both groups being funding and personnel to maintain the properties.

13. Committee Member Comments

13.a Michigan Historic Preservation Network 2024 Annual Conference

14. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32p.m.

Moved by: Leslie Snow
Seconded by: Chris Kraska

Motion to adjourn at 9:32p.m. approved.

Motion Adopted



Royal Oak

Minutes

Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee Meeting

April 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Conference Room 116
203 South Troy Street
Royal Oak, MI 48067

Present: Chairperson Tammis Donaldson
Patrick Andras
Chris Kraska
Jeffrey Ridley
Eric Romain
Leslie Snow
Leo Derdelakos

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at by Chair Tammis Donaldson at 7:02 pm.

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of April 18, 2024 Meeting Agenda

Approval of the April 18, 2024 meeting agenda.

Eric Romain's Lockwood presentation will be delayed until the May meeting.

Addition of Oakdale and Sunnybrook Home discussions.

Resolution Number: Motion Adopted

Moved by: Leslie Snow

Seconded by: Patrick Andras

Motion to approve the April 18, 2024 meeting agenda.

Motion Adopted

4. Approval of March 21 2024 Meeting Minutes

Approval of the March 21, 2024 meeting minutes.

Resolution Number: Motion Adopted

Moved by: Jeffrey Ridley
Seconded by: Leo Derdelakos

Motion to approve the March 21, 2024 meeting minutes.

Motion Adopted

5. Public Comment

None.

6. Historic Preservation Observations in Royal Oak

6.a Lost

6.b Endangered

6.b.1 1413 Crooks Road (1927)

Endangered building for sale. Threatened and under watch.

7. Unfinished Business

7.a Vinsetta Bridges Historic District

7.a.1 Task Force

7.b Historic Context Report Status

City Attorney may have to get involved because group is not getting a response back with the report that was promised.

7.c Marketing Presentation

7.c.1 City Website Updates, Corrections and Additions

Some members of the group will find a time to meet up with staff liaison Carol Schwanger to discuss city website corrections and marketing.

Group could potentially be interested in a content calendar for scheduling social media posts.

7.c.1.1 2023 Annual Report

Done and turned in. Group is wondering if they should coordinate with HDC.

7.c.2 HDSC Google Drive Review: Move to Single Sign-in

Group members will check to see if they each have access to the login.

8. Potential Study Projects

Cliff Marco - homeowner on Sunnybrook, is concerned about nice homes being torn down and multiple homes being put in their place. Seeing about beginning the process for getting a neighbor on his block a historical home designation.

8.a WPA Murals at Royal Oak Middle School former Dondero High School

Vice Principle trying to get three students at the middle school involved in the study.

8.b 703 Woodcrest Updates

8.c Lockwood Presentation by Eric Romain

Table until the May 16 2024 meeting.

9. New Business

10. Historic Group Reports

10.a Historic District Commission

HDC is looking forward to diving into the work with its Vinsetta bridge task force.

10.b Historical Commission

Met on April 2. Continuing on with the merge of the Historical Society and Historical Commission.

11. Committee Member Comments

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:41 PM.



CITY OF ROYAL OAK HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY

OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

J-1755/R-2030

MAY 17, 2024

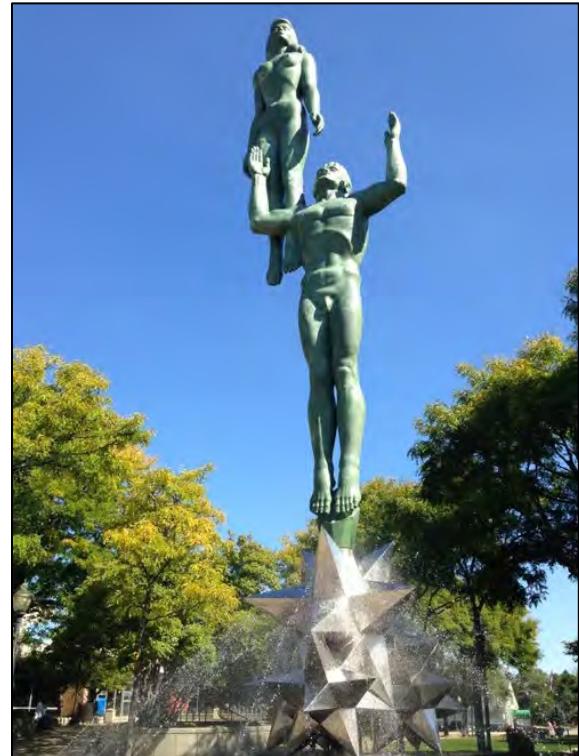


Image Credits: Star Dream" statue by Marshall Fredericks is in a fountain near Royal Oak's library and city hall. Charlotte Massey, The Detroit News



COMMONWEALTH
H E R I T A G E G R O U P

CITY OF ROYAL OAK HISTORIC CONTEXT STUDY

Prepared for

**CITY OF ROYAL OAK
HISTORIC DISTRICT STUDY COMMITTEE
203 SOUTH TROY STREET
ROYAL OAK, MICHIGAN 48067**

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R-2030

May 17, 2024

Acknowledgements

Commonwealth wishes to thank the members of the Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee and their city liaison, Carol Schwanger, for their invaluable advice and efforts toward completing this project. The collections of the Royal Oak Historical Society and the Royal Oak Public Library were invaluable in preparing this document.

Elaine H. Robinson served as Commonwealth's Project Manager and Principal Investigator for this Project. Assisting Ms. Robinson were architectural historians Sarah Reyes, Meredith McCulley, Jamie Sisty, and Laura DeMatteo. Graphics were prepared by James Montney.

ABSTRACT

In March 2023, the City of Royal Oak began a multi-phase project to assess the City's historical resources. This report is the first step, a city-wide historic context. It is anticipated that the context will feed into all future surveys of the built environment in the City. This report expands on the contexts presented by Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group (now Commonwealth Heritage Group, LLC) in the 1999 windshield report completed for the City of Royal Oak.

Commonwealth compiled background information on the City through a review of the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) files, published histories, newspapers, maps, archival materials that are considered primary sources, such as event brochures, programs, and advertising. Research was conducted at the Royal Oak Public Library and the Royal Oak Historical Society. This material was used to develop the historic context for the City.

The previous historic context report included Exploration and Settlement, Community Planning and Development, Transportation, Religion, Commerce/Trade, Social History, and Landscape Architecture. Additional contexts in this report span from the early 1800s to present day and include Government, Transportation, Commerce/Trade, Finance, Education, Religion, Funerary, Social History, Recreation/Culture, Health and Medicine. Further, this report researched four Royal Oak citizens that could be fulfill Criterion B of the NRHP Criteria for evaluation; association with the lives of persons significant to our past.

Commonwealth has made eight recommendations for future work in the City of Royal Oak. These include surveying the built environment stock to establish new historic districts, maintain inventories of properties that meet the 50-year age threshold for consideration as historically significant and those that qualify for Criteria Consideration G and have achieved significance within the last 50 years, and to develop National Register nominations for those that meet the Criteria of Evaluation for listing. Commonwealth also recommends identifying and developing a hazard mitigation plan for historic properties in high hazard areas, adopting a set of historic resource design standards, and adopting historic district preservation incentives. The City could also amend the zoning maps to include a historic district overlay and encourage property owners to apply for state and national incentives.

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INTRODUCTION

Project Background and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to prepare a city-wide historic context that will serve all future surveys of the extant built environment in the City of Royal Oak, Michigan. Extensive background research was carried out to develop a well-defined set of historic contexts for the city that begin in the early 1800s and continues through the present day. The report builds on the contexts presented in the 1999 windshield report completed for the City of Royal Oak by Commonwealth Cultural Resources Group (then Commonwealth) (now Chronicle Heritage). The contexts in the earlier report included Exploration and Settlement, Community Planning and Development, Transportation, Religion, Commerce/Trade, Social History, and Landscape Architecture. Additional contexts in this report Government, Transportation, Commerce/Trade, Finance, Education, Religion, Funerary, Social History, Recreation/Culture, Health and Medicine. Each prepared context covers overarching themes capturing major events or movements, thus offering guidance for future areas of investigation. The cumulative, completed report constitutes the Project.

NRHP Criteria for Evaluation

While the purpose of this report is not to prepare a National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) nomination form, The Michigan Local Historic Districts Act 169 of 1970, as amended, requires local historic districts follow the same standards for local resources, and therefore, the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation are provided here. The National Register Bulletin—How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation states to be eligible for listing, a property must possess significance in American history, architecture, or archaeology. The resources recognized as possibly significant include buildings, such as houses or factories; structures including towers and barns; objects which could include a sculpture or fountain; sites, which include parks or other open areas; and historic districts, which may include one or more resources from any of the categories.¹ These types of resources can be considered for listing in the NRHP. In Royal Oak, each of the designated historic properties is identified as a historic district. Once a potentially eligible historic resource is identified, it is assessed against the NRHP Criteria for Evaluation. A resource must meet at least one of the following four criteria to be considered eligible for listing in the NRHP:

- An association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history (Criterion A)
- An association with the lives of persons significant in our past (Criterion B)
- An embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or representation of the work of a master, or a possession of high artistic values, or a representation of a significant or distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (Criterion C)
- The ability to yield information important in prehistory or history (Criterion D)

¹ National Park Service [NPS]. “National Register Bulletin—How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.” Originally Published 1990. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resources, National Register, History and Education, 1997.
https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/upload/NRB-15_web508.pdf.

Additionally, the NPS has issued Criteria Considerations for special types of historic resources – including cemeteries, birthplaces or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historical buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the last 50 years and would not ordinarily be considered eligible for the NRHP. Criteria Consideration G, Properties that Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years, is particularly relevant in this project since it provides for an exception to the basic guideline that suggests a resource needs to be 50 years old to be significant. Under Consideration G, a property that has achieved significance within the last 50 years can be NRHP eligible if it is of exceptional importance.

In addition to possessing significance, a cultural resource must possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Historic integrity, as it is spelled out by the NPS regulations, consists of the seven areas of integrity mentioned above. Typically, integrity is thought of in terms of high or excellent, good, low, or no integrity in an effort to remove some subjectivity from the evaluation. A property with a high level of integrity will exhibit several aspects of integrity; a resource with low integrity will exhibit a correspondingly low level of observable integrity. It is important to not confuse integrity with condition. For example, a Queen Anne house with original cladding and all its ornamental details intact, but no paint, has a higher level of integrity than a similar building with the ornament removed to make way for replacement windows and vinyl siding. In the first example, the house retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship; the house in the second example has lost integrity in the same areas.

Another issue of integrity is the determination of the appropriate period of significance. The period of significance, or the time when the cultural resource is being recognized as important, is not only limited to when the building was first constructed or held by its original owner. Having identified events or people that are historically important, the period of significance further defines the importance by tying the reasons for historic significance to time.

Previously Listed Properties

Part of understanding the importance of historic resources in the City of Royal Oak is knowing what buildings, structures, sites, objects, or districts have been examined for historic significance in the past. Commonwealth pulled information from the Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee (ROHDSC) and the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to compile the following information.

Local Historic Districts

At the time of this study, there were thirteen locally designated historic districts in the city plus two that are currently under study or in the process of being added (Table 1 and Figure 1). Upon designation, the district is added to Royal Oak Municipal Code (Ch 82, Articles IV–XVI).

Table 1. Locally Designated Properties in Royal Oak

Property Name	Address	Designation Date
Royal Oak Savings Bank Block including the Haberman's Fabric Store (formerly Miller Building)	Southwestern corner of Fourth and Main Streets, 117 West Fourth Street	12-4-2000
Hilzinger Block Building Historic District	106-110 South Main Street	6-21-2004
B&C Grocery Store Historic District	417-421 South Main Street and 101 East Fifth Street	5-15-2006
Royal Oak Woman's Club Historic District	404 South Pleasant Street	1-18-1999
McDowall House Historic District	402 North Troy Street	5-7-2007
Orson Starr House Historic District	3123 North Main Street	5-18-2009
George and Anna Hilzinger House Historic District	211 Knowles Street	5-18-2009
Stauch House Historic District	4620 Elmhurst Avenue	5-17-2010
Hermann's Bakery Historic District	317 South Main Street	10-17-2011
Baldwin Theatre Historic District	415 South Lafayette Avenue	6-15-2013
Knowles House Historic District	524 East Lincoln Avenue	4-7-2014
Fleming Goodrich House Historic District	319 Crane Avenue	4-20-2015
L.A. Young Historic District	L.A. Young Historic District comprised of 11 homes on North Altadena Avenue: 1016, 1021, 1036, 1107 1110, 1111 1114, 1115, 1118 1122, and 1123.	7-11-2016
Royal Oak Farmers Market	316 East 11 Mile Road	Under study
Vinsetta Boulevard Bridges	Vinsetta Boulevard	Under study

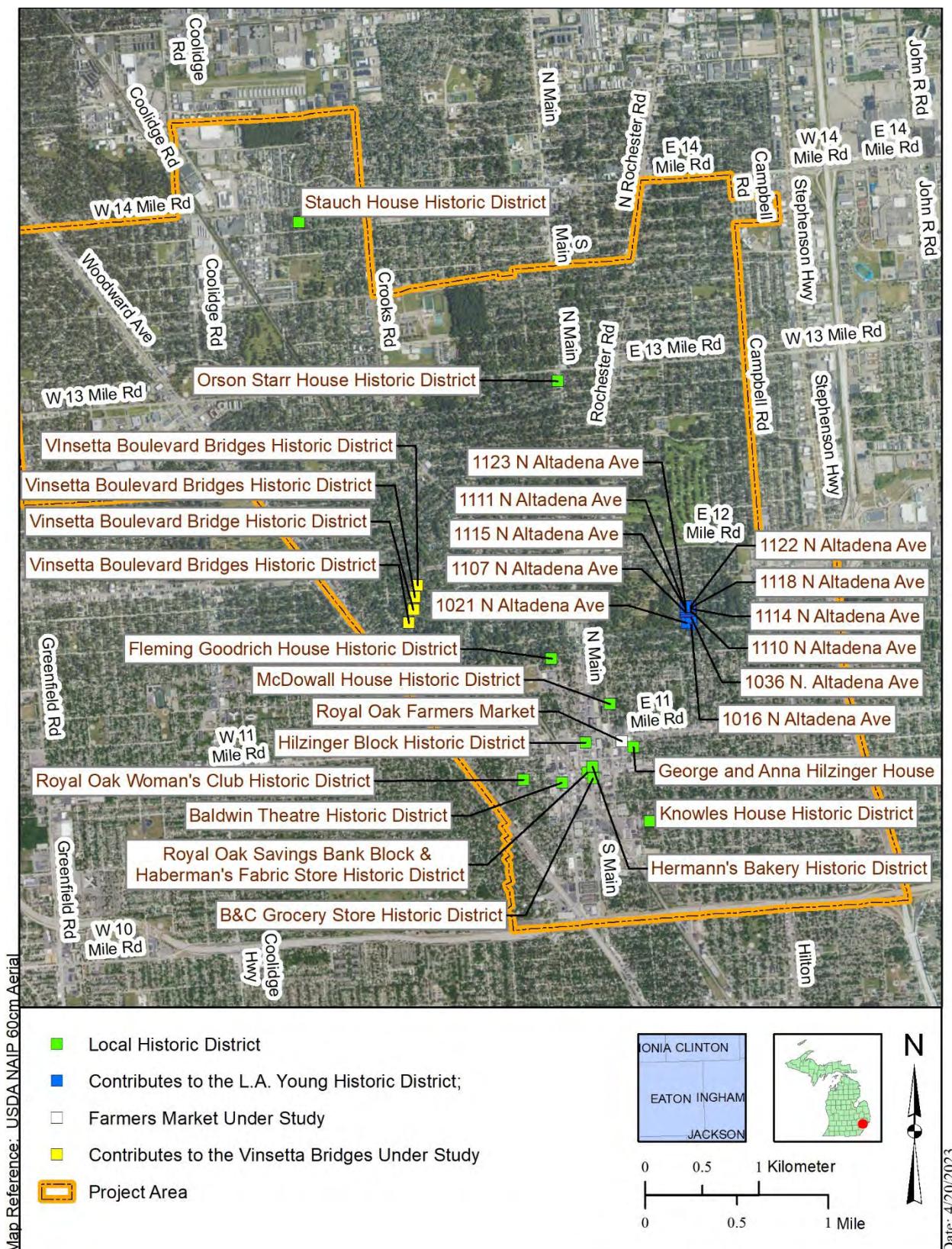


Figure 1. Royal Oak local Historic Districts.

SHPO File Resources

The files obtained from the Michigan SHPO revealed that there are 47 resources that have been reviewed for eligibility (Table 2; Figure 2 through Figure 4). The SHPO reviews NRHP Criteria for Evaluation. SHPO records indicate that the reviewed resources meet one of several categories: More Information Needed/Unevaluated, Contributing or Eligible for Listing in the NRHP, Listed in the NRHP, or Not Eligible for Listing in the NRHP.

Table 2. Previously Investigated Properties in SHPO Files

Name	Current NRHP Status	Address	Map Page No.
824 Maplegrove Avenue	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	824 Maplegrove Avenue	1
Royal Oak Fire Station #2	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	1415 West Webster Road	1
Shrine of the Little Flower	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	2100 West 12 Mile Road	1
Lester-Proctor House	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	2324 Crooks Road	1
John Almon Starr House	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	3123 Crooks Road	1
Starr, Orson, House	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	3123 North Main Street	1
Fleming Goodrich House	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	319 Crane Avenue	1
McDowall House	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	402 North Troy Street	1
Stauch House	Not Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	4620 Elmhurst Avenue	1
Water Works Station of the Village of Royal Oak	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	600 Lloyd Avenue	1
Royal Oak Township Cemetery	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	Bounded by 12 Mile Road and Rochester Road and Main Street	1
Mount Vernon Historic District	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	Mt. Vernon	1
Saint Mary Catholic Cemetery	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	Rochester Road	1
Eckstein-Lakie Building	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	1041 South Main Street	2
Hilzinger Block Building	Listed in the NRHP	106-110 South Main Street	2
U.S. Post Office	Not Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	200 West Second Street	2
215 West Parent Avenue	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	215 West Parent Avenue	2
Washington Square Plaza	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	306 South Washington Avenue	2
U.S. Post Office - Royal Oak Vehicle Maintenance Facility	Not Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	310 West 11 Mile Road	2
Hermann's Bakery	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	317 South Main Street	2
Royal Oak Savings Bank Block	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	400 South Main Street	2
First Baptist Church	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	404 South Pleasant Street	2
Royal Oak Woman's Club	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	404 South Pleasant Street	2
Baldwin Theatre	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	415 South Lafayette Avenue	2

Name	Current NRHP Status	Address	Map Page No.
B and C Grocery Store Building	Listed in the NRHP	417-421 South Main Street	2
Land's Pharmacy	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	422 West 11 Mile Road	2
Knowles House	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	524 East Lincoln Avenue	2
606 Hilldale Drive	Contributing	606 Hilldale Drive	2
612 Hilldale Drive	Contributing	612 Hilldale Drive	2
First United Methodist Church	Eligible for Listing in the NRHP	8320 West Seventh Street	2
Detroit Zoological Park	Listed in the NRHP	8450 West 10 Mile Road	2
923 West 11 Mile Road	Contributing	923 West 11 Mile Road	2
Laurel Historic District	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	11 Mile Road	2
Woodsboro Historic District	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	Northwood Boulevard	2
114 South Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	114 South Stephenson Highway	3
119 North Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	119 North Stephenson Highway	3
2401 Fourth Street	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	2401 Fourth Street	3
2454 Lincoln Avenue	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	2454 Lincoln Avenue	3
311 North Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	311 North Stephenson Highway	3
319 North Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	319 North Stephenson Highway	3
401 North Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	401 North Stephenson Highway	3
402 South Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	402 South Stephenson Highway	3
405 North Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	405 North Stephenson Highway	3
412 South Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	412 South Stephenson Highway	3
416 South Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	416 South Stephenson Highway	3
420 South Stephenson Highway	More Information Needed/Unevaluated	420 South Stephenson Highway	3

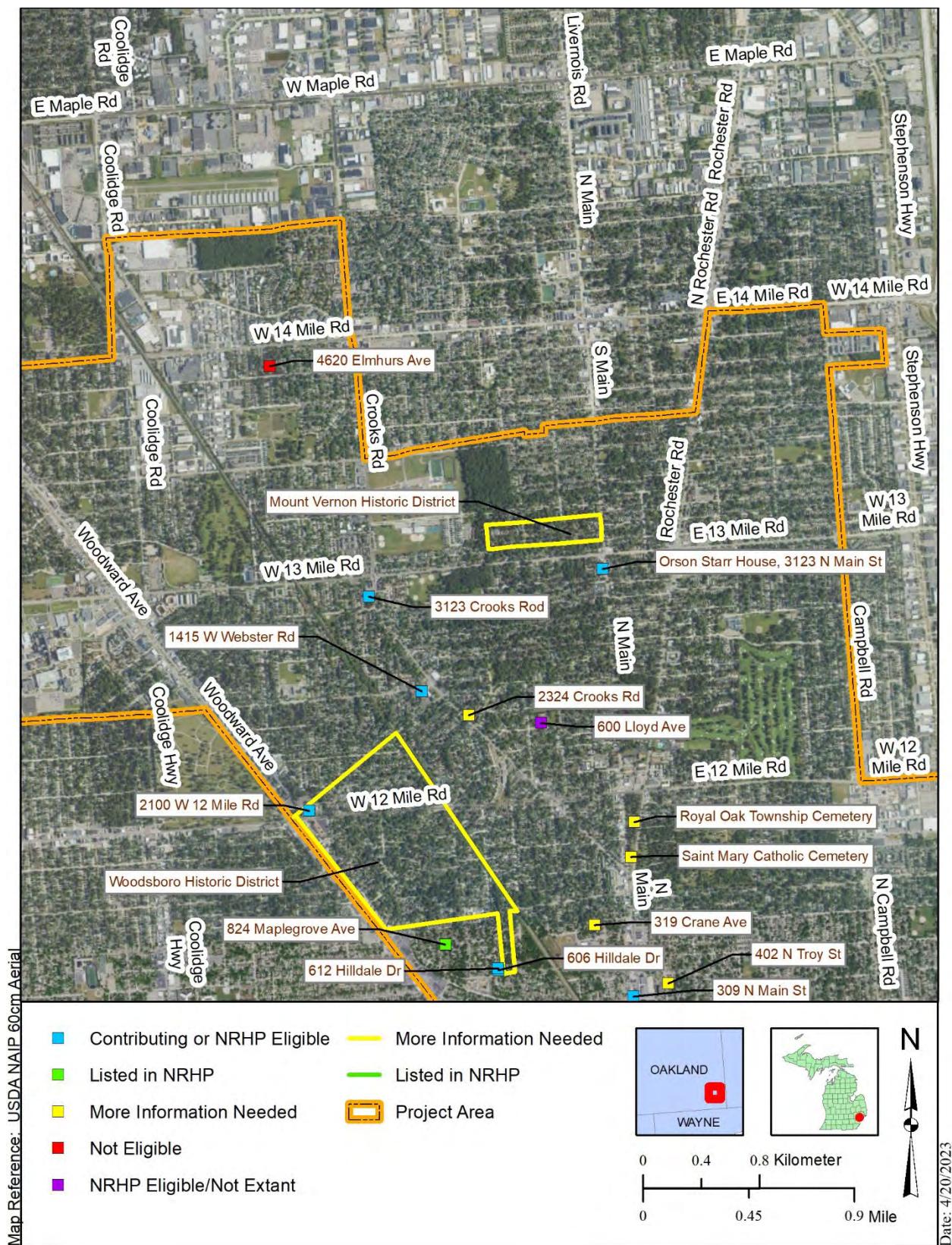


Figure 2. Map of previously recorded properties in Royal Oak (1 of 3).



Figure 3. Map of previously recorded properties in Royal Oak (2 of 3).



Figure 4. Map of previously recorded properties in Royal Oak (3 of 3).

As noted in Table 2, there are three properties in Royal Oak that have been listed in the NRHP. The Detroit Zoological Park (National Register Information System [NRIS] #90001226), which straddles the Royal Oak and Huntington Woods border, was listed on August 24, 1990. The B and C Grocery Building, 417–419 South Main Street (NRIS# 06000149) was listed on March 22, 2006. Just a few weeks later, on May 17, 2006, the Hilzinger Block Building (NRIS# 06000403), 106–110 South Main Street, was also listed in the NRHP.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Exploration and Settlement

Early in the nineteenth century, initial efforts to move from Detroit north, into what is today Oakland County, was met with huge areas of wetlands. In 1815, a report on the area called the land “incapable of cultivation or extensive settlement.”² Recognizing that the earlier reports could be wrong, Territorial Governor Lewis Cass, Austin E. Wing, and three other companions traveled north from Detroit in 1818.³ Initially, the group encountered marsh and muck, but eventually they reached higher ground and rested under the branches of a large oak tree. This tree was marked with the letter H by U.S. surveyors, who reminded the group of the story of the Royal Oak. The story notes that future King Charles II of England, having lost the battle of Worcester, took refuge under the branches of a large oak tree. So effective was their hideout that Cromwell’s troops marched past the tree in search of the King and other survivors. Intrigued by the story, Cass christened the oak tree they rested below the “Royal Oak,” from which the township and city took its name.⁴

The first recorded land purchases in Royal Oak Township were made in 1820 when both L. Luther and D. McKinstry acquired property in Section 33. Within what is today the City of Royal Oak, the first settlers of European descent were Mr. Woodford, who purchased land in the northeast quarter of Section 17, and Alexander Campbell, who owned property in the northwest quarter of Section 8.⁵

Community Development and Planning

Early owners of residences in Royal Oak did not leave the growth of their community to chance. For example, in 1914, the Men’s Association of Royal Oak published a pamphlet outlining the advantages of home ownership in the city. The brochure was “Dedicated to All City Men and Women who wish to Enjoy Living.” Peppered with facts and trivia, the brochure noted things like the proximity of the village to the State Fair Grounds, the Ford Factory, and Palmer Park. Royal Oak was called “a community of homeowners,” with 350 of the 390 people interviewed for the brochure noting they owned their own homes.⁶

² A.A. Hagman, editor, *Oakland County Book of History* (N.P., Sesqui-Centennial Executive Committee, 1970), 263.

³ S.W. Durant, *History of Oakland County, Michigan* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1877), 236.

⁴ Durant, *History of Oakland County*, 237.

⁵ Durant, *History of Oakland County*, 237.

⁶ Men’s Association of Royal Oak [MARO], *A Problem Solved* (Royal Oak: Men’s Association of Royal Oak, 1914).

Plats

The Village of Royal Oak was laid out in 1836 and officially platted in 1838 by Sherman Stevens.⁷ The town was bounded by First Street to the north, West Street to the west, Eighth Street to the south, and Troy Street to the east. The original plat was 42 blocks, which now comprises the current downtown business district.⁸ The *History of Oakland County 1877* notes a second plat, the J.A. Phelps addition, was added to the village in 1875, increasing its size by 44 acres (ac) in 1875 (Figure 5).⁹ However, the 1896 Royal Oak map by Kace Publishing does not note the J.A. Phelps addition, and instead notes the Wilson Park Subdivision.¹⁰

⁷ Durant, *History of Oakland County*, 239.

⁸ Kace, *Illustrated Atlas Royal Oak 1896*.

⁹ Durant, *History of Oakland County*, 239.

¹⁰ Kace, *Illustrated Atlas Royal Oak 1896*.

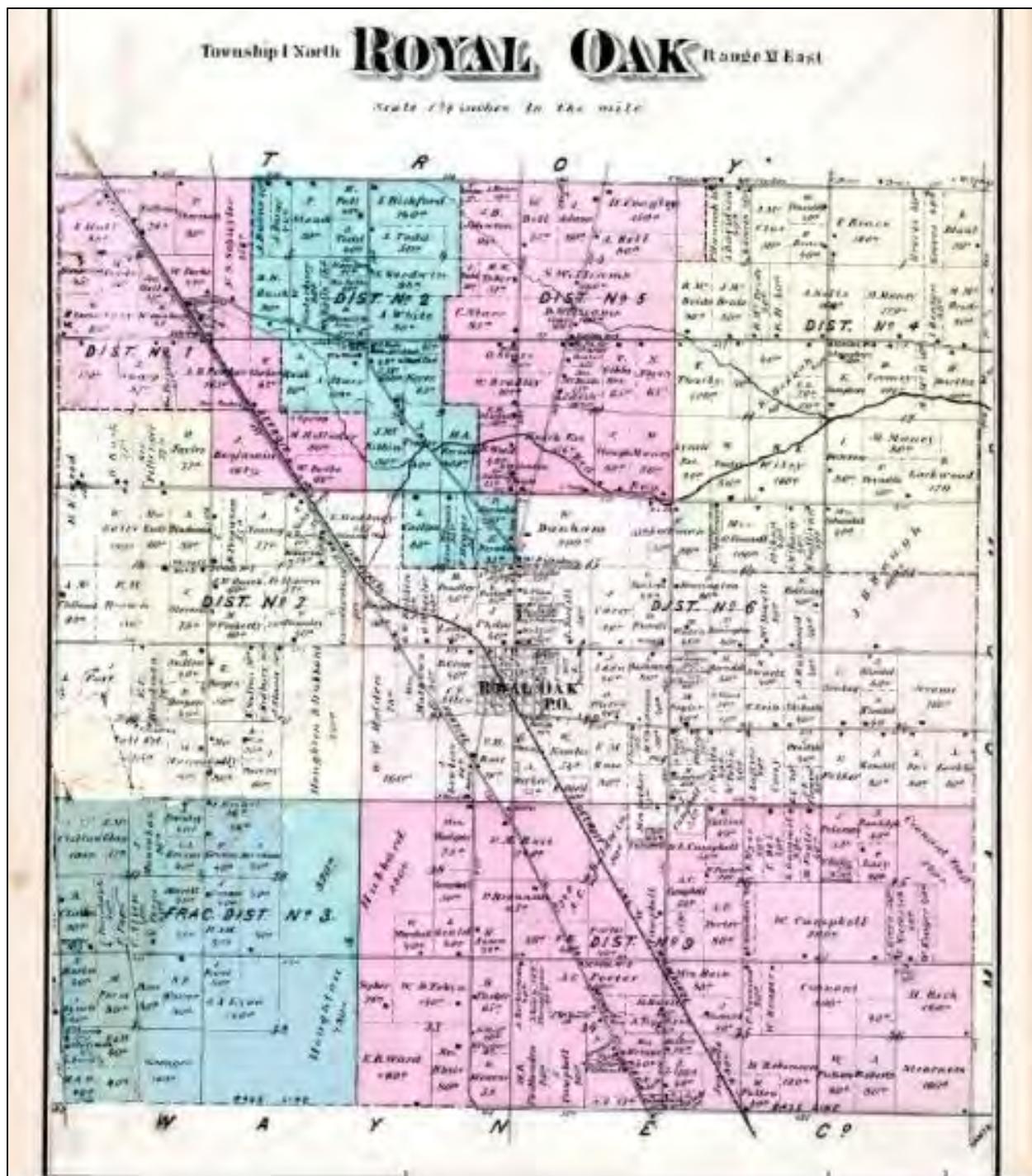


Figure 5. 1872 Plat Map of Royal Oak Township (Beers 1872).

Northwood Subdivision

In 1898, Dr. Firman W. Clawson and his family acquired a large farm, which included a house and large barn. The property extended from Crooks Road to Woodward Avenue.¹¹ Clawson foresaw the expansion of the city northward.¹² Upon acquiring the property that would become the Northwood subdivision, he began subdividing it and had it properly landscaped.¹³ The area was bounded by Oakwood Boulevard (12 Mile Road), Woodward Avenue, Webster Road, and Evergreen Drive.¹⁴ Northwood Boulevard ran through the middle with a northeast–southwest orientation. By 1914, the lots were “finely wooded.” Each lot measured 50 feet (ft) wide and 130 ft deep. It was Clawson’s intention, and he included it in contracts for all lots, to immediately lay out sidewalks, sewerage, and water pipes to every lot. Allotment No. 1 of Northwood consisted of 318 home sites, bungalow sites, and a “Business Street” on 66 ac. The remaining 250 ac would be platted to conform with the first allotment. Woodward Avenue was reserved for about half of its distance in front of the property for businesses and would be restricted to that use.¹⁵ By 1925, more than 200 residences had been constructed in Northwood. At that time, the paving of Pinehurst, Beechwood, and Woodland avenues was nearly complete, and the paving of Northwood Boulevard was just beginning.¹⁶

Vinsetta Park Subdivision

The Vinsetta Park subdivision was the brainchild of Arthur Bassett and neighbor Jay Vinton. The plat was approved in August 1915. The word Vinsetta was created by blending the “Vin” in Vinton with the “sett” in Bassett, a construction conceived by their wives.¹⁷ A prominent feature of the subdivision was Vinsetta Boulevard (Figure 6), which was likely paved in 1928.¹⁸ The boundaries of the neighborhood are considered to be 12 Mile Road on the north, the railroad on the east, Catalpa Drive on the south, and Woodward Avenue on the west.¹⁹

¹¹ John Maurice, “Royal Oak Then & Now,” Royal Oak Historical Society, February 2020, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/53aab63e-1fee-4f8b-824c-96b173e56662/downloads/Winter%202020.pdf?ver=1619565645425>.

¹² “Northwood Homes Springing Up Daily,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 16, 1925, 66.

¹³ “Northwood Homes Springing Up Daily,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 16, 1925, 66; John Maurice, “Royal Oak Then & Now,” Royal Oak Historical Society, February 2020, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/53aab63e-1fee-4f8b-824c-96b173e56662/downloads/Winter%202020.pdf?ver=1619565645425>.

¹⁴ John Maurice, “Royal Oak Then & Now,” Royal Oak Historical Society, February 2020, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/53aab63e-1fee-4f8b-824c-96b173e56662/downloads/Winter%202020.pdf?ver=1619565645425>.

¹⁵ “Beautiful Northwood,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 14, 1914, 42.

¹⁶ “Northwood Homes Springing Up Daily,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 16, 1925, 66.

¹⁷ Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee, “Vinsetta Bridges Draft Proposal,” November 2006, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32276/HDSC-Request-to-Study-Vinsetta-Boulevard-Bridges-March-14-2022>.

¹⁸ Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee, “Vinsetta Bridges Draft Proposal,” November 2006, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32276/HDSC-Request-to-Study-Vinsetta-Boulevard-Bridges-March-14-2022>; “Paving Proposal Stirs Hot Debate,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1928, 8.

¹⁹ Wickland Group, “Royal Oak’s Vinsetta Park Neighborhood Homes for Sale,” accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.wicklandgroup.com/royal-oak/vinsetta-park/>.



Figure 6. The Vinsetta Park subdivision is visible in the upper half of this 1920s aerial view with Vinsetta Boulevard at upper left (Penney 2008).

It was reported in April 1923 that Royal Oak had grown to such an extent during the previous year that additional territory had been annexed to the village twice. The latest annexed territory made Royal Oak three times larger than the original size of the village. Gardenia Avenue was one of the principal streets in the most recent annexation. At the time, there were 27 homes under construction in Royal Oak, most of them being on Gardenia Avenue.²⁰

North Main Subdivision

The North Main subdivision became part of Royal Oak in Spring 1929, and a significant amount of land beyond the subdivision was annexed to Royal Oak in September 1929. A 1929 ad for the subdivision described it as being in the North Woodward District, which would be served by the proposed Grand Trunk rapid transit and elevated motor highway. It was touted as being ideally midway between 12 and 13 Mile Roads. The subdivision was bounded on the east by Rochester Road and on the west by North Main Street, both of which were paved at the time. The area was also serviced by Interurban cars, which operated on North Main Street, and bus lines to Detroit operated on both streets. As of September 1929, water and sewer were being installed; streets were graded and graveled; gas, electricity, and telephone were available; and shade trees would be planted that fall in front of every residential lot. The property was described as being ready for immediate construction.²¹

²⁰ "Annexed Section Adds to Progress," *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1923, 33.

²¹ Bassett & Smith, Inc. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1929, 83.

Government

The City of Royal Oak has several local government buildings including a courthouse, city hall, town hall, police station, and two fire stations. The 44th District Courthouse and the U.S. Post Office are also in the city limits (Table 3).

City Hall

In 1916 and 1921, the town hall was at 244 South Main Street, at the northwestern corner of South Main and West Third Streets.²² By 1925, a new one-story, brick city hall had been constructed at the northwestern corner of East Third and South Troy streets (Figure 7).²³ A new city hall was built following World War II with the \$100,000 that had been saved by the city during the war.²⁴ The new building was designed by architect Lowell M. Price, who also designed three of Royal Oak's fire stations.²⁵ It was constructed in the early 1950s at the northeastern corner of East Third and Williams streets. Dedication ceremonies were held in April 1953.²⁶ A new city hall was constructed at the northeastern corner of East Third and South Troy streets between 2018 and 2020 as part of the City Center Project, which included a five-story office building, a new police station, and a new central park.²⁷ The 1953 city hall was demolished in 2021 and is now the site of Centennial Commons.²⁸

²² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

²³ City of Royal Oak, "History of the Court," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/314/History-of-the-Court>; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

²⁴ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

²⁵ "Lowell M. Price," *Detroit Free Press*, February 11, 1954, 18.

²⁶ "New City Hall To Be Dedicated," *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1953, 12.

²⁷ Aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2018 and 2020, accessed November 16, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicaerials.com); Krieger Klatt Architects, "City Hall: Overview," accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.kriegerklatt.com/municipal-portfolio/city-hall>.

²⁸ Mike McConnell, "Former Royal Oak police, city hall buildings leveled," May 20, 2021, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.theoaklandpress.com/2021/05/20/former-royal-oak-police-city-hall-buildings-leveled/>.



Figure 7. Photograph of Royal Oak's City Hall circa 1925, northwestern corner of East Third and South Troy streets (Royal Oak Historical Society [ROHS] undated)

44th District Courthouse

After Royal Oak became a city on June 21, 1921, the city charter adopted a manager form of government on November 8, 1921. John E. Brondige was appointed Justice of the Peace that same day. He held court in the old town hall at the northwestern corner of South Main and West Third streets (244 South Main Street). Judge Brondige served in that position until 1949. That year, the city charter was amended, establishing a Municipal Court, and Brondige became Royal Oak's first Municipal Judge, a position he served in until 1955.²⁹ In 1925, the court was relocated to the new brick, one-story city hall at the northwestern corner of East Third and South Troy streets.³⁰ The court was again moved in 1953, this time to a temporary location on the third floor of the city's new municipal building. The State Legislature established the District Court System in 1968. The first building to be designed and built specifically as a courthouse in the

²⁹ City of Royal Oak, "History of the Court," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/314/History-of-the-Court>.

³⁰ City of Royal Oak, "History of the Court," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/314/History-of-the-Court>; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

city was dedicated on May 1, 2001, on a site north of East Third Street and east of South Troy Street.³¹

Police Department

Alexander Lewless served as the town marshal for over 40 years.³² In 1917, two policemen were appointed to make regular rounds because of a string of robberies. Their purpose was also to watch for fires and prevent men and boys from blocking sidewalks and making rude comments to women and girls.³³ A small room containing two cells to house prisoners was in the 1915 fire hall.³⁴ Following the death of Lewless in 1918, Philip H. Beauvais established a local police department, three years prior to the village's incorporation. Performing the duties of both village manager and police chief, he assisted with arrests and brought prisoners to the county jail in Pontiac.³⁵ The headquarters continued to be at the fire hall. Because of insufficient space, the police department moved into the two-story Merrill House at the southeastern corner of Second and Williams streets in 1926. The jail cells remained at the fire hall for a period of time prior to being moved to the basement of the house.³⁶ In 1953, the police station relocated to the circa 1925, one-story brick building around the block at Third and Troy streets, which had formerly housed the city hall. A cellblock and garage were added to the rear of the building. The Merrill House was sold for \$102. In 1964, a new, three-story building was completed for the police department at 221 East Third Street adjacent to and east of the 1953 city hall.³⁷ This resulted in the demolition of the circa 1925 brick building.³⁸ In 2016, plans began to be made for a new police station.³⁹ The new station, just north of the courthouse, was built between 2018 and 2020. The 1964 police station was demolished in 2021 and is now the site of Centennial Commons.⁴⁰

³¹ City of Royal Oak, "History of the Court," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/314/History-of-the-Court>.

³² Judy Davids, "ROPD Blue: Police Chiefs through the Years" in *A Century of Service*, p. 2, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

³³ City of Royal Oak, "Timeline," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/275/Timeline>.

³⁴ City of Royal Oak, "History of Royal Oak Police Headquarters" in "A Century of Service," p. 7, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

³⁵ Judy Davids, "ROPD Blue: Police Chiefs through the Years" in *A Century of Service*, p. 2, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

³⁶ City of Royal Oak, "History of Royal Oak Police Headquarters" in "A Century of Service," p. 7, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

³⁷ City of Royal Oak, "History of Royal Oak Police Headquarters" in "A Century of Service," p. 7, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

³⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

³⁹ City of Royal Oak, "History of Royal Oak Police Headquarters" in "A Century of Service," p. 8, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

⁴⁰ Mike McConnell, "Former Royal Oak police, city hall buildings leveled," May 20, 2021, <https://www.theoaklandpress.com/2021/05/20/former-royal-oak-police-city-hall-buildings-leveled/>.

Fire Stations

In 1908, the first fire department was organized in the home of William Sullivan, who was elected fire chief.⁴¹ That year, the town board granted the fire department the privilege of constructing a suitable building behind the town hall in which they could store their engine and other equipment.⁴² Whenever a fire broke out, Arthur L. Lawson rang the St. Mary's church bell. This organization safeguarded the village until the Royal Oak Volunteer Fire Department was organized. In 1912, a devastating fire threatened to destroy the business district south of Third Street. Before help could arrive from Detroit, the volunteer group had the fire under control. As a result of this fire, merchants formalized the volunteer department on February 13, 1913. Early meetings were held in the old town hall on the northwestern corner of Main and Third streets, and upon its sale, meetings were held at the homes of members for a time. Being discontented with their quarters, the group voted unanimously in October 1915 to give the council a mandate to provide suitable accommodations. The group threatened to disband if the council did not comply.⁴³ In 1915, a fire hall was constructed in Royal Oak at Main and Sixth streets.⁴⁴ Fire Hall No. 1, which cost only \$1,700 to build, was largely constructed by the volunteers. The council paid for the building, but the fire department furnished it with their own funds.⁴⁵ The 1916 Sanborn map (Figure 8) shows the fire hall near the northeastern corner of Main and Sixth streets, as well as a one-story frame building at the southeastern corner of Main and Fifth streets, which housed equipment (a hose cart and truck).

⁴¹ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁴² "Royal Oak," *Bloomfield-Birmingham Eccentric*, June 20, 1908, 5.

⁴³ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁴⁴ City of Royal Oak, "History of Royal Oak Police Headquarters" in "A Century of Service," p. 7, accessed November 15, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/19767/A-Century-of-Service?bidId=>.

⁴⁵ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

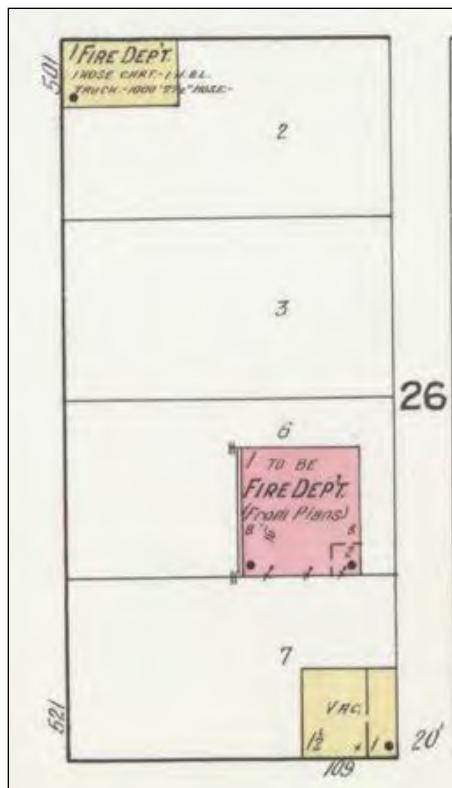


Figure 8. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1916, Sheet 3.

The 1921 Sanborn map describes the one-story Fire Station No. 1 as having a club room, 35 volunteers, one Ford hose truck, and one auto truck. A frame addition had been constructed on the southern elevation of the building for iron pipe and valve storage.⁴⁶ In 1922, a year after the Village of Royal Oak became a city, the city chose to replace the volunteer fire department with a paid department. Members of the volunteer department voted to share their station and equipment with the paid department.⁴⁷ The volunteer fire department continued to exist for many years after the establishment of the paid department, although it functioned mainly as a social group except during extreme emergencies.⁴⁸ The city decided to build a new fire station, the Northwood Development Company providing a site and the services of their architects.⁴⁹ The second fire hall constructed in Royal Oak was completed in 1928 at a cost of \$44,287.⁵⁰ The Northwood Fire Station (Figure 9) was on Webster Road near Crooks Road. The boundaries of the fire district were determined—Northwood would answer alarms west of Rochester Road from Catalpa Drive to 14 Mile Road, all alarms north of Catalpa Drive to the city line and all alarms west of Woodward Avenue from Webster Road to 14 Mile.⁵¹ In December 1928, the city

⁴⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

⁴⁷ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁴⁸ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁴⁹ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁵⁰ "New \$44,287 Fire Station is Erected," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 7-1.

⁵¹ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15-16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

manager proposed a \$100,000 combined city hall and fire station on the site of the old Department of Public Works building.⁵² In the mid-1930s, Frederick D. Madison was hired to draft preliminary plans for a combined Royal Oak Township Hall, fire hall, and garage. The plans had been delayed pending an announcement by the federal government as to how funding would be allocated to municipalities under the work-wage plan for the purposes of new construction.⁵³ It appears this building was never constructed and instead, Station No. 1 was remodeled in 1935. The fire department worked out of the Farmers Market during the renovations.⁵⁴



Figure 9. Northwood Fire Station, (ROHS undated)

Station No. 1 moved from its small quarters at the northeastern corner of Main and Sixth streets to a large new headquarters at Sixth and Troy streets in December 1953.⁵⁵ The former Station No. 1 building was demolished between 1973 and 1983.⁵⁶ A new station (Fire Station No. 3) was completed in 1954 at Rochester Road and Lawrence Avenue, just south of 13 Mile Road. This station covered the area bounded by Gardenia Avenue, Campbell Road, Main Street, and 14 Mile Road. By the end of 1954, Fire Station No. 4 had been constructed on city-owned land at the northeastern corner of 13 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue to service the area around the new

⁵² "New City Building Royal Oak's Plan," *Detroit Free Press*, December 4, 1928, 12.

⁵³ "Royal Oak Township Hall Plans Nearing Completion," *Detroit Free Press*, January 30, 1935, 8.

⁵⁴ City of Royal Oak, "Timeline," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/275/Timeline>.

⁵⁵ City of Royal Oak, "Timeline," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/275/Timeline>.

⁵⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1973 and 1983, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

William Beaumont Hospital. In 1980, the city closed Fire Station No. 2.⁵⁷ Station No. 1 was refurbished in 2002, and Stations Nos. 3 and 4 were completely demolished and reconstructed in 2003 and 2004, respectively. The new Station No. 4 has since been renumbered to Station No. 2, as the former Station No. 2 now houses the Royal Oak Historical Society.⁵⁸

United States Post Office

Royal Oak's first postmaster, James Lockwood, was appointed by John Quincy Adams in April 1825. In September of that year, Samuel Torbert took over as postmaster and remained in that post until January 1830. Because of insufficient business at Washington Square Plaza, the post office was relocated to Chase's Corners at 13 Mile Road and Crooks Road. This area was the center of community activities in the town's pioneer days. Joseph Chase used his son David's store as the post office. They provided this service from January 1831 to October 1841, when Moses Johnson took over as postmaster. The post office was relocated to Johnson's store at the northeastern corner of Main Street and University Avenue, as Chase's Corners was no longer the center of activity in the village because of the arrival of the railroad in 1838 and the planning of the Village of Royal Oak. The post office was in the general store at Fifth Street and the railroad during the Civil War. This building was later relocated to the corner of First and Main streets, where William Hilsinger used it as a milk house.⁵⁹

From the 1880s to the early 1900s, the postmaster would change, and the post office would move two blocks in either direction whenever the county swung back and forth from Republican to Democrat. Jacob Erb, a Republican, had a store on the southeastern corner of Main and Second streets (201 South Main Street) (Figure 10), and Louis Storz, a Democrat, had a store on the northeastern corner of Main and Fifth streets (445 South Main Street). Erb served as postmaster 1880–1885, 1889–1893, and 1897–1914; Storz served during the intervening years.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ City of Royal Oak, "Timeline," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/275/Timeline>.

⁵⁸ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15–16, 2023, at <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>.

⁵⁹ John A. Kuzemka, "The Royal Oak Post Office: A History," p. 1, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

⁶⁰ John A. Kuzemka, "The Royal Oak Post Office: A History," p. 1, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.



Figure 10. Photograph of Jacob Erb's store, which contained the Royal Oak post office, southeastern corner of Main and Second streets (ROHS undated).

By 1914, postal business had increased to the point where a separate building was rented at 203–205 South Main Street next to Jacob Erb's store, Charles A. Allen serving as postmaster. Over the next few years, streets were permanently named, and houses were requested to display address numbers so that house deliveries could be made beginning in November 1915. The post office relocated to the new three-story Royal Oak Savings Bank Building on the northwestern corner of Main and Fourth streets upon its completion in 1916. In 1920, the Royal Oak Post Office became a branch of the Detroit Post Office because of an insufficient number of employees and the town's rapid growth. That year, the post office was relocated to larger quarters at the southwestern corner of Fourth and Williams streets.⁶¹

By 1926, two postal substations were in use, one at 10 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, and the other at Catalpa Drive–Gardenia Avenue and Main Street. Both were in drug stores. The following year, the City Commission requested that Royal Oak be allowed its own postal unit, as the mail service under the Detroit system began to bog down. In March 1931, Leo Campbell became postmaster. However, the post office remained in its larger quarters at the southwestern corner of Fourth and Williams streets. Because of complaints about service and the insufficient size of this post office, petitions were circulated for a new federal post office in 1930. Federal funds (\$190,000) were allocated for this purpose the following year. However, this amount was reduced to \$171,000 in 1933. Local architect Frederick D. Madison was contracted to design the

⁶¹ John A. Kuzemka, “The Royal Oak Post Office: A History,” pp. 1-2, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

building. Henry Dattner of Detroit was hired as the contractor. Construction began in December 1935. In accordance with a government provision, local workers, both skilled and unskilled, were employed. Following the completion of the building, a brief dedication ceremony was held on August 29, 1936 (Figure 11). The first mail delivery from the new building was made September 14, 1936. Since then, the building has been modified and enlarged several times.⁶²

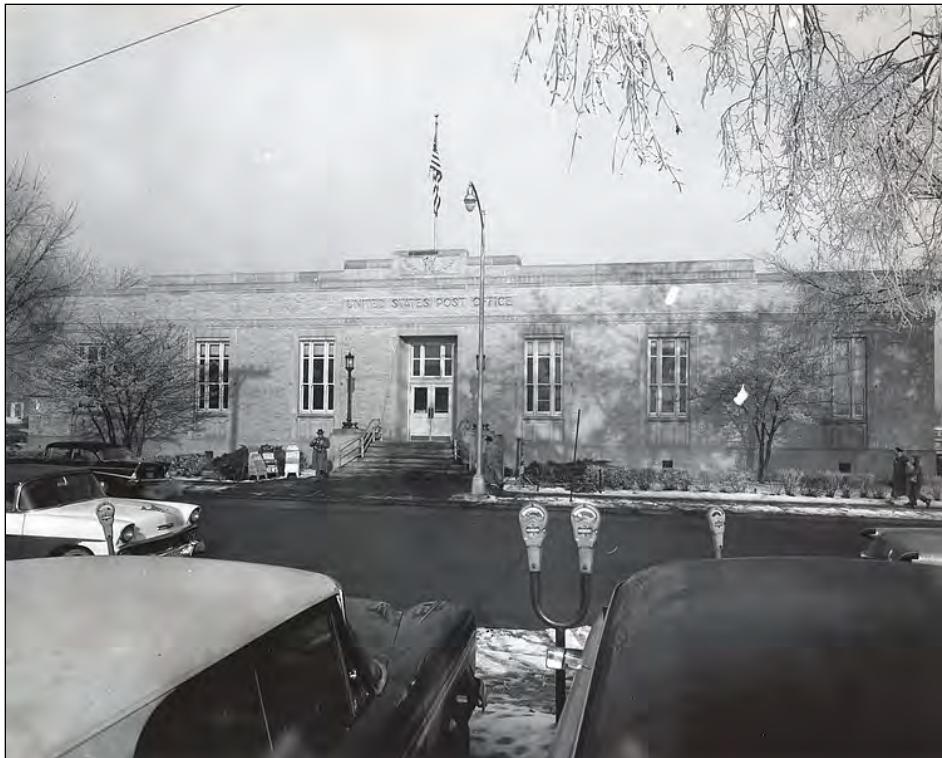


Figure 11. A 1959 photograph of the Royal Oak post office, West Second Street and South Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)

Royal Oak became the Sectional Center for area mail processing in 1967. This area covered 2,400 square miles (mi^2). Because of an increase in the amount of mail being processed, a separate mail processing building became necessary. The city leased a 70,000-square-foot (ft^2) building on 9 Mile Road in the city of Warren in 1974.⁶³ Between 1973 and 1983, a building was constructed on the northern side of West 11 Mile Road between the railroad tracks and North Washington Avenue, which serves as the Royal Oak vehicle maintenance facility for the postal service.⁶⁴ A new 140,000- ft^2 building was constructed in Troy in 1981 to house the Sectional Center/Processing and Distribution Center. By the 1980s, the Royal Oak post office had two

⁶² John A. Kuzemka, “The Royal Oak Post Office: A History,” pp. 3-4, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

⁶³ John A. Kuzemka, “The Royal Oak Post Office: A History,” p. 4, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

⁶⁴ Aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1973 and 1983, accessed November 16, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

branch offices in Berkley and Madison Heights and two contract stations in Huntington Woods and in a Meijer grocery store. A larger processing and distribution center was constructed in Pontiac in 2008. It processes mail for almost the entire southeastern quadrant of the Lower Peninsula.⁶⁵

Associated Resources

Table 3. Royal Oak Government Buildings, Locations, Date, and Status Information

Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
44th District Courthouse	400 East 11 Mile Road	2001	Yes
City Hall/Courthouse/ Police Station	Northwestern corner of East Third and South Troy streets	ca. 1925	No
City Hall/Courthouse	Northeastern corner of East Third and Williams streets	1953	No
City Hall	203 South Troy Street	2018-2020	Yes
Fire Station No. 1	Northeastern corner of Main and Sixth streets	1915	No
Fire Station No. 1	215 East Sixth Street	1953	Yes
Fire Station No. 2 (now Royal Oak Historical Society)	1411 West Webster Road	1928	Yes
Fire Station No. 3	3128 Rochester Road	1954 (Demolished/reconstructed 2003)	No
Fire Station No. 4 (now Station No. 2)	3298 13 Mile Road	1954 (Demolished/reconstructed 2004)	No
Police Station (Merrill House)	Southeastern corner of Second and Williams streets (205 Williams Street)	Pre-1916	No
Police Station	221 East Third Street	1964	No
Police Station	450 East 11 Mile Road	2018-2020	Yes
U.S. Post Office	201 South Main Street (Jacob Erb's Store)	Pre-1916	No
U.S. Post Office	203-205 South Main Street	Pre-1916	No
U.S. Post Office	200 West Second Street	1936	Yes
U.S. Post Office - Royal Oak Vehicle Maintenance Facility	310 West 11 Mile Road	1973-1983	Yes
Town Hall/Courthouse	244 South Main Street	1840 (as a church) (relocated in 1923 and relocated and remodeled in 1928)	Yes

⁶⁵ John A. Kuzemka, “The Royal Oak Post Office: A History,” p. 5, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

Transportation

Modes of transportation in Royal Oak have ranged from the most primitive, foot traffic, changing through the years to include horses, carriages, interurban, trains, and lastly to the automobile. As the modes of transport have changed, so has the requirements of the infrastructure to support the movement of people and goods in, out of, and around town (Table 4).

Roads and Bridges

The initial lack of roads was a major hindrance in the settlement of Royal Oak. This particular area of Oakland County consisted of sandy ridges, which held back drainage and transformed the land into swamps. The early Saginaw Trail followed one of these ridges. The laying out of a military trail began in 1818. A military road to Saginaw was authorized two years later. This opened the area to settlers.⁶⁶ By 1924, no less than 8–10 arteries of traffic converged in Royal Oak.⁶⁷

Woodward Avenue follows the path of the old Saginaw Trail.⁶⁸ Formerly known as Pontiac Road, it was the first surveyed road in Michigan, connecting Detroit and Pontiac in 1819.⁶⁹ Woodward Avenue was formerly a corduroy road, part of it consisting of planks laid through marshes. In the early spring, the road was rendered impassable due to the swampy condition of the land between Royal Oak and Detroit. Ditches were dug to allow for drainage. The road could then be graded and covered in gravel. These ditches inspired the development of the communities north of Detroit. An electric car line bordering the road was completed in the late 1890s, marking the real beginning of the Detroit suburbs. It was not until after 1900 that Woodward Avenue became an important highway as a result of the advent of the automobile and the northern Woodward suburbs becoming a mecca for drivers. However, the condition of the dirt and gravel roads suffered due to the increase in traffic. This resulted in the first strip of concrete being laid between 6 and 8 Mile Roads, now within Detroit's city limits. The concrete pavement was gradually extended to Birmingham and Pontiac. Because of an increase in the number of people leaving the city for the suburbs, the narrow, paved road became inadequate to accommodate the significant increase in traffic. Several plans were adopted to relieve this traffic. John R. Road and 11 Mile Road were paved, and the 7 Mile Road to Southfield Road and Southfield Road to Birmingham were improved. Although these roads carried a significant amount of traffic, they failed to relieve Woodward Avenue traffic.⁷⁰ There was a movement in the early 1920s to widen Woodward Avenue to 200 ft.⁷¹ However, the Grand Trunk railroad paralleled a portion of the road. The widening of the road proceeded without removal of the railroad because conditions were so bad. The narrow strip of pavement became a 44-ft strip of

⁶⁶ “Call Widening Plan Royal Oak Impetus,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1924, 84.

⁶⁷ “The Roots of Royal Oak Are Its Highways,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1924, 82.

⁶⁸ City of Royal Oak, “History,” accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/501/History>.

⁶⁹ Michigan Department of Transportation, “Road & Highway Facts,” accessed December 15, 2023, at <https://www.michigan.gov/mdot/about/history/road-and-highway-facts>.

⁷⁰ “Woodward Widening Passes Last Obstacle,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1928, 67.

⁷¹ “Call Widening Plan Royal Oak Impetus,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1924, 84.

pavement that extended to Pontiac, and another 44-ft strip was partially completed. The latter was contingent on the removal of the Grand Trunk railroad tracks. After the railroad acquired a new 100-ft right-of-way, the tracks were removed from Woodward Avenue between Royal Oak and Pontiac in 1928.⁷² This 28-mi road currently connects 10 communities from the Detroit River north to downtown Pontiac and has been honorarily designated the Michigan Heritage Route. This designation resulted from the presence of some 350 historically and culturally significant sites, including 42 historic churches, along the road.⁷³

Within Royal Oak are five mile roads: 10 Mile Road, 11 Mile Road, 12 Mile Road, 13 Mile Road, and 14 Mile Road (Figure 12 through Figure 15).⁷⁴ The mile road system originated in the Land Ordinance Act, which was passed by the Continental Congress in 1785 at Thomas Jefferson's urging. According to the law, a congressionally appointed surveyor in each state was to divide each territory into 6-mi-square townships with lines running north and south and others crossing at right angles. The plats of each of the towns would be divided into 1-mi² subdivisions (640 ac each) and numbered from 1 through 36. The surveyors first had to establish the points from which the land would be measured and numbered. Within Michigan, a line from its east to west lake shores was marked as the baseline. This is now 8 Mile Road. The north-south line is a meridian drawn from the bottom to the top of the state. It runs east of Lansing and approximately through Jackson and St. Ignace. The baseline and the meridian are the measuring points for the township and range numbers that appear in deed property descriptions.⁷⁵ Mile roads have also had names at one time, many of which are no longer used. Some names are only used within a county or jurisdiction. The numbering of mile roads began in Detroit with 0 Mile Road (Ford Road) and extended north to 50 Mile Road (Bowers Road). Within Royal Oak, 10 Mile Road has also been known as Kern Road and Lake Street, 11 Mile Road as Townhall Road, 12 Mile Road as Champagne Road and Oakwood Boulevard, 13 Mile Road as Chicago Road, and 14 Mile Road as Townline Road.⁷⁶

⁷² "Woodward Widening Passes Last Obstacle," *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1928, 67 and 70.

⁷³ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/501/History>.

⁷⁴ Macomb History, "Metro Detroit Mile Roads," accessed December 15, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20140118052927/http://www.macombhistory.org/documents/MileRoadnamesdocument-01-18-11_001.pdf.

⁷⁵ Susan Dorris, "Detroit's "Mile" Roads," accessed December 15, 2023, https://historydetroit.com/places/mile_roads.php#:~:text=The%20system%20originated%20in%20the,straight%20lines%20and%20right%20angles.

⁷⁶ Macomb History, "Metro Detroit Mile Roads," accessed December 15, 2023, https://web.archive.org/web/20140118052927/http://www.macombhistory.org/documents/MileRoadnamesdocument-01-18-11_001.pdf.



Figure 12. An early view south down Woodward Avenue from 13 Mile Road (ROHS undated).



Figure 13. A photograph of the intersection of 12 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue showing the paving of Woodward Avenue as the railroad tracks were relocated (ROHS 1931)



Figure 14. 12 Mile Road looking east from its intersection with Northwood Boulevard (ROHS 1929)



Figure 15. 12 Mile Road looking east from Vinsetta Boulevard showing workmen preparing to excavate for the Grand Trunk viaduct (ROHS ca. 1929)

Prior to 1928, Main Street was only about 60 ft wide and had become inadequate to handle the large volume of traffic due to the growth of the city. In late 1923, the commission of Royal Oak appointed a committee to study the issue. A resolution was passed in 1925 to widen Main Street from Crooks Road to 10 Mile Road to a uniform width. However, many property owners objected. A new committee was appointed in 1926 to study the issue further. In April of that year, the committee recommended abandoning the former recommendation and widening South Main Street from Fifth Street to 10 Mile Road. About 35 buildings were moved or demolished. The widening cost approximately \$365,000, exclusive of paving. It was planned that the road would be about 100 ft wide from the southern limits of the city to Catalpa Drive, the pavement itself being approximately 75 ft wide.⁷⁷

Northwood Boulevard is the main road through the Northwood subdivision (discussed earlier). The approximately 0.75-mi-long road extends from Woodward Avenue to Crooks Road. In 1914, it was described as being 100 ft wide.⁷⁸ The paving of Northwood Boulevard began in 1925 (Figure 16 and Figure 17).⁷⁹



Figure 16. Northwood Boulevard, possibly near its intersection with Roseland Avenue, looking east. A house, which appears to be 1917 Clawson Avenue, is at center left. (Detroit Public Library Digital Collections ca. 1920)

⁷⁷ "Main Street Soon Is To Be Great Highway," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 67 and 70.

⁷⁸ "Beautiful Northwood," *Detroit Free Press*, June 14, 1914, 42.

⁷⁹ "Northwood Homes Springing Up Daily," *Detroit Free Press*, August 16, 1925, 66.



Figure 17. Northwood Boulevard, looking northeast from its intersection with Lloyd Avenue toward where the Grand Trunk tracks would soon cross (ROHS 1929)

Vinsetta Boulevard was a prominent feature of Arthur Bassett and neighbor Jay Vinton's Vinsetta Park subdivision. The Vinsetta Park development plat was approved in August 1915. The word Vinsetta was created by blending the "Vin" in Vinton with the "sett" in Bassett, a construction conceived by their wives.⁸⁰ The meandering boulevard follows the path of the Red Run River (Figure 18).⁸¹ Its southern branch entered Royal Oak, crossing Woodward Avenue just north of Catalpa Drive and then followed Vinsetta (to North Main Street). The river left Royal Oak at 12 Mile Road and Campbell Road. However, the early development of Royal Oak turned the small river into a drain. Its southern branch was buried in the late 1920s, and the northern branch was buried in the 1960s. Both became part of the storm and sanitary drain system for the rapidly growing northern suburbs.⁸² Prior to being covered, the river, which flowed within the median of Vinsetta Boulevard, was little more than a small creek. As a result,

⁸⁰ Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee, "Vinsetta Bridges Draft Proposal," November 2006, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32276/HDSC-Request-to-Study-Vinsetta-Boulevard-Bridges-March-14-2022>.

⁸¹ HistoricBridges.org, "Greenleaf Drive Bridge," accessed December 14, 2023, <https://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=michigan/greenleaf/>.

⁸² Bob Muller, "A Run Ran Through It," accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1504/Red-Run-Ghost-River-of-Royal-Oak-PDF#:~:text=This%20early%20development%20had%20turned,north%20branch%20in%20the%201960's.>

roads intersecting with Vinsetta required bridges to span the river.⁸³ Four wooden bridges were constructed at Mayfield Drive, Greenleaf Drive, Woodsboro Drive, and Cedar Hill Drive prior to Royal Oak becoming a city in 1921. Later, neo-Grecian-style cement bridges were constructed to replace the wooden bridges. The new bridges were once wired and illuminated by electric lighting. The Red Run River was contained in a sewer in 1926–1927.⁸⁴ When the river was filled in, the bridges were left in place. Only their railings and a small upper portion of their spandrel walls remain visible.⁸⁵

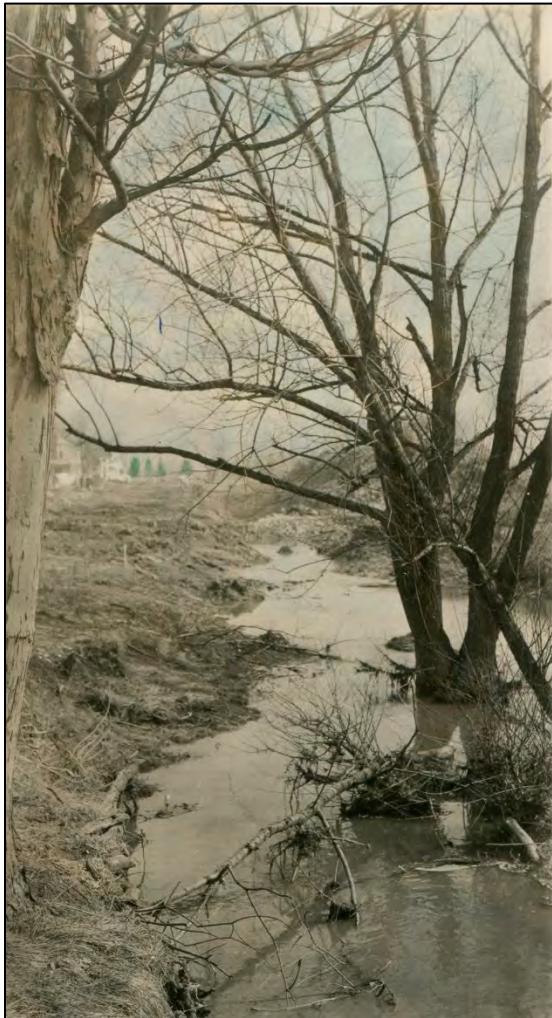


Figure 18. Red Run from the intersection of Ferncliff and Bonnieview looking east (ROHS 1927)

⁸³ HistoricBridges.org, “Greenleaf Drive Bridge,” accessed December 14, 2023, <https://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=michigan/greenleaf/>.

⁸⁴ Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee, “Vinsetta Bridges Draft Proposal,” November 2006, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/32276/HDSC-Request-to-Study-Vinsetta-Boulevard-Bridges-March-14-2022>.

⁸⁵ HistoricBridges.org, “Greenleaf Drive Bridge,” accessed December 14, 2023, <https://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=michigan/greenleaf/>.

One of the first multiple-lane superhighways in Oakland County, the Stephenson Superhighway, opened for traffic on September 27, 1924. It was named for Burnette Fechet Stephenson, a real estate magnate who paid \$1.5 million for 1,800 ac of farmland east of Woodward Avenue between Highland Park and Royal Oak in 1916. He laid out more than 12 subdivisions, or 5,000 bungalow houses. Residents took streetcars, and later drove their cars, to nearby factories. Working with political leaders, Stephenson proposed the ideal path to get people to work and create affordable housing.⁸⁶ The highway provided a shortcut from Royal Oak to Detroit, and its northern extension lessened the time required to travel from the village of Rochester to Detroit. The section of the highway between 8 and 11 Mile Roads was paved in 1925. Upon completion, the highway would provide a paved thoroughfare extending directly from the 11 Mile Road to the Detroit River.⁸⁷

As of 1927, automobiles arrived from Detroit on a single strip of paved road and entered Royal Oak on Main Street or Washington Avenue. The side streets, however, were not paved, and the loose sand was inches deep. It was common for drivers to get stuck within a few blocks of city hall, which was then in the old Storz residence on Main Street between Fourth and Fifth streets.⁸⁸

In 1928, it was reported that there were 50 mi of pavement in Royal Oak including asphalt, plain concrete, vibrolithic concrete, and reinforced concrete. The previous year, 10 mi of 8-inch reinforced concrete pavement had been constructed.⁸⁹

It was announced in October 1929 that a new system of traffic lights was being installed in Royal Oak to replace the old island traffic signal system. The new lights would be placed at diagonal corners of intersections. Both the intersections at Fourth and Main streets and Fourth Street and Washington Avenue would feature this new system.⁹⁰

In 1989, Interstate 696 (I-696) was completed on the southern border of Royal Oak (along 10 Mile Road), centrally positioning the city within southeastern Michigan. New life was brought to the city's downtown by merchants and city government.⁹¹

Table 4. Royal Oak Vehicular Transportation Resources, Location, Construction, and Status

Name	Address	Constructed	Extant
11 Mile Road	Woodward Avenue to I-75 (within Royal Oak)	-	Yes
12 Mile Road	Woodward Avenue to North Campbell Road (within Royal Oak)	-	Yes
13 Mile Road	Greenfield Road to North Campbell Road (within Royal Oak)	-	Yes
14 Mile Road	Mandalay Avenue to Crooks Road (within Royal	-	Yes

⁸⁶ John Schultz, "The History of Stephenson Highway," July 30, 2013, accessed December 14, 2023, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/the-history-of-stephenson-highway>.

⁸⁷ "Paving Plans Benefit 'Sub,'" *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1925, 73.

⁸⁸ Muriel Versagi, "Kiwanis Club once met in the Girl Scouts Room at the top of the Washington Square Building," accessed January 24, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalssociety.com/royal-oak-service-clubs>.

⁸⁹ "Paved Highways Total 50 Miles," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 69.

⁹⁰ "New Lights to Aid Royal Oak Traffic," *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1929, 78.

⁹¹ City of Royal Oak, "History," accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/501/History>.

Name	Address	Constructed	Extant
Oak)			
Cedar Hill Drive Bridge	Cedar Hill Drive over Red Run River	Unknown	Yes
Greenleaf Drive Bridge	Greenleaf Drive over Red Run River	Unknown	Yes
I-696	Interstate 696	1989	Yes
Main Street	Woodward Avenue to Chippewa Street	-	Yes
Mayfield Drive Bridge	Mayfield Drive over Red Run River	-	Yes
Northwood Boulevard	Woodward Avenue to Crooks Road	-	Yes
Stephenson Superhighway	Rochester to Detroit	1924	Yes
Vinsetta Boulevard	Woodward Avenue to North Main Street	ca. 1915	Yes
Woodsboro Drive Bridge	Woodsboro Drive over Red Run River	-	Yes
Woodward Avenue/Route 1	Detroit River north to downtown Pontiac	1819	Yes

Railroad Resources

Royal Oak was along the Detroit and Pontiac Railroad (subsequently the Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad, the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad, the Grand Trunk Western Railroad [GTW], and Canadian National [CN]).⁹² The presence of the railroad encouraged such industries as milling and logging.⁹³ Royal Oak was also served by an electric interurban line from Detroit north to Pontiac as well as a branch line north to Rochester and ultimately Imlay City in Lapeer County (Table 5).⁹⁴

Detroit and Pontiac Railroad/Detroit & Milwaukee Railroad/Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railroad/GTW/CN

The Detroit and Pontiac Railroad Company, conceived of in 1830, was the first incorporated railroad in the Northwest Territory, the sixth railroad to receive a charter from Michigan, and the second railroad in the state to actually operate trains. It represented the second attempt by a railroad company to connect the cities of Detroit and Pontiac, which are 25 miles apart. The railroad was reincorporated under a new charter in 1834 when the first incarnation of the company failed to complete the railroad along Pontiac Road within the allotted timeframe.⁹⁵ It was initially constructed from Detroit to Royal Oak. Construction of this 13-mile section was temporarily hindered by swampy terrain and numerous sink holes. Royal Oak eventually received train service by horsepower along the new railroad line in 1838. The following year, the line was continued on to Birmingham, and the first steam locomotive went into service on the line. The railroad was extended to Pontiac in 1843.⁹⁶ In 1855, the Detroit and Pontiac Railroad

⁹² Michigan Railroads, "Station: Royal Oak, MI," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/1632-royal-oak-mi>.

⁹³ "Royal Oak, MI (ROY)," accessed December 15, 2023, at <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/stations/royal-oak-mi-roy/>.

⁹⁴ Michigan Railroads, "Station: Royal Oak, MI," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/1632-royal-oak-mi>.

⁹⁵ Detroit Historical Society, "Detroit and Pontiac Railroad," accessed January 22, 2024, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/detroit-and-pontiac-railroad>.

⁹⁶ Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 6; "Royal Oak, MI (ROY)," accessed December 15, 2023, at <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/stations/royal-oak-mi-roy/>.

and the Oakland and Ottawa Railroad were consolidated into the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad.⁹⁷ A line was opened from Detroit to Grand Haven in 1858.⁹⁸ In 1860, the Great Western Railway took financial control of the Detroit & Milwaukee after it defaulted on debt payments. The Detroit and Milwaukee went into receivership in 1875. Great Western purchased the railroad outright in 1878 and refinanced the debts. The reorganized railroad company became known as the Detroit, Grand Haven & Milwaukee Railway that year.⁹⁹ The railroad came under the ownership of the Grand Trunk (GT)Railway of Canada by 1882 when Grand Trunk acquired the Great Western Railway (GTW).However, the railroads were not formally consolidated until 1928.¹⁰⁰ GTW went into receivership in 1919 due to the unprofitable Grand Trunk Pacific branch. It was nationalized and became part of the CN in 1923.¹⁰¹

Passing through Royal Oak, the railroad tracks ran parallel to Woodward Avenue at a distance of about 0.75 mi but veered to the west when they crossed First Street/11 Mile Road, meeting Woodward Avenue just south of Catalpa Drive and continuing along the eastern side of Woodward Avenue. The early 1920s movement to widen Woodward Avenue to 200 ft meant that the railroad would have to acquire a new 100-ft right-of-way from Royal Oak to Pontiac.¹⁰² In 1926, a contract was made with the railroad by the legislature during that year's special session.¹⁰³ That year, it was reported that the estimated cost of \$2 million given by Governor Alex J. Groesbeck for the new right-of-way had been increased to \$2,333,000. This figure included acquiring a new right-of-way for a distance of 9 mi, building a new railroad bed, laying new track, and constructing 12 grade separations. Whatever the cost turned out to be, the railroad was to repay the state \$200,000 per year. The railroad was not responsible for covering the cost of the two new highways that would be constructed on either side of the new right-of-way in connection with the project.¹⁰⁴ The purpose of these roads was to allow drivers to drive to a grade separation if driving on roads without a grade separation. This would eliminate additional grade crossings. The state planned to pay for the removal of the tracks by borrowing from the highway sinking fund, the legality of which was questioned.¹⁰⁵

In 1927, Grand Trunk Railroad (GT) asked for additional land for its railroad yards in Royal Oak. The petition brought to the circuit court requested that land be vacated to provide room for classification yards, an engine house, an office, and water, coaling, and car repairing plants.¹⁰⁶ That year, the original contract with the railroad was revised by the legislature at the suggestion

⁹⁷ Detroit Historical Society, “Detroit and Pontiac Railroad,” accessed January 22, 2024, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/detroit-and-pontiac-railroad>.

⁹⁸ Michigan Railroads, “Railroad: Detroit and Milwaukee railroad,” accessed January 22, 2024, <https://www.michiganrailroads.com/railroads-in-history/459-d/3413-detroit-and-milwaukee-railroad>.

⁹⁹ Silas Farmer, *The History of Detroit and Michigan* (Detroit: S. Farmer & Co., 1884), 895.

¹⁰⁰ Patrick C. Dorin, *The Grand Trunk Western Railroad* (Seattle: Superior Publishing, 1977), 11-12.

¹⁰¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, “Grand Trunk Railway,” accessed December 15, 2023, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Grand-Trunk-Railway>.

¹⁰² “Call Widening Plan Royal Oak Impetus,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1924, 84; “Woodward Widening Passes Last Obstacle,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1928, 67 and 70.

¹⁰³ “New Grand Trunk Line Soon Ready, Is Belief,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 13, 1928, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Frank G. Morris, “Grand Trunk Contract Cost to State Jumps,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1926, 1.

¹⁰⁵ Frank G. Morris, “Grand Trunk Contract Cost to State Jumps,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 3, 1926, 8.

¹⁰⁶ “Grand Trunk Asks Royal Oak Tracts,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 15, 1927, 19.

of Governor Fred W. Green. Under the provisions of the revised contract, the state was to construct the new railroad bed and in return was to receive the old railroad bed that paralleled Woodward Avenue. The railroad was also to repay the cost to the state in 15 annual installments.¹⁰⁷

The railroad tracks were removed from Woodward Avenue between Royal Oak and Pontiac in 1928.¹⁰⁸ The former path of the railroad from First Street/11 Mile Road to just south of Catalpa Drive became North Sherman Drive. Much of the new GT right-of-way passed through subdivision property. About half of the 9-mi right-of-way was acquired outside of court. Condemnation proceedings were started to obtain the remainder.¹⁰⁹ Development of the new right-of-way was delayed for several months by injunction suits based on the condemnation proceedings for obtaining the necessary land from property owners.¹¹⁰ Senator E.B. Howarth announced in September 1928 that subdivision owners east of the new right-of-way were prepared to grant the City of Royal Oak a 15-ft easement for the planting of ornamental trees and shrubbery to screen the tracks from view.¹¹¹ In December 1928, the Royal Oak city commission signed a contract with the state for 11 grade separations for the new right-of-way. The city had desired 15 but decided to take what it could get. The state desired that grading for the new right-of-way should start at once. Grading work began at Oakwood Boulevard and Webster Road.¹¹² By 1929, the new right-of-way was in the process of being excavated (Figure 19). The Nelson Contracting Company was in charge of the excavation work.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ "New Grand Trunk Line Soon Ready, Is Belief," *Detroit Free Press*, May 13, 1928, 59.

¹⁰⁸ "Woodward Widening Passes Last Obstacle," *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1928, 67 and 70.

¹⁰⁹ "New Grand Trunk Line Soon Ready, Is Belief," *Detroit Free Press*, May 13, 1928, 59.

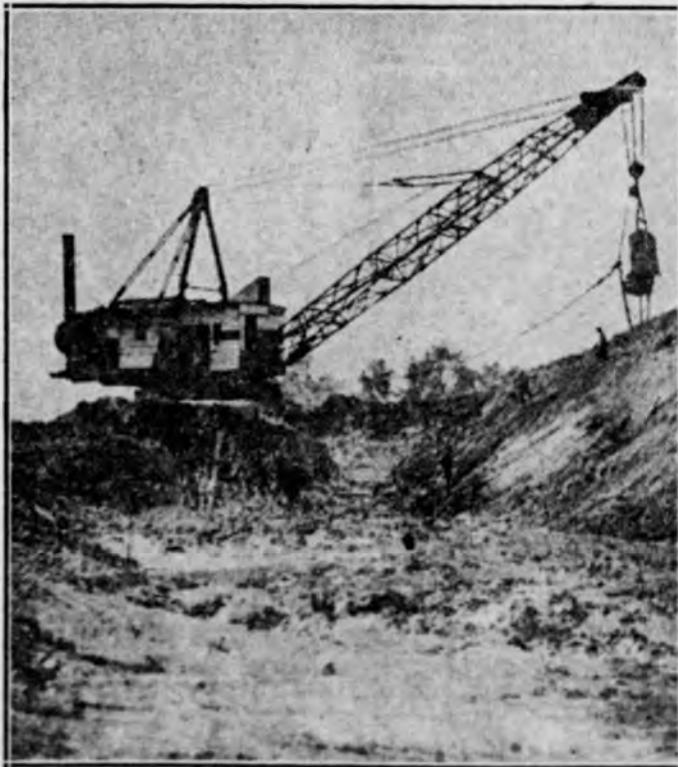
¹¹⁰ "Grand Trunk Work Speeds," *Detroit Free Press*, July 21, 1929, 65.

¹¹¹ "Grade Tangle Row Near End," *Detroit Free Press*, September 25, 1928, 5.

¹¹² "11 Crossings for Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, December 11, 1928, 9.

¹¹³ "Grand Trunk Work Speeds," *Detroit Free Press*, July 21, 1929, 65.

Grand Trunk Work Speeds



This crane has gone into action on the excavation work for the new right-of-way of the Grand Trunk railway near Royal Oak and Birmingham, which is soon to operate rapid transit service. The work has been held up several months by injunction suits based on the condemnation proceedings for obtaining the necessary land from property holders. The Nelson Contracting company is in charge of work.

Figure 19. A crane excavating the new right-of-way for the GT Railway near Royal Oak and Birmingham (Detroit Free Press 1929)

The General Manager of GT, Clarence G. Bowker, estimated that the excavation work and preparation of the new right-of-way would likely be completed by May 1930. He promised service on the new line by the fall of 1930 if track installation could begin in May. Work began near the northern end of the line between Birmingham and Pontiac where considerable excavation was necessary. Dirt from this section would be brought down to the section between Royal Oak and Birmingham to be used for raising the level of the railroad bed.¹¹⁴ “Four-tracking” the GT Railway between Detroit and Pontiac was projected to require 5,000 tons of steel rails, 100,000 railroad ties, 200,000 tie plates, and about 100,000 tons of ballast. It was proposed that 25 trains daily on a 45-minute schedule would run on the rapid transit line.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ “New G.T. Line Ready By Fall of Next Year,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 28, 1929, 65.

¹¹⁵ “Royal Oak-Pontiac Unit Being Rushed,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 29, 1929, 63.

Joseph A. Bower, financier of the Ambassador Bridge, proposed an elevated motor highway over the Grand Trunk right-of-way from downtown Detroit to Birmingham and Pontiac.¹¹⁶ Bower headed up a group of financiers who proposed to construct the highway. It would be operated as a toll road, without crossings or speed limit, and would run parallel to Woodward Avenue.¹¹⁷ The four-lane highway would be 40 ft wide and 26 mi long and would sit 15 ft above the railway tracks, which eliminated the need to acquire land for a right-of-way. It would be accessed by ramps at several points within Detroit and approximately every mile outside the city. According to General Manager C.G. Bowker, the Grand Trunk proposed to electrify its already projected rapid transit line between Detroit and Pontiac. A hard-surfaced road would be constructed above the columns carrying the overhead electric power wires. The entire project, which was to include a new eight-story terminal for Detroit as well as several stations along the rapid transit route, was to cost around \$100 million. Once the go-ahead was given, it was anticipated that the project would be completed in 1931 or 1932. There would be a slight toll charge for each motorist for use of the road.¹¹⁸ The roadway itself was projected to cost \$15 million. The proposal was placed on the ballot for the 1930 election. If a majority of voters approved, construction was scheduled to begin the following spring.¹¹⁹ Sixty percent of the vote was required for it to pass. If built, the railroad would have to be electrified all the way from Detroit to Pontiac.¹²⁰ Each municipality that it would pass through had to vote to grant its franchise to the Detroit–Pontiac Elevated Highway Company. The ordinance received the required percentage of votes to pass in Hamtramck, but a judge ruled the Hamtramck franchise null and void, as the election was held within 30 days of the ordinance being passed by the Hamtramck council.¹²¹ As of April 1931, all that was needed to allow the project to begin was legislation at Lansing and a favorable revote by Hamtramck voters.¹²² A majority of Hamtramck voters approved of the project, but the required 60 percent of votes was not attained.¹²³

When it became a stop along the GTW, a one-story, wood-frame, passenger and freight depot was built in Royal Oak (Figure 20).¹²⁴ It was on the northern side of West Fourth Street between South Washington Avenue and South Center Street.¹²⁵ The train ran on the surface through town, unloaded passengers here, and then made its way over to Woodward Avenue on its way to Pontiac.¹²⁶ This depot was demolished by 1951 for a parking lot.¹²⁷

¹¹⁶ “Toll Highway Vote Delayed,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 28, 1929, 5.

¹¹⁷ “Favorable ‘L’ Vote Forecast,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 1, 1930, 13.

¹¹⁸ Judson Bradway, “Motor Speedway Project Boon to North Area,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1929, 81.

¹¹⁹ “Highway Over Grand Trunk is Up to Voters,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 19, 1930, 53.

¹²⁰ “Woodward Ave. Group Backs ‘El’ Highway,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 1930, 4.

¹²¹ “‘L’ Franchise Held Invalid,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 21, 1931, 8.

¹²² “‘L’ Road Grade Accord Effectuated,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 1, 1931, 1.

¹²³ “‘L’ Road Loses in Hamtramck,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1931, 1.

¹²⁴ “Royal Oak, MI (ROY),” accessed December 15, 2023, at <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/stations/royal-oak-mi-roy/>.

¹²⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

¹²⁶ Muriel Versagi, “Kiwanis Club once met in the Girl Scouts Room at the top of the Washington Square Building,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/royal-oak-service-clubs>.

¹²⁷ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.



Figure 20. An early view of the first GTW Railroad depot at Royal Oak (MichiganRailroads.com undated)

The Fourth Street tower, a highway crossing signal tower, was constructed at the intersection of the Detroit United Railway and the GT Railway on the northern side of West Fourth Street across the tracks from the depot in 1916 (Figure 21).¹²⁸ By 1926, the tower had been turned into a railroad flagman's house.¹²⁹ The building, which had been used to control gates and as a train order office, went out of service in 1952.¹³⁰ It was demolished by 1957, and the building to its west was expanded.¹³¹

¹²⁸ "Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1916, 64.

¹²⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

¹³⁰ Michigan Railroads, "Location: Royal Oak, MI – Fourth Street Tower," accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/6952-royal-oak-mi-fourth-street-tower>.

¹³¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.



Figure 21. Original Grand Trunk depot and the Fourth Street tower (MichiganRailroads.com undated)

In 1950, a new depot, with walls of buff brick and stone accents and a bare, streamlined aesthetic, was built to replace the first depot (Figure 22).¹³² Based on a 1951 historic aerial view, it appears that this depot was just north of West 11 Mile Road between North Sherman Drive and the railroad tracks.¹³³ This building was used by Southeastern Michigan Transportation Authority (SEMTA) and Amtrak into the 1990s.¹³⁴ It was demolished between 1999 and 2002 and replaced by the Detroit Edison Whittier substation at 400 North Sherman Drive.¹³⁵

¹³² “Royal Oak, MI (ROY),” accessed December 15, 2023, at <https://www.greatamericanstations.com/stations/royal-oak-mi-roy/>.

¹³³ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

¹³⁴ Michigan Railroads, “Station: Royal Oak, MI,” accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/1632-royal-oak-mi>.

¹³⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1999 and 2002, accessed December 18, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.



Figure 22. View of the 1950 Grand Trunk depot (MichiganRailroads.com 1983)

A Grand Trunk freight depot was constructed at the northeastern corner of West Sixth and South Center streets between 1916 and 1921. The stuccoed wood frame building was one story in height and featured a platform at the northern end and an office at the southern end. The railroad tracks ran past its eastern elevation.¹³⁶ It was demolished between 1957 and 1967.¹³⁷ The site is now the location of the Sixth Street Parking Lot P3.

The Royal Oak Amtrak station at 202 South Sherman Drive consists of two shelters sited on the southwestern side of the railroad tracks, north of the SMART Royal Oak Transit Center and south of West 11 Mile Road. They were installed between 1999 and 2002 to replace the 1950 station.¹³⁸

In addition to the GT Railroad and its predecessors, Royal Oak was also serviced by streetcars. As of 1927, a double-ended streetcar ran from Detroit, up the Stephenson Highway, and into town on Fourth Street. It was turned around at Main Street by the motorman, who also served as

¹³⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

¹³⁷ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

¹³⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1999 and 2002, accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

conductor by pulling down the trolley wire connector in the rear and raising one on what had been the front.¹³⁹



Figure 23. Streetcar near the northwestern corner of Fourth and Main streets (ROHS 1915)

Interurban—Detroit United Railway (DUR)

In 1896, the DUR was brought from Detroit to Pontiac by John Stott, the first president of the village of Royal Oak. Three years later, the Rochester line arrived.¹⁴⁰ That year, the DUR line on West Fourth Street in Royal Oak was built across the GTW.¹⁴¹ In 1907, the Detroit United Interurban Lines included the Flint Limited; Rapid Railway System; Detroit, Monroe & Toledo Short Line Railway; and the Detroit, Jackson & Chicago Railway (Figure 23). The last cars awaited the closing of theaters.¹⁴²

The single-track Flint line ran north from Royal Oak on the Territorial Road for a short distance and then turned onto another road to Stiles, where it turned back again, returning to the

¹³⁹ Muriel Versagi, “Kiwanis Club once met in the Girl Scouts Room at the top of the Washington Square Building,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/royal-oak-service-clubs>.

¹⁴⁰ “Call Widening Plan Royal Oak Impetus,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1924, 84.

¹⁴¹ Michigan Railroads, “Location: Royal Oak, MI – Fourth Street Tower,” accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/6952-royal-oak-mi-fourth-street-tower>.

¹⁴² “Detroit United Interurban Lines,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 9, 1907, 5.

Territorial Road again at West Utica Road. In 1909, it was reported that the DUR's Flint Division proposed to install a 14- to 16-mi double-track line between Royal Oak and Rochester. The installation of the new track would shorten the distance and lessen the running time between the two towns due to the elimination of two curves. Travel on the Flint line had been significant since the Flint–Saginaw end of the system had been opened to travel, and the single-track line, with its numerous switches and curves, was found to be inadequate for the large volume of business. This upgrade would also result in the removal of the tracks from the Territorial Road, which would then be improved to create a highway through the county, connecting with Woodward Avenue to provide farmers with a turnpike road extending from Rochester to Detroit.¹⁴³

As of 1927, the DUR cars entered from Woodward Avenue onto Washington Avenue. At Fourth Street, some cars cut over to First Street (11 Mile Road) and headed west to Woodward Avenue and north to Pontiac. Other cars turned east on Fourth Street to Main Street and headed north to Troy, Rochester, and Bay City (Figure 24).¹⁴⁴



Figure 24. Intersection of 12 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue showing DUR tracks in the foreground following the removal of the DUR shelter (ROHS ca. 1910).

A building labeled "DUR Waiting Rm" appears at the northeastern corner of West Fourth Street and South Washington Avenue on a 1916 Sanborn map. A "DUR Express Office" was across the street on the southern side of West Fourth Street.¹⁴⁵ The waiting room was labeled as the

¹⁴³ "To Double-Track Flint Division," *The Detroit Times*, July 29, 1909, 1.

¹⁴⁴ Muriel Versagi, "Kiwanis Club once met in the Girl Scouts Room at the top of the Washington Square Building," accessed January 24, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/royal-oak-service-clubs>.

¹⁴⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

“Interurban Railway Station” on the 1921 Sanborn. The express office was gone by this time.¹⁴⁶ By 1926, the station had been replaced by a brick store.¹⁴⁷ The DUR line on West Fourth Street in Royal Oak (across the GTW) was abandoned in 1931.¹⁴⁸

A DUR interurban freight house was constructed at the southeastern corner of West Seventh Street and South Washington Avenue between 1916 and 1921. The one-story brick building was surrounded by a wood platform on its eastern and southern elevations.¹⁴⁹ The building was demolished between 1926 and 1950 (see Table 5).¹⁵⁰

Bridges

In 1930, a series of 12 concrete-encased, metal, stringer, railroad-over-highway bridges were built through Royal Oak by A. Guthrie and Company of St. Paul, Minnesota, for the GT Railroad. These bridges resulted from the relocation of the GT Railroad line upon the widening of Woodward Avenue. They were built to separate the new railroad grade from the local highways.¹⁵¹ These bridges cross the following roads: 11 Mile Road, 12 Mile Road, 13 Mile Road, Benjamin Avenue, Catalpa Drive, Farnum Avenue, Greenleaf Drive, Normandy Road, Northwood Boulevard, and Webster Road. The structures continue to be used by the CN Railway.¹⁵² The words “GRAND TRUNK WESTERN RAILROAD” are still visible on the sides of most of the bridges (see Table 5).

Associated Resources

Table 5. Royal Oak Railroad Resources, Locations, Construction, and Status Information

Resource Name	Address	Constructed	Extant
11 Mile Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over 11 Mile Road west of Washington Avenue	1930	Yes
12 Mile Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over 12 Mile Road east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
13 Mile Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over 13 Mile Road east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
14 Mile Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over 14 Mile Road east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
Benjamin Avenue Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Benjamin Avenue east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes

¹⁴⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

¹⁴⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

¹⁴⁸ Michigan Railroads, “Location: Royal Oak, MI – Fourth Street Tower,” accessed December 15, 2023, <https://michiganrailroads.com/stations-locations/127-oakland-county-63/6952-royal-oak-mi-fourth-street-tower>.

¹⁴⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

¹⁵⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

¹⁵¹ HistoricBridges.org, “11 Mile Road Railroad Overpass,” accessed December 14, 2023, <https://historicbridges.org/bridges/browser/?bridgebrowser=michigan/oakland11mile/>.

¹⁵² HistoricBridges.org, “Historic Bridges: Oakland County, Michigan,” accessed December 14, 2023, https://historicbridges.org/b_a_list.php?ct=&c=&ptype=county&pname=Oakland+County,+Michigan.

Resource Name	Address	Constructed	Extant
Catalpa Drive Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Catalpa Drive east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
DUR Express Office	South side of Fourth between South Washington Avenue and South Center Street	Pre-1916	No
DUR Interurban Station	Northeastern corner of West Fourth Street and South Washington Avenue	Pre-1916	No
DUR	Detroit to Pontiac with a line to Rochester	ca. 1899	No
Farnum Avenue Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Farnum Avenue east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
Fourth Street Tower	North of West Fourth Street between South Washington Avenue and railroad tracks	1916-1921	No
GT Railroad Depot #1	North of West Fourth Street between railroad tracks and South Center Street	1882-1892	No
GTW Railroad Depot #2	400 North Sherman Drive	1950	No
GT Railroad Freight Depot	150W West Sixth Street (northeastern corner of West Sixth and South Center Streets)	1916-1921	No
Greenleaf Drive Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Greenleaf Drive east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
Normandy Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Normandy Road east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
Northwood Boulevard Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Northwood Boulevard east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes
Royal Oak Amtrak Station	202 South Sherman Drive	1999-2002	Yes
SMART Royal Oak Transit Center	202 South Sherman Drive	1983-1987	Yes
Webster Road Railroad Overpass	Railroad over Webster Road east of Woodward Avenue	1930	Yes

Commerce/Trade

Transportation Services

In 1937, Royal Oak issued Fr. Charles E. Coughlin a building permit to construct a \$12,500 gasoline service station adjacent to the Shrine of the Little Flower. It would be built by contractor Sim E. Smith on Shrine property by a major oil company adjacent to another gas station, which he hoped to acquire and raze, as it obstructed the view of his church.¹⁵³ Fr. Coughlin was named as the owner of what would be called “The Shrine Super Service.” (Figure 25 and Figure 26)¹⁵⁴ Robert Antwis would be the operator of the gas station (Figure 27).¹⁵⁵ In 1942, it was reported that Fr. Coughlin had also built a “Shrine Super-Hot-Dog Stand” near the gas station.¹⁵⁶ In 1941, Robert Antwis was attacked by an employee with a hammer. Fr. Coughlin and his assistant, Fr. Cyril J. Keating, brought Antwis to the hospital, and Fr. Coughlin administered the last rites of the Church prior to the emergency operation (Table 6).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ “Fr. Coughlin Obtains Permit for Gas Station,” *The Morning Post*, May 21, 1937, 2; “Fr. Coughlin Enters Gas Station Business,” *Lansing State Journal*, May 21, 1937, 3.

¹⁵⁴ “Fr. Coughlin Obtains Permit for Gas Station,” *The Morning Post*, May 21, 1937, 2.

¹⁵⁵ “Fr. Coughlin Enters Gas Station Business,” *Lansing State Journal*, May 21, 1937, 3.

¹⁵⁶ “Coughlin is in the news,” *The Daily Telegraph*, April 5, 1942, 9.

¹⁵⁷ “Bludgeons Boss With Hammer,” *Detroit Evening Times*, January 14, 1941, 4.



Figure 25. Shrine Super Service (ROHS 1937)



Figure 26. Shrine Super Service (Siegel 1939)

Fallon's Service Station was at 901 West First Street (now 901 West 11 Mile Road).¹⁵⁸ It was constructed prior to 1950.¹⁵⁹ The building, which has been expanded and modified, is currently used by Motor City Auto Spa.

¹⁵⁸ Firestone Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 14, 1942, 14.

¹⁵⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).



Figure 27. Fallon's Gas Station (ROHS 1937)

The building now occupied by Jax Kar Wash and Auto Detailing, at 27054 Woodward Avenue, was built between 1951 and 1957. The eastern end was added between 1957 and 1967.¹⁶⁰ A 1960 company ad did not list a Royal Oak location, so it appears that this was already a car wash when Jax acquired it.¹⁶¹ The company was established by Jack Milen, who left the retail jewelry business in 1952 to operate a car wash in Detroit, and by 1968, he had eight locations.¹⁶² In 1991, it was announced that the company, which had 11 car washes in the Detroit area, was adding a convenience store at this location.¹⁶³

McPeek's Service, which used Standard Oil products, was at Woodward Avenue and 12 Mile Road (Figure 28).¹⁶⁴ No longer extant, it may have stood where a BP gas station now stands at 28992 Woodward Avenue.

¹⁶⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, 1957, and 1967, accessed January 10, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

¹⁶¹ Jax Kar Wash Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 1960, 16.

¹⁶² "Car-Wash Tycoon Keeps a Weather Eye," *Detroit American*, May 15, 1968, 11.

¹⁶³ "In Michigan," *Detroit Free Press*, August 10, 1991, 8.

¹⁶⁴ McPeek's Service Advertisement, *Shrine Herald*, December 26, 1948, 4, accessed January 10, 2024, https://libraries.udmercy.edu/digital_collections/shrine_herald_shrher/1948_v001_shrher/1948-12-26_v001_n004_shrher.pdf.



Figure 28. McPeek's Service (ROHS undated)

Built between 1957 and 1964, Northwood Car Wash was at 3322 North Woodward Avenue (Figure 29) (now 30900 Woodward Avenue).¹⁶⁵ By May 2002, Jax Kar Wash had acquired the property and gutted and remodeled the building, opening it as Jax Express. Jax eventually closed the establishment.¹⁶⁶ It was demolished between 2005 and 2009.¹⁶⁷ A Consumer Value Store (CVS) Pharmacy is now on the site.

¹⁶⁵ Water Winter Wonderland, "Northwood Car Wash," accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/automotivedetail.aspx?id=3891&type=21>; NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1964, accessed December 29, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.netronline.com).

¹⁶⁶ Water Winter Wonderland, "Northwood Car Wash," accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/automotivedetail.aspx?id=3891&type=21>.

¹⁶⁷ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2005 and 2009, accessed December 29, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.netronline.com).



Figure 29. The former Northwood Car Wash (Water Winter Wonderland 2002)

Associated Resources

Table 6. Royal Oak Auto Service Establishments, Location, Date, and Status

Store Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Fallon's Service	901 West First Street (now 901 West 11 Mile Road)	Pre-1950	Yes
Jax Kar Wash and Auto Detailing	27054 Woodward Avenue	1951–1957; eastern end 1957–1967	Yes
McPeek's Service	Woodward Avenue and 12 Mile Road (most likely 28992 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1951	No
Northwood Car Wash	3322 North Woodward Avenue (now 30900 Woodward Avenue)	1957–1964	No

Retail

A thriving downtown community requires shops and stores for the community to purchase needed goods. Of 62 recorded retail businesses, several of which had multiple locations, 56 buildings are extant (Table 7).

A-D Camera Shop was at 606 South Washington Avenue in 1945 (Figure 30). By 1953, the shop had relocated at 507 South Washington Avenue (below the Washington Hotel).¹⁶⁸



Figure 30. A-D Camera Shop is visible at left at the southwestern corner of Washington Avenue and Sixth Street (ROHS 1945)

Atlantic & Pacific Tea Company (A&P) Groceries was in the vicinity of 432 South Washington Avenue at the southern end of Kresge's (Figure 31). The one-story, tile-faced building was constructed between 1926 and 1950 and replaced a two-story wood-frame building.¹⁶⁹ The A&P Groceries building was demolished between 1983 and 1987.¹⁷⁰ The site was vacant until around 2009, when a high-rise building was constructed on the site.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁸ Argus Camera Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, April 24, 1953, 15.

¹⁶⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

¹⁷⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

¹⁷¹ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2009, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.



Figure 31. A&P Groceries and S.S. Kresge Co. “green front” store (ROHS. ca. 1930)

B&C Market was at 417 South Main Street (Figure 32).¹⁷² The building was constructed between 1926 and 1950.¹⁷³ It is now occupied by the Jolly Pumpkin Restaurant & Taphouse and has since been modified.



Figure 32. B&C Market (ROHS undated)

¹⁷² B&C Greater Markets Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 10, 1949, 14.

¹⁷³ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

Brent Furniture, which had other locations in the Detroit metropolitan area, was at 117 West Fourth Street, the former location of Regal Furniture, from at least 1972 until at least 1975.¹⁷⁴ The Royal Oak and Highland Park stores were owned by Avrum Feinstein, who passed away in 1997.¹⁷⁵ Advertisements ceased to be placed in local newspapers after 1993.

Charles F. Quick was elected the first treasurer of the village of Royal Oak in 1891.¹⁷⁶ He owned a general store where he sold such items as dry goods and hardware. Quick opened a store at the corner of Main and First streets, which was nothing more than the Marcellus blacksmith shop remodeled into a store building. He conducted this store for a number of years, later adding a meat department. Quick later moved to a store at the corner of Main and Third streets, operating a general store and meat shop there as well.¹⁷⁷ Neither of these locations remains. The exact location of the store in Figure 33 is unknown. Quick's obituary in 1934 stated that he had been born in Royal Oak 72 years prior (in 1862) and was the son of Joseph Quick, a pioneer of Oakland County. He apparently had worked for George C. Wetherbee & Co. for many years, retiring a few years earlier.¹⁷⁸



Figure 33. C.F. Quick store (ROHS undated)

¹⁷⁴ Brent Furniture Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 9, 1972, 36; Norwalk Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, November 22, 1975, 7.

¹⁷⁵ "Avrum Feinstein: Hospital volunteer, ran furniture stores," *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1997, 13.

¹⁷⁶ Thaddeus De Witt Seeley, *History of Oakland County, Michigan*, 1912, 432.

¹⁷⁷ "History of Royal Oak," *Royal Oak Tribune*, August 27, 1908, accessed January 10, 2024, <http://www.ropltribune.org/Archive/1908%20-%20Royal%20Oak%20Tribune/August/August,%202027%201908.pdf>;

"History of Royal Oak," *Royal Oak Tribune*, August 20, 1908, accessed January 10, 2024,

¹⁷⁸ Charles F. Quick Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, July 18, 1934, 7.

Caskey Drugs, a New York & London Drug Co. drugstore (Figure 34), was at 1000 North Main Street. This building was likely built between 1921 and 1926. In 1926 and 1950, this building was labeled as a drug store.¹⁷⁹ The space is now occupied by the Royal Pup Parlor.



Figure 34. Caskey Drugs (ROHS 1943)

Cunningham's Drugs was established by Andrew Cunningham in 1889. By the time Economical Drugs' owner, Nate Shapero, acquired the company in 1931, there were 11 Cunningham drugstores in downtown Detroit.¹⁸⁰ The Cunningham drugstore in Figure 35 was at what was formerly 345 South Main Street (now #323). It was constructed between 1926 and 1950 and replaced a two-story store.¹⁸¹ The building is currently occupied by Comerica Bank. The Cunningham's drugstore in Figure 36 was in the Washington Square Building (built 1927) at the northwestern corner of West Fourth Street and South Washington Avenue (likely 300 West Fourth Street).¹⁸² The space is now occupied by Tome Software.

¹⁷⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

¹⁸⁰ *DBusiness Magazine*, “Old-Line Retailers,” published August 24, 2009, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.dbusiness.com/people/old-line-retailers/>.

¹⁸¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

¹⁸² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).



Figure 35. Cunningham Drugs at 345 South Main Street (ROHS undated)



Figure 36. Cunningham Drug Store at 300 West Fourth Street (ROHS undated)

Drapery Fair Discount Stores was a small local chain that sold fabrics, drapes, and bedding. As of 1958, they had four locations: Dearborn, Royal Oak, Livonia, and Plymouth.¹⁸³ The Royal Oak store was at 4304 North Woodward Avenue (Figure 37), south of 14 Mile Road opposite Richard's (later Maverick's) Drive-In.¹⁸⁴ The current address is likely 32410 Woodward Avenue, which was built between 1955 and 1964.¹⁸⁵



Figure 37. Drapery Fair (ROHS undated)

Dunn's Camera was established in the early 1950s (Figure 38).¹⁸⁶ In 1952, Dunn's Camera & Hobby Supply was at 610 South Washington Avenue, the structure being built between 1916 and 1921.¹⁸⁷ In 1921, it served as a clothing and dry goods store, and in 1926 and 1950 it is simply labeled as a store.¹⁸⁸ The space is currently occupied by Pronto! Diner. By 1957, the store had relocated to 116 West Fourth Street, which appears to have been redeveloped between 1951 and

¹⁸³ Drapery Fair Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1958, 12.

¹⁸⁴ Drapery Fair Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 23, 1954, 13.

¹⁸⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1955 and 1964, accessed February 1, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

¹⁸⁶ Water Winter Wonderland, "Dunn's Camera," accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=3862&type=16>.

¹⁸⁷ Praktica Camera Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 10, 1952, 11; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

¹⁸⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921, 1926, and 1931/1950).

1957.¹⁸⁹ This space, the exterior of which has since been modified, is now occupied by a bar and grill. The Royal Oak location was one of six locations in the Detroit Metro area.¹⁹⁰ The last store closed in 1999.¹⁹¹

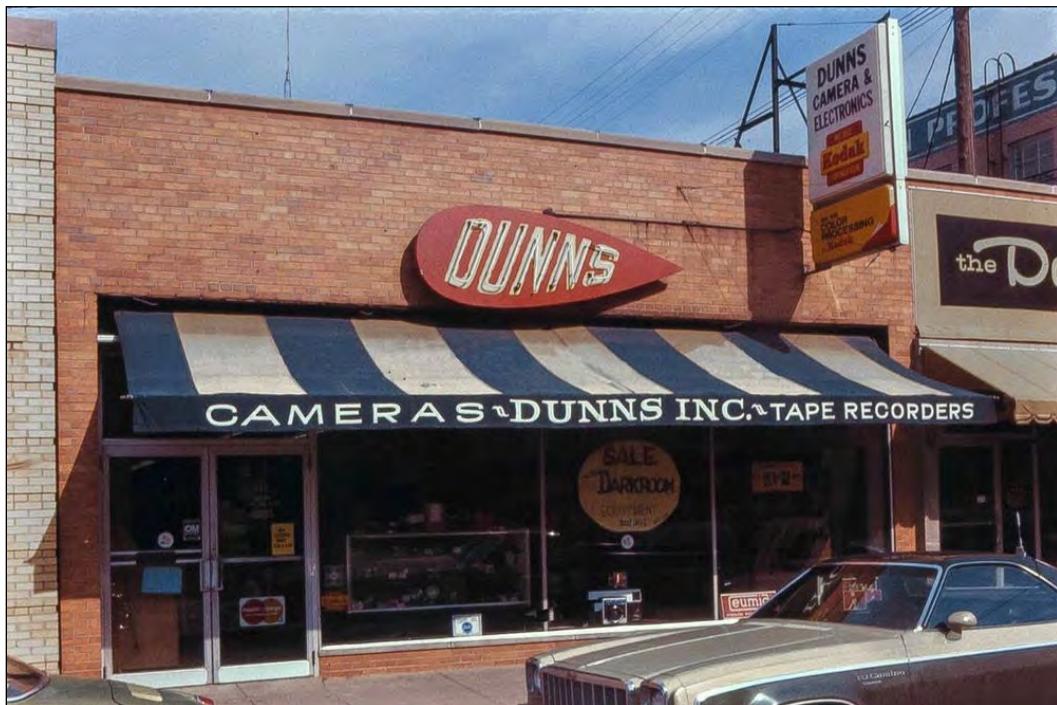


Figure 38. Dunn's Camera and Electronics (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The Teen Haven Shop occupied 610 South Washington Avenue sometime after Dunn's moved to a different location (Figure 39).¹⁹² Only one local newspaper reference, dated 1963, was discovered for this particular shop.¹⁹³ The space now forms part of Pronto! Diner.

¹⁸⁹ Keystone Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 1957, 98; NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed January 9, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

¹⁹⁰ Water Winter Wonderland, "Dunn's Camera," accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=3862&type=16>.

¹⁹¹ "Restaurant, Store Equipment - Store Closing," *Detroit Free Press*, April 25, 1999, 155.

¹⁹² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

¹⁹³ "Miscellaneous for Sale," *Detroit Free Press*, October 12, 1963, 18.



Figure 39. Teen Haven Shop (ROHS undated)

A Grand Leader Department Store occupied 119 South Main Street (likely the southern section of the building).¹⁹⁴ The building was constructed between 1926 and 1950 as a furniture store (northern section, 119–121 South Main Street) and a store (southern section, 123–129 South Main Street).¹⁹⁵ The Grand Leader was the go-to store in Royal Oak for clothing. At the time the photo in **Error! Reference source not found.** was taken, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) occupied the second floor of the building, the department store having been on the first floor only.¹⁹⁶ The building is currently occupied by a toy store but is mostly vacant. The Grand Leader Department Store was at 308 South Main Street from at least 1965 to 1984.¹⁹⁷ Presumably the store closed that year, as later that year, a newspaper advertisement announced the grand opening of the Grand Leader Flea Market at 306–308 South Main Street.¹⁹⁸ This building was built prior to 1916 as a one-story building. That year, it housed a pool and bowling establishment.¹⁹⁹ In 1921, it was occupied by a barber and billiards.²⁰⁰ By 1926, it had been

¹⁹⁴ Grand Leader Department Store Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 70.

¹⁹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

¹⁹⁶ John Maurice, “Royal Oak Then & Now: The Grand Leader Department Store,” Royal Oak Historical Society Bulletin, Fall 2017, p. 4, accessed January 3, 2024, https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/53aab63e-1fee-4f8b-824c-96b173e56662/downloads/1ci5sb97p_622602.pdf?ver=1568813168095.

¹⁹⁷ Healthknit Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 18, 1965, 6; Grand Leader Department Store Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, May 24, 1984, 92.

¹⁹⁸ “Antique & Collectibles,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 9, 1984, 93.

¹⁹⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

raised to two stories. A store was on the lower floor, and there was a tin shop on the second floor.²⁰¹ In 1950, the building was only occupied by a store.²⁰² A Mexican restaurant is currently on the first floor, and the second floor is vacant.



Figure 40. Grand Leader Department Store at 119 South Main Street (ROHS 1940)

The Economy Furniture Company was at 119 South Main Street since at least 1948.²⁰³ The building was constructed between 1926 and 1950 as a furniture store (northern section, 119–121) and store (southern section, 123–129).²⁰⁴ By 1969, the furniture store's address was advertised as 125 South Main Street.²⁰⁵ This may indicate that it took over the former location of the Grand Leader Department Store in the southern section. The building is currently occupied by a toy store but is mostly vacant.

The Edward Furniture Company was at 916 North Main Street (Figure 41), which was built between 1921 and 1926.²⁰⁶ The company was mentioned in local newspapers between at least 1927 (1929 for the Royal Oak location) and 1982.²⁰⁷ The building, which has been modified, is currently home to Beaumont Internal Medicine & Pediatrics of Royal Oak, M3 Investment Services, and second-floor apartments.

²⁰⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

²⁰¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

²⁰² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

²⁰³ Philco Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 6, 1948, 18.

²⁰⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

²⁰⁵ Serta Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 10, 1969, 121.

²⁰⁶ Edward Furniture Company Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 14, 1942, 87; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²⁰⁷ Edward Furniture Co. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, April 28, 1929, 13.



Figure 41. Edward Furniture Company (ROHS undated)

Field's Ladies Apparel was a component of Marshall Field & Company, which officially began in 1881 when Marshall Field bought out Levi Zeigler Leiter's share of Field, Leiter and Company.²⁰⁸ The Royal Oak store was at 401 South Main Street (Figure 42), which was constructed prior to 1916, at which time it was occupied by a bank.²⁰⁹ The space had become a meat shop by 1921 and a drugstore by 1926.²¹⁰ It was simply labeled as a store in 1950.²¹¹ The Field's store was known as Field's Fashions since at least 1961.²¹² In 1994, the space continued to be occupied by Field's Fashions.²¹³ By 1996, the space had been taken over by Caribou

²⁰⁸ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Marshall Field," accessed January 9, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Marshall-Fields>.

²⁰⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

²¹⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²¹¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

²¹² Security Bank Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 23, 1961, 27.

²¹³ "Bargains – Women," *Detroit Free Press*, February 7, 1994, 27.

Coffee.²¹⁴ This space is now occupied by Atomic Coffee. The exterior of the building has been slightly modified.



Figure 42. Field's Ladies Apparel (ROHS undated)

Fintex Clothes was at 417 South Washington Avenue (Figure 43), which was built between 1916 and 1921.²¹⁵ In 1921 and 1926, this space was occupied by a drug store.²¹⁶ By 1950, a single store had taken over both 417 and 419 South Washington Avenue, combining the two spaces.²¹⁷ In 1941, Fintex Clothes opened an outlet in this combined space. Numerous improvements were made to the interior and exterior of the building including a wider and deeper shopping space. The opening of a store at this location was part of the company's "Plan of Progress," which involved expanding and modernizing many of its stores.²¹⁸ The space is currently vacant.

²¹⁴ "on the horizon," *Detroit Free Press*, July 26, 1996, 23.

²¹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

²¹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²¹⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

²¹⁸ "Fintex Clothes Opens Two New Outlets Here," *Detroit Evening Times*, March 23, 1941, 48.

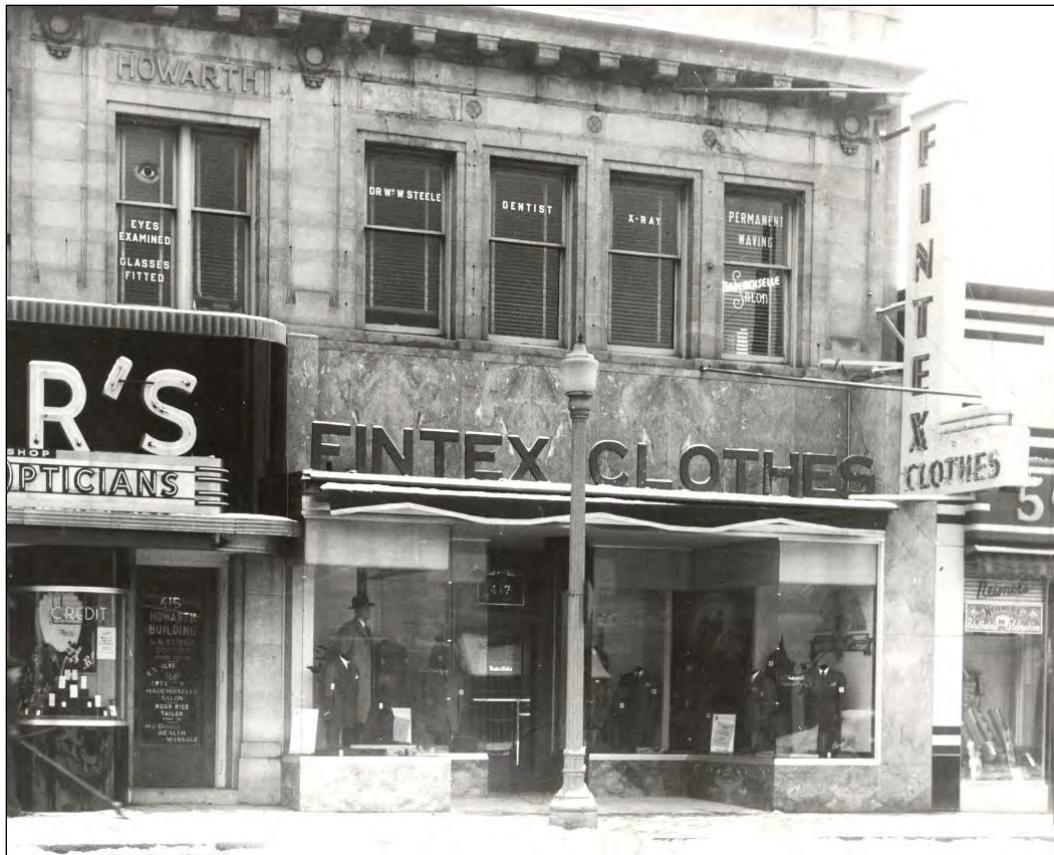


Figure 43. Fintex Clothes (ROHS undated)

Frentz & Sons Hardware is at 1010 North Main Street.²¹⁹ The entire building complex appears to have been built between 1921 and 1926, although a historic marker on the back of the building states 1932.²²⁰ The storefront in Figure 44 (at 1002 North Main Street) remains standing but appears to be currently vacant. The northern end of the complex has been aesthetically modified but continues to house the hardware store.

²¹⁹ Flatlux Paint Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 3, 1948, 12.

²²⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).



Figure 44. Frentz & Sons Hardware (ROHS undated)

Gabel's Dairy established a branch office in Royal Oak around 1925 (Figure 45). Around 1929, Gabel's sold out to Borden, Inc.²²¹ An agreement was made in 1932 when the Gabel Creamery was sold that W.A. Gabel and Philip Gabel would stay out of the dairy business for five years. Borden brought suit against the Gabels in 1935 in an attempt to prevent them from using the Gabel name in conjunction with the sale of milk products.²²² As of 1939, the office was at 515 South Washington Avenue (below the Madrid Hotel), which was built in 1918. It is now home to Mathnasium.

²²¹ Virgil M. Benedict, "A dairyman's diary of Detroit," *Detroit Free Press*, January 19, 1987, 5.

²²² "Dairy Company Suit is Heard," *Detroit Free Press*, February 27, 1935, 2.

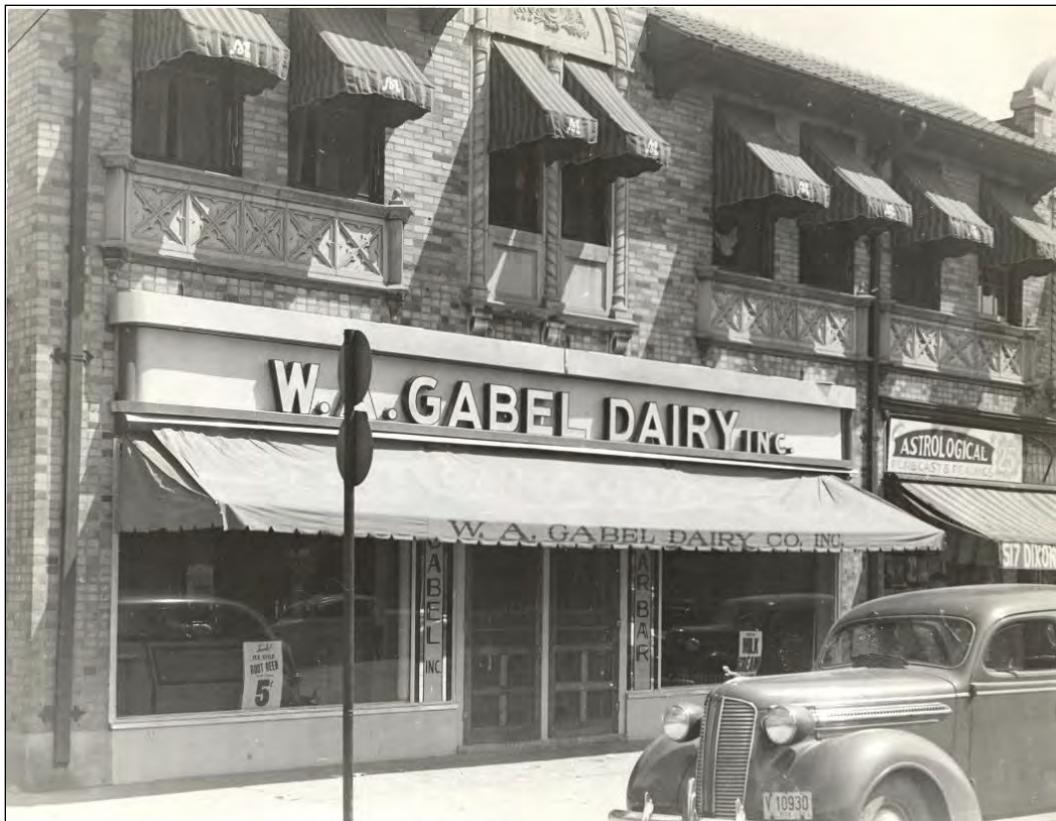


Figure 45. Gabel's Dairy, Royal Oak branch office (ROHS 1939)

The Gordon E. Stewart Co. Pontiac dealership was at 1305 South Main Street (Figure 46), which was advertised as new in 1941.²²³ The name appears in local newspapers until at least 1951.²²⁴ The building was expanded between 1957 and 1973.²²⁵ Between 1988 and 1999, the building was demolished and replaced by the Main Street Centre residential development.²²⁶

²²³ "For Rent," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1941, 56; Willys Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, April 7, 1950, 17.

²²⁴ Willys Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1951, 4.

²²⁵ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957, 1967, and 1973, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](#).

²²⁶ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1988 and 1999, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](#).



Figure 46. Gordon E. Stewart Co. Pontiac dealership (ROHS undated)

Grayson's was established in California in 1940 and specialized in women's apparel.²³⁶ The 212-store retail chain went bankrupt in 1962.²³⁷ In 1964, Grayson-Robinson Stores, Inc. announced that the company would close more than half (80 out of 148) of its women's and children's apparel stores.²³⁸ The location of the Royal Oak store (Figure 47) is unknown.

²³⁶ Sacramento Room Digital Collections, "Grayson's department store," accessed January 4, 2024, <https://sacroom.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p15248coll1/id/1156>.

²³⁷ Sylvia Porter, "Apparel Field Trends Toward a 'General Motors,'" *Detroit Free Press*, September 6, 1962, 24.

²³⁸ "Apparel Chain to Close 80 Units; Only 68 Stores Will Be Kept by Grayson-Robinson," *The New York Times*, July 18, 1964, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/1964/07/18/archives/apparel-chain-to-close-80-units-only-68-stores-will-be-kept-by.html?auth=login-google1tap&login=google1tap>.



Figure 47. Grayson's Department Store (ROHS undated)

Grinnell Brothers was established in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1879. Initially selling sewing machines, musical instruments were eventually added to the inventory. Ira Grinnell, along with brothers Clayton and Herbert, opened a store in Ypsilanti prior to opening a store on Woodward Avenue in Detroit in 1881.²³⁹ Grinnell's Pianos was established in Holly, Michigan, in 1913. It was once known as the “largest piano factory on the earth.”²⁴⁰ By the mid-1950s, it had become the world’s largest piano distributor.²⁴¹ Largely because of its quality pianos and consistent community involvement hosting annual statewide music festivals, the company lasted for almost a century.²⁴² In 1955, the Grinnell family sold the company to WKC Inc., which rapidly grew the company and opened new locations in the suburbs and acquired other piano manufacturers. By 1963, Grinnell’s had 35 stores in Michigan and Ohio and five subsidiaries in Kentucky and New

²³⁹ Dan Austin, “Grinnell Brothers Music House,” accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.historicdetroit.org/buildings/grinnell-brothers-music-house#:~:text=Grinnell%20Brothers%20was%20a%20giant,1872%20before%20adding%20musical%20instruments>

²⁴⁰ *DBusiness Magazine*, “Old-Line Retailers,” published August 24, 2009, accessed January 4, 2024,

<https://www.dbusiness.com/people/old-line-retailers/>.

²⁴¹ Dan Austin, “Grinnell Brothers Music House,” accessed January 4, 2024,

<https://www.historicdetroit.org/buildings/grinnell-brothers-music-house#:~:text=Grinnell%20Brothers%20was%20a%20giant,1872%20before%20adding%20musical%20instruments>

²⁴² *DBusiness Magazine*, “Old-Line Retailers,” published August 24, 2009, accessed January 4, 2024,

<https://www.dbusiness.com/people/old-line-retailers/>.

York. Grinnell's was the country's largest music merchandiser by the mid-to-late 1960s, with more than 40 stores in the United States and Ontario. The company was taken public as American Music Stores Inc. in 1966. However, the Detroit Rebellion of 1967, caused a flight to the suburbs, taking away much of their business.^{243,244} In 1968, American Music Stores filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. By 1977, many of its stores had closed. The flagship location on Woodward Avenue closed in 1981.²⁴⁵

The Grinnell Brothers Royal Oak store was at 501 South Washington Avenue (Figure 48), which was built as a store between 1926 and 1950.²⁴⁶ The building was demolished between 1957 and 1967.²⁴⁷ The building that replaced it is currently vacant.

²⁴³ The Detroit Rebellion of 1967 began following a police raid on an unlicensed bar. The conflict between white community servants and the Black community was the culmination of decades of institutional racism and entrenched segregation. Over the course of five days, the Detroit police and fire departments, the Michigan State Police, the Michigan National Guard, and the US Army were involved in quelling what became the largest civil disturbance of twentieth century America. The crisis resulted in forty-three deaths, hundreds of injuries, almost seventeen hundred fires, and over seven thousand arrests..

²⁴⁴ Detroit Historical Society, "Encyclopedia of Detroit: Uprising of 1967," accessed May 16, 2024, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/uprising-1967>.

²⁴⁵ Dan Austin, "Grinnell Brothers Music House," accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.historicdetroit.org/buildings/grinnell-brothers-music-house#:~:text=Grinnell%20Brothers%20was%20a%20giant,1872%20before%20adding%20musical%20instruments>

²⁴⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

²⁴⁷ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 9, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).



Figure 48. Grinnell Brothers music store (ROHS undated)

The Hilzinger Block Building at 106–110 South Main Street was constructed in 1925. The Hilzinger brothers initially only used the middle storefront (#108) for their hardware store. By 1963, the store occupied all three storefronts. From 1955 to 1957, architect Minoru Yamasaki located his office in Royal Oak. He initially moved his Detroit office to West Fifth Street in Royal Oak, but he eventually moved his engineering department to the second floor of the Hilzinger Block Building as his architectural ideology and popularity rapidly expanded.²⁴⁸ The first floor of the building is currently occupied by Leo's Coney Island and an Indian restaurant.

In 1928, the Hollywood Shoppe was at 204 South Main Street (Figure 49), which was constructed between 1921 and 1926 and demolished between 1957 and 1967.²⁴⁹ The shop sold exclusive women's wear, including millinery, coats, and dresses, and specialized in hosiery.²⁵⁰ By 1940, it had relocated to 428 South Washington Avenue, which was constructed between 1921 and 1926.²⁵¹ The shop was owned by Sidney Elkes, who passed away in 1960.²⁵² It was last

²⁴⁸ Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee and Lloyd Baldwin, *Hilzinger Block Building: Royal Oak Historic District Study Committee Final Report*, December 16, 2003, 6-7.

²⁴⁹ Hollywood Shoppe Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 70; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926); NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 4, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

²⁵⁰ Hollywood Shoppe Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 70.

²⁵¹ "For Her," *Detroit Free Press*, December 1, 1940, 21; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

mentioned in local newspapers in 1966.²⁵³ The building at 428 South Washington Avenue was demolished between 1983 and 1987.²⁵⁴ The site remained vacant until around 2009, when a high-rise building was constructed on the site.²⁵⁵



Figure 49. The Hollywood Shoppe at 428 South Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)

The Howie Glass Co. was established in 1912.²⁵⁶ It was formerly at 307 South Center Street (Figure 50), which was built between 1921 and 1926.²⁵⁷ This building is now occupied by a bar. Howie Glass is now at 940 North Campbell Road, which appears to have been under construction in 1957.²⁵⁸

²⁵² Sidney Elkes Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, April 13, 1960, 25.

²⁵³ Security Bank & Trust Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1966, 44.

²⁵⁴ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

²⁵⁵ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2009, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

²⁵⁶ Howie Glass, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.howieglass.com/>.

²⁵⁷ Mirror Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1952, 130; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²⁵⁸ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957, accessed January 4, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.



Figure 50. Howie Glass at 307 South Center Street (ROHS undated)

The Hy-Wilde Camera Shop was established in 1944 by Henry Wildeman.²⁵⁹ It was initially at 1029 South Washington Avenue (Figure 51), which had formerly been occupied by Klemm's drugstore.²⁶⁰ The building was constructed between 1921 and 1926.²⁶¹ The building, which has since been aesthetically modified, is now occupied by a construction law firm. In 1954, a new-location sale was advertised in the newspaper. The shop had moved to 1129–1133 South Washington Avenue that year.²⁶² The building at 1127–1139 South Washington Avenue was constructed as a store building in 1928 by the N.A. Starr company for Charles Staff of Pleasant Ridge and R.F.C. Brown of Huntington Woods.²⁶³ The building is currently occupied by a cosmetology school. In 1959, the shop moved to 211 South Main Street (in the Jacob Erb Building), which is now occupied by a women's clothing store.²⁶⁴ The shop appears to have closed or ceased advertising in local newspapers after 1959.

²⁵⁹ Hy Wilde Camera Shop Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 30, 1955, 15; Mary B. Wildeman Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, January 18, 1995, 12.

²⁶⁰ Hy-Wilde Camera Shop Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1948, 17.

²⁶¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²⁶² Hy-Wilde Camera Shop Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 14, 1954, 32.

²⁶³ "New Store Building," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 74.

²⁶⁴ Miscellaneous for Sale, *Detroit Free Press*, August 16, 1959, 20.



Figure 51. Hy-Wilde Camera Shop at 1029 South Washington Avenue, (ROHS undated)

In 1907, J.F. Codling, an optometrist by trade, opened a jewelry and watch repair shop at 345 South Main Street (Figure 52). Codling built a new building at 218–222 South Main Street and relocated his business there in 1926. The basement contained the Royal Oak recreation rooms, which featured bowling alleys and billiard tables. The Parmenter Flower Shop occupied space in the building fronting on Third Street. The Codling store and offices occupied the rest of the building. The store consisted of a jewelry store, optical parlors, men's and boy's store, ladies' specialty shop, and a shoe store for men and boys. The store was the official outfitter of the Royal Oak Boy Scouts. The jewelry store fronted on Main Street with a separate entrance. A watch and jewelry repair shop was connected to the jewelry store.²⁶⁵ The building is now occupied by Bamboo, which provides coworking space.

²⁶⁵ "Constant Progress Marks Firms Career," *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 72.



Figure 52. J.F. Codling men's wear and jewelry store at 345 South Main Street (ROHS ca. 1915).

Jacob Erb General Store was on the southeastern corner of Main at Second streets (201 South Main Street) (see Figure 10). The post office was in his store while he served as postmaster (1880–1885, 1889–1893, and 1897–1914).²⁶⁶

The Jacob Erb Building is at 207–211 South Main Street. It was reported in a 1922 newspaper article that Mrs. Jacob Erb was building a business block called the Royal Oak Economy Market on Main Street just south of Second Street. It was being constructed on the lot adjoining, on which the Royal Oak post office (Jacob Erb's general store) was for 30 years. Jacob Erb had been postmaster from 1883 to 1912 except during the two Cleveland administrations.²⁶⁷ The building is now occupied by a restaurant, a nail salon, and a women's clothing store.

Kent Jewelers was at 308 West Fourth Street in the Washington Square Building (Figure 53), which was built in 1927.²⁶⁸ Harry Deal opened the store at this location around 1941.²⁶⁹ It is now home to a women's clothing store.

²⁶⁶ John A. Kuzemka, "The Royal Oak Post Office: A History," p. 1, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

²⁶⁷ "Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, July 16, 1922, 15.

²⁶⁸ Schick Lighter Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1958, 95; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

²⁶⁹ Robin Givhan, "Little Things opens in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, November 17, 1991, 72.

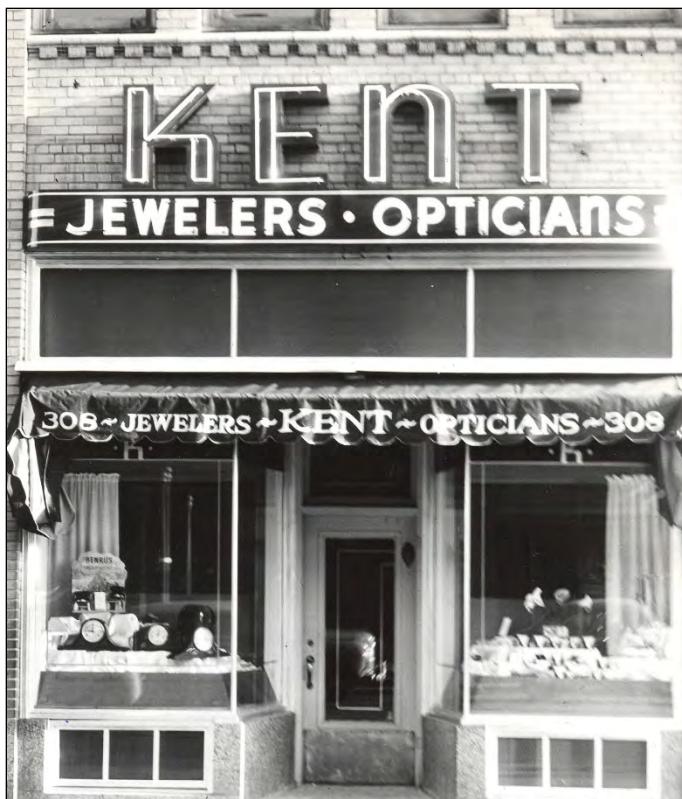


Figure 53. Kent Jewelers (ROHS undated)

The King David Bake Shop was owned by J.B. Sparks. It was at 317 East 11 Mile Road adjacent to where he resided (321 East 11 Mile Road) (Figure 54).²⁷⁰ Number 317 was built between 1926 and 1950, and the adjacent house was built prior to 1921.²⁷¹ Sparks had a wide variety of interests. In 1928, he ran the oldest music store in Royal Oak at 509 South Washington Avenue.²⁷² As of 1932, Sparks was general manager of radio station WEXL of Royal Oak.²⁷³ In 1933, he co-founded the Sparks Funeral Home with Virgo E. Kinsey.²⁷⁴ By 1938, Sparks was no longer the manager of WEXL.²⁷⁵ He also served as a city commissioner in Royal Oak until he resigned in 1942 when his fellow commissioners granted a poolroom license but banned an evangelist's sound truck from the street.²⁷⁶ By 1948, he was also operating the Sparks Conservatory of Music, which then occupied the second floor of 507 South Washington Avenue.²⁷⁷ In 1950, his funeral home was renamed the Sparks-DeMund Funeral Home, and it

²⁷⁰ "Wedding Echoes," *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1955, 7.

²⁷¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921, 1926, and 1931/1950).

²⁷² J.B. Sparks Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 68.

²⁷³ "Family Reunion to Honor Couple Married 60 Years," *Detroit Free Press*, November 30, 1932, 17.

²⁷⁴ Darryl Fears, "Virgo E. Kinsey, 86, founded funeral home," *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1989, 6.

²⁷⁵ James Edward Thompson Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1938, 18.

²⁷⁶ "Sound Truck Banned, Royal Oak Aide Quits," *Detroit Evening Times*, May 19, 1942, 9.

²⁷⁷ "Suitor Slays Teacher Who Rejected Him," *Detroit Free Press*, April 2, 1948, 1.

was relocated to the former bake shop.²⁷⁸ In 1957, Sparks was operating the J.B. Sparks Music Co. out of 214 West Sixth Street.²⁷⁹ The former bake shop was used as a funeral home until at least 1960.²⁸⁰ Both the house and bake shop remain standing. An addition was constructed at the rear of the bake shop between 1967 and 1973, and the front section of the building has been modified.²⁸¹



Figure 54. King David Bake Shop at 317 East 11 Mile Road (ROHS undated)

Edward C. Kinsel opened Detroit's first 24-hour drugstore in 1894, offering customers everything from cold cuts to cold remedies.²⁸² In Royal Oak, Kinsel's Drugs was at 401 South Washington Avenue (Figure 55 and Figure 56), which was built in 1942. In the late 1950s, Cunningham Drugs merged with Kinsel Drug Co.²⁸³ The space previously occupied by the drug store is currently home to a hair salon. The exterior of the building has been modified, eliminating the rounded corner.

²⁷⁸ Ingbert Hanson Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, August 30, 1950, 25.

²⁷⁹ DeMire's Marching Aid Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, January 16, 1957, 33.

²⁸⁰ Mary Elizabeth Insko Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, August 19, 1960, 32.

²⁸¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed January 11, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

²⁸² *DBusiness Magazine*, "Old-Line Retailers," published August 24, 2009, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.dbusiness.com/people/old-line-retailers/>.

²⁸³ "Cunningham Drug Stores," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 31, 1958; "Cunningham Drug-Kinsel Merger," *The Wall Street Journal*, November 18, 1958.



Figure 55. Kinsel's Drugs under construction (ROHS 1942)



Figure 56. Kinsel's Drugs (ROHS ca. 1943)

Klemm's drugstore was owned by A.L. Klemm, who worked as a drug clerk at least as far back as 1906.²⁸⁴ His store was at 1029 South Washington Avenue (Figure 57), which was constructed between 1921 and 1926.²⁸⁵ The space was later occupied by the Hy-Wilde Camera Shop (by 1948). The building, which has since been aesthetically modified, is now occupied by a construction law firm.



Figure 57. Klemm Drug Store (ROHS undated)

Klett & Cain Furniture was at 224 South Main Street (Figure 58), which was built as a store in 1926.²⁸⁶ The furniture store moved into the building in the early 1940s. A 1942 Klett & Cain newspaper advertisement refers to the store as a new location.²⁸⁷ Following a 1948 newspaper advertisement for a public auction at the Detroit store, the company ceased to be mentioned in local newspapers.²⁸⁸ The building is now home to coworking space known as Bamboo Royal Oak.

²⁸⁴ "Drug Clerks' Ball," *Detroit Free Press*, February 4, 1906, 33.

²⁸⁵ Parker's Celebrated Oil Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1931, 12; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

²⁸⁶ Klett & Cain Furniture Co. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 1, 1946, 11; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

²⁸⁷ Klett & Cain Furniture Co. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 21, 1942, 92.

²⁸⁸ Home Furnishings - Public Auction Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, January 12, 1948, 23.



Figure 58. Klett & Cain Furniture (ROHS ca. 1945)

Land's Pharmacy was established by St. Louis native Eugene E. Land, who also owned the medical pharmacy in William Beaumont Medical Building and the Merrill-Wood Pharmacy.²⁸⁹ The pharmacy was likely initially at 315 (now part of 317) South Washington Avenue (Figure 59). In 1955, Minoru Yamasaki designed the new Land's Pharmacy at 422 West 11 Mile Road. Born in Seattle and later relocating to the Detroit area, Yamasaki started his own architecture firm in Royal Oak in the 1950s. The two-story, triangular Land's Pharmacy building was the first drive-up prescription center in the area.²⁹⁰ It is now occupied by the Donnelly Penman & Partners investment bank.

²⁸⁹ Eugene E. Land Obituary – “St. Louis native owned pharmacy,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 12, 1993, 44.

²⁹⁰ Judy Davids, “World Trade Center Architect had Office in Royal Oak in ‘50s,” *Patch*, published September 11, 2011, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/world-trade-center-architect-had-office-in-royal-oak-in-50s>.

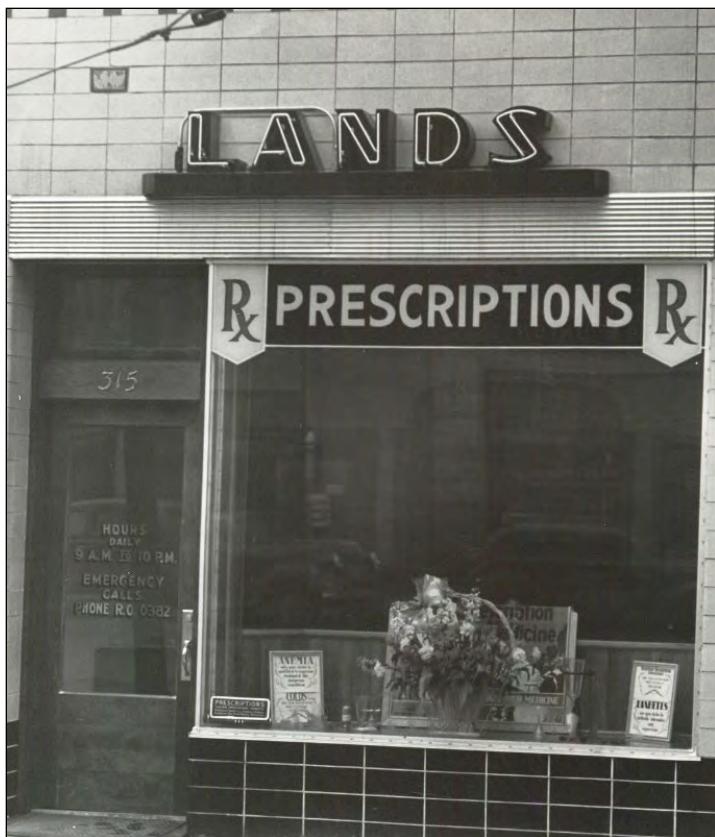


Figure 59. Land's Pharmacy at 315 South Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)

Liston Dry Goods was established by J.J. Liston, who operated stores in Royal Oak and other suburbs.²⁹¹ The Royal Oak store was at 500 South Washington Avenue (Figure 60), which was built between 1916 and 1921.²⁹² The building is currently occupied by a yoga studio and gift shop.

²⁹¹ "J.J. Liston Dies After Long Illness," *Detroit Free Press*, November 9, 1932, 5.

²⁹² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).



Figure 60. Liston Dry Goods (ROHS undated)

The Louis Storz General Store was at the northeastern corner of Main and Fifth streets (445 South Main Street). The post office was in the store whenever a Democrat was in the White House (1885–1889 and 1893–1897).²⁹³ The first telephone switchboard in town was in the Storz store, and his son started the first *Daily Tribune* there.²⁹⁴ Louis Storz also served as town supervisor for a time.²⁹⁵ The building was demolished, and the site redeveloped between 1926 and 1931/1950.²⁹⁶

Main Floor Covering was established around 1957.²⁹⁷ Main Furniture, a division of Main Floor Covering, was at 1224 South Main Street since at least 1963.²⁹⁸ This building was constructed between 1957 and 1967.²⁹⁹ The furniture store was advertised as being at 1412 South Main Street

²⁹³ John A. Kuzemka, “The Royal Oak Post Office: A History,” p. 1, accessed November 16, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

²⁹⁴ William H. Anger, “Voices from the Past: Royal Oak in the 1890s,” *Royal Oak Today*, Fourth Quarter 2018, 14, accessed January 31, 2024, https://cdnsm5-ss20.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_455101/File/District/Administration%20and%20Departments/Communications/34d91c61804fcff0a4240b89814df8f3cd0c0875.pdf.

²⁹⁵ “To Test Mortgage Tax Law in Michigan Court,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1908, 8.

²⁹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

²⁹⁷ Main Floor Carpet One Floor & Home, “About Us,” accessed January 8, 2024, <https://www.mainfloorcarpetoneroyal oak.com/about-us>.

²⁹⁸ Main Floor Covering Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 31, 1963, 38.

²⁹⁹ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 8, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

in 1966.³⁰⁰ That building, the original section of which was constructed as a store between 1926 and 1950, was demolished between 1988 and 1999 for the Main Street Centre development.³⁰¹ The company, now known as Main Floor Carpet One Floor & Home, continues to be at 1224 South Main Street.

Matthews-Hargreaves Chevrolet was at the northwestern corner of West 10 Mile Road and South Main Street (Figure 61). Built in 1949, this building was demolished between 1983 and 1987 for the construction of I-696.³⁰² That property is currently the location of West 10 Mile Road and The Griffin apartment complex. The dealership appears to have then relocated to 2000 12 Mile Road between 1983 and 1987.³⁰³ The modified northern section of the building appears to have been constructed between 1951 and 1957.³⁰⁴ Most of the building (the southern section) was constructed between 1988 and 1999.³⁰⁵



Figure 61. Matthews-Hargreaves Chevrolet (ROHS ca. 1953)

The Modern Housekeeping Shop was owned by Milton L. Hey for 45 years.³⁰⁶ It was initially at 309 South Center Street in 1927.³⁰⁷ This building was constructed between 1921 and 1926 as a

³⁰⁰ Main Floor Covering Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1966, 18.

³⁰¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950); NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1988 and 1999, accessed January 8, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁰² NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

³⁰³ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁰⁴ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁰⁵ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1988 and 1999, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁰⁶ Milton L. Hey Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1994, 28.

³⁰⁷ Copeland Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 26, 1927, 7.

store.³⁰⁸ By 1939, the shop had moved to 407 South Washington Avenue, which was built as a store between 1926 and 1950.³⁰⁹ The space is currently occupied by a gift and stationery shop. By 1948, the store had relocated to 510 South Washington Avenue (Figure 62), which was constructed between 1921 and 1926.³¹⁰ That year, it was home to a printing business, and by 1950, it was occupied by a store.³¹¹ The space is now used by a vintage clothing store. In 1970, Modern Housekeeping Shop moved across the street to 515 South Washington Avenue, below the Madrid Hotel, which was constructed in 1918.³¹² The space is now occupied by the Mathnasium. Newspaper advertisements appear to have ceased after 1978.



Figure 62. Modern Housekeeping Shop at 510 South Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)

The Montgomery Ward store in Royal Oak was in the Conga Building at 402 South Washington Avenue. It was announced in late 1928 that the company was soon to break ground (the following spring) at the southwestern corner of Fourth Street and Washington Avenue (Figure 63). The three-story department store, designed by Frederick D. Madison, would be the third

³⁰⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

³⁰⁹ Bendix Home Appliances Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 19, 1939, 3; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³¹⁰ RCA Victor Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 8, 1948, 23; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

³¹¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³¹² GE Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 20, 1970, 10; JC Reindl, "Little-known Madrid Hotel in downtown Royal Oak to go upscale," *Detroit Free Press*, August 17, 2014, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2014/08/17/little-known-madrid-hotel-in-downtown-royal-oak-to-go-upscale/14143373/>.

largest in Oakland County upon its completion. Its design was intended to complement the Washington Square Building across the street. The same color and texture of brick would be used, as well as terra cotta trim. The building would have a frontage of 55 ft on Washington Avenue and of 113 ft on Fourth Street. It would have unusual window display facilities and 25,000 ft² of store space. The site of the proposed store was acquired after negotiations with Bassett and Smith allied with Wayne D. Jewell. It was chosen because a survey showed the location to dominate a trading area containing 165,000 people. Construction of this store was part of a nation-wide building campaign on the part of Montgomery Ward and represented an investment of nearly \$200,000.³¹³ The store was there for more than 30 years.³¹⁴ The company left Royal Oak in the early 1960s.³¹⁵ The building is now home to a spa with space for lease above.



Figure 63. Montgomery Ward (ROHS 1929)

Myer's Jewelry Shop was at 415 South Washington Avenue from at least 1943 to 1968.³¹⁶ The building was constructed between 1916 and 1921. In 1921, it was labeled as a bank.³¹⁷ By 1926,

³¹³ "Montgomery-Ward Company to Build Large Department Store in the Heart of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 74-75.

³¹⁴ City of Royal Oak, "Happy Birthday, Frederick D. Madison," published April 4, 2021, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=52&ARC=52>.

³¹⁵ Cathy Trost, "Suburban downtowns aren't down anymore," *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1978, 115.

³¹⁶ Myer's Jewelry Shop Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, May 28, 1943, 9; Omega Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, December 8, 1968, 14.

³¹⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

it had been divided into two stores, which continued to be the case in 1950.³¹⁸ The building is now home to an Italian restaurant. Myer's also had a shop in the Northwood Center at Woodward Avenue and 13 Mile Road (built between 1951 and 1955) until at least 1970.³¹⁹

The Neisner Brothers Five to Dollar Store in Royal Oak was at 421 (now 423) South Washington Avenue (Figure 64), which was constructed as a store between 1926 and 1950.³²⁰ Neisner's filed for bankruptcy in late 1977 and closed four of seven of its stores in the Detroit area in 1978.³²¹ The building is now home to a Keller Williams real estate office.



Figure 64. Neisner Bros. (ROHS undated)

Noonan's Men's Wear was at 312 South Main Street (Figure 65).³²² This building was built prior to 1916. According to Sanborn maps from 1916, 1921, and 1926, motion pictures/movies were shown in this building, which has a sloping roof.³²³ A store in this building was looted of some \$4,000 worth of clothing in 1934.³²⁴ The 1931 (updated 1950) Sanborn shows that the whole building had become a store.³²⁵ The building is now home to a Mexican restaurant.

³¹⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³¹⁹ "Help Wanted, Male," Classified Ads, *Detroit Free Press*, September 12, 1970, 13; NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1955, accessed January 2, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³²⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³²¹ "Neisner's to Close Stores; Four In Detroit Area Affected," *Detroit Free Press*, January 10, 1978, 16.

³²² "Royal Oak Police Working on \$4,000 Clothing Robbery," *Detroit Free Press*, November 27, 1934, 4.

³²³ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1921, and 1926).

³²⁴ "Royal Oak Police Working on \$4,000 Clothing Robbery," *Detroit Free Press*, November 27, 1934, 4.

³²⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).



Figure 65. Noonan's Men's Wear (ROHS undated)

North End Market was at 926 North Main Street, adjacent to the Edward Furniture Company (Figure 66).³²⁶ The building was built between 1921 and 1926.³²⁷ It has since been modified and is currently home to Beaumont Internal Medicine & Pediatrics of Royal Oak, M3 Investment Services, and second floor apartments.

³²⁶ List of Independent Grocery Stores, *Detroit Free Press*, September 15, 1939, 11.

³²⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).



Figure 66. North End Market (ROHS 1943)

Pansy Shops was a chain that operated exclusively in the Detroit area. At the time that the photograph in Figure 67 was taken, there were 35 Pansy Hosiery Shops in existence.³²⁸ The Royal Oak shop was at 422 South Washington Avenue on the southern side of Reel's Shoe Store (420 South Washington Avenue). The one-story building was constructed between 1926 and 1937 and replaced a series of two-story, wood-frame stores.³²⁹ The building was demolished between 1983 and 1987.³³⁰ The site was vacant until around 2009, when a high-rise building was constructed on the site.³³¹

³²⁸ “Frank and Seder Strike Settlement Made as Police Take Over Store Seized by Union; Governor Give Out Warning on Seizures,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 18, 1937, 2.

³²⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

³³⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³³¹ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2009, accessed January 3, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).



Figure 67. Pansy Shops (ROHS 1937)

R&S Shoes was at 512 South Washington Avenue adjacent to the Modern Housekeeping Shop (Figure 68). The building was constructed between 1921 and 1926.³³² It has since been modified and is currently home to UHF Records.



Figure 68. R&S Shoes (ROHS undated)

³³² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

Nathan Rattner owned four RB's Dress Shops in the Greater Detroit area for 30 years. They were in Ferndale, Royal Oak, Mt. Clemens, and Birmingham.³³³ The Royal Oak store was in the Washington Square Building at 314 West Fourth Street (Figure 69), which was built in 1927. The 1931/1950 Sanborn map shows 314 and 316 West Fourth Street as having been occupied by a single store³³⁴, RB's: No. 314 contained the hose shop and No. 316 contained the dress shop. Numbers 314 and 316 are currently occupied by two separate businesses, one a restaurant and the other a tattoo parlor. According to a 1937 advertisement, the hose shop was formerly adjacent to Cunningham's drug store on West Fourth Street.³³⁵

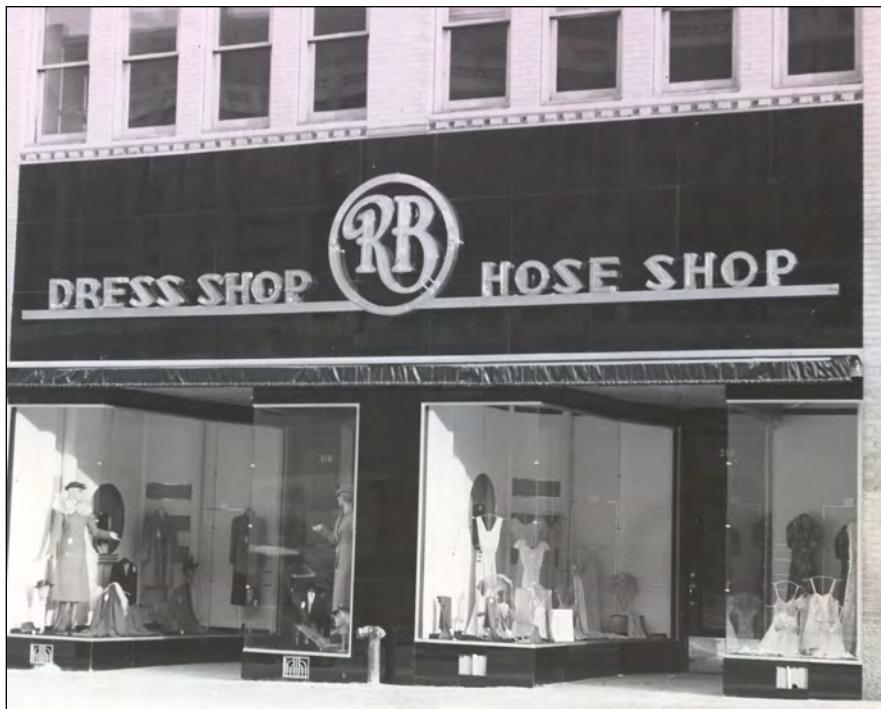


Figure 69. RB's Dress and Hose Shop (ROHS undated)

Reel's Shoe Store was at 420 South Washington Avenue (Figure 70).³³⁶ The one-story building was constructed between 1926 and 1937 and replaced a series of two-story, wood-frame stores.³³⁷ The building was demolished between 1983 and 1987.³³⁸ The site was vacant until around 2009, when a high-rise building was constructed on the site.³³⁹

³³³ Nathan Rattner Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, January 23, 1960, 14.

³³⁴ RB Shops Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, April 8, 1965, 39; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

³³⁵ Washington Square Building Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, January 3, 1937, 110.

³³⁶ Mary Jane Shoe Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, May 28, 1948, 16.

³³⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

³³⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³³⁹ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2009, accessed January 3, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.



Figure 70. Reel's Shoes (ROHS undated)

As of 1948, Regal Furniture was at 114 West Fourth Street, which was built prior to 1916.³⁴⁰ This property, the former location of the Hotel Royal, appears to have been redeveloped between 1951 and 1957.³⁴¹ The property is now occupied by a one-story masonry building, which is home to the Creative Arts Studio. By 1954, the business was advertised as being at 117 West Fourth Street (Figure 71), which was constructed as a store between 1921 and 1926.³⁴² From 1951 to 1956, the business is occasionally advertised as being at 113 West Fourth Street, which was likely considered part of the building at 117 West Fourth Street. This building is now occupied by an IV therapy clinic and a legal firm.

³⁴⁰ Philco Television Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 9, 1948, 11; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

³⁴¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed January 8, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

³⁴² Philco Air Conditioner Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 10, 1954, 37; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).



Figure 71. Regal Furniture at 117 West Fourth Street (ROHS undated)

Royal Oak Appliance Shop was owned by Gale and Irene Taylor.³⁴³ In 1939 and 1949, it was at 405 South Center Street. According to the photograph in Figure 72, it occupied two storefronts, 403 and 405 South Center Street.³⁴⁴ This building, built between 1921 and 1926, was demolished between 1967 and 1973.³⁴⁵ By 1952, the store had relocated to 208 West Fifth Street, which was constructed between 1926 and 1950.³⁴⁶ This building at 208 West Fifth Street is currently occupied by an Italian restaurant and a bar/nightclub.

³⁴³ Irene V. Taylor Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, July 25, 2002, 95.

³⁴⁴ Bendix Home Appliances Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 19, 1939, 3; Crosley Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, October 19, 1949, 8.

³⁴⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926); NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed January 8, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³⁴⁶ Westinghouse Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1952, 16; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).



Figure 72. Royal Oak Appliance Shop at 403-405 South Center Street (ROHS ca. 1923)

Royal Oak Buick, presided over by George R. Lawson, was initially at 1315 South Woodward Avenue (Figure 73).³⁴⁷ This building, constructed prior to 1921, initially served as a garage.³⁴⁸ By 1926, it had become a used car dealership.³⁴⁹ Between 1926 and 1950, the building was extended to the north, and a filling station and auto service building was constructed within the L formed by the building. In 1950, the dealership building was labeled auto sales and service (Royal Oak Buick).³⁵⁰ By 1948, the dealership's service department had been relocated to 115 West Sixth Street (at Main Street).³⁵¹ According to the 1931/1950 Sanborn map, this building had been built in 1947.³⁵² Between 1957 and 1967, the filling station was demolished for a large addition to the dealership building.³⁵³ Advertisements for Royal Oak Buick appear to have ceased after 1959. A 1961 advertisement for Larry Nelson Buick, which used the former Royal Oak Buick locations, touted the dealership as "your new Buick Dealer."³⁵⁴ From at least 1963 to

³⁴⁷ Autos-Passenger Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 28, 1931, 23; "Wolverine Star to Sell Buicks," *Detroit Free Press*, August 21, 1932, 15.

³⁴⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

³⁴⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

³⁵⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³⁵¹ Buick Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, April 28, 1948, 13; Larry Nelson Buick Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 1961, 40.

³⁵² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

³⁵³ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 9, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁵⁴ Larry Nelson Buick Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 15, 1961, 40.

1969, the dealership used 600 South Main Street instead of 115 West Sixth Street in newspaper advertisements. The building at 1315 South Woodward Avenue was demolished between 2005 and 2009.³⁵⁵ The property is now the site of LA Fitness (25352 Woodward Avenue). The 115 West Sixth Street location was also demolished between 2005 and 2009.³⁵⁶ It is now the location of parking lot P7 at 163 West Sixth Street.



Figure 73. Royal Oak Buick at 1315 South Woodward Avenue (ROHS undated)

Royal Oak Furniture Co. was at 215 South Washington Avenue from at least 1949, the building being constructed between 1931 and 1951.³⁵⁷ It was owned by Maxwell H. Elgot, who sold the building and liquidated the business in 1967.³⁵⁸ Subsequently occupied by a Chinese restaurant, the building is now vacant.

³⁵⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2005 and 2009, accessed January 9, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁵⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2005 and 2009, accessed January 9, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁵⁷ Central Stores Washing Machine Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1949, 10; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950); NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed January 8, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁵⁸ "Helping Hands for Struggling Firms," *Detroit Free Press*, June 28, 1974, 9.

Royal Pontiac was initially at 818 North Main Street.³⁵⁹ What later served as the front section of this building was built between 1921 and 1926 as a store.³⁶⁰ Between 1926 and 1950, this building became an auto dealership, and two large, sequential additions were constructed to its rear.³⁶¹ The front section was demolished between 1957 and 1967.³⁶² The dealership relocated to 400 North Main Street in 1960 (Figure 74).³⁶³ The dealership later became known as Ace Wilson's Pontiac and then Jim Fresard Pontiac, which operated for many years until Pontiac ceased production and the dealerships closed.³⁶⁴ The 400 North Main Street location was demolished between 2016 and 2018.³⁶⁵ The property is now occupied by a hotel, an apartment complex, and a parking garage.



Figure 74. Postcard showing Royal Pontiac at 400 North Main Street (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

³⁵⁹ Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Pontiac,” accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/automotivedetail.aspx?id=5949&type=21>.

³⁶⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

³⁶¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³⁶² NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 8, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³⁶³ Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Pontiac,” accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/automotivedetail.aspx?id=5949&type=21>.

³⁶⁴ Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Pontiac,” accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/automotivedetail.aspx?id=5949&type=21>.

³⁶⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2016 and 2018, accessed December 29, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

Royal Radio Sales and Service opened in 1947 at 703 North Main Street, which appears to have been constructed between 1926 and 1950 as an auto repair shop and filling station.³⁶⁶ A advertisement was placed in 1939 for home and auto radio service, which provided an address of 703 North Main Street.³⁶⁷ This building was demolished and replaced between 1973 and 1983.³⁶⁸ Because of a need for more space, Royal Radio moved across the street to 612 North Main Street by 1953 (Figure 75).³⁶⁹ The front section of the building was constructed between 1951 and 1957.³⁷⁰ Additions were built onto the rear of the building between 1957 and 1967.³⁷¹ Between 1967 and 1973, the building was expanded to the south.³⁷² The business ceased operations in 2008. In 2010, the vacant building was sold and renovated to become the headquarters for ISCG Inc.³⁷³



Figure 75. Postcard of Royal Radio at 612 North Main Street (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

³⁶⁶ Olin Battery Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, June 26, 1949, 6; Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Radio,” accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=3861&type=16>.

³⁶⁷ “Detroit Free Press Business Service Directory - Radio Service—Royal Oak,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 21, 1939, 118.

³⁶⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1973 and 1983, accessed January 9, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

³⁶⁹ Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Radio,” accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=3861&type=16>; Hallicrafters Radio Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, May 17, 1953, 8.

³⁷⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

³⁷¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

³⁷² NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

³⁷³ Water Winter Wonderland, “Royal Radio,” accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=3861&type=16>.

Sherman Drugs was at 3009 Rochester Road (Figure 76), which appears to have been constructed between 1931 and 1951.³⁷⁴ The building, which has since been modified, is currently occupied by an indoor archery range.

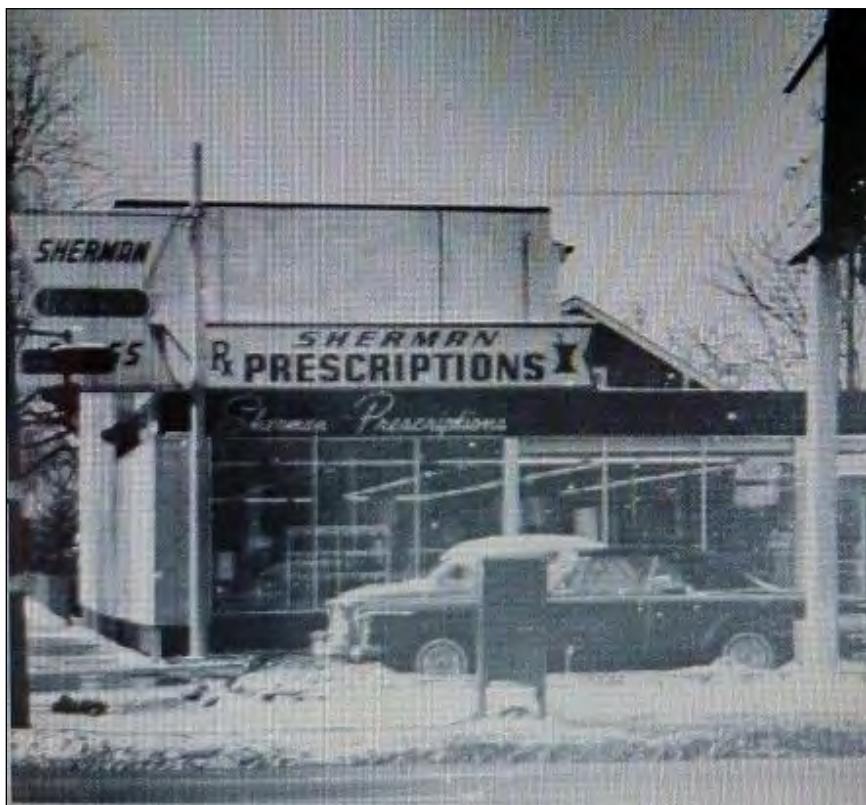


Figure 76. Sherman Drugs (ROHS undated)

In 1923, Smith-Crampton Hardware was at 150 Fourth Street.³⁷⁵ This address had been changed to 124 West Fourth Street by 1942 due to a renumbering between 1926 and 1950.³⁷⁶ The building was constructed prior to 1916. It was occupied by clothing and jewelry stores at that time.³⁷⁷ By 1921, a hardware store was in the building.³⁷⁸ In 1926 and 1950, it was labeled as a store.³⁷⁹ The building is now occupied by Noir Leather. The hardware store was later at 215–217

³⁷⁴ Hasbro Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 14, 1971, 235; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950); NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed January 2, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicaerials.com).

³⁷⁵ Smith-Crampton Co. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, November 4, 1923, 93.

³⁷⁶ Sherwin-Williams Paints Advertisement, *Detroit Evening Times*, March 15, 1942, 47; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³⁷⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

³⁷⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

³⁷⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

South Main Street (Figure 77). This building was also built prior to 1916. In 1916 and 1921, it served as a garage.³⁸⁰ By 1926, it had been divided into two stores and a warehouse.³⁸¹ In 1950, a single store occupied 215 and 217 South Main Street.³⁸² The building, the façade of which has been modified, is now occupied by a restaurant.



Figure 77. Smith-Crampton Hardware at 215–217 South Main Street (ROHS undated)

The S.S. Kresge Co. was established in 1899. Traditional Kresge stores were known as “red front” stores. In 1921, the company opened “green front” stores that sold items ranging in price from 25 cents to a dollar.³⁸³ The Royal Oak store was one such store. This Kresge store (#530) was at 408 South Washington Avenue (Figure 78). This building was constructed between 1926 and 1950.³⁸⁴ In 1962, the president of Kresge, Harry B. Cunningham, opened the first Kmart discount store in Garden City, Michigan. These stores spread across the country and eventually replaced Kresge stores, the last of which were sold to the McCrory Corporation by 1987.³⁸⁵ The former Kresge store in Royal Oak is now occupied by a variety of businesses.

³⁸⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

³⁸¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

³⁸² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

³⁸³ Detroit Historical Society, “S.S. Kresge Company,” Encyclopedia of Detroit, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/ss-kresge-company>.

³⁸⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³⁸⁵ Detroit Historical Society, “S.S. Kresge Company,” Encyclopedia of Detroit, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://detroithistorical.org/learn/encyclopedia-of-detroit/ss-kresge-company>.



Figure 78. Kresge store #530 (Pinterest.com undated)

Stark Hickey Ford was at 1515 South Washington Avenue (Figure 79).³⁸⁶ The dealership was constructed between 1926 and 1950.³⁸⁷ It was demolished between 1983 and 1987.³⁸⁸ The site remained vacant until around 2016–2018.³⁸⁹ It is now the site of a luxury apartment complex at 25090 Woodward Avenue.

³⁸⁶ Ford Rent-a-Car System Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 29, 1964, 32.

³⁸⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

³⁸⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed December 28, 2023, HistoricAerials.com.

³⁸⁹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2016 and 2018, accessed December 28, 2023, HistoricAerials.com.



Figure 79. Stark Hickey Ford (ROHS undated)

Tiny Tim Family Hobby Center was established at 4400 North Woodward Avenue in 1965 at what had formerly been Maskill Hardware (Figure 80). The initial registered name was Northwood Raceways (1965). The subsequent registered name was Tiny Tim Hobby Center (1975). The business was operated by the Laverdiere family for many years. It offered slot car racing and sold hobby supplies and refreshments. By the early 1980s, video games had also been added. A Tiny Tim Hobby Center was also operated at 14922 Kercheval Avenue in Detroit by Frank Gizzi, but it is not certain if these two establishments were related. The Royal Oak center was in operation until the early 1980s.³⁹²



Figure 80. Tiny Tim Family Hobby Center (ROHS undated)

³⁹² Water Winter Wonderland, "Tiny Tim Hobby Center," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/amusementpark.aspx?id=3966&type=2>.

Tom Collins Oldsmobile was at 200 South Main Street (Figure 81), which was constructed as a dealership between 1921 and 1926.³⁹³ It was demolished between 1957 and 1967.³⁹⁴ The existing building on this property was constructed between 1967 and 1973 and is now occupied by a Citizens Bank.³⁹⁵



Figure 81. Tom Collins Oldsmobile (ROHS undated)

The Tower Furniture Company was founded by Irving Rosen and Saul Landau. By 1955, the company had five stores in the Greater Detroit area, and there were plans to open more. The Royal Oak store was at 215 West Fifth Street, which was built as a store between 1921 and 1926.³⁹⁶ Based on going-out-of-business advertisements in newspapers, it appears that the company went out of business in the early 1960s. The Royal Oak store is now home to a sports bar.

Triangle Furniture Company was at 324 West Fourth Street in the Washington Square Building (Figure 82), which was constructed in 1927.³⁹⁷ The space is currently occupied by a sushi restaurant, with possible residential space on the second floor. The furniture store relocated to a new building at 818 North Woodward Avenue, near Catalpa Drive, in 1956. The building was

³⁹³ "Autos-Passenger," *Detroit Free Press*, April 2, 1939, 23; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

³⁹⁴ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³⁹⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed December 28, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

³⁹⁶ "Tower Group Opens Store On Gratiot," *Detroit Free Press*, March 27, 1955, 24; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

³⁹⁷ "Help Wanted, Men," *Detroit Free Press*, July 7, 1947, 22; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

designed by Harry S. King.³⁹⁸ The original, northern section of 27880 Woodward Avenue, currently occupied by Trader Joe's, was constructed between 1951 and 1957 and has the same number of pillars across the front as shown in Figure 83, making it the likely former location of Triangle Furniture.



Figure 82. Triangle Furniture Company at 324 West Fourth Street (ROHS undated).



Figure 83. Triangle Furniture Company at 818 North Woodward Avenue (Detroit Free Press 1956)

The Triangle-Royal Oak, Inc. automobile dealership was at 1431 Woodward Avenue, at the corner of Woodward and South Washington avenues.³⁹⁹ In 1921, the building was occupied by grocery store, an upholsterer, and an office.⁴⁰⁰ The 1926 Sanborn map (Figure 84) shows that the dealership was associated with an auto repair shop (1429 Woodward Avenue) and a vulcanizing

³⁹⁸ "Triangle Furniture Opens New Store," *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1956, 28.

³⁹⁹ Willys-Overland, Inc. Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, August 4, 1929, 61.

⁴⁰⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

shop (1435 Woodward Avenue).⁴⁰¹ By 1950, the auto sales section of the building had been turned into a filling station, and the southern section of the building had been demolished for gas tanks.⁴⁰² The rest of the building was demolished between 1951 and 1957.⁴⁰³ The parking lot of LA Fitness (at 25352 Woodward Avenue) now occupies the site.

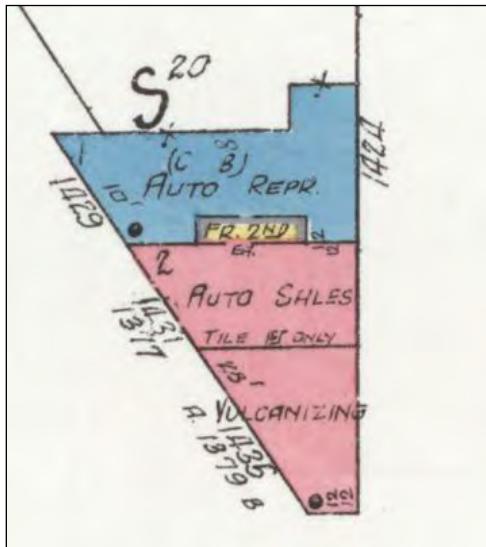


Figure 84. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1926, Sheet 26.

Founded by brothers Isadore and Leon Winkelman, the first Winkelman's store was built in Detroit in 1928.⁴⁰⁴ The chain store sold women's ready-to-wear clothing.⁴⁰⁵ At one time, Royal Oak contained two Winkelman's stores, one at 3327 North Woodward Avenue and the other at 405 South Washington Avenue (Figure 85).⁴⁰⁶ The latter building, built in 1922, was initially occupied by a bank.⁴⁰⁷ A 1942 newspaper advertisement proclaimed that Winkelman's "beautiful new store" was now open at this location.⁴⁰⁸ In 1950, the space contained a store.⁴⁰⁹ It is now occupied by Broadway Salon Studios.

⁴⁰¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

⁴⁰² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950)

⁴⁰³ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed January 23, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

⁴⁰⁴ *DBusiness Magazine*, "Old-Line Retailers," published August 24, 2009, accessed January 4, 2024, <https://www.dbusiness.com/people/old-line-retailers/>.

⁴⁰⁵ "Woodward Selected For Site," *Detroit Free Press*, April 6, 1956, 16.

⁴⁰⁶ Water Winter Wonderland, "Winkleman's," accessed December 28, 2023, <https://www.waterrwinterwonderland.com/retaildetail.aspx?id=2688&type=16>.

⁴⁰⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

⁴⁰⁸ Winkelman's Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, March 20, 1942, 9.

⁴⁰⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

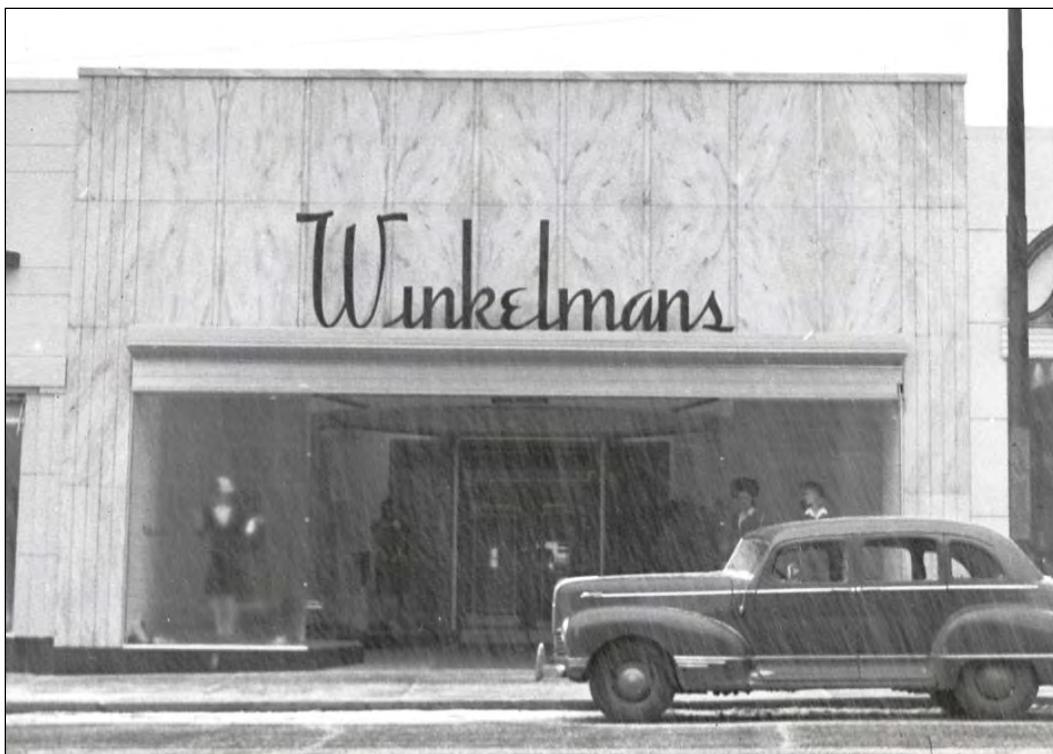


Figure 85. Winkelman's Apparel Shop, likely at 405 South Washington Avenue, (ROHS 1941)

The main Winter's Drug Store was at 322 South Main Street (Figure 86).⁴¹⁰ The building was constructed in 1916, this section of it serving as a bank before becoming a drug store between 1921 and 1926.⁴¹¹ A 1924 advertisement claimed that it was Royal Oak's leading drug store. It provided up-to-the-minute service, the finest and most complete stock, fountain service, cigars, kodaks, and kodak supplies.⁴¹² The building is now occupied by a Verizon store. A historic photo shows a Winter's Cut Rate Drugs at 314 South Main Street (see Figure 65). This building was built prior to 1916. According to Sanborn maps from 1916, 1921, and 1926, motion pictures/movies were shown in this building, which has a sloping roof.⁴¹³ By 1950, the entire building had become a store.⁴¹⁴ The building is now home to a Mexican restaurant.

⁴¹⁰ Winter's Drug Store Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1924, 84.

⁴¹¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

⁴¹² Winter's Drug Store Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1924, 84.

⁴¹³ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1921, and 1926).

⁴¹⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

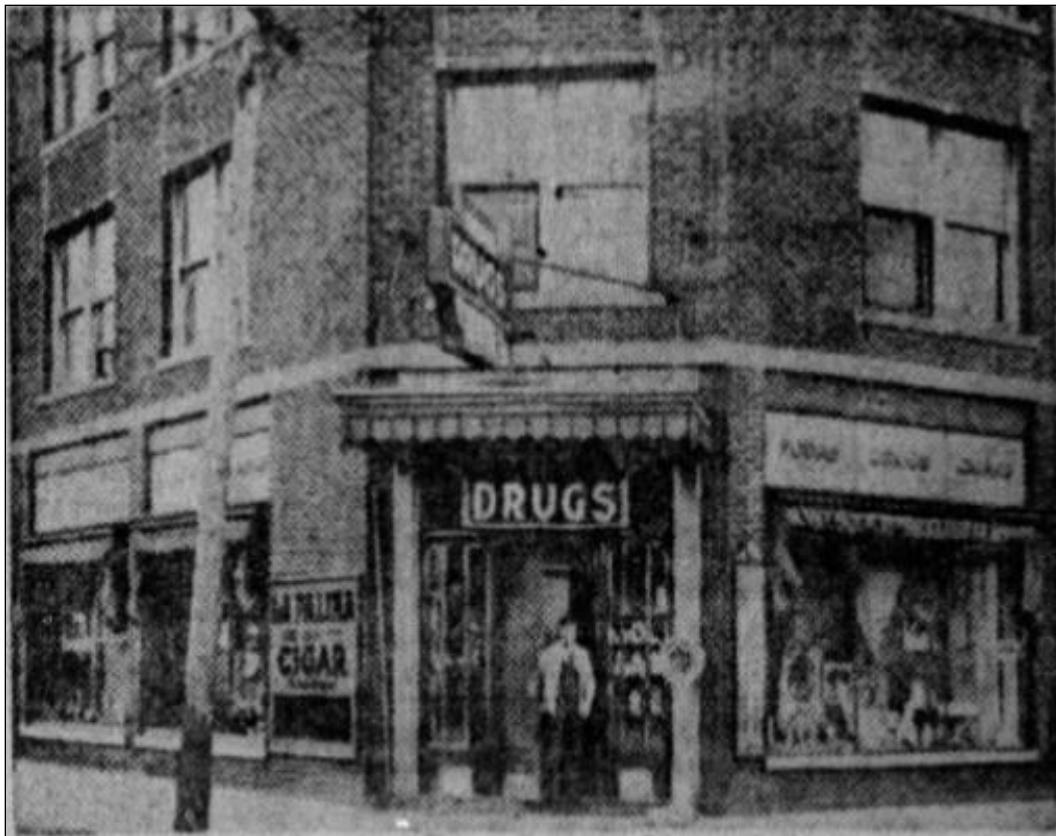


Figure 86. Winter's Drug Store at 322 South Main Street (*Detroit Free Press* 1924)

The Yardstick Store in Royal Oak was one of four local Yardstick fabric stores. It was at 506 South Washington Avenue (Figure 87).⁴¹⁵ The building was constructed between 1916 and 1921.⁴¹⁶ It is now home to a bridal shop.

⁴¹⁵ The Yardstick Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 31, 1947, 18.

⁴¹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).



Figure 87. The Yardstick Store (ROHS undated)

Associated Resources

Table 7. Royal Oak Retail Establishments, Location, Date, and Status

Store Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
A-D Camera Shop	606 South Washington Avenue	1916–1921	Yes
A-D Camera Shop	507 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes
A&P (Atlantic & Pacific Tea Co.)	432 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	No
B&C Super Market	417 South Main Street	1926–1950	Yes
Brent Furniture	117 West Fourth Street	1921–1926	Yes
C.F. Quick General Store	Main and First Streets	Unknown	No
	Main and Third Streets	Unknown	No
Caskey Drugs	1000 North Main Street	1921–1926	Yes
Cunningham Drugs	323 South Main Street	1926–1950	Yes
Cunningham Drugs	304 West Fourth Street	1927	Yes
Drapery Fair	4304 North Woodward Avenue (now 32410 Woodward Avenue)	1955–1964	Yes
Dunn's Camera Shop/ Teen Haven Shop	610 South Washington Avenue	1916–1921	Yes
Dunn's Camera Shop	116 West Fourth Street	1951–1957	Yes

Store Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Economy Furniture Company	119 and 125 South Main Street	1926–1950	Yes
Edward Furniture Company	916 North Main Street	1921–1926	Yes
Field's Ladies Apparel	401 South Main Street	Pre-1916	Yes
Fintex Clothes	417 South Washington Avenue	1916–1921	Yes
Frentz & Sons Hardware	1010 North Main Street	1921–1926	Yes
Gabel's Dairy	515 South Washington Avenue	1918	Yes
Gordon E. Stewart Co. Pontiac	1305 South Main Street	ca. 1941	No
Grand Leader Department Store	119 South Main Street	1926–1950	Yes
Grayson's Department Store	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Grinnell Brothers	501 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	No
Hilzinger Block Building	106-110 South Main Street	1925	Yes
The Hollywood Shoppe	204 South Main Street	1921–1926	No
The Hollywood Shoppe	428 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	No
Howie Glass Co.	307 South Center Street	1921–1926	Yes
Howie Glass Co.	940 North Campbell Road	1957	Yes
Hy-Wilde Camera Shop	1029 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes
Hy-Wilde Camera Shop	1129–1133 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	Yes
J.F. Codling	345 South Main Street	Pre-1916	No
J.F. Codling	218-222 South Main Street	1926	Yes
Jacob Erb Building	207-211 South Main Street	1922	Yes
Jacob Erb General Store	Southeastern corner of Main at Third Street	–	No
Kent Jewelers	308 West Fourth Street	1927	Yes
King David Bake Shop	317 East 11 Mile Road	1926–1950	Yes
Klemm's Drugstore	1029 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes
Klett & Cain Furniture	224 South Main Street	1926	Yes
Land's Pharmacy	422 West 11 Mile Road	1955	Yes
Liston Dry Goods	500 South Washington Avenue	1916–1921	Yes
Louis Storz General Store	Northeastern corner of Main and Fifth streets (445 South Main Street)	Pre-1916	No
Main Furniture	1224 South Main Street	1957–1967	Yes
Main Furniture	1412 South Main Street	1926–1950	No
Matthews-Hargreaves Chevrolet	Northwestern corner of West 10 Mile Road and South Main Street	1949	No
Modern Housekeeping Shop	309 South Center Street	1921–1926	Yes
Modern Housekeeping Shop	407 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	Yes
Modern Housekeeping Shop	510 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes
Modern Housekeeping Shop	515 South Washington Avenue	1918	Yes
Montgomery Ward	402 South Washington Avenue	1926–1929	Yes
Myer's Jewelry Shop	415 South Washington Avenue	1916–1921	Yes
Neisner Brothers Five to Dollar Store	423 South Washington Avenue	1926–1950	Yes

Store Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Noonan's Men's Wear	312 South Main Street	Pre-1916	Yes
North End Market	926 North Main Street	1921-1926	Yes
Pansy Shops	422 South Washington Avenue	1926-1937	No
RB's Dress Shop	314 West Fourth Street	1927	Yes
R&S Shoes	512 South Washington Avenue	1921-1926	Yes
Reel's Shoe Store	420 South Washington Avenue	1926-1937	No
Regal Furniture	114 West Fourth Street	Pre-1916	No
Regal Furniture	113-117 West Fourth Street	1921-1926	Yes
Royal Oak Appliance Shop	405 South Center Street	1921-1926	No
Royal Oak Appliance Shop	208 West Fifth Street	1926-1950	Yes
Royal Oak Buick	1315 South Woodward Avenue (now 25352 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1921	No
Royal Oak Buick	115 West Sixth Street (now 163 West Sixth Street)	1947	No
Royal Oak Furniture Co.	215 South Washington Avenue	1931/1950-1951	Yes
Royal Pontiac	818 North Main Street	1921-1950	Mostly
Royal Pontiac	400 North Main Street	ca. 1960	No
Royal Radio & Appliance	703 North Main Street	1926-1950	No
Royal Radio & Appliance	612 North Main Street	1951-1957	Yes
Sherman Drugs	3009 Rochester Road	1931/1950-1951	Yes
Smith-Crampton Hardware	124 West Fourth Street	Pre-1916	Yes
Smith-Crampton Hardware	215-217 South Main Street	Pre-1916	Yes
S.S. Kresge Co.	408 South Washington Avenue	1926-1950	Yes
Stark Hickey Ford	1515 South Washington Avenue (now 25090 Woodward Avenue)	1926-1950	No
Teen Haven Shop	610 South Washington Avenue	1916-1921	Yes
Tiny Tim Family Hobby Center	4400 North Woodward Avenue (old address)	Unknown	Unknown
Tom Collins Oldsmobile	200 South Main Street	1921-1926	No
Tower Furniture Company	215 West Fifth Street	1921-1926	Yes
Triangle Furniture Co.	324 West Fourth Street	1927	Yes
Triangle-Royal Oak, Inc.	1431 Woodward Avenue (now 25352 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1921	No
Winkelman's Apparel	405 South Washington Avenue	1922	Yes
Winter's Cut Rate Drugs	314 South Main Street	Pre-1916	Yes
Winter's Drug Store	322 South Main Street	1916	Yes
The Yardstick Store	506 South Washington Avenue	1916-1921	Yes

Farmers Market

Michigan was a major truck-garden state during the 1930s. Royal Oak was once considered the Rhubarb Capital of the world due to the large quantity of rhubarb that was shipped through the city. In 1925, the City of Royal Oak and Oakland County, acknowledging the need for fresh

produce for the growing city, jointly decided to rent the corner of Fourth and Troy streets and to establish a municipal open-air farmers or community market (Figure 88). It attracted farmers from 25–30 miles away. From the very beginning, the market has maintained a strict “farmer must grow” rule. Items available for sale included poultry, butter, potatoes, apples, cabbage, carrots, and onions. In 1927, a permanent brick building was constructed at 316 East 11 Mile Road to enclose the farmers market (Figure 89).⁴¹⁷ The land was purchased for the purpose of the market for \$46,000. The building was completed the following year at a cost of \$33,800.

Oakland County paid 60 percent, and the City of Royal Oak paid 40 percent of the total cost.⁴¹⁸ The building was 12-ft tall and measured 23,400 ft². The roof consisted of cement tile with two rows of lights, and the floor was made of concrete to allow cars to drive in and unload. More than 300 customers purchased from 75 producers on its first day of business. In 1941, farmers sold such items as buttermilk, butter, and rabbit. However, during World War II, meat and dairy products were rationed. The market grounds were used for Home Guard volunteer practices and Boy Scouts drum-and-bugle corps drills. By 1950, the market featured 110 farmer vendors. The community market’s name was officially changed to Royal Oak Farmers Market in 1960. In 1978, a Sunday flea market began to supplement the market’s income. In 1996, demonstrators protested the proposed sale of the market when redevelopment threatened its existence. To protect the market, the city, which owned 40 percent of the market, acquired the remaining 60 percent from the county.⁴¹⁹

The market has developed a stable vendor base that attracts regular customers seeking locally grown produce. Some family members from the original producer vendors continue to sell at the market, and the Sunday flea market has grown to 90 vendors. The building has also been used for square dances, public meetings, weddings, parties, craft shows, and the storage of fire trucks during the construction of a fire station.⁴²⁰



Figure 88. The opening of the Royal Oak curb market at Fourth and Troy streets (SecondWaveMedia.com 1925)

⁴¹⁷ Carl Levin, “About the Royal Oak Farmers Market,” accessed January 26, 2024, <https://www.savethefarmersmarket.com/history>.

⁴¹⁸ “Oakland-Royal Oak Market Completed,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 4, 1928, 68.

⁴¹⁹ Carl Levin, “About the Royal Oak Farmers Market,” accessed January 26, 2024, <https://www.savethefarmersmarket.com/history>.

⁴²⁰ Carl Levin, “About the Royal Oak Farmers Market,” accessed January 26, 2024, <https://www.savethefarmersmarket.com/history>.

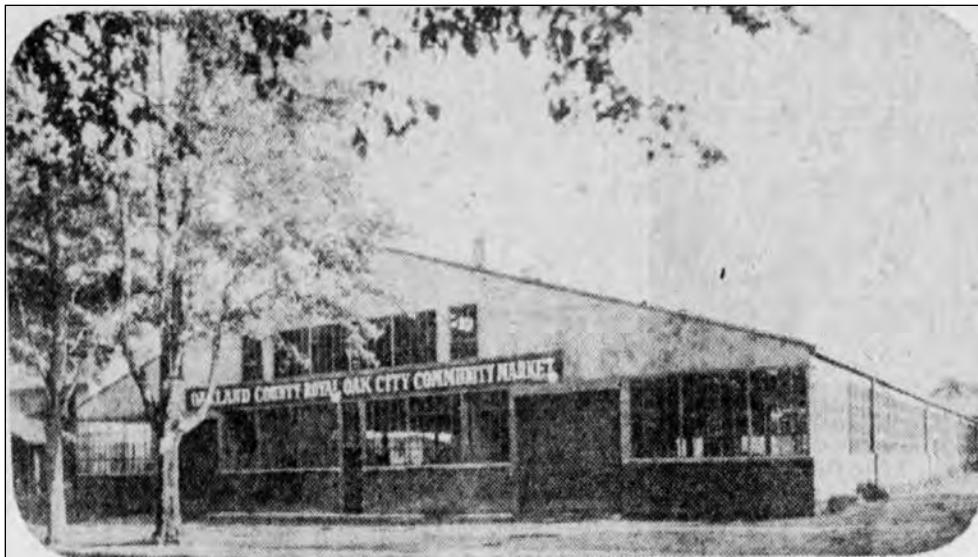


Figure 89. The recently constructed Royal Oak farmers market building (Detroit Free Press 1929)

Restaurants

Restaurants are a vital part of any downtown community. Out of a dozen restaurants, five buildings are extant (Table 8).

Aunt Fanny's Restaurant was next to the Susie-Q's Restaurant at what was then 2244 North Woodward Avenue (now 29428 Woodward Avenue). The restaurant opened in 1955 in what had formerly been the John Benjamin home (Figure 90), which was built in 1854. It was a popular restaurant that also hosted large gatherings (Figure 91). However, the restaurant was short-lived; it closed and was demolished in 1968. The site is now occupied by Trek Bicycle Store.⁴²¹

⁴²¹ John Maurice, "Royal Oak Then & Now," Royal Oak Historical Society, July 2022, p. 9, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/53aab63e-1fee-4f8b-824c-96b173e56662/downloads/Summer%202022.pdf?ver=1690392862083>.

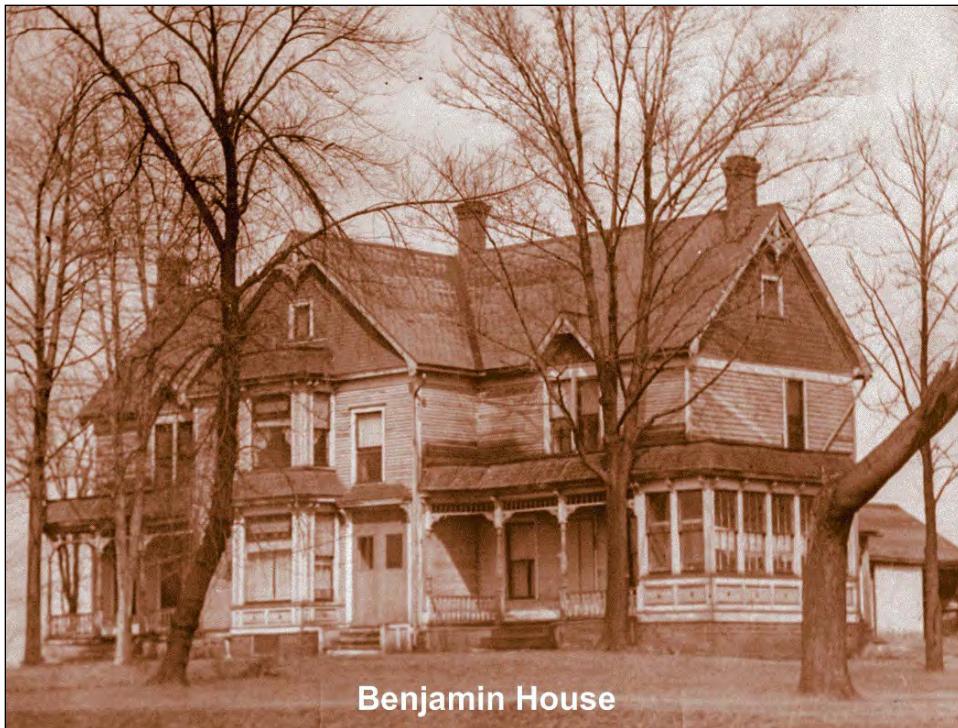


Figure 90. The Benjamin House (ROHS undated)



Figure 91. Aunt Fanny's (ROHS 1960)

Bill Brooks' coffee bar was at 2440 North Woodward Avenue near 12 Mile Road and half a mile north of the Basilica. The address places it between the Oakotel Motel and the Sorrento/Kingswood Motel (possibly in the vicinity of present-day 29838 Woodward Avenue). Brooks came to Michigan in 1913, mostly residing in Pontiac and Royal Oak, and served in the Navy in World War I. He opened his hamburger stand in 1939 in a small, rectangular, one-story

building. It was one of the world's smallest restaurants. Brooks seated about a dozen guests around a horseshoe-shaped table. Benches on the far sides of the room were loaded with a wide range of magazines. A fire burned in a fireplace inside the horseshoe. Food was delivered on a train consisting of an engine and flat cars, which was operated from the kitchen. In the early 1940s, he forced a group of rowdy youths to leave, and when their fathers threatened to sue, he incorporated his business as a private club with 25 cent-a-year dues. He added a vestibule and one-way mirror, a two-way speaker in the vestibule, and a buzzer to unlock the door. If Brooks did not know the visitor or if first timers did not provide the right name, he would ignore them. To pass the time, he constructed a large concrete steam engine out front (Figure 92), which helped conceal the front door and added an extra door to the building.⁴²² In 1945, it was announced that Brooks had published a short book about the 13 little men (12 major generals and a bugler) who ran the hamburger train in his restaurant.⁴²³ The establishment operated in the 1940s and 1950s but was torn down when Brooks died in 1963.⁴²⁴

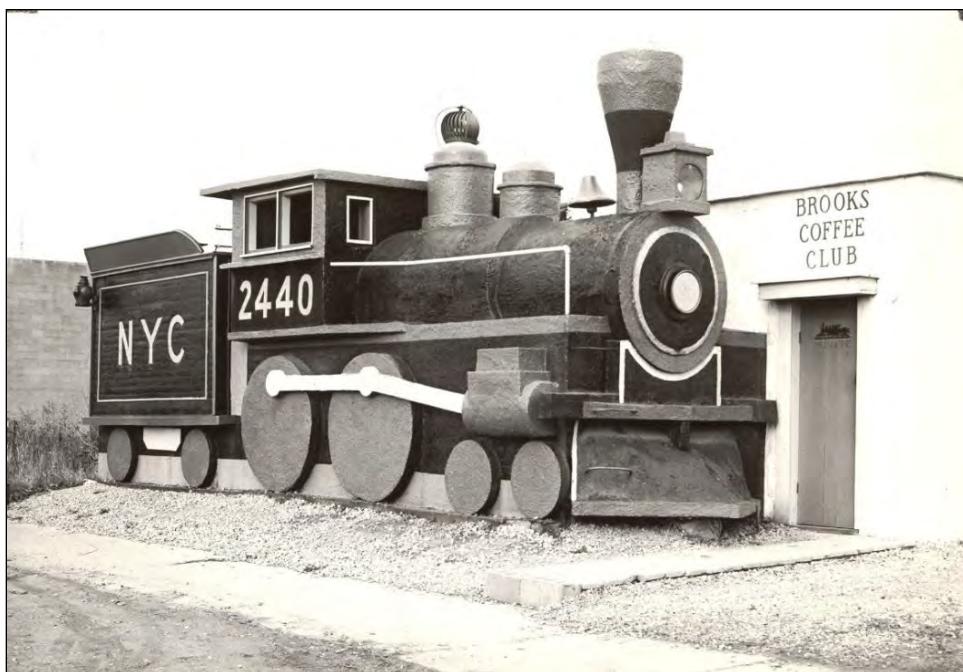


Figure 92. Brooks Coffee Club (ROHS undated)

⁴²² "Bonds in Trainloads Supplant Hamburgers," *Detroit Evening Times*, May 20, 1945, 3; W.T. Rabe, "Coffee Bar kept kids and parents on the Woodward Avenue track," *Detroit Free Press*, May 1, 1991, 15; "Independent Restaurant," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1943, 84; Mark Belaire, "Why Bill Demands Closed Door Policy," *Detroit Free Press*, April 8, 1945, 13; 'Hamburger King' Bill Brooks Dies," *Detroit Free Press*, September 28, 1963, 20.

⁴²³ Mark Belaire, "Disappointed Hunter Trusses Jackrabbit," *Detroit Free Press*, November 29, 1945, 20.

⁴²⁴ Robert Musial, "All aboard the Lionel Express," *Detroit Free Press*, November 19, 1978, 121.

The Busy Oak Restaurant was at 507 South Washington Avenue, operating from at least 1964 to 1990. In 1984, it was announced in a newspaper advertisement that the restaurant was under new management.⁴²⁵ It was owned by Andreas Polemitis for a period of time.⁴²⁶

A Dairy Queen was built between 1951 and 1957 at the northwestern corner of South Rochester Road and East Lawrence Avenue (3201 Rochester Road) (Figure 93).⁴²⁷ As it was not listed in a 1955 newspaper advertisement, it was more likely constructed between 1955 and 1957. It was remodeled prior to 2002.⁴²⁸



Figure 93. Dairy Queen (ROHS undated)

Enners Grill was at 201 West Fourth Street (Figure 94). A cobbler was at this site in 1916, followed by a shoe shop in 1921 and a store in 1926.⁴²⁹ In 1950, a restaurant was here. It may or may not be the same building visible in earlier Sanborn maps. Either it was a new build, or it was

⁴²⁵ Busy Oak Restaurant Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1984, 76.

⁴²⁶ Andreas C. "Andy" Polemitis Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 2007, 20.

⁴²⁷ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴²⁸ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2002, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴²⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1921, and 1926).

simply extended to the south.⁴³⁰ The building is currently occupied by Little Brothers Burgers. The exterior of the building retains its white tile exterior cladding shown in the photograph.



Figure 94. Enners Grill (ROHS undated)

Hedge's Wigwam was a popular restaurant in Michigan from 1927 until 1967. The restaurant had a Native American theme and a cafeteria-style buffet.⁴³¹ An advertisement placed in 1937 advertised a table service dining room at Woodward Avenue and 12 Mile Road, just north of the Shrine of the Little Flower, and a cafeteria at Woodward Avenue and 10 Mile Road (now Triangle Park) in Pleasant Ridge.⁴³² The owner Roy Hedge passed away in 1955 and left the business to his longtime employees.⁴³³

A Howard Johnson's restaurant was built at 3310 North Woodward Avenue prior to 1951.⁴³⁴ It later became a Ground Round, which was demolished between 1987 and 1999 for a Walgreens (30852 Woodward Avenue).⁴³⁵

⁴³⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁴³¹ Royal Oak, "5 Royal Oak Restaurants I miss the most," March 5, 2016, accessed January 10, 2024, <https://www.royaloak.org/5-royal-oak-restaurants-that-are-missed/>.

⁴³² Hedge's Wigwam Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, May 2, 1937, 9.

⁴³³ Royal Oak, "5 Royal Oak Restaurants I miss the most," March 5, 2016, accessed January 10, 2024, <https://www.royaloak.org/5-royal-oak-restaurants-that-are-missed/>.

⁴³⁴ Water Winter Wonderland, "Howard Johnson's Restaurant," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/diningdetail.aspx?id=3883&type=13>; NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴³⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1987 and 1999, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

Mel's Carry Outs was at the southwestern corner of North Washington Avenue and Glenn Frey Drive (formerly a continuation of Willis Avenue). The house was constructed between 1921 and 1926. A garage was to the rear of the house.⁴³⁶ By 1950, a small front porch had been replaced by an attached, one-story, tiled store which extended the full width of the property (Figure 95).⁴³⁷ A store addition is not visible in 1951 or 1957 aerials, but it is visible in a 1967 aerial.⁴³⁸ The house was demolished between 1967 and 1973.⁴³⁹ The property is now the location of a parking lot for Royal Oak Middle School (formerly a high school).⁴⁴⁰



Figure 95. Mel's Carry Outs (ROHS undated)

The Onion Roll Deli was at 302 North Woodward Avenue (now 27302 Woodward Avenue). The building was constructed between 1957 and 1967.⁴⁴¹ A 1975 advertisement claimed it had the biggest sandwiches in town. The deli also offered party trays, breakfast anytime, and carry-out

⁴³⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

⁴³⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁴³⁸ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, 1957, and 1967, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴³⁹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed January 3, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁴⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁴⁴¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

(Figure 96).⁴⁴² A 1989 for-sale advertisement described the deli as seating 24 people, with parking for 24 cars.⁴⁴³ The restaurant closed in 2012, after more than 40 years in business. In 2016, it reopened as O.W.L., which serves Mexican-American food as well as more typical diner fare. The 1,000-ft² space, redesigned by Ron & Roman architects of Birmingham, seats 15 people and retains the historic sign, which has been painted black.⁴⁴⁴



Figure 96. The Onion Roll Deli (Pinterest.com undated)

Pasquale's Family Restaurant opened in 1954 in a building now occupied by the Red Coat Tavern on the eastern side of Woodward Avenue (31542 Woodward Avenue) (Figure 97). It was originally owned by Pasquale Del Giudice and specialized in pizza and pasta.⁴⁴⁵ As of 1970, it was owned by Paul and Al Del Giudice, who also operated the Roman Gate restaurant about a half-mile away. That year, they constructed a new building for Pasquale's across Woodward Avenue from the old one (at 31555 Woodward Avenue).⁴⁴⁶ Pasquale's closed in 2019 after 65 years in business.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴² Onion Roll Deli Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, October 23, 1975, 93.

⁴⁴³ Business Opportunities, *Detroit Free Press*, June 17, 1989, 34.

⁴⁴⁴ Mark Kurlyandchik, "O.W.L. offers diner fare with Mexican flair in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, July 21, 2016, D2.

⁴⁴⁵ Micah Walker, "Pasquale's pizzeria closing after 65 years in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 2019, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2019/03/08/pasquales-family-restaurant-royal-oak-closing/3108031002/>.

⁴⁴⁶ Chuck Thurston, "Hollywood to Royal Oak, That's Some Chariot Trip," *Detroit Free Press*, May 28, 1970, 56.

⁴⁴⁷ Micah Walker, "Pasquale's pizzeria closing after 65 years in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, March 8, 2019, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2019/03/08/pasquales-family-restaurant-royal-oak-closing/3108031002/>.



Figure 97. Pasquale's on the east side of Woodward Avenue (ROHS ca. 1965)

Sunrise Family Restaurant was at the northwestern corner of East 11 Mile Road and North Alexander Avenue (Figure 98). The building appears to have been constructed between 1941 and 1951.⁴⁴⁸ It is labeled as a store on the 1931/1950 Sanborn map.⁴⁴⁹ A 1962 for-sale advertisement described the building as a beer/wine/grocery store.⁴⁵⁰ The building was subsequently occupied by the Sunrise Restaurant. It has been remodeled and is now occupied by the Village Grill Cafe & Family Restaurant.

⁴⁴⁸ NETROnline, topo map and aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1941 and 1951, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁴⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁴⁵⁰ Business Opportunities, *Detroit Free Press*, April 8, 1962, 46.



Figure 98. Sunrise Family Restaurant (ROHS undated)

The Susie Q was at what was then 2216 North Woodward Avenue (now 29402 Woodward Avenue).⁴⁵¹ It opened in October 1942 with 30 seats and one menu item: fish and chips. “Chick ‘N Chips by Susie-Q” was added to the menu in the 1950s (Figure 99).⁴⁵² It served these famous menu items for under \$4, which made it a popular stop for families during the day and young motorists cruising Woodward Avenue at night.⁴⁵³ By the time it closed in 1985, a year after its owner Al Bergel died, it seated 240 and had a menu people still raved about 10 years later. As of 1996, you could still get some of Susie Q’s menu items at Larry Payne’s Woodward Inn at 1881 Woodward Avenue at 12 Mile Road, formerly the old Pub 1881, as Payne had acquired the rights to the Susie Q recipes.⁴⁵⁴ Duggan’s on Woodward acquired the Susie Q fish and chips recipe.⁴⁵⁵ The site was redeveloped between 1987 and 1999 and is currently occupied by Pet Supplies Plus.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ Forward Look, “The Susie-Q Restaurant in Royal Oak, Michigan,” accessed December 19, 2023, <http://dodge.forwardlook.eu/postcards/cards/MIRoyalOakSusieQ.php>.

⁴⁵² Bob Talbert, “Woodward’s memory lane leads right to the Susie-Q,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1996, 75.

⁴⁵³ Forward Look, “The Susie-Q Restaurant in Royal Oak, Michigan,” accessed December 19, 2023, <http://dodge.forwardlook.eu/postcards/cards/MIRoyalOakSusieQ.php>.

⁴⁵⁴ Bob Talbert, “Woodward’s memory lane leads right to the Susie-Q,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 11, 1996, 75.

⁴⁵⁵ John Zussman, “Secret Sauce,” August 10, 2017, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.myretrospect.com/stories/secret-sauce/>.

⁴⁵⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1987 and 1999, accessed January 10, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>; Forward Look, “The Susie-Q Restaurant in Royal Oak, Michigan,” accessed December 19, 2023, <http://dodge.forwardlook.eu/postcards/cards/MIRoyalOakSusieQ.php>.



Figure 99. The Susie Q (ROHS undated)

Totem Pole Drive-In was at 1205 Woodward Avenue, three blocks north of 10 Mile Road on the eastern side of Woodward Avenue.⁴⁵⁷ It was owned by the Hunds, who also owned the Northwood Inn, Hund's Downtown, and Club Berkeley (2729 Woodward Avenue).⁴⁵⁸ A large totem pole stood near a sign (Figure 100), which advertised “Heap Good Food.” The restaurant was famous for its Big Chief burger.⁴⁵⁹ It offered curb service and an indoor dining room.⁴⁶⁰ It was a major hangout for the Woodward Cruisers in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁶¹ However, in the late 1960s, it attracted a rowdier crowd.⁴⁶² Following a series of police incidents that culminated in a shooting in 1967, the restaurant closed.⁴⁶³ It was replaced by a Burger King in 1972, which was demolished between 2012 and 2014.⁴⁶⁴ Prior to the death of the owner, Mrs. Mildred Hund, Duggan's on Woodward bought the recipe for Big Chief Burgers. The restaurant also contains

⁴⁵⁷ “Cars, Food and Fun,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 15, 2004, 95; “Royal Oak Teen is Killed in Traffic Dispute,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1967, 6.

⁴⁵⁸ “Fire Wrecks Restaurant in Berkeley,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 14, 1969, 21; “Action Line – Secret Sauce,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1980, 19.

⁴⁵⁹ “Cars, Food and Fun,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 15, 2004, 95.

⁴⁶⁰ “Weekend Treat!” Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, July 19, 1963, 17.

⁴⁶¹ Water Winter Wonderland, “Totem Pole - Royal Oak MI,” accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/diningdetail.aspx?id=4117&type=13>.

⁴⁶² John Zussman, “Secret Sauce,” August 10, 2017, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.myretrospect.com/stories/secret-sauce/>.

⁴⁶³ John Zussman, “Secret Sauce,” August 10, 2017, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.myretrospect.com/stories/secret-sauce/>; “Royal Oak Teen is Killed in Traffic Dispute,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 24, 1967, 6.

⁴⁶⁴ “Action Line – Secret Sauce,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 19, 1980, 19; John Zussman, “Secret Sauce,” August 10, 2017, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.myretrospect.com/stories/secret-sauce/>; NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2012 and 2014, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

relics from the Totem Pole.⁴⁶⁵ The site is now occupied by EZ Storage Royal Oak at 25538 Woodward Avenue (the northern corner of Woodward Avenue and South Lafayette Avenue).



Figure 100. Totem Pole Drive-In (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

Associated Resources

Table 8. Royal Oak Restaurants, Location, Date, and Status

Restaurant Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Aunt Fanny's	2244 North Woodward Avenue (now 29428 Woodward Avenue)	1854	No
Brooks Coffee Club	2440 North Woodward Avenue (possibly present-day 29838 Woodward Avenue)	ca. 1943	No
Dairy Queen	3201 Rochester Road	1951-1957	Yes
Enners Grill	201 West Fourth Street	Pre-1950	Yes
Hedge's Wigwam (table service)	Woodward and 12 Mile Road, just north of the Shrine of the Little Flower (possibly near 29110 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1937	No
Howard Johnson's	3310 North Woodward Avenue (now 30852 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1951	No
Mel's Carry Outs	Southwestern corner of North Washington Avenue and Glenn Frey Drive	House: 1921-1926 Store addition: 1926-1950	No

⁴⁶⁵ John Zussman, "Secret Sauce," August 10, 2017, accessed December 19, 2023, <https://www.myretrospect.com/stories/secret-sauce/>.

Restaurant Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Onion Roll Deli	302 North Woodward Avenue (now 27302 Woodward Avenue)	1957-1967	Yes
Pasquale's Family Restaurant	31542 Woodward Avenue	ca. 1954	Yes
Sunrise Family Restaurant	841 East 11 Mile Road	1941-1951	Yes
Susie-Q Restaurant	2216 Woodward Avenue (now 29402 Woodward Avenue)	ca. 1942	No
Totem Pole Drive-In	1205 Woodward Avenue (now 25538 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1951	No

Lodging

Hotels, and motels fulfil an important role of providing lodging for visitors to the community. Fifteen hotels and motels serviced the Royal Oak community, and six of those buildings are extant (Table 9).

The motels along Woodward sprang up in the 1940s and early 1950s and catered to salesmen, tourists, and people wanting to visit the newly expanded Shrine of the Little Flower, where a stone tower had been completed in 1936. People who had donated money came from out of state to see the church. Some visitors were on pilgrimages for St. Therese of Lisieux, whom the church honors. Rev. Charles Coughlin's radio show was extremely popular, and weekend dedications sometimes brought 25,000 visitors. Others wished to take their children to the Detroit Zoo. The in-ground pools at the motels were also open to neighborhood children in the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁶⁶

The Capri Hotel, built between 1951 and 1955, was at 3016 Woodward Avenue near Woodslee Drive. A postcard advertising the motel stated that all rooms were air conditioned and carpeted and had televisions and telephones (Figure 101). The motel also had rear rooms and entries.⁴⁶⁷ It was padlocked and demolished by the city in 1996. A Blockbuster was subsequently built on the site.⁴⁶⁸ Today, 30532 Woodward Avenue is occupied by a dance studio.

⁴⁶⁶ Amber Hunt Martin, "A Sight for Sore Eyes," *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 108 and 112.

⁴⁶⁷ Water Winter Wonderland, "Capri Motel," accessed December 27, 2023,

<https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3437&type=14>.

⁴⁶⁸ Bill Laitner, "Royal Oak plans to watch motels serving as homes," *Detroit Free Press*, June 13, 2000, 87.



Figure 101. Postcard showing the Capri Motel (top) and the Drake Motel (bottom) (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The City Motel is at 111 West 12 Mile Road. Between 1951 and 1957, a building consisting of a series of five sections was built just west of the building that remains standing.⁴⁶⁹ Between 1957 and 1964, the current building was built, and the five-section building was either replaced or modified.⁴⁷⁰ In late 1987 to early 1988, the second (western) building was demolished to make way for an access road to a fast-food restaurant to the south.⁴⁷¹

Holiday Motel opened in 1951 at 2712 North Woodward Avenue. It was part of the Gold Key Chain, which included several motels in southeast Michigan, Lansing, and Flint.⁴⁷² The motel was an attraction for businessmen and families.⁴⁷³ A circa 1952 postcard (Figure 102) advertised 30 units with individual, thermostatically controlled hot water heat, colored tile baths with tubs and showers, and carpeted floors.⁴⁷⁴ An advertisement in 1961 boasted 48 newly remodeled and refurnished rooms.⁴⁷⁵ The property was well kept with trees and bushes lining the landscaped

⁴⁶⁹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁷⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1964, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁷¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1987 and 1988, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁷² Water Winter Wonderland, "Holiday Motel," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=4206&type=14>.

⁴⁷³ Amber Hunt Martin, "A Sight for Sore Eyes," *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 112.

⁴⁷⁴ Water Winter Wonderland, "Holiday Motel," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=4206&type=14>.

⁴⁷⁵ "In Royal Oak - Holiday Motel," *Detroit Free Press*, July 7, 1961, 52.

yard. Flowers surrounded brightly colored umbrellas that shielded lawn chairs positioned around the pool. The motel later became known as the Comfort Motel, which was demolished in late 2003.⁴⁷⁶ It is now the site of a shopping plaza at 30278 Woodward Avenue, built between 2005 and 2009.⁴⁷⁷

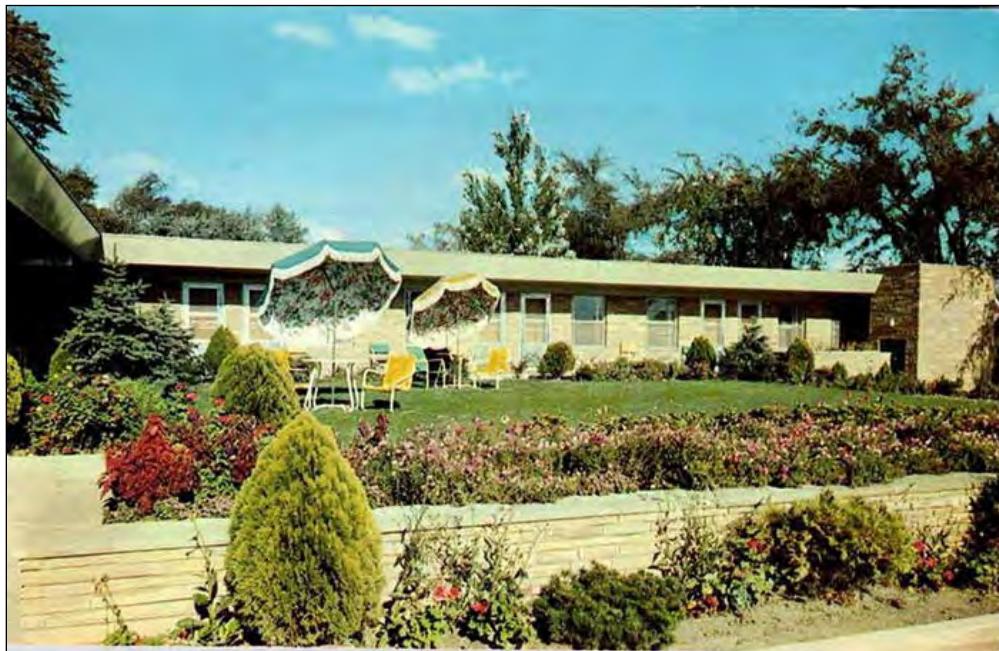


Figure 102. Postcard showing the Holiday (Water Winter Wonderland ca. 1952)

In 1916, Hotel Royal was at what was then 128 West Fourth Street (Figure 103). A doorway appears to have connected the hotel to a barber and pool establishment on its western side. These two front sections were both two stories tall. At the rear of each of these front sections was a doorway accessing a one-story section. Attached to the northern elevation of the rear section was a two-story stable (possibly used to store cars). All four of these sections were wood framed.⁴⁷⁸ By 1921, the front section, formerly occupied by the hotel, had become a grocery and confectionery (then 124 West Fourth Street), and the barber and pool establishment had become a restaurant. Half of the one-story section had been demolished, and the former stable appears to have been divided in half: one half serving as a garage and the other as fuel storage.⁴⁷⁹ The former location of the hotel had become a store by 1926 (then 114-124 West Fourth Street).⁴⁸⁰ In 1950, the former hotel space continued to be occupied by a store. The garage at the rear had been

⁴⁷⁶ Amber Hunt Martin, "A Sight for Sore Eyes," *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 112.

⁴⁷⁷ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2005 and 2009, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁷⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

⁴⁷⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

⁴⁸⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

demolished by this time.⁴⁸¹ This property appears to have been redeveloped between 1951 and 1957.⁴⁸² The former location of the hotel is now occupied by a one-story masonry building, which is home to the Creative Arts Studio and a bar and grill.

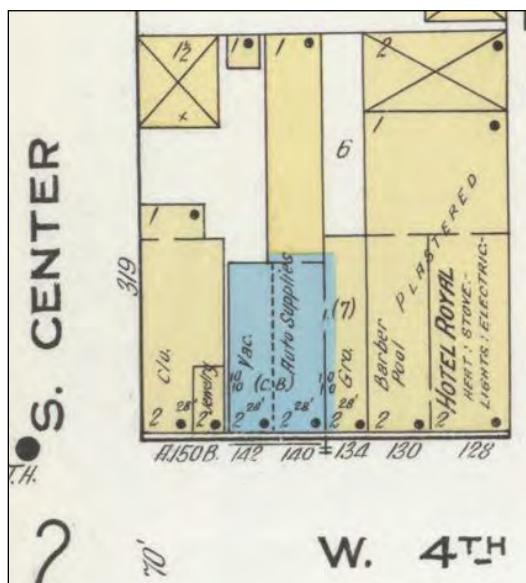


Figure 103. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1916, Sheet 3.

Now a boutique hotel known as Hotel Royal Oak, the Jones Royal Motor Inn at 811 East 11 Mile Road was built in three phases around a house in the center of the parking lot.⁴⁸³ The northern and eastern blocks were built between 1951 and 1957, and between 1957 and 1967, the eastern half of the western block was constructed.⁴⁸⁴ In 1973, the western half of the western block was under construction.⁴⁸⁵ From the 1950s to the 1980s, the motel offered guests modern amenities in close proximity to downtown.⁴⁸⁶ A 1970s postcard (Figure 104) advertised 75 rooms with color televisions, phones, air conditioning, and fully tiled baths and showers. Kitchenettes and meeting rooms were also available.⁴⁸⁷ The property subsequently fell into disrepair. Local business owners saw an opportunity to restore the building. The current owners acquired the hotel in 2014.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁴⁸² NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed January 8, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁸³ Hotel Royal Oak, "Our Story," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://hotelroyaloak.com/about-2/>.

⁴⁸⁴ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, 1957, and 1967, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁸⁵ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1973, accessed December 27, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁴⁸⁶ Hotel Royal Oak, "Our Story," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://hotelroyaloak.com/about-2/>.

⁴⁸⁷ Water Winter Wonderland, "Hotel Royal Oak (Jones Motel, Jones Royal Motor Inn)," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3472&type=14>.

⁴⁸⁸ Hotel Royal Oak, "Our Story," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://hotelroyaloak.com/about-2/>.

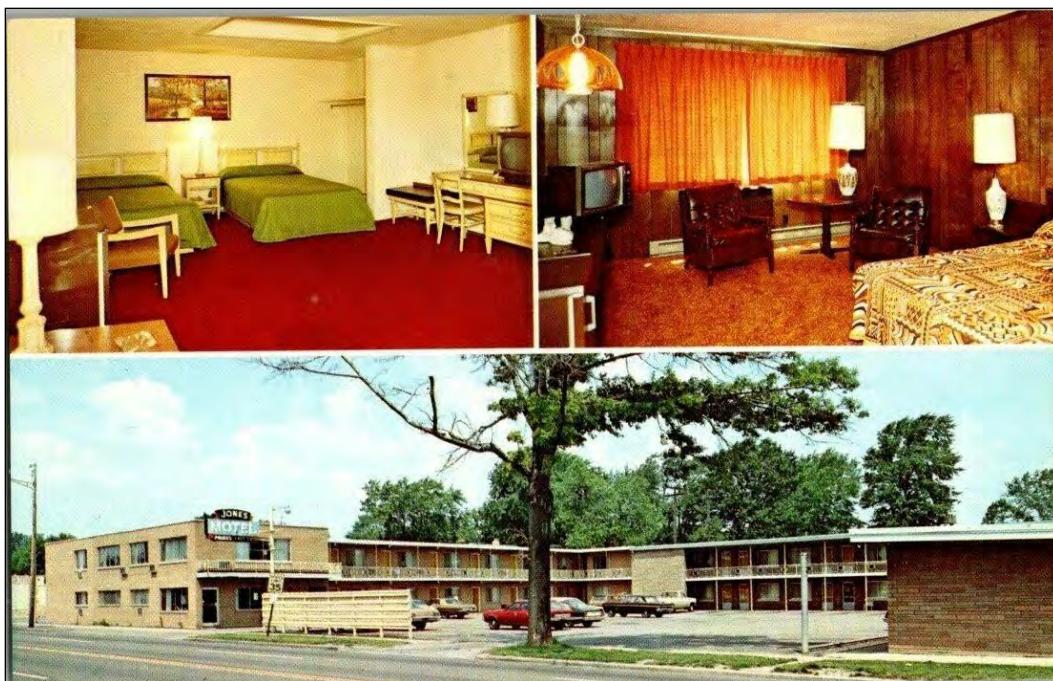


Figure 104. Postcard showing interior and exterior views of the Jones Motel (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The little-known Hotel Madrid, which dates to 1918, was on the second floor of 218 West Sixth Street (Figure 105). It contained 25 rooms and 12 shared bathrooms. Rooms were traditionally let by the week or month, some guests staying for years or decades.⁴⁸⁹ The hotel was accessed via a door near the building's southeastern corner. Between the door and the fanlight is a masonry sign with "MADRID" carved into it. In 2013, Skyward Suites acquired the property from the Sam and Frank Pallis family for more than \$800,000. Plans were announced in 2014 to transform the boarding hotel into a boutique hotel for visitors. The occupants of the hotel were forced to leave the building by 2015 due to a new city law which bans hotel stays exceeding 30 days.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ JC Reindl, "Little-known Madrid Hotel in downtown Royal Oak to go upscale," *Detroit Free Press*, August 17, 2014, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://www.freep.com/story/money/business/2014/08/17/little-known-madrid-hotel-in-downtown-royal-oak-to-go-upscale/14143373/>.

⁴⁹⁰ Courtney Bledsoe, "Royal Oak Hotel Goes from Boarding House to Upscale Boutique," *Patch*, August 19, 2014, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/royal-oak-hotel-goes-boarding-house-upscale-boutique>.



Figure 105. Hotel Madrid (ROHS undated)

Motel Berkley opened in 1951 at 2324 North Woodward (later 29582 Woodward Avenue), just south of the Palms Motel.⁴⁹¹ Based on the cars shown in postcards (Figure 106 and Figure 107), Motel Berkley was likely the first name of this establishment. The motel offered radiant heat, televisions, and radios.⁴⁹² By 1962, the name had been changed to the Drake Motel (see Figure 101).⁴⁹³ The name “Drake Motel” appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* until 1967.⁴⁹⁴ It first appeared in the *Detroit Free Press* as the “Dunes Motel” in 1976.⁴⁹⁵ When it served as the Dunes Motel, it featured 36 modern, air-conditioned units with kitchenettes, carpet, telephones, and televisions. The motel also featured a heated pool.⁴⁹⁶ In 1996, Royal Oak police surrounded Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s (see Jack Kevorkian page 214) car in the parking lot of the Dunes Motel following his meeting with a lady there.⁴⁹⁷ A fire in March 1999 caused \$250,000 worth of damage to the motel.⁴⁹⁸ It was demolished in late 2003.⁴⁹⁹ The site has not been redeveloped and now serves as an open-air marketplace.

⁴⁹¹ Amber Hunt Martin, “A Sight for Sore Eyes,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 108 and 112; Bill Laitner, “Owners told to improve motels,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 2000, 118.

⁴⁹² Water Winter Wonderland, “Drake Motel (Dunes Motel),” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3920&type=14>.

⁴⁹³ Erickson Hair and Scalp Specialists Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, April 15, 1962, 78.

⁴⁹⁴ Kathy Colton, “Fearful Detroiter Flee City,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 27, 1967, 9.

⁴⁹⁵ Susan Morse, “Highland Park Judge Found Guilty of Plotting Burglary,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 28, 1976, 13.

⁴⁹⁶ Water Winter Wonderland, “Drake Motel (Dunes Motel),” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3920&type=14>.

⁴⁹⁷ Jim Finkelstein, “Police detain Kevorkian after patient meeting,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1996, 25.

⁴⁹⁸ Bill Laitner, “Owners told to improve motels,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 2000, 120.



Figure 106. Postcard showing the Motel Berkley (Water Winter Wonderland ca. 1955)



Figure 107. Postcard showing the Dunes Motel (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

⁴⁹⁹ Amber Hunt Martin, "A Sight for Sore Eyes," *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 108 and 112.

The Oakotel Motel was built around 1945 at the southeastern corner of Woodward Avenue and West Webster Road at 2460 North Woodward Avenue (Figure 108 and Figure 109).⁵⁰⁰ A postcard issued not long after it opened advertised a café, terraces, modern furnished apartments, and sleeping rooms.⁵⁰¹ An advertisement was placed in 1948 that advertised 32 rooms and bath with moderate rates.⁵⁰² In 1962, an advertisement for the motel described it as containing cozy, comfortable rooms and kitchenettes, televisions, phones, and automatic laundry.⁵⁰³ In 1984, an advertisement was placed in the newspaper for a garage sale at the “Oak Motel” in preparation for its demolition. All the furniture, carpeting, appliances, and drapes were available for purchase.⁵⁰⁴ The motel was demolished by 1987.⁵⁰⁵ The only portion of the motel that may remain (with a modified exterior) is the building, now the home of Toarmina’s Pizza, which has the same triangular shape as the motel’s café. The property is now the site of the Oaktree Shops at 29918–29956 Woodward Avenue and a plaza at 2707–2715 West Webster Road.



Figure 108. Oakotel Motel (ROHS undated)

⁵⁰⁰ “Korean Veterans,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 22, 1954, 27; Amber Hunt Martin, “A Sight for Sore Eyes,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 112.

⁵⁰¹ Water Winter Wonderland, “Oakotel Hotel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=5879&type=14>.

⁵⁰² Oakotel Advertisement, *Shrine Herald Supplement*, December 26, 1948, accessed January 10, 2024, https://libraries.udmercy.edu/digital_collections/shrine_herald_shrher/1948_v001_shrher/1948-12-26_v001_n004_shrher.pdf.

⁵⁰³ “Motels to Rent,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 15, 1962, 57.

⁵⁰⁴ “Garage Sales Oakland,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 6, 1984, 55.

⁵⁰⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1987, accessed January 2, 2024, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

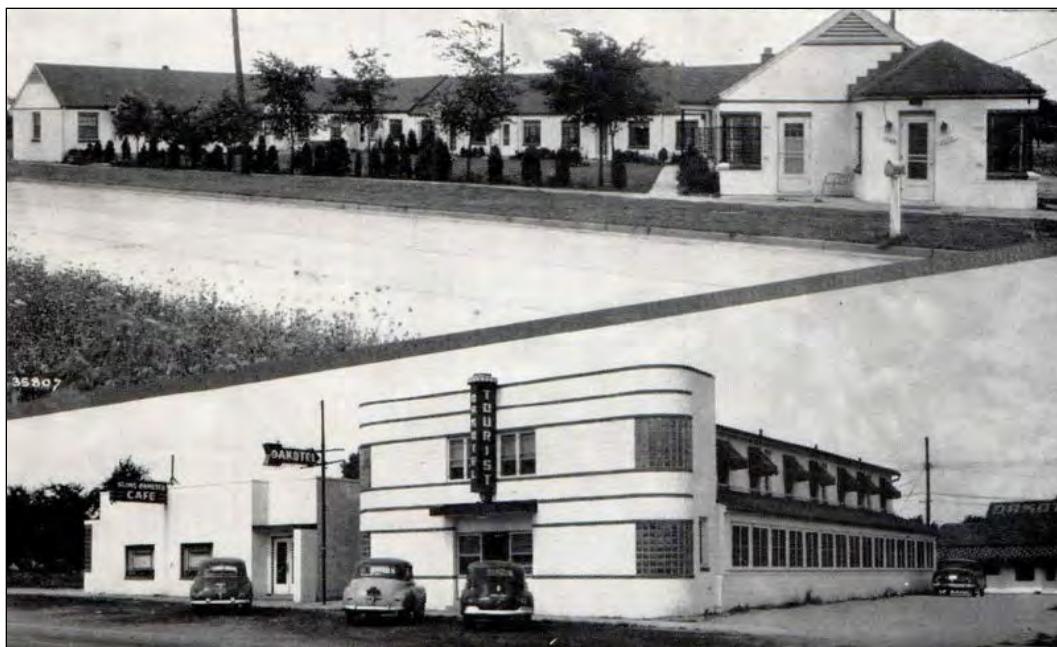


Figure 109. Oakotel Motel(MichiganWonderland.com undated)

The Palms Motel, at 29806 Woodward Avenue (formerly 2428 North Woodward Avenue), was built between 1951 and 1957.⁵⁰⁶ A circa 1970s postcard (Figure 110) advertised color televisions, telephones, tiled tub baths, stall showers, and individually controlled thermostat heating and air conditioning.⁵⁰⁷ As of 1986, the original sign remained.⁵⁰⁸ The motel remains, but the sign has since been replaced.

⁵⁰⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁵⁰⁷ Water Winter Wonderland, “Palms Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=4210&type=14>.

⁵⁰⁸ John Monaghan, “It’s the kind of art that glows on you,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 16, 1986, 141.



Figure 110. The Palms Motel (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

Built prior to 1951, the Sagamore Motor Lodge was at 3220 North Woodward Avenue (Figure 111).⁵⁰⁹ It was just south of a Howard Johnson's restaurant.⁵¹⁰ The hotel became a Travelodge in April 2002.⁵¹¹ During its last few years in operation, the hotel's name reverted to the Sagamore. It was demolished between 2014 and 2016.⁵¹² The site is now occupied by a commercial building at 30754–30766 Woodward Avenue.

⁵⁰⁹ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁵¹⁰ Sagamore Motor Lodge Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1970, 48.

⁵¹¹ Amber Hunt Martin, "Location wins out over luxury," *Detroit Free Press*, August 14, 2003, 168.

⁵¹² NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2014 and 2016, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.



Figure 111. The Sagamore Motor Lodge(Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The Saranay Motel was built at 1104 North Woodward Avenue just south of the Seville Motel in the late 1950s. A postcard (Figure 112), issued not long after it opened, advertised air conditioning, free radios and televisions, and ceramic tile showers and stated that the motel was fire protected.⁵¹³ The 24-room motel was relatively peaceful compared to other aging motels serving as housing.⁵¹⁴ It was demolished in 2019.⁵¹⁵ The property at 28202 Woodward Avenue is now the site of an AutoZone.

⁵¹³ Water Winter Wonderland, “Saranay Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=2541&type=14>.

⁵¹⁴ Amber Hunt Martin, “Location wins out over luxury,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 14, 2003, 165 and 168; Bill Laitner, “Royal Oak plans to watch motels serving as homes,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 13, 2000, 84.

⁵¹⁵ Water Winter Wonderland, “City Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=4208&type=14>.



Figure 112. Postcard showing the Saranay Motel (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The Seville Motel, at 1120 North Woodward Avenue (later 28300 Woodward Avenue), was built between 1951 and 1957.⁵¹⁶ Not long after it opened, a postcard (Figure 113) stated that all rooms were completely carpeted and air conditioned with free television, phone service, and Hi-Fi.⁵¹⁷ The motel, which remains open, somewhat resembles the Palms Motel in appearance.

⁵¹⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁵¹⁷ Water Winter Wonderland, "Seville Motel," accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3860&type=14>.



Figure 113. Postcard showing the Seville Motel soon after it opened (Water Winter Wonderland ca. 1951)

The Sorrento Motel, built prior to 1951, was at 2400 North Woodward Avenue.⁵¹⁸ It was referred to by that name from at least 1951 to 1962 in local newspapers. It later became known as the Kingswood Motel (Figure 114). This name appeared in local newspapers by 1983.⁵¹⁹ It eventually fell into disrepair and was converted to apartments.⁵²⁰ It was demolished in January 2003, and by 2005, the site at 29710 Woodward Avenue was occupied by a Fifth Third Bank.⁵²¹

⁵¹⁸ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>; Water Winter Wonderland, “Sorrento Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=4213&type=14>.

⁵¹⁹ Tom Walsh, “One-stop shopping for sex services alleged in Ferndale,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 7, 1983, 49.

⁵²⁰ Water Winter Wonderland, “Kingswood Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3859&type=14>.

⁵²¹ Amber Hunt Martin, “A Sight for Sore Eyes,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 112.



Figure 114. Kingswood Motel (Water Winter Wonderland ca. 2002)

The Uptown Motel was at 511 East 11 Mile Road (now a defunct address).⁵²² The motel was built between 1951 and 1957.⁵²³ A circa 1960s postcard (Figure 115) advertised 55 modern units with 28 “beautiful” kitchen apartments. They featured carpet, radios, televisions, and telephones.⁵²⁴ It was referred to as the “Uptown Motel” in newspapers until at least 1994.⁵²⁵ It later became known as the Select Inn, a name which first appeared in newspapers by 1997.⁵²⁶ The motel was eventually expanded to contain 173 units.⁵²⁷ In 2004, plans were announced for the redevelopment of the property into lofts by Morningside Group, which was also completing another loft development (Skylofts Royal Oak) at Fourth and Main streets and had completed Main Place of Royal Oak on Main Street the previous year.⁵²⁸ The hotel was demolished between 2002 and 2005.⁵²⁹ The site is now occupied by Skylofts Marketsquare at 101 Curry Avenue.

⁵²² Water Winter Wonderland, “Uptown Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3278&type=14>.

⁵²³ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951 and 1957, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.

⁵²⁴ Water Winter Wonderland, “Uptown Motel,” accessed December 27, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/lodgingdetail.aspx?id=3278&type=14>.

⁵²⁵ L.L. Brasier, “Suspect may be serial rapist,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 30, 1994, 15.

⁵²⁶ “Housekeepers,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 31, 1997, 47.

⁵²⁷ Bill Laitner, “Royal Oak plans to watch motels serving as homes,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 13, 2000, 87.

⁵²⁸ Erin Chan, “Condo lofts on the way for Select Inn site,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 18, 2004, 179.

⁵²⁹ NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2002 and 2005, accessed December 20, 2023, <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>.



Figure 115. Postcard showing the Uptown (Water Winter Wonderland undated)

The Washington Hotel, built between 1921 and 1926, was at 507 South Washington Avenue.⁵³⁰ In a 1966 newspaper article, it was referred to as the Hartrick Hotel.⁵³¹ As of 2000, it contained 29 units.⁵³² The hotel closed in early 2003.⁵³³ The property was sold for \$420,000 in 2004.⁵³⁴ The building now houses shops on the first floor with the second and third floors being residential.

Associated Resources

Table 9. Royal Oak lodging, location, date, and status

Hotel Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Capri Motel	3016 Woodward Avenue (now 30532 Woodward Avenue)	1951–1955	No
City Motel	111 West 12 Mile Road	1957–1964	Yes
Holiday/Comfort Motel	2712 North Woodward (now 30278 Woodward Avenue)	1951	No
Hotel Royal	114 West Fourth Street	Pre-1916	No
Jones Royal Motor Inn (Jones Motel)/Hotel Royal Oak	811 East 11 Mile Road (formerly 825 East 11 Mile Road)	1951–1957, 1957–1967, 1973	Yes
Madrid Hotel	218 West Sixth Street	1918	Yes
Motel Berkley/Drake	2324 North Woodward Avenue (later 29582 Woodward)	1951	No

⁵³⁰ Bill Laitner, “Owners told to improve motels,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 16, 2000, 118 and 120; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

⁵³¹ “Resident Dies in Hotel Fire,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 25, 1966, 2.

⁵³² Bill Laitner, “Royal Oak plans to watch motels serving as homes,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 13, 2000, 84.

⁵³³ Amber Hunt Martin, “A Sight for Sore Eyes,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 19, 2003, 112.

⁵³⁴ “Sold in Your Area,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 18, 2004, 94.

Hotel Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Motel/Dunes Motel	Avenue)		
Oakotel Motel	2460 North Woodward Avenue (now 29918-29956 Woodward Avenue) and 2707-2715 West Webster Road)	ca. 1945	No
Palms Motel	2428 North Woodward Avenue (now 29806 Woodward Avenue)	1951–1957	Yes
Sagamore Motor Lodge/Travelodge	3220 North Woodward Avenue (now 30754-30766 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1951	No
Saranay Motel	1104 North Woodward Avenue (now 28202 Woodward Avenue)	Late 1950s	No
Select Inn	511 East 11 Mile Road (now 101 Curry Avenue)	1951–1957	No
Seville Motel	1120 North Woodward Avenue (now 28300 Woodward Avenue)	1951–1957	Yes
Sorrento/Kingswood Motel	2400 North Woodward Avenue (now 29710 Woodward Avenue)	Pre-1951	No
Washington Hotel	507 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes

Finance

Royal Oak has had eleven banks operate in its boundaries, so with more than one branch. Six of the buildings are extant (Table 10).

Banks

The Royal Oak Savings Bank was established in 1907 by the state banking commission.⁵³⁵ The organizers included Charles G. Merrill, Louis Storz, and Jacob Erb.⁵³⁶ It was at the southeastern corner of Main and Fourth streets (Figure 116). In 1912, the bank had \$20,000 in capital stock, \$10,460.50 in surplus and undivided profits, with a total of \$245,152.05 in deposits.⁵³⁷ In 1913, the bank increased its capital to \$40,000.⁵³⁸ The new building at 400 South Main Street opened in 1923, across the street from the original bank. The building was designed by local architect, Frederick D. Madison to be “burglar proof.”⁵³⁹ It cost \$240,000 and was part of Royal Oak’s civic and commercial expansion program.⁵⁴⁰

⁵³⁵ Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 247.

⁵³⁶ “Royal Oak Banker Dead,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 23, 1921, 3.

⁵³⁷ Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 247.

⁵³⁸ “Royal Oak Bank Boosts Capital,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 14, 1913, 6.

⁵³⁹ “Royal Oak to have Burglar Proof Bank,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 27, 1921, 19.

⁵⁴⁰ “Million in Buildings will Mark Royal Oak Centennial,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 15, 1922, 16.



Figure 116. Royal Oak Savings Bank Postcard (Royal Oak City Hall ca. 1920)

By 1929, Royal Oak had three banks: Royal Oak Savings Bank, First National Bank, and The First State Bank.⁵⁴¹ Total deposits between the three banks was reported to be approximately \$1,000,000 due largely to the growth and development of the city.⁵⁴² In 1931, the Royal Oak Savings Bank and The First State Bank of Royal Oak merged to form the First State Savings Bank of Royal Oak. The bank collapsed the same year.⁵⁴³

The Royal Oak Savings Bank building reopened in 1931 as Guardian Bank of Royal Oak at the behest of Royal Oak citizens who sought a local bank.⁵⁴⁴ The Guardian Bank of Royal Oak merged with Highland Park Trust Company to form The Wayne Oakland Bank in 1939 (Figure 117).⁵⁴⁵ At the time, Charles S. Mott was a principal stockholder in the bank.⁵⁴⁶ By 1969, the Mott Foundation owned The Wayne–Oakland Bank. The bank listed assets of \$194 million and was the only bank in Michigan owned by a charitable trust.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴¹ "City's Banks on High Plane," *Detroit Free Press*, April 28, 1929, 7-3.

⁵⁴² "Banks Report Large Gains," *Detroit Free Press*, August 30, 1925, 4-10.

⁵⁴³ "Dalby Denies Theft Charge-Ferndale Bank Head Admitted to Bail," *Detroit Free Press*, December 22, 1931, 3.

⁵⁴⁴ "New Royal Oak Bank to Open," *Detroit Free Press*, September 10, 1931, 20.

⁵⁴⁵ "Summary of Business News," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1939, 25.

⁵⁴⁶ "Financial Shorts," *Detroit Free Press*, December 16, 1949, 30.

⁵⁴⁷ "Bank Bill Would Exempt Ruppe Family Holdings," *The Ludington Daily News*, April 1, 1969, 2.



Figure 117. The Wayne Oakland Bank, 1939-1989 (University of North Texas Libraries undated)

In the 1950s, large Detroit banks were acquiring smaller suburban banks. An article in 1957 listed The Wayne–Oakland Bank as one of 26 suburban independent banks that were in operation within 25 mi of Detroit.⁵⁴⁸ The Wayne–Oakland Bank constructed the first drive-in bank in Oakland County at Stephenson Highway and 11 Mile Road in 1951.⁵⁴⁹ A second drive-in bank was constructed southwest of the Red Run Drive and Campbell Road intersection in 1960.⁵⁵⁰ By 1966, The Wayne–Oakland Bank had five branches in Royal Oak: 400 South Main Street, 114 South Stephenson Highway, 1821 North Campbell Road (Figure 118), and 3127 North Woodward Avenue.⁵⁵¹ In 1967, The Wayne–Oakland Bank was one of eight Michigan banks that joined the American Express Company's credit card plan offering card holders a minimum of \$2,000 in credit.⁵⁵² In 1974, The Wayne–Oakland Bank introduced Anytime Teller, a 24-hour banking service.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁸ "26 Suburban Banks Survive," *Detroit Free Press*, January 15, 1957, 17.

⁵⁴⁹ "Drive-In Bank to be Built," *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1951, 8.

⁵⁵⁰ "Bank Plans Royal Oak Auto Unit," *Detroit Free Press*, December 9, 1960, 49.

⁵⁵¹ "The Wayne Oakland Bank," *Detroit Free Press*, March 23, 1966, 8-B.; Royal Oak Historical Society, "12 Mile Rd. & Woodward, October 1931" Photograph, Royal Oak Historical Society Facebook page, accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3220678011276715&set=pb.100064439719485.-2207520000>.

⁵⁵² "Eight Join Card Plan of American Express," *Detroit Free Press*, February 28, 1967, 4-B.

⁵⁵³ "The Wayne-Oakland Bank Announces Anytime Teller," *Detroit Free Press*, January 10, 1974, 6.

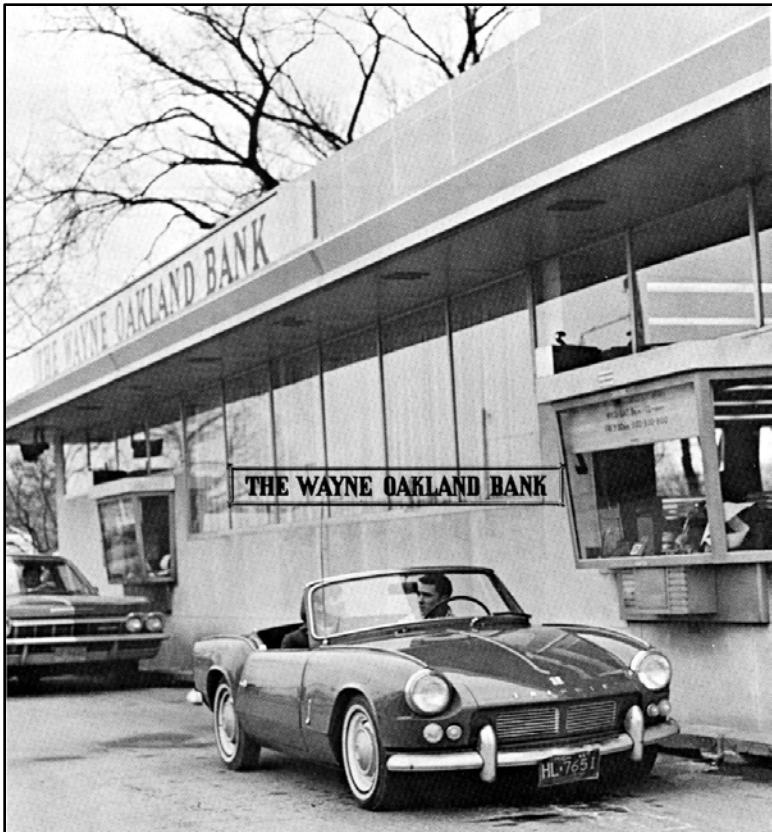


Figure 118. The Wayne Oakland Bank at 1821 North Campbell Road (ROHS undated)



Figure 119. The Wayne Oakland Bank at Fourth and Williams streets (ROHS undated)

The First American Bank Corporation began the process of acquiring The Wayne–Oakland Bank as an affiliate in 1979. At the time, The Wayne–Oakland Bank had \$450 million in assets. The merger was presented as elevating First American Bank to one of the 100 largest bank holding companies in the United States.⁵⁵⁴ In July 1980, First American Bank announced the purchase of The Wayne–Oakland Bank, which was the 21st affiliate bank.⁵⁵⁵ The Wayne–Oakland Bank changed its name to First of America Bank–Wayne Oakland in 1983. In 1987, the bank moved its headquarters from Royal Oak to Troy, Michigan.⁵⁵⁶ First of America Banks became National City Bank in 1998.⁵⁵⁷ National City Bank operated out of the Royal Oak Savings Bank building until 2000.⁵⁵⁸ Around that time, there was much discussion about demolishing the building for downtown development.⁵⁵⁹ The Royal Oak Savings Bank Block was listed as a local historic district in 2000, saving it from ruin.⁵⁶⁰

The First State Bank of Royal Oak was founded in 1911. The bank began construction of a larger building to accommodate the growth in Royal Oak's population in 1921.⁵⁶¹ The new building at Washington Avenue and Fourth Street opened on March 18, 1922. The building was designed by architect Frederick D. Madison and the general contractor was N.A. Starr (Figure 120 and Figure 121).⁵⁶² In 1931, the Royal Oak Savings Bank and The First State Bank of Royal Oak merged to form the First State Savings Bank of Royal Oak. The bank collapsed the same year.⁵⁶³ The building is no longer extant.

⁵⁵⁴ "Kalamazoo Bank Firm want to Acquire Wayne Oakland," *Detroit Free Press*, July 15, 1979, 16D.

⁵⁵⁵ "Business Update-First American Bank Corp.," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, July 6, 1980, 1D.

⁵⁵⁶ USBankLocations.com, "First of America Bank-Wayne Oakland," accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.usbanklocations.com/first-of-america-bank-wayne-oakland-1009.shtml/>.

⁵⁵⁷ "Bank Name Change," *Petosky News-Review*, November 2, 1998, A10.

⁵⁵⁸ Reynolds L. Smith, The Friendly Bank, Royal Oak Historical Society, accessed September 25, 2023, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/fourth-%26-main-remembered/>.

⁵⁵⁹ "Growing Pains," *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1999, B1.

⁵⁶⁰ Robert Carr, "Historic District Approved for Old Bank," ALM Global LLC, accessed September 26, 2023, <https://www.globest.com/sites/globest/2000/12/06/historic-district-approved-for-old-bank/>.

⁵⁶¹ "First State Bank of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, April 29, 1923, 35.

⁵⁶² "Detroit Suburb Adds Financial Structure," *Detroit Free Press*, May 8, 1921, 18.

⁵⁶³ "Dalby Denies Theft Charge-Ferndale Bank Head Admitted to Bail," *Detroit Free Press*, December 22, 1931, 3.



Figure 120. First State Bank, Fourth Street and Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)



Figure 121. First State Bank, Fourth Street and Washington Avenue (ROHS undated)

The First National Bank of Royal Oak opened on March 28, 1925.⁵⁶⁴ By 1927, plans were in place to construct a new building at the intersection of Main and Third streets (Figure 122).⁵⁶⁵ The formal opening of the bank was scheduled for May 5, 1928.⁵⁶⁶ After the closure of The Royal Oak Savings Bank and the First State Bank of Royal Oak earlier in the month, First

⁵⁶⁴ "New Bank Open Today; Jewell is the Cashier," *The Escanaba Daily Press*, March 28, 1925, 8.

⁵⁶⁵ "First National Bank, Royal Oak, to Build," *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1927, 5.

⁵⁶⁶ "\$100,000 Hauled in Streets," *Detroit Free Press*, April 26, 1928, 2.

National Bank closed on June 27, 1931, as a result of heavy withdrawals. At this time, the bank was placed in the hands of national bank examiners.⁵⁶⁷ The First National Bank of Royal Oak issued National Bank Notes in \$5 bills. A total of 58,312 Series 1902 bank notes (Figure 123) were issued between 1925–1929, and 22,356 Series 1929 Type 1 notes (Figure 124) were printed from 1929 to 1933.⁵⁶⁸

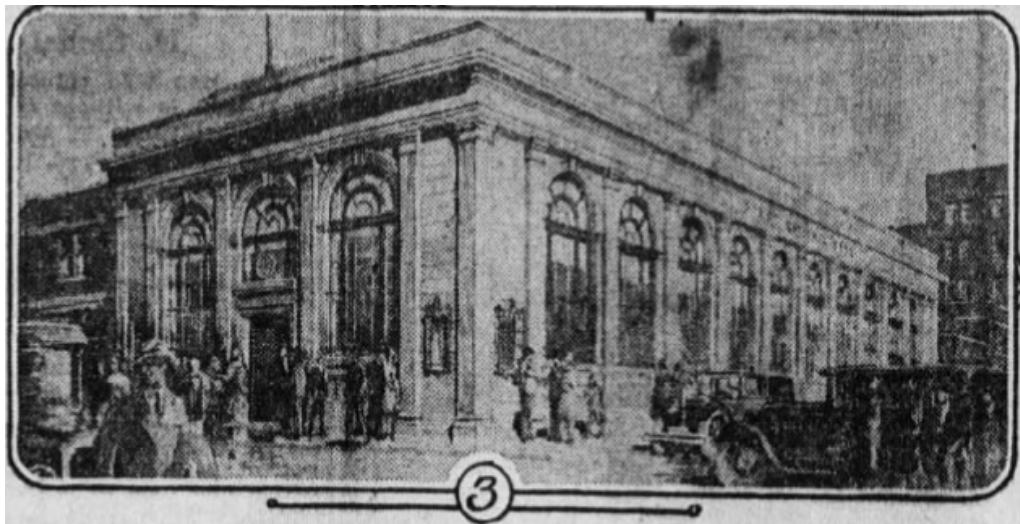


Figure 122. The First National Bank of Royal Oak architect drawing (*Detroit Free Press* 1927)

⁵⁶⁷ "Royal Oak Bank Taken Over by U.S. Officers," *Lansing State Journal*, June 27, 1931, 4.

⁵⁶⁸ Birmingham Michigan National Banks, "Historical Items from Royal Oak National Bank," accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.birminghammichiganbank.com/royal-oak-1/>.



Figure 123. First National Bank of Royal Oak Series 1902 bank note (Birmingham Michigan National Banks undated)



Figure 124. First National Bank of Royal Oak 1929 Type 1 Series bank note, (Birmingham Michigan National Banks undated)

In 1957, Standard Federal Savings & Loan Association opened its first branch outside of Detroit City limits in Royal Oak. The bank was at 1406 North Woodward Avenue (presently 28746 Woodward Avenue) near 12 Mile Road.⁵⁶⁹ The bank experienced several acquisitions, mergers, and name changes including Peoples Federal Savings and Loan Association in 1982, which included the branch in Royal Oak.⁵⁷⁰ The bank changed its name to LaSalle Bank in 2005, and to finally Bank of America in 2008.⁵⁷¹

Peoples Federal Savings and Loan Association of Detroit opened in 1940.⁵⁷² A new branch opened at 3100 North Woodward Avenue in Royal Oak in 1961 (Figure 125).⁵⁷³ The building was designed by Birkerts and Straub architecture firm in Birmingham, Michigan. The firm won an Award of Merit award by the Detroit Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for the building in 1963.⁵⁷⁴



Figure 125. Peoples Federal Savings (Detroit Free Press 1961)

St. Dennis Parish Credit Union operated in Royal Oak from 1959 to 1984. The credit union served the St. Dennis parishioners until membership was opened to the Royal Oak Community

⁵⁶⁹ "Mary's First Savings Account," *Detroit Free Press*, February 5, 1957, 5.

⁵⁷⁰ "Etcetera-Standard Federal Savings & Loan," *Detroit Free Press*, February 11, 1982, 9D.

⁵⁷¹ "Standard Federal Becomes 'LaSalle,'" Crain's Grand Rapids Business, August 26, 2005, accessed September 29, 2023, <https://www.crainsgrandrapids.com/uncategorized/standard-federal-becomes-lasalle-2/>; "Bank-Standard Federal to be LaSalle," *Detroit Free Press*, August 13, 2005, 13A.

⁵⁷² "New Peoples Savings, Loan Firm Formed," *Detroit Free Press*, February 1, 1940, 20.

⁵⁷³ Peoples Federal Savings Advertisement, *Detroit Free Press*, December 13, 1961, 2.

⁵⁷⁴ "2 Firms Share Design Awards," *Detroit Free Press*, October 17, 1963, 16A.

and became known as Royal Oak Community Credit Union in 1984. In 2007, the name was changed to OUR Credit Union, and now serves the state of Michigan.⁵⁷⁵ OUR Credit Union headquarters is at 726 South Washington Avenue and was constructed ca. 1980.⁵⁷⁶ As of 2023, the bank had four additional branches including a second branch in Royal Oak, one in Shelby Township, one in Troy, and one in Warren, Michigan.⁵⁷⁷

The Sterling Savings and Loan Association moved its headquarters from Pontiac, Michigan to Royal Oak in 1986.⁵⁷⁸ The bank was at 255 Troy Street.⁵⁷⁹ In 1988, the bank changed its name to Sterling Savings Bank. It became a stock savings bank in 1989, and changed its name to Sterling Savings Bank, FSB. The bank changed its name again in 1992 to Sterling Bank and Trust, FSB, and acquired Newport Federal Savings Bank the following year. The bank relocated to Southfield, Michigan, in 1996.⁵⁸⁰

Associated Resources

Table 10. Royal Oak Financial Centers, Location, Date, and Status

Bank Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Royal Oak Savings Bank	Southeastern corner of Main and Fourth streets	1907	No
Royal Oak Savings Bank; First State Savings Bank of Royal Oak; Guardian Bank of Royal Oak; First of America Bank-Wayne Oakland; National City Bank	400 South Main Street	1923	Yes
First National Bank	Unknown	1925	Unknown
First National Bank	Main and Third streets	1928	Yes
The First State Bank	Unknown	1911	-
The First State Bank	Washington Avenue and Fourth Street	1921	No
Wayne-Oakland Bank	114 South Stephenson Highway	1951	Yes
Wayne-Oakland Bank	1821 North Campbell Road	1960	Yes
Wayne-Oakland Bank	3127 Woodward Avenue	ca. 1965	No
Wayne-Oakland Bank	East Fourth and Williams streets	ca. 1966	No
Standard Federal Savings & Loan Association; Peoples Federal Savings and Loan Association; LaSalle Bank; Bank of America	28746 Woodward Avenue	1957	Yes

⁵⁷⁵ OUR Credit Union, “mission and History,” accessed September 25, 2023, https://www.ourcuonline.org/mission_history/.

⁵⁷⁶ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1973, 1983, accessed September 15, 2023.

⁵⁷⁷ OUR Credit Union, “Hours and Locations,” accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.ourcuonline.org/locations/>.

⁵⁷⁸ USBankLocations.com, “Sterling Bank and Trust, FSB, History,” accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.usbanklocations.com/sterling-bank-and-trust-fsb-history.shtml>.

⁵⁷⁹ “Accounting Clerk,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 5, 1986, 6G.

⁵⁸⁰ USBankLocations.com, “Sterling Bank and Trust, FSB, History,” accessed September 25, 2023, <https://www.usbanklocations.com/sterling-bank-and-trust-fsb-history.shtml>.

Bank Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Peoples Federal Savings and Loan Association of Detroit	3100 Woodward Avenue	1961	No
People's State Bank	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
St. Dennis Parish Credit Union; Royal Oak Community Credit Union; OUR Credit Union	Unknown	1959	Unknown
OUR Credit Union	726 South Washington Avenue	ca. 1980	Yes
Sterling Savings and Loan Association; Sterling Savings Bank; Sterling Savings Bank, FSB; Sterling Bank and Trust, FSB	225 Troy Street	ca. 1955	No

Education

Royal Oak has a long history of education centers within the community composed of public, parochial and post-secondary schools (Table 11 through Table 13). The first school in Royal Oak Township was established prior to 1825.⁵⁸¹ By 1837, the first frame school was constructed in District No. 1. This district was in the southeastern corner of Section 6, near the junction of Woodward Avenue and Coolidge Highway.⁵⁸² In Royal Oak Village, the honor of the first school went to a log cabin at the northeastern corner of Main Street and Lincoln Avenue.⁵⁸³ This school also served as a space for Sunday school by both the Methodists and Congregationalists. A third log school and Sunday school was at the northeastern corner of Fifth and Williams streets; the lot is now occupied by St. Paul Lutheran's church.⁵⁸⁴ The township's first frame school building was constructed in 1850 at the southwestern corner of Main and Third streets.⁵⁸⁵ This building continued to serve as the village school until 1870 when a new two-story building was constructed at the corner of Fourth and Williams streets.

Public Schools

The first modern-era school constructed in Royal Oak was the Union School (Figure 126). A call for construction proposals for the new building was placed in the January 22, 1902, *Detroit Free Press*. The notice indicated that the planned school included a basement and two-story brick building and was designed by Fisher Brothers Architects of Pontiac.⁵⁸⁶

⁵⁸¹ Owen A. Perkins, *Royal Oak, Michigan, The Early Years* (Royal Oak: Golden Jubilee '71, Inc., 1971), 91.

⁵⁸² Ralzelmond Allen Parker, *Reminiscences of Royal Oak, Michigan: The First Century* (Royal Oak: Royal Oak Historical Society, 2021), 27.

⁵⁸³ Royal Oak Woman's Club [ROWC], *Historical Pageant in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of Royal Oak Township* (Royal Oak: Royal Oak Woman's Club, 1922), 3.

⁵⁸⁴ ROWC, *Historical Pageant*, 4.

⁵⁸⁵ ROWC, *Historical Pageant*, 4.

⁵⁸⁶ "Proposals Wanted," *Detroit Free Press*, January 22, 1902, 7.



Figure 126. The Union School (Royal Oak Schools undated)

Because of an increase in the number of school children, the building plans for the district north of Eight Mile Road and east of Woodward Avenue (which included Royal Oak and Rochester) called for an expenditure of around \$2 million for 15 new buildings in 1925. Royal Oak was planning the construction of a new senior high school that was anticipated to cost no less than \$1.5 million for the building alone. The 10-ac site of the school was acquired for \$62,000. It would accommodate several hundred high school students.⁵⁸⁷

Royal Oak High School was constructed on a 10-ac lot and included an impressive auditorium, gymnasium, teachers' restrooms, and other high-class modern amenities that were expected at the time (Figure 127).⁵⁸⁸ The building was designed by Royal Oak architect Frederick D. Madison and constructed by R. R. Patterson of Detroit.⁵⁸⁹ Royal Oak High School originally opened in 1927 and cost \$877,455.61 to construct.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸⁷ "Northeast Area Schools Planned," *Detroit Free Press*, May 10, 1925, 82.

⁵⁸⁸ "Fine Schools Dot Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, 7-6.

⁵⁸⁹ "School to Take Rank with State's Finest," *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1927, 4-6.

⁵⁹⁰ "Dondero: School mourned as doors close," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 2006, 8B.



Figure 127. Royal Oak High School (Dondero undated)

In 1929, Royal Oak had 10 large brick schools including the modern high school constructed for \$1,000,000.⁵⁹¹ Despite having an established and excellent school system, the Royal Oak school board was not satisfied with the number of existing schools. With approximately 6,000 students enrolled in the Royal Oak school system and a rapidly rising population at the time, the school board felt it necessary to prepare for the anticipated increase in attendance. As a result, they prepared a bond issue of \$250,000 to be used to construct additional educational buildings.⁵⁹²

The Royal Oak school board voted to submit a \$250,000 bond issue for additions to the Longfellow and Whittier schools in early 1929. According to Frederick D. Madison, the board's architect, additions to the Whittier school would cost \$60,000, and an addition to and remodeling of the Longfellow school would cost \$166,000. Equipment in the two schools brought the cost to \$250,000.⁵⁹³

Royal Oak schools were hit with an outbreak of Diphtheria in 1941, resulting in an immunization campaign among Oakland County's 40,000 grade school students.⁵⁹⁴

In 1954, school enrollment increased in cities surrounding the heart of Detroit including Royal Oak schools. A possible cause cited for the increase was the trend to convert single-family homes into multiple dwellings at the time.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ "Fine Schools Dot Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, April 28, 1929, 7-6.

⁵⁹² "Fine Schools Dot Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, 7-6.

⁵⁹³ "\$250,000 School Additions Planned," *Detroit Free Press*, March 22, 1929, 23.

⁵⁹⁴ "Diphtheria Outbreak," *Lansing State Journal*, November 7, 1941, 22.

In 1955, the existing Royal Oak High School was renamed for Congressman George A. Dondero who also served on the Royal Oak Board of Education. The new Clarence M. Kimball High School was under construction in the same year.⁵⁹⁶ Finally, in May 1957, the new high school was completed and dedicated. The school is at 1500 Lexington Boulevard, between 13 and 14 Mile roads and at its dedication included 36 general classrooms, a 512-seat theater, and a 400-seat cafeteria.⁵⁹⁷ The building also was equipped with a gymnasium that could accommodate 3,300 spectators and a swimming pool with room for 500 spectators. The new building was completed at a cost of \$4,102,000.⁵⁹⁸

In 2006, Dondero High School closed due to a significant decline in enrollment between 2000 and 2006. As a result, the students of Dondero High School merged with those of Kimball High School, just 2 miles away, to form the new Royal Oak High School.⁵⁹⁹ The former Dondero High School building then underwent a \$28 million renovation before reopening as Royal Oak Middle School for the 2007–2008 school year.⁶⁰⁰

Associated Resources

Table 11. Royal Oak Public Schools, Location, Dates, and Status

School Name	Address	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Date Closed	Extant
Churchill High School	707 Girard Avenue	1964	1967–1973, 1973–1983	7/1/1998	Yes
Clara Barton (originally HS, became Clara Barton Jr. HS after 1927)	308 North Main Street	1913	1949	Fall 1979, demolished 1973–1983	No
District Office/Board of Education	1026 North Main Street	Pre-1926	1952	1988, demolished 1988–1999	No
District Office/Board of Education	–	1983	–	ca. 2014	No
Royal Oak High School/Dondero High School, Royal Oak Middle	709 North Washington Avenue	1927	1957, 1962, closed 2006, reopened 2007 as ROMS	–	Yes
Emerson Elementary	Lexington Boulevard and Marais Avenue	1959	1960	ca. 1980, demolished 2014–2016	No
Benjamin Franklin	1121 Mohawk Avenue	1927	1953	2003, demolished by 2005	No
Helen Keller Junior High	1505 North Campbell	1961	Became elementary	–	Yes

⁵⁹⁵ “Enrollment In Central Schools Up,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1954, 3.

⁵⁹⁶ “Royal Oak Plans to Honor Dondero,” *Detroit Free Press*, July 23, 1955, 4.

⁵⁹⁷ “Royal Oak School to be Dedicated,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 16, 1957, 20.

⁵⁹⁸ “Royal Oak School to be Dedicated,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 16, 1957, 20.

⁵⁹⁹ “Dondero High’s Last Days,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 2006, 1B.

⁶⁰⁰ “Dondero: School mourned,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 2006, 8B.

School Name	Address	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Date Closed	Extant
	Road		in 2007		
Jane Addams	2200 West Webster Road	1952	1953, 1961	–	Yes
Jefferson	2520 Nakota Road	1957	1967, 1978	1981	Yes
Kimball	1500 Lexington Boulevard	1957	1963, 1978	2006 (became Royal Oak Historical Society 2007)	Yes
Lincoln	1901 East 11 Mile Road	1953	1954	1998, demolished 2005–2009	No
Lockman	1426 Bellaire Avenue	1949	1952, 1954	1998 (Consolidated into Keller Middle School 1998), demolished 2014–2016	No
Longfellow	303 Maxwell Avenue	1919	1930, 1980	2008, demolished 2009	No
Mark Twain Elementary	4300 North Campbell Road (now 1712 Midtown Circle)	1954	1956, 1961	2008, demolished by 2009	No
Mary Lyon Junior High	3302 Rochester Road	1916	1952, 1953, 1961, 1965	1980, demolished 1982	No
Northwood Elementary	926 12 Mile Road	1923	1941	Demolished and replaced 2005–2009	No
Oak Ridge	503 East 13 Mile Road	1951	1953, 1964–1967, 1978	Demolished 1973–1983	No
Oakland Elementary	2415 East Brockton Avenue	1924	1928, 1950, 1953	–	Yes
Parker Elementary	3704 West 13 Mile Road	1919	1952, 1954, 1965, 1967–1973, 1973–1983	2003, demolished 2005	No
Starr Elementary	3412 Devon Road	1919	1952, 1954, 1962	1988, demolished 2005–2009	No
U.S. Grant	515 Kayser Avenue	1922	1952	1979, used by Longfellow students 1979–1980, demolished 1980	No
Union	825 South Washington Avenue	1902	1910	1924, demolished by 1926	No
Upton	4400 Mandalay Avenue	1952	1952	–	Yes
Washington	825 South Washington Avenue	1924	1947	1975, demolished 1983–1987	No
Whittier Elementary	815 East Farnum Avenue	1922	1945, 1977	2008, demolished ca. 2009	No

Parochial Schools

Educational opportunities for Royal Oak children included Catholic, Lutheran, and Christian parochial schools. St. Mary's Church and Academy was the first to form, and the school was constructed in 1912 (Figure 128).⁶⁰¹ The building was on South Lafayette Avenue between Seventh Street and Lincoln Avenue. The school occupied the first floor, and the church was on the second floor.⁶⁰² St. Mary's High School was constructed north of the church and academy building at 333 West Seventh Street in 1925 (Figure 129). St. Mary's constructed a new church and school on the western side of South Lafayette Avenue in 1953.⁶⁰³ The building currently accommodates pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students.⁶⁰⁴ The original St. Mary's Church and Academy building was demolished circa 1970.⁶⁰⁵ St. Mary's High School was closed circa 1985 and is now used as commercial space.

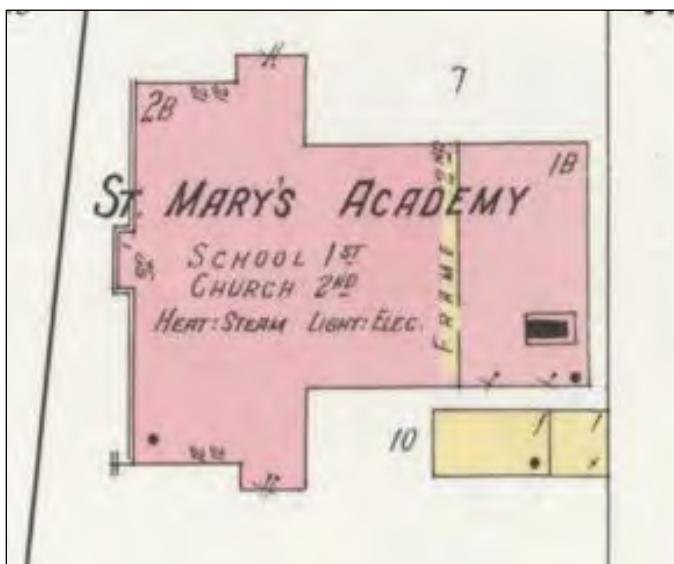


Figure 128. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1916, Sheet 4.

⁶⁰¹ George A. Ogle and Company, Standard Atlas of Oakland County Michigan including a Plat Book 1908: Royal Oak, Mountain View Park, Cass Lake, Big Beaver, Rose Centre, Huron Lake, (Chicago, Illinois: Geo. A. Ogle and Co., 1908), 63.

⁶⁰² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916).

⁶⁰³ Michigan Stained Glass Census, "St. Mary Catholic Church."

⁶⁰⁴ St. Mary's Catholic School, "Home," accessed September 21, 2023, <https://www.stmaryroyaloak.org/>.

⁶⁰⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

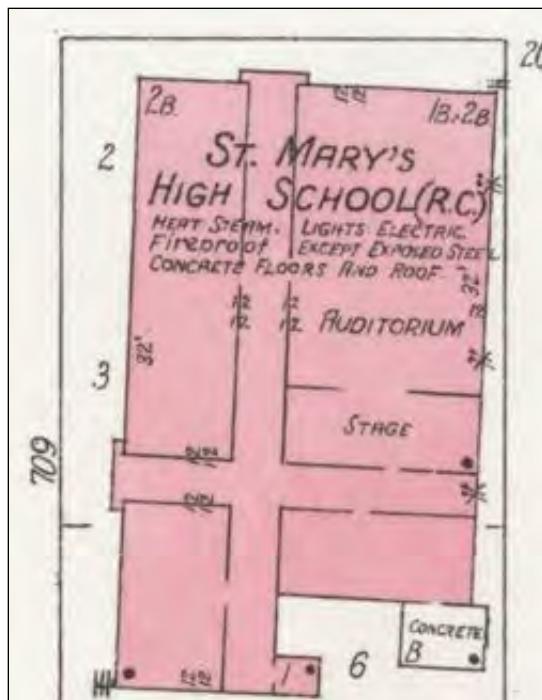


Figure 129. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1926, Sheet 20.

The National Shrine of the Little Flower Parish schools were established "in the firm belief that a Christian atmosphere afforded the most complete and effective climate for educating and developing the youth of any generation."⁶⁰⁶ From the original grade school, housed in a public school on Scotia Avenue, the school system has expanded to three schools incorporating preschool through 12th grade. School tuition for the first year was open was \$15.00 per family.⁶⁰⁷

The Shrine Catholic Grade School opened on December 11, 1938, at 12 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue with an enrollment of 325 students. The school cost \$130,000 to construct, which was collected from the Shrine of the Little Flower parish in 25-cent donations at every Sunday mass. Mr. Clair Ditchy, an architect and member of the parish, designed the present grade school, described in 1938 as "new, thoroughly modern, and completely equipped." The J.E. Utley Corporation, under general manager and parishioner Raymond LeVeque, was the contractor for the building. It was a modern 10-classroom structure, which also contained a library, medical clinic, and general and principal's offices. By the school's first anniversary, enrollment had increased to 425.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁶ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶⁰⁷ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶⁰⁸ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

In 1940, in anticipation of establishing a Shrine Boys' High School, high school classes began in some of the elementary school classrooms in the Coughlin building, the church undercroft, and under the narthex. Plans were made for a new building, and property was purchased east of the railroad, north of Vinsetta Road, and south of Northwood Boulevard. Grading for initial construction had begun when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred, and plans were put on hold.⁶⁰⁹

Meanwhile, the Sisters of Charity built the Little Flower High School for Girls on 13 Mile Road for \$350,000. The school was built on 18 ac that were donated by Father Charles E. Coughlin. It opened in 1941 with registration quickly reaching 150. Sister Barbara Geoghegan served as principal. Staff included Sisters Rose McConville, Myra Drain, Ancilla Marie Petricone, and Francis Anna Bunline. The school served students from Birmingham, Ferndale, Royal Oak, and Berkley.⁶¹⁰

Despite the delay of the boys' high school building, the school opened in 1942, using rooms in the grade school and the girls' high school buildings. In 1948, the Shrine of the Little Flower parish purchased the girls' high school from the Sisters of Charity. A boys' locker room, lavatories, and a dressing room were added. The facility reopened as a coeducational high school on September 13, 1948, as Little Flower High School. During its first year, the school enrolled 400 students, and faculty consisted of 13 Sisters of Charity, 5 priests, 2 laymen, and 1 laywoman. The school had a capacity of 580, and within 10 years, the enrollment was 635, resulting in some classes being held in the boiler room.⁶¹¹

With the desperate need for more room in the high school, more than 500 parishioners were mobilized to walk the streets in an effort to reach every family in the parish and obtain pledges for further building. Six new classrooms were built onto the grade school in 1955. By 1958, in the height of the "baby boom," registration swelled to 1,600 pupils. By 1963, negotiations began to enable Our Lady of Fatima, a neighboring parish, to join with the Shrine parish in operating the high school. In August of 1965, Our Lady of Fatima parish formally joined with Shrine parish to operate the school. Its name was officially changed from Shrine of the Little Flower High School to Shrine High School. A new wing was built at the eastern end of the building to accommodate 100 additional students. As a result of the partnership, Shrine High School became an Archdiocesan high school and Fr. Dennis Harrity was appointed principal. The school policy was organized by a lay Board of Supervisors, which was unique to Catholic schools at the time. Thomas P. Kirkwood was promoted from teacher to assistant principal of Shrine High School and was the first lay administer in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Principal Kirkwood succeeded Fr. Harrity as principal in 1970 and was the first lay principal at Shrine High School and within the Archdiocese of Detroit. By 1971, 735 students, from more than 30 other parishes and localities,

⁶⁰⁹ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹⁰ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹¹ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

attended the school. In 1980, Our Lady of Fatima parish withdrew from the operation of Shrine High School due to declining enrollment from their parish. This change resulted in the school returning to a parish high school operated by Shrine of the Little Flower parish.⁶¹²

As enrollment declined, the Shrine Catholic Academy was formed in 1993 to serve seventh and eighth grade students on the third level of the High School building. The school is an independent school with a separate principal, staff, curriculum, and schedule that shares facilities for drama, music, art as well as the biology and computer labs. The building was renamed Shrine Catholic High School and Academy to reflect the new student population.⁶¹³

The parish developed a Master Plan between 1995 and 2002 to assess all parish community needs. The plan focused on facility upgrades and development of ongoing ministry and spiritual life initiatives within the church. An ambitious fundraising campaign launched in 2003 to raise money to implement the Master Plan in phases for both church and school campuses. Numerous renovations and building expansions occurred between 2004 and 2009 including the construction of science labs in all three schools, a 15,000-ft² fieldhouse and gymnasium with a fitness center, an art room, and a performing arts center.⁶¹⁴

In 2017, the Early Childhood Center opened in Shrine Grade School to serve children ages three to five. The sixth-grade students were moved to the Academy building and a new outdoor sports field was built in 2021. As of 2022, the Grade School, with preschool for three-year olds through fifth grade, had an enrollment of over 600 students, the Academy accommodated more than 100 students, and the High School had over 300 students enrolled.⁶¹⁵

St. Dennis Catholic School was constructed in 1955. It opened in 1956 under principal Sr. Mary Alfred with 16 classrooms and 477 students. The school closed in 2010.⁶¹⁶ The school was demolished circa 2015.⁶¹⁷ St. Dennis and Guardian Angels Church in Clawson, Michigan, jointly purchased land to build Bishop Foley High School in Madison Heights, Michigan. The school opened in 1965. Bishop Foley High School is a college preparatory school with students from more than 60 private and public grade and middle schools.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹² Shrine Catholic Schools, “Mission and History,” accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹³ Shrine Catholic Schools, “Mission and History,” accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹⁴ Shrine Catholic Schools, “Mission and History,” accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹⁵ Shrine Catholic Schools, “Mission and History,” accessed April 5, 2023, <https://shrineschools.com/mission-history>.

⁶¹⁶ “Sad, Reflective Goodbye for Closing Royal Oak Church,” Patch Media, November 26, 2012, accessed September 18, 2023, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/sad-reflective-goodbye-from-closing-royal-oak-church/>.

⁶¹⁷ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 2014, 2016, accessed September 18, 2023.

⁶¹⁸ Bishop Foley High School, “About BFC,” accessed September 22, 2023, <https://www.bishopfoley.org/about-bfc/>.

St. Paul Lutheran School opened in 1916 with 11 students. The original wooden church southwest of the Fifth and Williams streets intersection was used as the school until 1951 when a new school was built at the northwest of the Sixth and Williams streets intersection. The school featured four classrooms, a library, office, gymnasium, and cafeteria. An addition was constructed at the southern end of the school in 1959. Currently, the school educates three- and four-year-old preschoolers to eighth grade students.⁶¹⁹

Sunflower Christian Preschool was founded in 1972 by the First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak. The school serves three- and four-year-old children.⁶²⁰ Luckett Christian Academy was operated by Royal Oak Missionary Church from 1975 to 2005.⁶²¹

It should be noted that the Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Mute Institute had its beginnings in Royal Oak. Trinity Church of Detroit orchestrated the formation of a Lutheran Orphanage in 1873 and selected Royal Oak for its location. Rev. G. Speckhardt was chosen to be the spiritual father and superintendent of the new orphanage. Before he entered the ministry, Rev. Speckhardt had spent time as a teacher of deaf students in Germany. Immediately prior to his appointment in Royal Oak, he was a pastor in Sebewaing, Michigan, and taught two deaf children secular and religious subjects. The children and their families moved to Royal Oak with Rev. Speckhardt to continue their education. Thirteen additional deaf students were under Rev. Speckhardt's tutelage 10 months after his arrival. Within a year of its establishment, it was decided to forgo the mission of the orphanage and instead to continue educating deaf children regardless of religious affiliation. The Royal Oak location was deemed unsuitable, and a new building was constructed on 20 ac on 6½ Mile Road between Van Dyke and Mt. Elliott Roads, in North Detroit.⁶²²

Associated Resources

Table 12. Royal Oak Parochial Schools, Location, and Status

School Name	Address	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Date Closed	Extant
Bishop Foley High School	32000 Campbell Road, Madison Heights, MI 48071	1965	ca. 1970	-	Yes
Evangelical Lutheran Deaf Mute Institute	Unknown, possibly northwest of the Third and Main Street intersection ⁶²³	1873	-	1874	
Luckett Christian Academy	115 South Campbell Road	ca. 1945	ca. 1955, ca. 1960, ca. 1980	2005	Yes

⁶¹⁹ Paul Lutheran School, "About St. Paul Royal Oak," accessed September 22, 2023, <https://sproschool.org/about-us/about-st-paul-royal-oak/>.

⁶²⁰ First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, "Sunflowers Christian Preschool," accessed September 22, 2023, <https://www.fpcro.org/preschool/>.

⁶²¹ Royal Oak Church, "Our Story," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.rochurh.org/about/>.

⁶²² Robert E. Erickson, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Detroit and Vicinity 1919, Detroit?, s.n., 113.

⁶²³ Kace Publishing Company, Illustrated Atlas of Oakland County Michigan 1896: Royal Oak, Washington Heights, Commerce, (Racine, Wisconsin: Kace Publishing Company, 1896).

School Name	Address	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Date Closed	Extant
St. Dennis School	1415 North Stephenson Highway	1955	ca. 1965, ca. 1970	2010, demolished 2014-2016	No
Shrine Catholic Grade School	1621 Linwood Avenue	1938	1955	-	Yes
Shrine High School	3500 West 13 Mile Road	1941	1948, 1965, ca. 2005	-	Yes
St. Mary's Church and Academy	721 South Lafayette Avenue	1912	-	Demolished ca. 1970	No
St. Mary's Church and School	628 South Lafayette Avenue	1953	ca. 1960	-	Yes
St. Mary's High School	333 West Seventh Street	1925	-	ca. 1985	Yes
St. Paul Lutheran School	508 Williams Street	1951	1959	-	Yes
Sunflower Christian Preschool	529 Hendrie Boulevard	1916	1955, 1962	-	Yes

Colleges

Baker College of Royal Oak

The origin of Baker College can be traced back to the founding of Muskegon College in 1888 by Woodbridge Ferris, who later became Governor of Michigan and a U.S. Senator. Eldon E. Baker established Baker Business University in Flint in 1911. In 1965, Baker Business University was acquired by Muskegon resident Robert Jewell, who brought both schools under a single academic group. Both colleges were authorized to grant an Associate of Business degree, and Baker Business University became Baker Junior College in 1974. In 1985, the colleges received regional accreditation from the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and the campuses were merged to form the Baker College System. After the Baker College system was authorized to grant a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in 1986, Baker Junior College became Baker College of Flint. In 1994, Baker College began offering online classes, and the Center for Graduate Studies opened in Flint, which represented the system's first graduate degree program. Record enrollment was achieved in 2001 with more than 21,000 students across the system. That same year, the Center for Graduate Studies was granted full accreditation from the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education. In 2005, the college attained a record-high enrollment of nearly 34,000. Enrollment surpassed 43,000 students in 2009.⁶²⁴

Baker College of Royal Oak, the new flagship campus, was constructed on the former location of the Kinsey–Garrett Funeral Home at the northwestern corner of West Fifth Street and South Lafayette Avenue between 2020 and 2022.⁶²⁵ The building was designed by Edge Design

⁶²⁴ Baker College, "History," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://www.baker.edu/about/get-to-know-us/history/>.

⁶²⁵ Baker College, "Baker College of Royal Oak Classes Expected to Begin January 2023," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://www.baker.edu/about/get-to-know-us/news/baker-college-of-royal-oak-classes-expected-to-begin-january-2023/>.

Associates, Inc.⁶²⁶ An underground parking garage is below the building. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on September 25, 2023.⁶²⁷

Oakland Community College

Oakland Community College was established on June 8, 1964, and opened in September 1965, on two campuses. The Highland Lakes campus used a renovated hospital, and the Auburn Hills campus was a former U.S. Army Nike missile site. Oakland Community College boundaries encompass 45 public and 37 private high schools. Initially, 3,860 students enrolled, which was a record number of students to enroll in a community college at the time. The Orchard Ridge Campus was opened in Farmington Hills in 1967 followed by Southeast Campus in Oak Park, which was replaced by the Southfield campus in 1980. Buildings in Royal Oak were purchased in 1980, and a new campus complex was constructed and opened in 1982.⁶²⁸ The college offers five associate degree programs, nearly 100 career programs, and has credit transfer agreements with more than 70 four-year institutions.⁶²⁹

The Royal Oak Campus is north of West Lincoln Avenue, south of West Seventh Street, east of South Washington Avenue, and west of South Main Street. The campus parking structures are southeast of the West Lincoln and South Washington Avenue intersection.⁶³⁰ The campus was designed by Straub Perritt Yaste Architects out of Clawson, Michigan.⁶³¹

Associated Resources

Table 13. Royal Oak Colleges, Location, Date, and Status

College Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Baker College of Royal Oak	420 South Lafayette Avenue	2020–2022	Yes
Oakland Community College	739 South Washington Avenue	1980–1982	Yes

Royal Oak Public Library

The Royal Oak Library formed in 1856 and began as a township library composed of 2,423 books. The library was kept in the township clerk's home, and his wife acted as librarian. The collection was not organized, recorded, or cataloged. The collection moved to the town hall

⁶²⁶ Baker College Royal Oak, "Baker College is coming to Royal Oak!," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://royaloakbaker.com/#:~:text=Our%20new%20campus%2C%20designed%20by,the%20city%20of%20Royal%20Oak>.

⁶²⁷ Baker College, "Cutting the Ribbon to Excellence: Baker College's Royal Oak Campus Unveils State-of-the-Art Facility," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://www.baker.edu/about/get-to-know-us/news/cutting-the-ribbon-to-excellence-baker-colleges-royal-oak-campus-unveils-state-of-the-art-facility/>.

⁶²⁸ Oakland Community College, "College History," accessed September 29, 2023, <https://www.oaklandcc.edu/about/college-history/>.

⁶²⁹ Oakland Community College, "About OCC," accessed September 29, 2023, <https://www.oaklandcc.edu/about/>.

⁶³⁰ Oakland Community College, "About OCC," accessed September 29, 2023, <https://www.oaklandcc.edu/about/>.

⁶³¹ Straub Pettitt Yaste Architects, "Oakland Community College Royal Oak Campus," accessed October 11, 2023, <http://www.straubpettityaste.com/Oakland-Royal-Oak/index.htm/>.

building and was open to the public on Saturday afternoons. On February 10, 1917, the township library reopened on the second floor of the Royal Oak Savings and Loan building at the Main and Fourth streets intersection. At this time the collection was organized to form a circulation library, and the library included a reading room. The City of Royal Oak purchased the collection in October 1922, which had grown to 7,694 volumes and included subscriptions to 68 periodicals.⁶³²

The library moved to the Merrill House at the southeastern corner of Second and Williams streets in 1923.⁶³³ The following year, the library moved to the first floor of 418 South Main Street, and the library rapidly developed. By 1927, the library was renting space on South Main Street, paying \$2,700 a year in rent. Royal Oak Mayor, Harold Storz, directed president of the Royal Oak City Library, Arthur A. May, to bring estimates for suitable sites and costs for a permanent library building.⁶³⁴ The same year, the library moved to the newly built Washington Square Building. In 1928, the library circulated nine books per capita, which was more than twice the average for other Michigan cities with similar populations. The library maintained library stations in the seven grade school buildings and featured story hours and reading clubs under the supervision of a "trained expert." By 1929, the library was governed by a board appointed by the city commission. At this time the library served 8,774 card holders and had 23,051 volumes.⁶³⁵ The library moved to the old First National Bank building at Main and Third streets in 1936.⁶³⁶

As the population of Royal Oak grew, so did the library's programs. In 1939, the library hosted twice-weekly Citizenship Classes, hosted a radio program on local station WJR, and displayed a collection of snakes, spiders, moths, beetles, and insects from Guiana.⁶³⁷ In the 1940s, the library hosted art exhibits and plays.⁶³⁸ By 1942, the Friends of the Library group formed and raised money to fund a phonograph record collection.⁶³⁹ In 1943, the library debuted a garden center in tandem with the Victory Garden Movement during World War II.⁶⁴⁰ The library hosted meetings for many groups and sponsored many community initiatives including the Home Building Clinic in 1946, which offered "practical assistance in planning and building small homes" with special emphasis on low-cost housing and provisions of the GI Bill of Rights to veterans.⁶⁴¹ In 1947, the

⁶³² "Oakland County News-Growth of Library Shows City Progress," *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1929, 8.

⁶³³ "Royal Oak Library Enters New Home," *Detroit Free Press*, November 4, 1923, 2.

⁶³⁴ "Royal Oak Starts Move Toward New Library Site," *The Unionville Crescent*, February 4, 1927, 3.

⁶³⁵ "Oakland County News-Growth of Library Shows City Progress," *Detroit Free Press*, October 27, 1929, 8.

⁶³⁶ "New Quarters Fitted Out for Royal Oak's Library," *Detroit Free Press*, March 9, 1936, 9.

⁶³⁷ "Around the Town with the Free Press Staff: What's Doing Today in Detroit, Free Citizenship Classes," *Detroit Free Press*, March 17, 1939, 11; "What the Radio Offers Today," *Detroit Free Press*, January 6, 1939, 12; "Market Plans Art Exhibit," *Detroit Free Press*, March 16, 1947, 2-6; "Detroit Finds Jungle Safer than Streets of Native City," *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1939, 1-3.

⁶³⁸ "On Exhibition," *Detroit Free Press*, May 4, 1941, 1-7; "Confined to A Wheel Chair," *Detroit Free Press*, September 8, 1946, 2-6; "Detroit Today: Three Short Plays for Children," *Detroit Free Press*, January 9, 1942, 16.

⁶³⁹ "Women's Clubs: Record Library Aim of Suburban Benefit," *Detroit Free Press*, February 11, 1942, 9.

⁶⁴⁰ "Garden Center Opens in Royal Oak Library," *Detroit Free Press*, March 28, 1943, 3-11.

⁶⁴¹ "Home Plan Clinic Set in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1939, 1-3.

library opened a branch library in the administration building of the Oakdale Garden Housing Project.⁶⁴²

By 1957, Royal Oak was planning the construction of a new library. The City Commission hired Charles Mohrhardt, assistant director of the Detroit Public Library, to consult on the size and layout of the new building.⁶⁴³ The new building at 222 East 11 Mile Road opened in 1963. The building included an art gallery space on the first floor complete with a 4 × 16-ft mural. The mural was completed by the Tints and Tones Art Association and had an oceanography scene. The library seemed to have a “cheerful” theme with multicolored bookshelves.⁶⁴⁴ The library also featured the Three Clowns sculpture and the Two Bears sculpture by Marshall Fredericks.⁶⁴⁵

The library continued to be a place for meetings, lectures, and presentations including art shows, a symposium for the elderly, stock market classes, the garden club’s chrysanthemum festival, film viewing, antique appraisals, and music concerts.⁶⁴⁶

In 1984, the library was designated a selective depository library by the U.S. Government Printing Office. This designation allows the library to house government publications and documents.⁶⁴⁷

Many women held librarian and director positions at the Royal Oak Library. They include librarians Elizabeth Briggs from 1917 until her retirement in 1943, and Mildred Limond, who left to serve as librarian for the U.S. Army in Japan in 1947.⁶⁴⁸ Children’s librarians included Leona C. Norman, who served for 15 years, and Marian R. LaFountaine, who held the position from 1969 until 1982.⁶⁴⁹ Carrie Palmer was the director of the library from 1937 until her retirement in 1958, and Elizabeth Briggs also served as director of Royal Oak Public Library.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴² "Bulletin Board: Oakdale Library," *Detroit Free Press*, July 5, 1947, 16.

⁶⁴³ "Royal Oak OK's Library Aide," *Detroit Free Press*, June 26, 1957, 12.

⁶⁴⁴ "Art Association Helps Make Royal Oak Library Cheery," *Detroit Free Press*, April 2, 1957, C-1.

⁶⁴⁵ "Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 4-D.

⁶⁴⁶ "A Feaste Fit for a King," *Detroit Free Press*, November 24, 1983, 7B; "Spokesman," *Detroit Free Press*, May 27, 1963, A-3; "Art on View and Upcoming Exhibitions," *Detroit Free Press*, April 18, 1965, 5-C; "Symposium for Elderly Scheduled," *Detroit Free Press*, November 6, 1966, 8-C; "The Adult Educational Program of Royal Oak Public Library," *Detroit Free Press*, August 27, 1967, 15-A; "Festival Time," *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 1970, 3-B; "The Calendar: Theater," *Detroit Free Press*, February 24, 1974, 8-F; "Antique Dealers Chipping in to Aid Royal Oak Library," *Detroit Free Press*, November 24, 1983, 20A.

⁶⁴⁷ "Royal Oak: This Library's Selective," *Detroit Free Press*, April 5, 1984, 6A.

⁶⁴⁸ "Retiring Librarian Honored in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, May 2, 1943, 3-9; "Librarian to Work in Japan," *Detroit Free Press*, February 23, 1947, 3-3.

⁶⁴⁹ "Obituaries, Leona Norman, Friend to Young Readers," *Detroit Free Press*, March 6, 1981, 4C; "Obituaries, Marian R. LaFountaine: Former Royal Oak Reporter, Librarian," *Detroit Free Press*, October 20, 1991, 6C.

⁶⁵⁰ "Deaths Elsewhere: Mrs. Carrie Palmer, Library Director," *Detroit Free Press*, March 13, 1975, 13-A; City of Royal Oak, "Early Leaders" accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/1548/Royal-Oak-100>.

Religion

Organized religion in Royal Oak dates back to 1838. The earliest religious services in Royal Oak were held in homes and schoolhouses often led by congregants. As congregations grew and funding allowed, permanent houses of worship were constructed. Many different religious organizations have been accounted for in the Royal Oak community including the Aetherius Society, African Methodist Episcopal (AME), Baptist, Catholic, Christadelphian, Christian, Christian Science, Church of God, Congregational, Eckankar Michigan Satsang Society, Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, Free Will Baptist, Korean Assemblies of God, Lutheran, Methodist, Non-Denominational, Orthodox, Presbyterian, Spiritualist, Swedenborgia Christian, Taiwanese Fellowship, United Methodist, and Unity Christian (Table 14).

Methodist

The first organized church in Royal Oak was the Methodist Church. The congregation formed in 1838 and held their meetings in a schoolhouse at the southern end of the village.⁶⁵¹ Their first church building was constructed in 1843 at the northwestern corner of West Seventh Street and Washington Avenue.⁶⁵²

The First United Methodist Church began construction on its second building, immediately west of the original structure, in 1894, and it was completed in 1918. The modern interpretation of a Collegiate Gothic-style church was designed by William E.N. Hunter of Detroit. An education wing was added to the western elevation and was completed in 1928. The building was renovated in the late 1950s. It was used for many community events outside of the congregation including concerts, meetings, graduations, and as a recreation center.⁶⁵³

The congregation has founded and supported many other Methodist churches in the surrounding area including Starr Avenue Methodist Church (Rochester Road north of 13 Mile Road) which became St. Johns in 1923 before merging with the First United Methodist Church in 2013.⁶⁵⁴ The St. Johns building was demolished circa 2017. The congregation has changed its name to Royal Oak First United Methodist Church.⁶⁵⁵

Mitcham Chapel Church is an AME church founded by Rev. Barbara J. Anthony in 1987. The church was conceived as a daughter church to Oak Grove AME Church in Detroit,

⁶⁵¹ Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 435-437.

⁶⁵² Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-437; Kace Publishing Company, *Illustrated Atlas of Oakland County Michigan 1896: Royal Oak, Washington Heights, Commerce, (Racine, Wisconsin: Kace Publishing Company, 1896)*. Pastor Rev. J. M. Arnold was the first dedicated pastor and served until 1876 (Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-437).

⁶⁵³ Royal Oak First, "Brief History of ROFUM, accessed September 9, 2023, <https://www.rofum.org/brief-history-of-rofum/>.

⁶⁵⁴ Royal Oak First, "Brief History of ROFUM, accessed September 9, 2023, <https://www.rofum.org/brief-history-of-rofum/>.

⁶⁵⁵ Royal Oak First, "History".

Michigan. The church was named after Rev. David E. Mitcham, former pastor of Oak Grove, who supported the new church. The church purchased the building in 2011 from the Korean Assemblies of God.⁶⁵⁶

Baptist

The First Baptist Church of Royal Oak was organized in 1839 under Elder Stephen Goodman. Some of the first congregants included Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stephens, Mr. and Mrs. William Bettes, Dr. and Mrs. L.C. Rose, Mr. and Mrs. Chester Morgan, and Amelia Nichols.⁶⁵⁷ The church charter includes Hamlet Harris who donated \$25 toward the construction of the first church. According to the 1840 U.S. Census, Mr. Harris was “a free colored person.”⁶⁵⁸ The group met in schoolhouses and homes prior to their formal organization and construction of a house of worship the same year. The first church constructed in Royal Oak was the Baptist Church at the northwestern corner of Third and Main streets (244 South Main Street). The parcels were donated by Sherman Stephens. The church was built by contractor Henry Stephens, who was also the largest financial contributor of funds for the building. It was used until a larger church was built southwest of what is now the intersection of West University Avenue and North Main Street, which was completed in 1875 (309 North Main Street).⁶⁵⁹ The land for the new church was donated by Athalinda Phelps.⁶⁶⁰ The new church had a Greek-cross form and was dedicated in August 1876. The cost of the building was about \$4,000, Reverend Silas Finn bearing half of the financial burden. The church also included a Sabbath school, which was organized by Mr. Pearsall and who also acted as superintendent.⁶⁶¹ At the turn of the century, membership was low, and Anna B. Quick held meetings to maintain the character of the building.⁶⁶² The church was rededicated in the fall of 1907 and resumed its function.⁶⁶³ The Tabernacle was built in 1918 followed by the first brick sanctuary in 1921, the educational wing in 1950, and the present sanctuary in 1965.⁶⁶⁴ Currently, the congregation goes by the name Genesis the Church.

The original church building was purchased by the German Lutherans in 1875 with the agreement that the Baptists would continue to use the building until they could meet in the basement of the new church.⁶⁶⁵ The building was used as a worship space for other congregations and as the village town hall around 1916. In 1923, the structure was moved to Lafayette Street (near present day Sherman Drive) by the Royal Oak Women’s Club to serve as

⁶⁵⁶ Mitcham Chapel AME Church, "Our Rich History," accessed September 11, 2023, <https://mitchamamechurch.org/>.

⁶⁵⁷ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-436.

⁶⁵⁸ Michigan Department of Natural Resources, “First Baptist Church of Royal Oak,” Michigan History Center Historical Marker #1610, 1989.

⁶⁵⁹ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-436.; Kace, Illustrated Atlas Royal Oak 1896.

⁶⁶⁰ MDNR, "First Baptist Church."

⁶⁶¹ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-436.

⁶⁶² MDNR, "First Baptist Church."

⁶⁶³ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-436.

⁶⁶⁴ MDNR, "First Baptist Church."

⁶⁶⁵ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 435-436.

their first clubhouse.⁶⁶⁶ The Women's Club moved the building a second time to its current location at Pleasant and Fourth Streets in 1928. At this time, the building was remodeled as a Tudor-style structure. The oldest building in the city, it was registered as a Michigan Historical Site in 1979 and received a historic marker in 1985. In 1999, it was designated as a Contributing Structure to the Royal Oak Historic District.⁶⁶⁷

A group of citizens met at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Luther to discuss the formation of an Independent Baptist Church in April 1939. The citizens in attendance included the Luthers, Mr. and Mrs. D.O. Calvin, Mr. and Mrs. Dodson Newman, Mr. and Mrs. Milton Tutor, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gardner, and Charles Newman. The first services were held at the Women's Club of Royal Oak in the old Congregation Church building on 13 Mile Road between Rochester Road and Main Street (236 East 13 Mile Road). The church was formally organized on June 4, 1939 under the name Oak Missionary Baptist Church with 11 charter members. The first pastor was Brother D.O. Calvin, and Thomas Luther was elected church clerk. A committee was formed in March 1941 to secure lots on Rochester Road (3015 Rochester Road) to erect a building. In August 1942, the first section of the building was complete, and the first service was held in the new building. Pastor Calvin resigned in 1956, and Dr. John Hunter was elevated to pastor in 1957, serving until 1965. During Dr. Hunter's time as pastor, the church changed its name to Ambassador Baptist Church and Bible Institute of Royal Oak. Pastor C. Edward Boone led the church from 1965 to 1967, and in 1968, Pastor Jack Richard joined the church and led until 1973. In 1972, the building underwent an extensive exterior renovation, which amounted to \$41,600. Pastor Robert McLaughlin ministered to the congregation for 25 years from 1973 to 1998. Under his leadership, the church paid off its renovation debt and constructed a new pastor's office in 1991. Pastor James Loller served from 1999 to 2000 followed by Pastor Adam Tauber from 2000 to 2008. The Ambassador Baptist Bible Institute held its first class in 2003, and an access ramp was added to the building in 2006. Pastor Jacob Elwart ministered from 2009 to 2017, and Pastor Dan Lee began his service in 2018.⁶⁶⁸

Central Free Will Baptist Church was founded by Raymond Riggs and was established in 1938 in Detroit. The congregation built a new campus and moved to Royal Oak in 1960 (2005 Rochester Road). The church changed its name to Central Oaks Community Church in 2015.⁶⁶⁹

Catholic

The St. Mary Parish was founded in 1842 as the first Roman Catholic Church in Oakland County.⁶⁷⁰ Edmund Loughman donated one-quarter of an acre of land, and the first church

⁶⁶⁶ Royal Oak Women's Club, "History of Royal Oak Women's Club," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.rowc.org/our-history/>; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

⁶⁶⁷ Royal Oak Women's Club, "History."

⁶⁶⁸ Ambassador Baptist Church, "Our History," accessed September 11, 2023, <http://ambassadorbaptist.com/about-us/our-history/>.

⁶⁶⁹ Central Oaks Community Church, "About Us," accessed September 8, 2023, <https://www.centraloaks.com/about-us/>.

building was erected in 1868 under the leadership of Rev. Fr. George Mivels. The second church was constructed northwest of the Fifth and Main streets intersection in 1889.⁶⁷¹ A church was built on West Lafayette Avenue between West Seventh Street and West Lincoln Avenue circa 1912, and a high school building was constructed north of the church in 1925.⁶⁷² The first three St. Mary churches are no longer extant. The high school building at the southeastern corner of Lafayette Avenue and Seventh Street is still extant but was closed as a school circa 1985. St. Mary Catholic Church and School at 730 South Lafayette Avenue was built in 1953. Arthur Des Rosiers of Detroit was the architect of the Romanesque-style building.⁶⁷³

The National Shrine of the Little Flower parish was formed in 1926. It was named after the recently canonized St. Thérèse de Lisieux, the Little Flower. The original, wood church was constructed that year (Figure 130 and Figure 131). The extant church was constructed between 1929 and 1936. Henry J. McGill designed the Art Deco-style church (Figure 132). The church was largely funded by founding pastor Fr. Charles E. Coughlin's radio ministry. Two weeks after the new church opened, the Ku Klux Klan burned a cross in front of the church. The church responded by constructing the 104-ft-tall tower known as Charity Crucifixion Tower, which was completed in 1931. The limestone tower features a 28-ft-tall crucifix to symbolize a "cross they could not burn." The sculptures were designed by Rene Paul Chambellan.⁶⁷⁴

⁶⁷⁰ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 437; Michigan Stained Glass Census, "St. Mary Catholic Church," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.michiganstainedglass.org/collections/building.php?id=208-792-1003/>.

⁶⁷¹ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 437.

⁶⁷² George A. Ogle and Company, Standard Atlas of Oakland County Michigan including a Plat Book 1908: Royal Oak, Mountain View Park, Cass Lake, Big Beaver, Rose Centre, Huron Lake, (Chicago, Illinois: Geo. A. Ogle and Co., 1908), 63; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1926).

⁶⁷³ Michigan Stained Glass Census, "St. Mary Catholic Church."

⁶⁷⁴ National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, "Parish History," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://shrinechurch.com/history/>.



Figure 130. Photograph of the exterior of the original 1926 Shrine of the Little Flower, 1926–1936 (Drivingfordeco.com ca. 1930)



Figure 131. Photograph of the interior of the original 1926 Shrine of the Little Flower, 1926–1936, (Drivingfordeco.com ca. 1930)

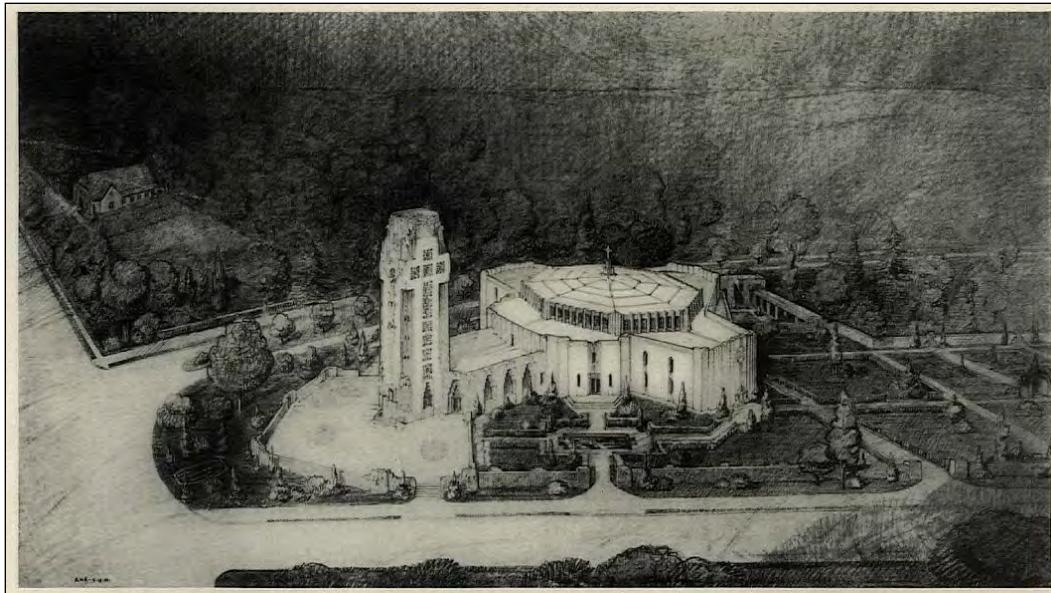


Figure 132. Prospective sketch of the Shrine of the Little Flower (Drivingfordeco.com 1935)

The original church was destroyed by a fire in 1936.⁶⁷⁵ In 1938, the Shrine Catholic Grade School opened. It was designed by architect and parishioner Clair Ditchy and constructed by the J.E. Utley Corporation under general manager and parishioner Raymond LeVeque. In 1940, boys' high school classes were held in some of the elementary classrooms and in the church. The Little Flower High School for Girls was constructed in 1941. The school was funded in part by the Sisters of Charity who donated the land and staffed the school. In 1948, the parish purchased the school from the Sisters, and after some renovations, opened as a coeducational school in 1948. Six new classrooms were built in 1955. In 1963, the Our Lady of Fatima parish formerly joined with the Shrine parish to operate the school until the dissolution of the partnership in 1980. This joint venture resulted in the school's name change from Little Flower High School to Shrine High School.⁶⁷⁶ In 1998, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops declared the site a National Shrine. In 2014, Pope Francis granted the National Shrine the honorary title of Minor Basilica.⁶⁷⁷

Fr. Coughlin hosted a weekly catechism radio show, which grew to be a nationally syndicated radio show and weekly newspaper. In the mid-1930s, Fr. Coughlin's program and paper increasingly focused on national and international politics and economics, resulting in anti-Semitic rhetoric. Archbishop Edward Mooney stepped in and cancelled the radio show in

⁶⁷⁵ National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, "Parish History," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://shrinechurch.com/history/>.

⁶⁷⁶ Shrine Catholic Schools, "Mission and History," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://26905.sites.ecatholic.com/mission-history/>.

⁶⁷⁷ National Shrine, "Parish History."

1940 followed by the end of his publication in 1942.⁶⁷⁸ See additional information about Father Coughlin in Criterion B—Persons Significant in Our Past section.

St. Dennis Catholic Church was at 2200 East 12 Mile Road and was active in the Royal Oak community from 1950 until 2012 when it closed its doors. The church was founded by Edward Cardinal Mooney. In 1954, the church purchased two houses on Symes Court to use as temporary convents. A 16-classroom school was constructed in 1955 and was opened in 1956 under principal Sr. Mary Alfred. The church purchased property with Guardian Angels in Clawson, Michigan, and built Bishop Foley High School, which opened in 1965. St. Dennis School closed in 2010. The church merged with St. Vincent Ferrer in Madison Heights, Michigan.⁶⁷⁹ The church building was demolished circa 2015.⁶⁸⁰

Congregationalist

The Congregational Church was organized on August 13, 1842, by Rev. Ebenezer McDowell, and service was held in the First Baptist Church. The congregation moved services to the Methodist Church in early 1843. Each member rented pews from the Methodist Church to fund the congregation's use of the building. The congregation purchased the old Presbyterian church and moved it to lots donated by Mrs. Drake of Flint, Michigan. The church was dedicated on August 28, 1867, and was used by the congregation until 1911 when a new building was erected and dedicated on the corner of Center and Third streets.⁶⁸¹ The Church merged with Starr Congregational Church in 1936 and held services at the Third and Center streets property until 1955. In May 1955, construction began on the current building on Northwood Boulevard. The congregation met at the Jane Addams School on Webster Road until the social hall and classrooms were completed. Services were subsequently held in the social hall until the meeting house was complete. The first service was held in the meeting house on February 2, 1964. The congregation merged with Highland Park Congregational Church in 1974.⁶⁸²

Presbyterian

The Troy Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church formed in 1850 under the leadership of Rev. James Bull. The congregants included Irish families from what is now Royal Oak and Troy, Michigan. After more than a year of meeting in homes and schools, a wooden, one-room church was erected at 13 Mile and Crooks roads. In 1858, the church changed its name to the Troy United Presbyterian Church, and then in 1927, the church changed its name to The First United Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak. The current church was dedicated in 1956 under the church's longest serving pastor, Rev. Rodney Beal. The original church was used for controlled-burn training in 1958. In 1983, the United Presbyterian Church and the

⁶⁷⁸ National Shrine, "Parish History."

⁶⁷⁹ "Sad, Reflective Goodbye for Closing Royal Oak Church," Patch Media, November 26, 2012, accessed September 18, 2023, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/sad-reflective-goodbye-from-closing-royal-oak-church/>.

⁶⁸⁰⁶⁸⁰ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 2014, 2016, accessed September 18, 2023.

⁶⁸¹ Seeley, History of Oakland County Michigan, 436-437.

⁶⁸² First Congregational Church, "FCC History," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.fccro.org/fcc/>.

Presbyterian Church were joined, resulting in two First Presbyterian Churches in Royal Oak. The church voted to change the name to Starr Presbyterian Church, reflecting the history of the Starr family, Starr Road, Starr School, and the Starr neighborhood.⁶⁸³

In 1914, a group of 21 people met at D.K. Smith's Furniture store to discuss starting a new church. The First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak was established on May 17, 1914, with 79 charter members. Two acres of land were purchased from George Hendrie in 1915, and a two-story church was constructed and dedicated in 1916. A new sanctuary was dedicated in 1955, and a fellowship hall was constructed on the site of the original church in 1962.⁶⁸⁴

Lutheran

A fast-growing German population in the late nineteenth century prompted the founding of the St. Paul Lutheran Church in 1873. A day school began in 1916 in the chapel, and a new church was built in 1918 southwest of the East Fifth and Williams streets intersection. A new school was built south of the church in 1951, and an addition was constructed in 1959. The present church building at the southeastern corner of East Fifth and Williams streets (202 East Fifth Street) was dedicated in 1973, and the old church building was demolished around the same time.⁶⁸⁵

The German Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Royal Oak was founded in 1880 by Rev. John Andres. The first building the congregation used was northwest of the West Third and South Main streets intersection.⁶⁸⁶ Around 1910, a new church was built at the northeastern corner of South Lafayette Avenue and West Sixth Street.⁶⁸⁷

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church was established in 1947.⁶⁸⁸ The building was constructed circa 1960.⁶⁸⁹ In 2022, the congregation merged with Trinity Lutheran in Clawson, Michigan, and Prince of Glory Lutheran in Madison Heights.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸³ Starr Presbyterian Church, "About Us: Where We Came From," accessed September 8, 2023, http://starrchurch.org/?page_id=426/.

⁶⁸⁴ First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, "100 Years of God's Faithfulness," accessed September 7, 2023, <https://www.fpcro.org/history/>.

⁶⁸⁵ St. Paul Lutheran Church and School, "About St. Paul," accessed September 7, 2023, <https://www.stpaulroyaloak.org/about-st-paul/>; HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1967, 1973, accessed September 15, 2023.

⁶⁸⁶ Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan*, 437.

⁶⁸⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916); George A. Ogle and Company, *Standard Atlas of Oakland County Michigan including a Plat Book 1908: Royal Oak, Mountain View Park, Cass Lake, Big Beaver, Rose Centre, Huron Lake*, (Chicago, Illinois: Geo. A. Ogle and Co., 1908), 63.

⁶⁸⁸ Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, "Synod Data Toolkit for 2021: Synod 6A-Southeast Michigan," accessed September 8, 2023,

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/6A_Southeast_Michigan_data_kit.pdf/](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/6A_Southeast_Michigan_data_kit.pdf).

⁶⁸⁹ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1957, 1967, accessed September 15, 2023.

⁶⁹⁰ Prince of Glory Evangelical Lutheran Church, "Shared Ministry," accessed September 8, 2023, <https://www.wearepog.org/general-4/>.

Episcopal

St. John's Episcopal Church resulted from the gathering of three families in the basement of the school on the corner of Fourth and Williams streets in 1902. By 1917, the church had a full-time clergy member and its own building. In 1920, the congregation became a full parish. The church purchased property at the corner of 11 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue in 1923 and held its first service in the new building in 1926. In the 1950s, an education wing was constructed, and in 1958, the current worship space was completed. St. John's has a long tradition of social justice, outreach, diversity, and inclusion. In 1922, St. John's held joint programs with St. Matthew's African American congregation. During the Great Depression, while the church struggled financially, they ministered to the needy. In the years surrounding World War II, the parish held services for special intentions for persecuted Jews and helped settle war refugees. During the civil rights era of the 1960s, the congregation promoted peace, justice, and protecting the environment. In the 1980s, the church began ministries to the poor.⁶⁹¹

Christian

The Church of the Holy City was founded in Detroit, Michigan, in 1839. The Swedenborgian Christian Church gathers at the Royal Oak Women's Club at 404 South Pleasant Street.⁶⁹²

The work of the Salvation Army in Royal Oak began in October 1923 under the leadership of Ensign Evangeline (Eva) Eliza Symmonds. Ensign Symmonds was the daughter of Eliza Shirley, an early leader of the Salvation Army in the United States. Originally designated as the Detroit #6 Corps, the Salvation Army Royal Oak Citadel first met in the old Masonic Temple at 300 West Fourth Street at Williams Street. In 1929, the group purchased Royal Oak Township Hall and Community Center, which had become St. John's Episcopal Church, at 702 South Center Street. The Corps remodeled and expanded the building, and it was dedicated on October 24, 1937. The Corps outgrew the building and purchased the property across the street at 703 South Center Street. A cornerstone-laying ceremony was held on October 38, 1951, and the dedication and opening ceremony was held on June 22, 1952. By the 40th anniversary celebration, Sunday school attendance averaged over 300. The Corps continued to grow and need more space, and the group purchased and moved into the building at 3015 North Main Street in 1969. The sanctuary was remodeled in 1971, and the community service building was built in 1975–1976 and included a gymnasium, lounge, and industrial kitchen. Around 1996, the sanctuary was remodeled again, new offices and classrooms were built adjacent to the community center, and the garage was expanded.⁶⁹³

⁶⁹¹ Episcopal Asset Map, "St. John's Episcopal Church," accessed September 7, 2023, <https://www.episcopalassetmap.org/dioceses/diocese-michigan/list/st-johns-episcopal-church-3#:~:text=12%20step%20programs.-,St.,two%2Dstory%20wood%20frame%20structure.>

⁶⁹² Church of the Holy City, accessed September 7, 2023, <https://sites.google.com/churchholycity.org/churchhc3/about-us?authuser=0.>

⁶⁹³ The Salvation Army. "The History of the Salvation Army in Royal Oak," accessed September 11, 2023, <https://centralusa.salvationarmy.org/royaloak/our-history/>.

The 1920s also included the formation of Royal Oak Missionary Church and Renaissance Unity Church. The Royal Oak Missionary Church leadership wanted to form a new church in its existing location in 2015. Royal Oak Church officially began on September 24, 2017, at 411 East 11 Mile Road. The church features services in English with Romanian translation and bilingual services.⁶⁹⁴ Renaissance Unity formed as a small study group in Detroit. It eventually became an established church at the Coram and Queen streets intersection in Detroit, Michigan. The church worshiped in several venues in and around Detroit until it began holding services in Royal Oak circa 2011 in the Emagine Theater.⁶⁹⁵

The Royal Oak Church of Christ assembled in 1934 and originally met on the second floor of the Sullivan Building at Third and Main streets. The congregation purchased a house at University and Washington avenues and met there from 1936 until the current building at 115 South Campbell Road was constructed around 1950. The auditorium and offices were built in the 1970s, and a classroom and multipurpose room were added in the 1980s. The church operated Luckett Christian School from 1975 to 2005.⁶⁹⁶ Calvary Christian Ministries also formed in 1934 and meets at 2203 East 11 Mile Road.⁶⁹⁷ Unity of Royal Oak is at 2500 Crooks Road and was formed circa 1930.⁶⁹⁸ The Royal Oak Unity Center was previously at 101 South Troy Street.⁶⁹⁹

The First Church of Christ, Scientist building at 900 West Fourth Street was constructed before 1951 and was altered circa 1960 and circa 1970.⁷⁰⁰ Prior to this, the Christian Science Society (later First Church of Christ, Scientist) had been at the southeastern corner of East First and Troy streets (101 South Troy Street).⁷⁰¹ Between 1931 and 1950, this building had become the Royal Oak Unity Center.⁷⁰² It was demolished between 1957 and 1967.⁷⁰³

Woodside Bible Church began in 1955 when Pastor Harold Moran formed an evangelical church in Troy, Michigan. In 2005, Woodside experienced its first merger with a struggling church in Warren, Michigan, and has since seen several mergers with other churches resulting in a multiple-site church. The church consists of locations in Algonac, Chesterfield, Dearborn, Detroit, Downriver, Farmington Hills, Lake Orion, Lapeer, Plymouth, Pontiac, Romeo, Royal

⁶⁹⁴ Royal Oak Church, "Our Story," accessed September 6, 2023, <https://www.rochurch.org/about/>.

⁶⁹⁵ Renaissance Unity, "About Us," accessed September 11, 2023, <https://www.renaissanceunity.org/about-us/>.

⁶⁹⁶ Royal Oak Church of Christ, "Our History," accessed September 7, 2003, <http://www.royaloakcoc.org/details/our-history/>.

⁶⁹⁷ WLQV-AM and Salem Interactive Media, "Calvary Christian Church Directory," accessed September 8, 2023, <https://faithtalkdetroit.com/churchdirectory/138969/>.

⁶⁹⁸ Unity of Royal Oak, "We Celebrate Our History," accessed September, 9, 2023, <https://m.facebook.com/unityofroyaloak/videos/247341843644434/>.

⁶⁹⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁰⁰ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1951, 1957, 1967, 1973, accessed September 18, 2023.

⁷⁰¹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

⁷⁰² Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁰³ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 31, 2024.

Oak, Troy, Warren, and White Lake with communities on the campuses of the University of Michigan and Michigan State University.⁷⁰⁴

Emmanuel Bethel Church and Encounter Church of God and Prophecy (which was once known as the Church of God and Prophecy, as well as Heritage Family Church) were both formed circa 1960. Emmanuel Bethel Church is at 4000 Normandy Road, and Encounter Church is at 600 North Campbell Road.⁷⁰⁵

The Christadelphians of North Detroit were founded in 1992 and meet at 3022 North Main Street in Royal Oak.⁷⁰⁶ Reconciliation Word Ministry is a Pentecostal church at 1400 Normandy Road. It was founded in 1993.⁷⁰⁷

In 1999, three new congregations formed in Royal Oak: Tree of Life Bible Fellowship, Faith Christian Church, and Covenant Community Church. Pastor Eric Moore founded the Tree of Life Bible Fellowship in 1999, with Elders Sid Jones and Ronald White joining later that year. In May 2003, Elder Keith Crosby joined the leadership team. The church originally met at Lawrence Technological University in the architecture building auditorium. In March 2016, Tree of Life Bible Fellowship moved to its new location at 3118 Greenfield Road in Royal Oak. The building formerly housed Faith Baptist Church and United International Christian Church.⁷⁰⁸ Faith Christian Church began holding services at 1318 South Stephenson Highway, which appears to have once housed the Korean First Presbyterian Church and Point of Vision Presbyterian Church.⁷⁰⁹ Covenant Community Church met at 236 East 13 Mile Road from 1999 to 2013.⁷¹⁰

The early 2000s ushered in three new churches: St. Theodora of Sihla Mission, Hosanna Christian Church, and The Gathering House. St. Theodora of Sihla Mission is an Orthodox church that meets at 236 East 13 Mile Road. The church is a member of the Christian Congregation in the United States–Detroit and was formed in 2011.⁷¹¹ Hosanna Christian Church was founded circa 2016. The congregation meets at 2915 Normandy Road, which was once the

⁷⁰⁴ Woodside Bible Church, "About Us," accessed September 17, 2023, <https://woodsidebible.org/about/>.

⁷⁰⁵ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1955, 19646, accessed September 15, 2023; Encounter Church, "Our Pastor," accessed September 18, 2023, <https://www.encounter360.org/our-pastor/>.

⁷⁰⁶ Dunn and Bradstreet, "Christadelphians of North Detroit," accessed September 18, 2023, [https://www.dandb.com/businessdirectory/christadelphiansofnorthdetroit-royaloak-mi-22581765.html/](https://www.dandb.com/businessdirectory/christadelphiansofnorthdetroit-royaloak-mi-22581765.html).

⁷⁰⁷ USAChurches.org, "Reconciliation Word Ministry, International," accessed September 20, 2022, <http://www.usachurches.org/church/reconciliationwordministryintl.htm/>.

⁷⁰⁸ Tree of Life Bible Fellowship, "Who We Are," accessed September 11, 2023, <https://www.tolbf.org/about/>.

⁷⁰⁹ Faith Christian Church, "Faith Christian Church," accessed September 11, 2023, <https://www.mifcc.com/>.

⁷¹⁰ Covenant Community Church, Facebook homepage, accessed September 20, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/micovenant/>.

⁷¹¹ Orthodox Church in America, "St. Theodora of Sihla Church," accessed September 18, 2023, <https://www.oca.org/parishes/oca-ro-utcs/>.

home of Northwood Baptist Church.⁷¹² The Gathering House moved into the Memorial Free Will Baptist Church building at 1326 East Lincoln Avenue in 2021.⁷¹³

Non-Christian Religions

The First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak was founded on February 12, 1925.⁷¹⁴ A one-story Spiritual Church was constructed at 114 Pingree Boulevard between 1926 and 1931.⁷¹⁵ This building was demolished between 1983 and 1987.⁷¹⁶ It is a member of the National Spiritualist Association of Churches and currently meets at 3224 Greenfield Road in Royal Oak.⁷¹⁷

The Aetherius Society was founded by Dr. George King, an English Yoga Master, in 1955. The society believes in yoga, spiritual energy, praying and healing, the Divine within, intuition and psychic powers, Mother Earth, Extraterrestrial life, karma, and reincarnation.⁷¹⁸ The Aetherius Society founded two centers in the United States in 1960 in Los Angeles, California, and Detroit, Michigan. In 2007, the Detroit Branch became the Michigan Branch and purchased the church at 3119 North Campbell Road in Royal Oak.⁷¹⁹

The Eckankar Michigan Satsang Society meets at 320 East Fourth Street. The Eckankar religion was founded by Paul Twitchell in 1965.⁷²⁰ The Michigan Satsang Society formed in 1975.⁷²¹

Associated Resources

Table 14. Royal Oak Churches, Location, Dates, and Status Information

Church Name	Address	Formation Date	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Active or closure date
Ambassador Baptist Church and Bible Institute of Royal Oak (Oak Missionary Baptist Church)	3015 Rochester Road	1939	1942	1972, 1991	Yes

⁷¹² Candid/GuideStar, “Hosanna Christian Church,” accessed September 20, 2023, <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/46-3550590/>.

⁷¹³ The Gathering House, “About Us,” accessed September 11, 2023, <https://www.mygatheringhouse.com/about-us/>.

⁷¹⁴ The First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak, accessed September 7, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FirstSpiritualTempleofRoyalOak/>.

⁷¹⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

⁷¹⁶ HistoricAerials.com, Royal Oak, Oakland, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed January 31, 2024.

⁷¹⁷ The First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak, accessed September 7, 2023, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/FirstSpiritualTempleofRoyalOak/>.

⁷¹⁸ Aetherius Society, “What We Believe,” accessed September 18, 2023, <https://www.aetherius.org/key-beliefs/>.

⁷¹⁹ Aetherius Society, “Welcome to the Aetherius Society in Royal Oak, MI,” accessed September 18, 2023, <https://www.aetherius.org/locations/michigan/>.

⁷²⁰ World Religions and Spirituality Project, “Eckankar: The Religion of Light and Sound,” accessed September 18, 2023, <https://wrdrels.org/2016/10/08/eckankar/>.

⁷²¹ Candid/GuideStar, “Michigan Satsang Society Inc.,” accessed September 20, 2023, <https://www.guidestar.org/profile/38-2752169/>.

Church Name	Address	Formation Date	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Active or closure date
Calvary Christian Ministries	2203 East 11 Mile Road	1934	ca. 1955	ca. 1960, ca. 1970	Yes
Central Oaks Community Church (Central Free Will Baptist Church)	2005 Rochester Road	1938	1960	-	Yes
Christadelphians of North Detroit	3022 North Main Street	1992	ca. 1930	ca. 1990	Yes
Church of the Holy City	404 South Pleasant Street	1839	1839	-	Yes
Covenant Community Church	236 East 13 Mile Road	ca. 1999	ca. 1940	-	2013
Eckankar Mi Satsang Society	320 East Fourth Street	1975	ca. 1940	-	Yes
Emmanuel Bethel Church	4000 Normandy Road	ca. 1960	ca. 1960	ca. 1990	Yes
Emmanuel Evangelical Church (German Lutheran; German Evangelical Emmanuel Church)	Northwest of the West Third and South Main Street intersection	1880	ca. 1880 (not extant)	-	No, date unknown
Emmanuel Evangelical Church (German Lutheran; German Evangelical Emmanuel Church)	500 South Lafayette Avenue	1880	ca. 1910 (not extant)	-	No, date unknown
Encounter Church of God and Prophecy	600 North Campbell Road	ca. 1960	ca. 1960	-	Yes
Faith Christian Church	1318 South Stephenson Highway	1999	ca. 1940	ca. 1955	Yes
First Church of Christ, Scientist	Southeastern corner of East First and Troy Streets (101 South Troy)	-	-	-	-
First Church of Christ, Scientist	900 West Fourth Street	Unknown	ca. 1945	ca. 1960, ca. 1970	Yes
First Congregational Church	Northeastern corner of South Center and West Third Streets	1842	1911 (not extant)	-	Yes, at new location
First Congregational Church	1314 Northwood Boulevard	1842	1955–1964	-	Yes
First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak	529 Hendrie Boulevard	1914	1916 (not extant)	1955, 1962	Yes
First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak	114 Pingree Boulevard	1925	1926-1950	Demolished 1983–1987	No
First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak	3224 Greenfield Road	1925	ca. 1960	-	Yes
Genesis the Church (First Baptist Church of Royal Oak)	Northwestern corner of West Third and South Main Streets	1839	1839	Moved in 1923 (Lafayette Street (near present day Sherman Drive) and in 1928 (Pleasant and Fourth streets)	-
Genesis the Church (First Baptist Church of Royal Oak)	309 North Main Street	1839	1875	1918, 1921, 1950, 1965	Yes
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church	814 North Campbell Road	1947	ca. 1960	-	No, closed 2022

Church Name	Address	Formation Date	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Active or closure date
Hosanna Christian Church	2915 Normandy Road	ca. 2016	ca. 1960	–	Yes
Mitcham Chapel Church	4207 West 14 Mile Road	1987	ca. 1953	–	Yes
National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica	2100 12 Mile Road	1926	1926 (not extant)	–	Yes
National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica	2100 12 Mile Road	1926	1929–1936	1931 (Charity Crucifixion Tower)	Yes
Reconciliation Word Ministry	1400 Normandy Road	1993	ca. 1960	–	Yes
Renaissance Unity	200 North Main Street	ca. 1920	2011	–	Yes
Royal Oak Church of Christ	115 South Campbell Road	1934	ca. 1950	ca. 1955, ca. 1970, ca. 1980	Yes
Royal Oak First United Methodist Church (Methodist Church, First Methodist Church)	Northwestern corner of West Seventh Street and South Washington Avenue	1838	1843 (no longer extant)	–	Yes, at new location
Royal Oak First United Methodist Church	320 West Seventh Street	1838	1894-1918	1928, ca. 1950	Yes
Royal Oak Church (Royal Oak Missionary Church)	411 East 11 Mile Road	ca. 1920; 2017	ca. 1960	ca. 1970, ca. 2000	Yes
St. Dennis Catholic Church	2200 East 12 Mile Road/1515 North Stephenson Highway	1950	1951 (not extant)	–	No, closed 2012
St. John's Episcopal Church	26998 Woodward Avenue	1902	1926	ca. 1950, 1958	Yes
St. John's United Methodist Church (Starr Avenue Methodist Church)	3506 Rochester Road	ca. 1923	ca. 1955 (not extant)	ca. 1960; demolished ca. 2017	No, closed 2013
St. Mary Catholic Church	South of 12 Mile Road and west of North Campbell Road	1842	1868 (not extant)	–	Yes, at new location
St. Mary Catholic Church	Northwest of Fifth and Main streets	1842	1889 (not extant)	–	Yes, at new location
St. Mary Catholic Church	721 South Lafayette Avenue	1842	ca. 1912 (not extant)	–	Yes, at new location
St. Mary Catholic Church	730 South Lafayette Avenue	1842	1953	ca. 1960, ca. 1990	Yes
St. Paul Lutheran Church (German Lutheran Church)	220 South Main Street	1873	ca. 1880 (not extant)	–	Yes
St. Paul Lutheran Church	508 South Williams Street	1873	1918 (not extant); 1951 (not extant)	1959 (not extant)	Yes, at new location
St. Paul Lutheran Church	202 East Fifth Street	1873	1973	–	Yes
St. Theodora of Sihla Mission	236 East 13 Mile Road	2011	ca. 1950	–	Yes
Starr Presbyterian Church (Troy Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; Troy United Presbyterian	13 Mile and Crooks roads	1850	1851 (not extant)	–	Yes, at new location

Church Name	Address	Formation Date	Construction Date	Additions Renovations	Active or closure date
Church; First United Presbyterian Church)					
Starr Presbyterian Church (Troy Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church; Troy United Presbyterian Church; First United Presbyterian Church)	1717 West 13 Mile Road	1850	1955	ca. 1965, ca. 1970	Yes
The Aetherius Society	3119 North Campbell Road	1960	ca. 1960	-	Yes
The Gathering House (Memorial Free Will Baptist Church)	1326 East Lincoln Avenue	2021	1941-1950	-	Yes
The Salvation Army Royal Oak Citadel	703 South Center Street	1923	ca. 1951 (not extant)	-	Yes, in new location
The Salvation Army Royal Oak Citadel	3015 North Main Street	1923	ca. 1950	1971, 1976, ca. 1996	Yes
Tree of Life Bible Fellowship	3118 Greenfield Road	1999	ca. 1960	-	Yes
Unity of Royal Oak (Unity Church of Royal Oak)	2500 Crooks Road	ca. 1930	Pre-1951	ca. 1955, ca. 1960, ca. 1980	Yes
Woodside Bible Church-Royal Oak Campus (Woodlawn Church of God)	3620 Rochester Road	1955	ca. 1955	ca. 1960, ca. 1970, ca. 1985	Yes

Funerary

The City of Royal Oak includes three cemeteries and four funeral home (Table 15 and Table 16). The cemeteries are still active as are all but one of the funeral homes.

Cemeteries

In 1825, the first recorded burial in Royal Oak Township occurred on the Russell Farm at 11 Mile Road and Main Street.⁷²² One account indicates that “not more than five or six burials” took place at that cemetery, and they were “afterward removed to the present township and village cemetery to the north of the city.”⁷²³

In 1826, Royal Oak Township Cemetery was established on 6 ac of land donated by Daniel Burrows.⁷²⁴ The first burial was the infant daughter of Laura Swift Chase and David Chase, who

⁷²² ROHS, “A Walking Tour of the Royal Oak and St. May Cemeteries,” (Royal Oak: Royal Oak Historical Society, ca. 2008), 11.

⁷²³ George A. Dondero, “History of Royal Oak City and Township,” in *Royal Oak Twigs and Acorns: A Book of History* compiled by David G. Penney and Lois A. Lance (Royal Oak: Little Acorn Press, 1996), 70.

⁷²⁴ ROHS, “A Walking Tour,” 1.

would later serve as township supervisor and a delegate to the Convention of Assent for Michigan statehood.⁷²⁵ The Cemetery was renamed the Royal Oak Cemetery after the township's Board of Health took over its operation in 1857; it is at the northern end of the point of land created by the junctions of Main Street, Rochester Road, and 12 Mile Road. The property expanded several times before it was reduced in 1874 when 2 ac at the southern tip of the triangular burial ground were sold to the Catholic Society of St. Mary Parish, creating St. Mary Catholic Cemetery (Figure 133).⁷²⁶ Royal Oak Cemetery has been owned and maintained by the City of Royal Oak since 1921. Veterans of all U.S. wars from the American Revolution through the Vietnam War as well as pioneers and prominent citizens, are buried in the cemetery. It has been racially integrated since its formation.⁷²⁷

St. Mary Catholic Cemetery was established in 1875 and was consecrated by Bishop Caspar Henry Borgess that year. One of the first burials was for Edmund Loughnane (Lockman), who had hosted Catholic meetings in his home. Statuary within the cemetery includes a concrete tree trunk and a seated maiden holding flowers. A statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which was formerly atop St. Mary High School beginning in 1925, was moved to the cemetery in 1992. Numerous local businessmen are buried in the cemetery.⁷²⁸

⁷²⁵ HMdb, "Royal Oak Township Cemetery/St. Mary Catholic Cemetery."

⁷²⁶ ROHS, "A Walking Tour," 2.

⁷²⁷ HMdb, "Royal Oak Township Cemetery/St. Mary Catholic Cemetery."

⁷²⁸ HMdb, "Royal Oak Township Cemetery/St. Mary Catholic Cemetery."

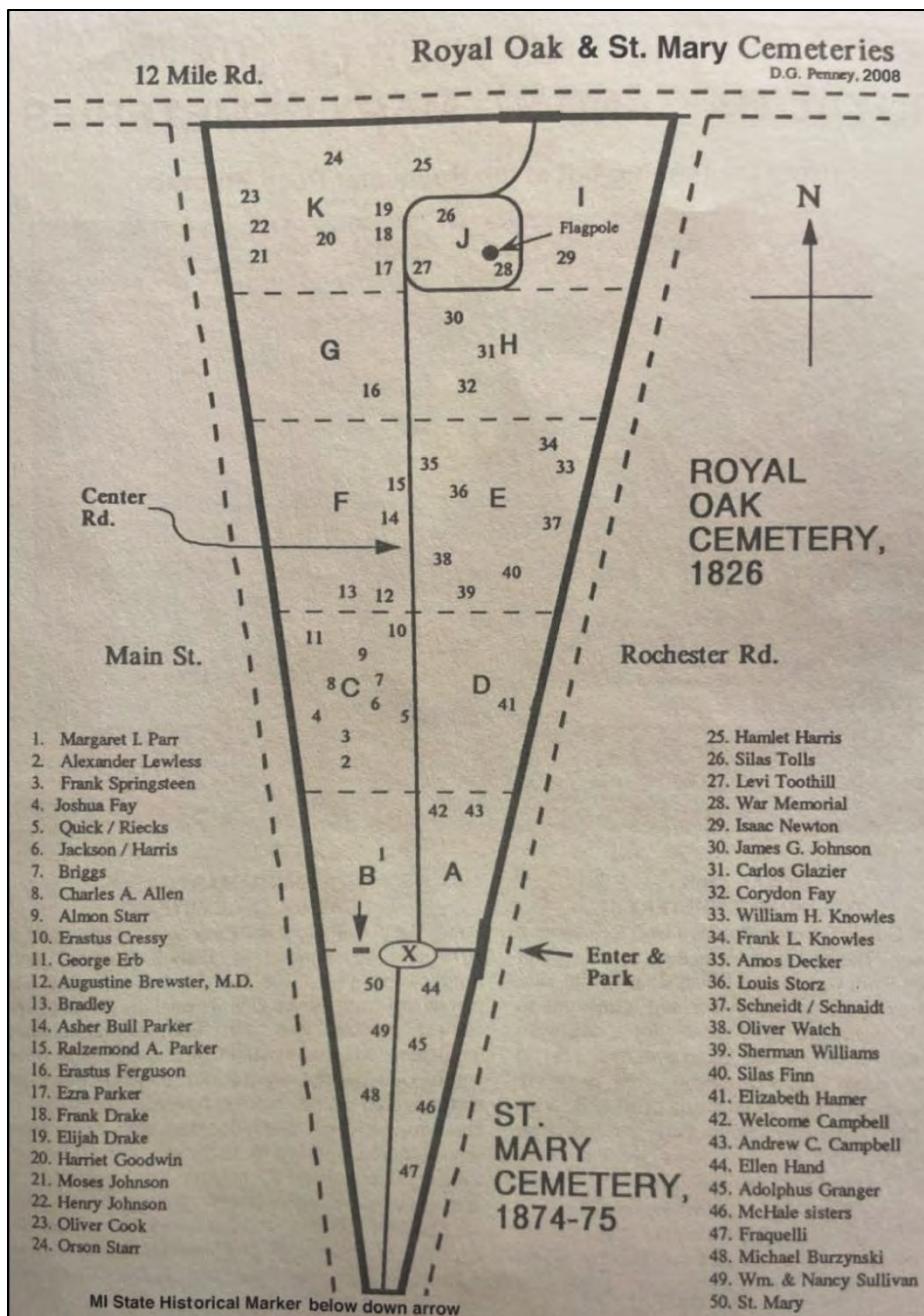


Figure 133. Map of Royal Oak and St. Mary Cemeteries (ROHS 2008)

The third cemetery to be established in Royal Oak was Oakview Cemetery. This burial ground is east of the Royal Oak and St. Mary's Cemetery on the eastern side of Main Street. Newspaper announcements (Figure 134) invited the public to attend the formal dedication and laying of the cornerstone of the chapel at 2:30 pm, Sunday, June 24, 1917.⁷²⁹

⁷²⁹ "Announcement," *Detroit Free Press*, June 17, 1917, 12.

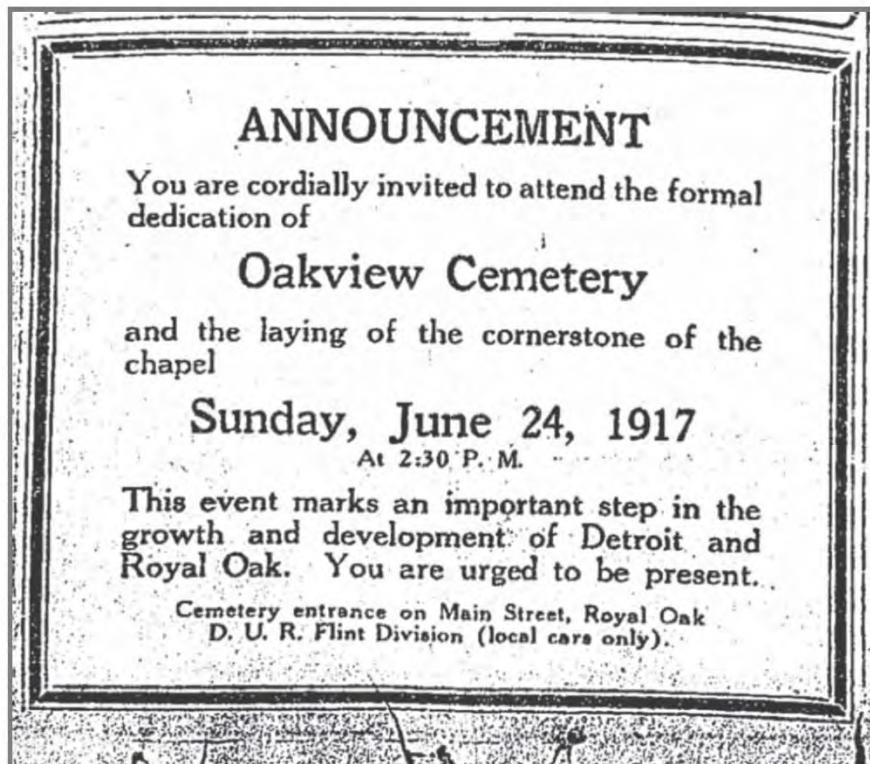


Figure 134. Announcement of the formal dedication of Oakview Cemetery (Detroit Free Press 1917)

The festivities at the cornerstone laying included music by the Royal Oak Masonic band and speakers Rev. James M. Barkley, Rev. Jerome E. Webber, Miss Marguerite t, and Alvah G. Pitts. President Pitts and Rev. Barkley were charged with laying the cornerstone.⁷³⁰ A June 14, 1917 newspaper account indicated that the burial ground included 127 ac, of which about 60 ac had been developed "into park lawn, platted, and beautiful."⁷³¹ At the time of its dedication, the cemetery was already a success, with approximately 1,000 lots reserved by the Palestine Lodge Free and Accepted Masons for their members and families. An additional section was reserved by the Straits Lodge for the same purpose.⁷³²

During the ceremony, the two representatives from the cemetery placed the cornerstone in the new chapel and mausoleum under construction at the time. The chapel was designed by Detroit architect K. Lee Hyder and constructed of fieldstone.

⁷³⁰ "Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1917, 4-3.

⁷³¹ "Cemetery Receives Dedication Today," *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1917, 4-3.

⁷³² "Cemetery Receives Dedication Today," *Detroit Free Press*, June 24, 1917, 4-3.

Associated Resources

Table 15. Royal Oak Cemeteries, Location, Establishment, Size, and Status Information

Cemetery Name	Address	Established/Dedicated	Size	Active
Oakview Cemetery	1032 North Main Street	1911/1917	94 ac	Yes
Royal Oak Cemetery	1600 Rochester Road	1826	Unknown	Yes
St. Mary Catholic Cemetery	North Main Street and South Rochester Road	1874	2 ac	Yes

Funeral Homes

Edward Korkoian Funeral Home, Inc./Spiller–Spitler Chapel

The Edward B. Korkoian Funeral Home was established in 1949 by Edward B. Korkoian, who started his business at the Perry Funeral Home in Detroit. He purchased the Sevald–McCarthy Funeral Home (at 11545 Woodward Avenue at Burlingame) in 1952, and in 1968, he acquired the Severance Funeral Home (at 19621 West McNichols in Detroit), changing its name to the Colonial Chapel–Edward Korkoian Funeral Home. In 1972, his son, Edward H. Korkoian, joined his father, who retired in 1986. Edward H. Korkoian purchased the Spiller–Spitler Funeral Home at 836 North Main Street in Royal Oak in 1985 and incorporated the business. His son Christopher began working in the family business in 1995. The Spiller–Spitler Funeral Home has been serving the Royal Oak and surrounding communities for over 82 years.⁷³³ Initially known as the J.H. Spiller Funeral Home, it was constructed as a funeral home between 1926 and 1950 (Figure 135).⁷³⁴ The southern section was added between 1931 and 1951.⁷³⁵ In 1959, its name was changed from J.H. Spiller to Spiller–Spitler.

⁷³³ Edward Korkoian Funeral Home, Inc., “About Us,” accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.ekfh.net/about-us>; Katherine Haley Death Notice, *Detroit Free Press*, May 25, 1952, 40; Funeral Directors Listing for Severance Funeral Home, *Detroit Evening Times*, December 22, 1940, 51.

⁷³⁴ Elizabeth Stever Death Notice, *Detroit Free Press*, July 14, 1931, 25; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

⁷³⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950); NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed January 11, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

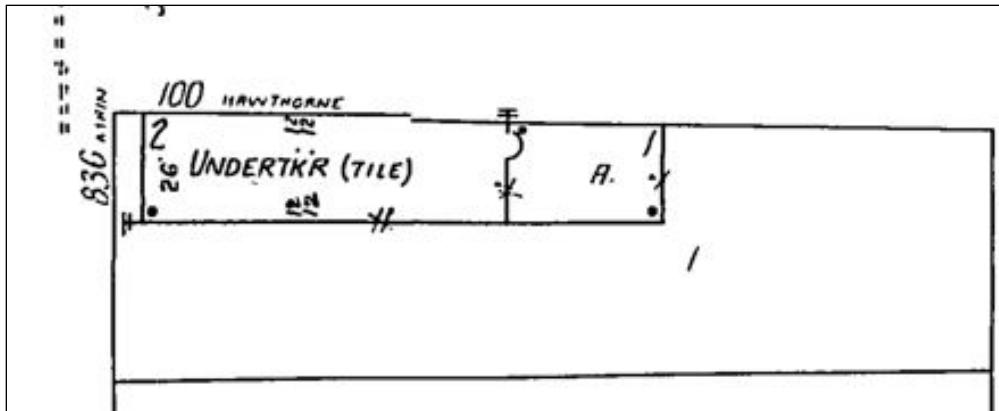


Figure 135. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 7.

Sparks Funeral Home/Sparks-DeMund Funeral Home

In 1933, J.B. Sparks co-founded the Sparks Funeral Home with Virgo E. Kinsey.⁷³⁶ This funeral home was initially at 509 South Washington Avenue, which was built between 1921 and 1926.⁷³⁷ The space is now used by a home goods store. By 1938, the funeral home had been relocated to 333 East 11 Mile Road, a dwelling built prior to 1921.⁷³⁸ Between 1926 and 1950, a side chapel was constructed on the eastern side of this house, which had become a funeral home (Figure 136).⁷³⁹ This building was demolished between 1957 and 1967.⁷⁴⁰ It appears that in 1950, the Sparks funeral home enterprise was renamed the Sparks–DeMund Funeral Home, and it was relocated to 317 East 11 Mile Road, which Sparks had previously used for his King David Bake Shop.⁷⁴¹ Claude R. DeMund served as funeral director.⁷⁴² The building was constructed between 1926 and 1950.⁷⁴³ This location was used as a funeral home until at least 1960.⁷⁴⁴ The building remains standing, although an addition was constructed at its rear between 1967 and 1973, and the front section of the building has been modified.⁷⁴⁵ It has also been divided into multiple office suites.

⁷³⁶ Darryl Fears, “Virgo E. Kinsey, 86, founded funeral home,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1989, 6.

⁷³⁷ George W. Cooper Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, February 6, 1934, 4; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921 and 1926).

⁷³⁸ James Edward Thompson Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, February 22, 1938, 18; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1921).

⁷³⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

⁷⁴⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967, accessed January 11, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

⁷⁴¹ Ingbert Hanson Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, August 30, 1950, 25.

⁷⁴² Hal Cohen, “Cemetery Says ‘No’ to Indian,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 12, 1960, 1.

⁷⁴³ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

⁷⁴⁴ Mary Elizabeth Insko Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, August 19, 1960, 32.

⁷⁴⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed January 11, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

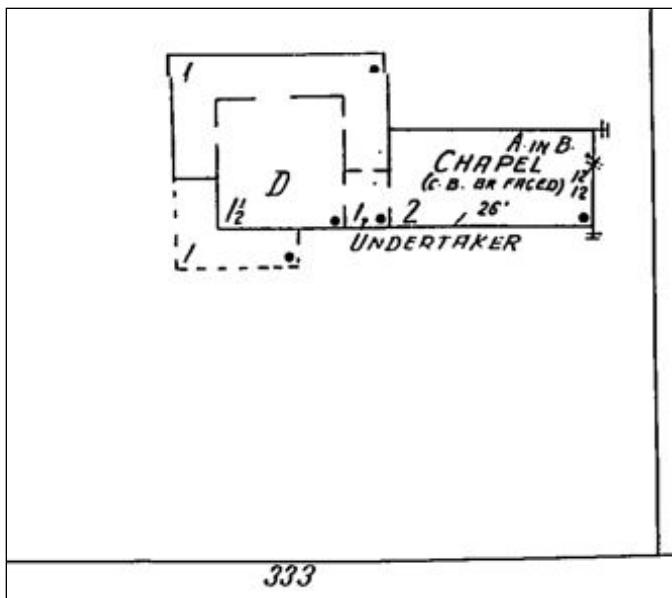


Figure 136. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 21.

Virgo E. Kinsey Funeral Home/Kinsey–Garrett Funeral Home

In 1933, Virgo E. Kinsey co-founded the Sparks Funeral Home with J.B. Sparks.⁷⁴⁶ Three years later, he opened the Virgo E. Kinsey Funeral Home at 420 South Lafayette Avenue.⁷⁴⁷ The pre-1916 dwelling at this location was converted into a funeral home between 1926 and 1950, large additions being constructed on its western and southern sides (Figure 137).⁷⁴⁸ Kinsey sold the funeral home in 1964 and continued to work there until 1977, when he retired. It became known as the Kinsey–Garrett Funeral Home.⁷⁴⁹ The funeral home was there until it closed, and the building was demolished between 2020 and 2022.⁷⁵⁰

⁷⁴⁶ Darryl Fears, “Virgo E. Kinsey, 86, founded funeral home,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1989, 6.

⁷⁴⁷ Charles W. Farmer Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, April 23, 1943, 3; Darryl Fears, “Virgo E. Kinsey, 86, founded funeral home,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1989, 6.

⁷⁴⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1926, and 1931/1950).

⁷⁴⁹ Darryl Fears, “Virgo E. Kinsey, 86, founded funeral home,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 15, 1989, 6.

⁷⁵⁰ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2020, accessed January 11, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

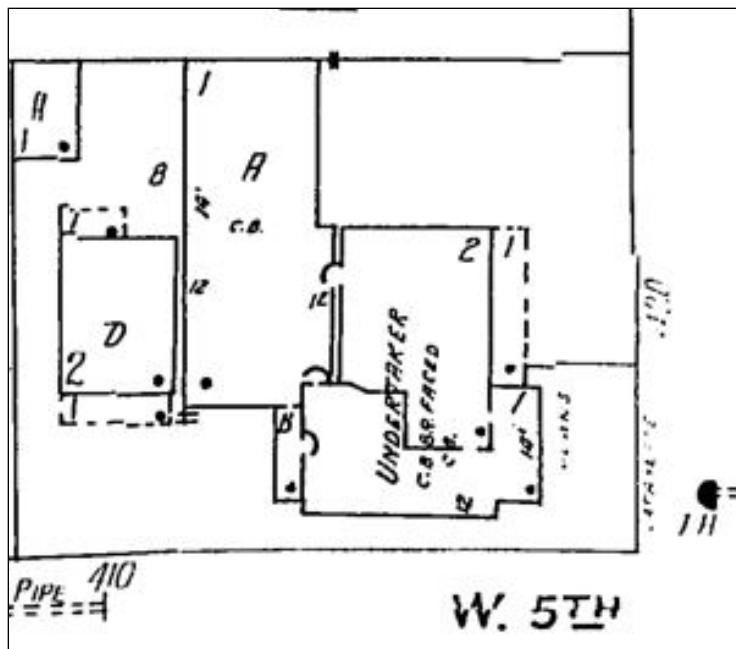


Figure 137. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 2.

Wm. Sullivan and Son Funeral Directors

Wm. Sullivan and Son was established by William Sullivan in 1906. For many years, the business was on Main Street in Royal Oak. The first location was at the northwestern corner of Main and Second streets (likely a house at 144 South Main Street). This house was demolished between 1921 and 1926. By 1916, the funeral home had moved to 105 East Third Street. Sullivan also operated a thriving livery business next door at 109 East Third Street until 1923, when automobiles had replaced horses. While the 1916 Sanborn map labeled the building at 109 East Third Street as a livery (Figure 138), the 1921 Sanborn map described it as being used for funeral autos and having a capacity of eight cars. The 1926 and 1931–1950 Sanborn maps do not indicate that these buildings had any funerary association, but a 1934 obituary provides an address of 109 East Third Street for the funeral home. These buildings were demolished between 1967 and 1973. William Sullivan's son James joined his father's business in 1932. The funeral home was relocated to its present location at 705 West 11 Mile Road in 1939. Since then, several additions have been made to the building. A second location was later acquired in Utica, Michigan.⁷⁵¹

⁷⁵¹ Wm. Sullivan & Son, “Our History,” accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.sullivanfuneraldirectors.com/about-us/history-and-staff>; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1921, 1926, and 1931/1950); NETROonline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1967 and 1973, accessed January 11, 2024, HistoricAerials.com; Harrison V. Parent, Jr. Obituary, *Detroit Free Press*, June 4, 1934, 7.

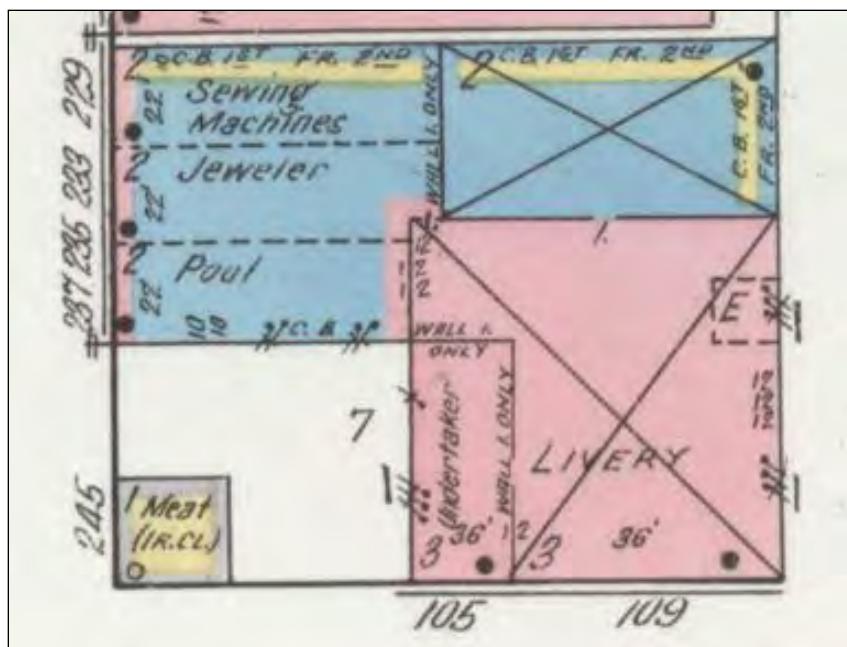


Figure 138. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. January 1916, Sheet 3.

Associated Resources

Table 16. Royal Oak funeral homes, location, construction, and status information

Name	Address	Construction Date	Extant
Edward Korkoian Funeral Home, Inc./Spiller-Spitler Funeral Home/J.H. Spiller Funeral Home	836 North Main Street	1926–1950	Yes
Sparks Funeral Home/Sparks-DeMund Funeral Home	509 South Washington Avenue	1921–1926	Yes
Sparks Funeral Home/Sparks-DeMund Funeral Home	333 East 11 Mile Road	Pre-1921	No
Sparks Funeral Home/Sparks-DeMund Funeral Home	317 East 11 Mile Road	1926–1950	Yes
Virgo E. Kinsey Funeral Home/Kinsey-Garrett Funeral Home	420 South Lafayette Avenue	Pre-1916	No
Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors	144 South Main Street	Pre-1916	No
Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors	105–109 East Third Street	Pre-1916	No
Wm. Sullivan & Son Funeral Directors	705 West 11 Mile Road	ca. 1939	Yes

Social History

Clubs

Royal Oak had at least 22 clubs in the community. Of those twenty are still active community groups (Table 17).

American Legion Frank Wendland Post 253

American Legion Frank Wendland Post 253 was established in February 1920 at a meeting of 25 former servicemen in the high school auditorium. It was named in honor of Frank Wendland, a lifelong resident of Royal Oak and one of its first residents to answer the call of duty. He served as a sharpshooter in the Army and was killed in October 1918.⁷⁵² The building currently used by the post was constructed between 1964 and 1967 at the northwestern corner of North Main Street and Woodsboro Drive.⁷⁵³

Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH) Norman O'Brien Division 1

This order is America's oldest Irish Catholic fraternal organization. It was founded concurrently in New York City and the coal-mining region of Pennsylvania in May 1836.⁷⁵⁴ The original purpose of the Order was to protect the priesthood and keep the faith. The primary mission of this order is Christian charity. The AOH and the Ladies' AOH have contributed millions of dollars to numerous charitable causes. In recent years, the AOH in southeast Michigan raised thousands of dollars for various inner-city parishes.⁷⁵⁵ There are 12 AOH divisions within Michigan.⁷⁵⁶ The Oakland County division meets monthly at the Canadian Legion Hall at 1005 East 11 Mile Road.⁷⁵⁷

Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Royal Oak–Detroit #34

The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States is one of the oldest and largest fraternal organizations in the country. It was established in 1868 and has since grown to include nearly 1.2 million men and women in almost 2,200 communities. The order has a commitment to the ideals of charity and patriotism and considers working with the country's youth as their most important endeavor. These efforts include Scouting, scholarships, sponsoring athletic and artistic endeavors, youth camps, and drug awareness programs. The order also assists those who have been negatively affected by natural disasters, explosions, and epidemics.

The Royal Oak–Detroit lodge was created through the 2013 merger of two of Michigan's oldest Elks lodges: Detroit Lodge #34, which was established in 1896, and Royal Oak Lodge #1523, which was established in 1926. The lodge supports the community through Royal Oak school programs, Elks Hoop Shoot and College Scholarship programs and Community Impact Grant recipients, and Focus Hope (2022 Beacon Grant) and Piquette Square for Veterans (2022 Spotlight Grant).⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵² American Legion Frank Wendland Post 253, "History of Frank Wendland Post No. 253," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://frankwendland253.com/index.php?id=2>.

⁷⁵³ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1964 and 1967, accessed January 17, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://historicairials.com).

⁷⁵⁴ AOH Michigan State Board, "About Us," accessed January 25, 2024, <http://www.michiganaoh.org/about.html>.

⁷⁵⁵ James O'Kelly, "History of AOH," accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.detroitaoh.org/about/>.

⁷⁵⁶ AOH Michigan State Board, "About Us," accessed January 25, 2024, <http://www.michiganaoh.org/about.html>.

⁷⁵⁷ Ancient Order of Hibernians, "AOH Directory," accessed January 25, 2024, <https://aoh.com/aoh-directory/>.

⁷⁵⁸ The Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Royal Oak Detroit #34, "About the Royal Oak Detroit Elks," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://royaloakdetroitelks.com/about-the-royal-oak-detroit-elks/>.

The Royal Oak lodge is at 2401 East Fourth Street, which was likely constructed between 1940 and 1951. Two additions were constructed on the rear of the building between 1988 and 1999.⁷⁵⁹ According to the 1931–1950 Sanborn map (Figure 139), the lodge was previously at 205 South Troy Street.⁷⁶⁰ The lodge operated a bowling alley next door at 203 South Troy called Elks (Club) Lanes.⁷⁶¹ These buildings were demolished between 1994 and 1999.⁷⁶² That site is now occupied by the new city hall.

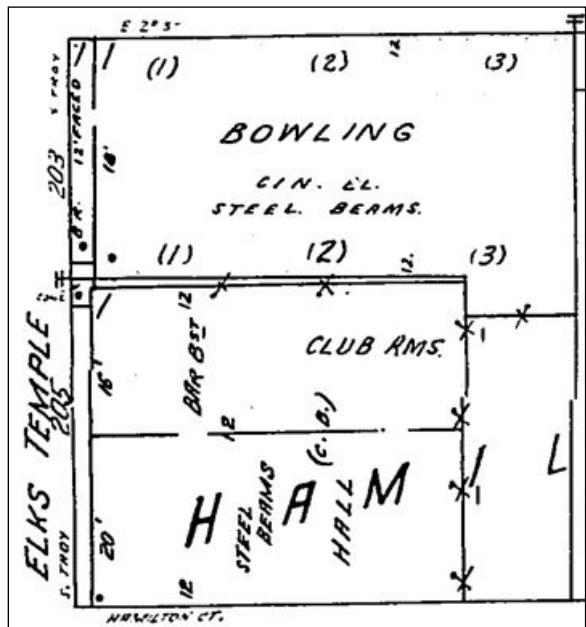


Figure 139. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 28.

Exchange Club

The Royal Oak Exchange Club was founded in 1912. As of 1923, local architect Frederick D. Madison served as the club's president.⁷⁶³ Exchange Park, one of the larger parks in the city, was first known as Montrose Park. In 1962, it was renamed Exchange in recognition of The Royal Oak Exchange Club, which paid for some playground equipment installed there. The club has not been active in Royal Oak since the 1980s.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁵⁹ NETROnline, topographic map and aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1940, 1951, 1988, and 1999, accessed January 23, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

⁷⁶⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁶¹ "Reunions," *Detroit Free Press*, November 12, 1987, 107.

⁷⁶² NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1999 accessed January 24, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicair.com).

⁷⁶³ "Royal Oak Club To Hold Banquet," *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1923, 33.

⁷⁶⁴ Mike McConnell, "Royal Oak to name park after man behind creation of city's 51 parks," *The Oakland Press*, published July 12, 2023, accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.theoaklandpress.com/2023/07/12/royal-oak-to-name-park-after-man-behind-creation-of-citys-51-parks/>.

Fraternal Order of Eagles Union Aerie No. 2092

The Fraternal Order of Eagles is an international, nonprofit, charitable organization that has its roots in a meeting of six of Seattle's most prominent theater owners on February 6, 1898. They decided to work together to settle a musicians' strike by using piano players to replace the musicians. Out of a subsequent discussion of life came the Order of Good Things. The Order chose the Bald Eagle as their official emblem and changed the name of the organization to The Fraternal Order of Eagles as their numbers grew. Its goal was to "make human life more desirable by lessening its ills and promoting peace, prosperity, gladness and hope." Much of the order's early growth is due to touring theater troupes who carried the story of the Eagles as they traveled throughout the United States and Canada. Within 10 years, the Order had more than 1,800 Aeries across the United States, Canada, and Mexico and a membership of over 350,000. Members received free medical care for themselves and their families, weekly payments in case of sickness, and a funeral benefit, all of which were extremely valuable prior to the widespread availability of medical, disability, and life insurance. The formation of the Ladies' Auxiliary was formally approved in August 1926.⁷⁶⁵

The Royal Oak aerie was established in 1926. The current lodge was built in 1949 at 401 East Fourth Street.⁷⁶⁶ The order has also recently been referred to as the Royal Oak Federation of Eagles.⁷⁶⁷

Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge No. 424

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) is a fraternal organization established in England in the 1600s. Its initial purpose was to assist those in need, as people were class-conscious at the time and few helped their neighbors. Because this behavior was contrary to how the rest of society behaved at the time, they considered themselves "odd," thus the name of the order. The order came to the United States in 1819. One of the world's oldest and largest fraternal orders, it currently has more than 3,000 lodges.⁷⁶⁸

The Royal Oak lodge was instituted in 1892 and began with 80 members.⁷⁶⁹ As of 1917, their hall was in the Royal Oak Bank building.⁷⁷⁰ In 1922, the lodge held a carnival to help raise funds for a temple at Fourth and West streets that was estimated to cost \$50,000.⁷⁷¹ A new temple was dedicated on East 11 Mile Road in 1952.⁷⁷²

⁷⁶⁵ Fraternal Order of Eagles, "History," accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.foe.com/About-The-Eagles/History>.

⁷⁶⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁶⁷ "Toys for Kids party helps Gilda's Club," *Detroit Free Press*, December 4, 2010, 32.

⁷⁶⁸ Independent Order of Odd Fellows, "About Us," accessed January 23, 2024, <https://iooflodgedirectory.org/>.

⁷⁶⁹ "Odd Fellows – Pontiac and Detroit Lodges Entertained by Royal Oak Lodge," *Detroit Free Press*, March 5, 1892, 3.

⁷⁷⁰ "Royal Oak Society," *Detroit Free Press*, July 15, 1917, 54.

⁷⁷¹ "Odd Fellows Planning Big Time at Carnival," *Detroit Free Press*, August 22, 1922, 22.

⁷⁷² "Lodge Sets Dedication of New Temple," *Detroit Free Press*, November 28, 1952, 17.

Kiwanis Club

The Michigan District, chartered in January 1915, was the birthplace of Kiwanis.⁷⁷³ In 1927, a group of men, led by Earl Becker, formed a local Kiwanis Club. It immediately went into service, helping needy families with fuel and clothes, loaning money to seniors for their trip to Washington, D.C., and buying books for students. During World War II, the club provided “farewell breakfasts” to departing draftees and enlistees and donated money and blood to the Red Cross blood bank. The club also established a soup kitchen. The group met in such locations as the Girl Scouts’ Room on the second floor of the Washington Square Building, Marquard’s Restaurant over Hilzinger’s Hardware, Maison’s Restaurant on Main Street, and the basement of the Congregational Church. They also met for a time at the Woman’s Club clubhouse prior to its relocation to Fourth and Pleasant streets. During the Great Depression, the club ceased meeting in restaurants to save money for charitable deeds. Instead, they dined on sandwiches, canned fruit, and coffee in the Girl Scouts’ Room.⁷⁷⁴ In 2015, Kiwanis Metro Detroit Young Professionals, the first Young Professional Kiwanis Club in Michigan, was chartered.⁷⁷⁵ At that time, the Royal Oak Kiwanis Club was meeting at the First Congregational Church at 1314 Northwood Boulevard.⁷⁷⁶

Knights of Columbus Bishop Gallagher Council No. 2569

The Knights of Columbus order was founded in 1882 by Reverend Michael J. McGivney. In 1898, the order was introduced to Michigan with the establishing of Council No. 305 in Detroit. The first Knights of Columbus Council in Oakland County was instituted in Pontiac on October 26, 1901. On May 10, 1925, the 61st Council in the State of Michigan was established in Royal Oak with 134 charter members.⁷⁷⁷ It initially occupied a pre-1916, two-story, wood-frame dwelling at 702 South Lafayette Avenue.⁷⁷⁸ The 1931–1950 Sanborn map shows that the group continued to use the building until that time and that they had constructed an addition that wrapped around the northern and western elevations.⁷⁷⁹ The house was demolished between 1957 and 1967.⁷⁸⁰ By January 1960, the council was meeting at 406 East Fourth Street, which

⁷⁷³ Kiwanis Michigan District, “The Michigan District of Kiwanis,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://k12.site.kiwanis.org/>.

⁷⁷⁴ Muriel Versagi, “Kiwanis Club once met in the Girl Scouts Room at the top of the Washington Square Building,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalociety.com/royal-oak-service-clubs>.

⁷⁷⁵ Kiwanis Metro Detroit Young Professionals, “MDYP Kiwanis In The News,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.metrodetroitkiwanis.org/in-the-news.html>.

⁷⁷⁶ City of Royal Oak, “City of Royal Oak’s Analysis Of Impediments To Fair Housing (AI) 2015 Update,” accessed January 25, 2024, at <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/270/Analysis-of-Impediments-to-Fair-Housing-2015-PDF>.

⁷⁷⁷ Knights of Columbus 2569, “About this group,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/242382129141159/about>.

⁷⁷⁸ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1926).

⁷⁷⁹ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁸⁰ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957 and 1967 accessed January 24, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

was constructed in 1949.⁷⁸¹ It now meets at the Royal Oak–Detroit Elks Lodge #34 at 2401 East Fourth Street.⁷⁸² The council works most closely with St. Mary Catholic Church in Royal Oak, but also assists other Catholic churches and agencies, providing funds for and participating in various projects.⁷⁸³

Lions Club

Lions Club International was established in 1917 by Chicago business leader Melvin Jones who was curious to see what would happen if people applied their talents to improving their communities.⁷⁸⁴ The primary mission of the Lions Club is to provide service and support for those with vision and hearing problems.⁷⁸⁵ The Royal Oak Lions Club was chartered by the International Association of Lions on November 19, 1928. It meets at the Royal Oak American Legion.⁷⁸⁶

Metro Detroit Youth Clubs—Jack & Patti Salter Club

Established about 65 years ago, Metro Detroit Youth Clubs serve youth throughout Metro Detroit by helping them to learn, grow, lead, and succeed. They provide programs that focus on literacy, mentoring, mental health services, workforce development, and health and fitness. There are locations in Detroit, Royal Oak, and Southfield.⁷⁸⁷ The Royal Oak Club was founded in 1958.⁷⁸⁸ The building at 1545 East Lincoln Avenue was constructed between 1957 and 1967 and expanded between 1999 and 2002.⁷⁸⁹

Optimist Club

Citizens began forming voluntary organizations to address the needs of their communities as industrialization and urbanization introduced many new problems to society. In 1911, the first official Optimist Club was formed in Buffalo, New York. Upon the formation of the Optimist Club of Indianapolis, Indiana, in May 1916, there was an impetus to begin a nationwide Optimist movement. In the summer of 1916, founders of the Indianapolis club began starting Optimist Clubs in many other major cities. These clubs rapidly grew to more than 100 members each. In

⁷⁸¹ “Brief Church Notes,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 2, 1960, 16; Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

⁷⁸² Knights of Columbus, Royal Oak Michigan, “Contact Us,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://kofc2569.com/contact-us>.

⁷⁸³ Knights of Columbus, Royal Oak Michigan, “About Us,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://kofc2569.com/>.

⁷⁸⁴ Lions Clubs International British Isles, “Stories and history,” accessed February 1, 2024, <https://lionsclubs.co/Public/stories-and-history/#:~:text=Lions%20Clubs%20International%20was%20formed,to%20work%20improving%20their%20communities.>

⁷⁸⁵ Royal Oak Chamber of Commerce, “Royal Oak Lions Club,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.royaloakchamber.com/list/member/royal-oak-lions-club-1294>.

⁷⁸⁶ Royal Oak Lions Club, Homepage, accessed January 24, 2024, <http://www.royaloaklionsclub.org/>.

⁷⁸⁷ Metro Detroit Youth Clubs, “About the Club,” accessed January 18, 2024, <https://miclubs.org/#>.

⁷⁸⁸ Metro Detroit Youth Clubs, “Royal Oak Club,” accessed January 18, 2024, <https://miclubs.org/royal-oak/>.

⁷⁸⁹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1957, 1967, 1999, and 2002, accessed January 18, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

1917, a national conference of the American clubs was held in Indianapolis. The association of clubs that is now known as Optimist International was formed on June 19, 1919, when representatives of 11 clubs held a convention in Louisville, Kentucky. The name International Optimist Club was adopted. From the very beginning, Optimist Clubs directed much of their efforts toward youth service.⁷⁹⁰ The Royal Oak club was chartered on June 1, 1946. It meets regularly at a local restaurant.⁷⁹¹

Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem No. 31, Royal Oak

Members of what would become Bethlehem Shrine #1, Illinois, met on September 23, 1894, to form a committee to take the necessary steps to procure a charter from the State of Illinois for a Supreme Shrine. A separate charter was also procured to establish the first subordinate shrine (No. 1, IL). The order was founded on October 23, 1894. The Illinois Supreme Organization was run by the Board of Directors until 1901. Palestine #1, Michigan, was the first shrine established in Michigan under the charter granted by special act of State of Michigan legislation. Both Illinois and Michigan established shrines around the country until a merger of the Supreme Organizations in 1909.⁷⁹²

This order is for men and women who are connected to the Masonic fraternity. Its mission is to “uphold the simple religion of Christ and further His Gospel of ‘Peace and Good Will upon the Earth’ and to perform good deeds and acts of kindness for those who suffer.”⁷⁹³ Their charity, the Supreme Material Objective Fund, assists in paying the medical bills of those who cannot otherwise afford to pay them.⁷⁹⁴ The overall order is still active, with shrines existing across the country.⁷⁹⁵ The Royal Oak shrine appears to have been active from at least 1931 to 1973 but is no longer active.

Rotary Club of Royal Oak District 6380

The Rotary Club began with the Rotary Club of Chicago, formed by Paul Harris, a Chicago attorney, in February 1905. There are now over 46,000 clubs. Its mission is “to provide service to

⁷⁹⁰ Optimist International, “History of Optimist International,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.optimist.org/member/about5.cfm>.

⁷⁹¹ Optimist International, “Club Information,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://www.optimist.org/member/clubdirectory/clubdetail.cfm?club=17180&backURL=city%2Ecfm%3Fcountry%3DUS%26state%3DMI>.

⁷⁹² The Supreme Shrine, Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, “History,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://supremeshrine.org/history/>.

⁷⁹³ The Supreme Shrine, Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, “Home,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://supremeshrine.org/>.

⁷⁹⁴ The Supreme Shrine, Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, “Home,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://supremeshrine.org/>.

⁷⁹⁵ The Supreme Shrine, Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem, “Shrine Locator,” accessed January 24, 2024, <https://supremeshrine.org/shrine-locator/>.

others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace through our fellowship of business, professional, and community leaders.”⁷⁹⁶

The Rotary Club of Royal Oak was established on April 1, 1924.⁷⁹⁷ As of 1959, it met at 430 North Washington Avenue.⁷⁹⁸ In 2023, club met biweekly at the First Presbyterian Church at 529 Hendrie Boulevard.⁷⁹⁹ There are about 23 active members. The club’s primary goal is to support youth and youth organizations in Royal Oak.⁸⁰⁰ Its signature event is the Y.E.S. (Youth Education and Service) Auction every April to raise money to assist with college costs. The club started the Blessings in a Backpack program, which was designed to feed marginalized families within the City of Royal Oak. It also hosts the annual Mayor of Royal Oak State of the City Address.⁸⁰¹

Royal Canadian Legion Post 84

Nearly 620,000 Canadians served in World War I from 1914 to 1918. That number includes many Americans who joined the Canadian Armed Forces prior to the United States entering the war. The Canadian forces suffered a casualty rate of 38 percent (66,655 killed and 172,950 wounded). By 1917, many wounded veterans were returning home and forming veteran’s organizations to address various issues. The Canadian government requested that these organizations form a committee to address the government as a group. In April 1917, the Great War Veteran Association was formed. The war officially ended in 1919, and all veterans returned home. Numerous groups were formed, some being specific in nature, others being more general service groups. In 1921, Field Marshall Douglas Haig, the commander of the British Expeditionary Army in France, founded the British Empire Service League (BESL) in Cape Town, South Africa, as an umbrella organization for all veterans organizations in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Haig traveled to Canada and asked the Canadian veteran groups to unite. Thus, in November 1925, the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League was formed in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Canadian Legion was accepted into the BESL in 1926. In 1935, John Price and a group of Canadian and British former servicemen met at his house in Pleasant Ridge, Michigan, and applied for a BESL charter. The charter was granted that December. There were initially 31 members, but by the following year, that number had increased to 57. In 1938, they moved into their first home at 500 South Main Street with nearly 100 members. The group continued to use that building until March 1953,

⁷⁹⁶ Terry Jacoby, “A Century of Service,” *Royal Oak Today*, Fourth Quarter 2023, 14, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.communitypublishing.com/articles-royal-oak-today/ACenturyOfService-TerryJacoby>.

⁷⁹⁷ Terry Jacoby, “A Century of Service,” *Royal Oak Today*, Fourth Quarter 2023, 14, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.communitypublishing.com/articles-royal-oak-today/ACenturyOfService-TerryJacoby>.

⁷⁹⁸ Resolution by the Special Committee to Study Future Use of Contagious Hospital, June 22, 1959, accessed January 24, 2024,

<https://openoakland2.oakgov.com/WebRequest/ElectronicFile.aspx?docid=19140&dbid=0&repo=Open-Oakland>.

⁷⁹⁹ Terry Jacoby, “A Century of Service,” *Royal Oak Today*, Fourth Quarter 2023, 14, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.communitypublishing.com/articles-royal-oak-today/ACenturyOfService-TerryJacoby>.

⁸⁰⁰ Mapquest, “Royal Oak Rotary Club,” accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.mapquest.com/us/michigan/royal-oak-rotary-club-423524423>.

⁸⁰¹ Terry Jacoby, “A Century of Service,” *Royal Oak Today*, Fourth Quarter 2023, 14, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.communitypublishing.com/articles-royal-oak-today/ACenturyOfService-TerryJacoby>.

when the current building at 1005 East 11 Mile Road was acquired. From 1935 to 1960, the group was part of the Canadian Legion of the British Empire Service League. By assent of Queen Elizabeth II, they became The Royal Canadian Legion in 1960. In 1962, the BESL was renamed the Royal Commonwealth Ex-services League. The full, official name of the post in Royal Oak is Maple Leaf Post 84 of The Royal Canadian Legion of the Royal Commonwealth Ex-services League.⁸⁰²

Royal Oak Arts Council

The Royal Oak Arts Council, a nonprofit volunteer organization, was established in 1976 to increase the visibility of the art community at large. It supports and consists of artists, both in fine arts and performing arts; students; and art organizations in and around Royal Oak. The group's primary focus has been to support local art organizations and provide scholarships to Royal Oak students. It partners with the City of Royal Oak Recreation Department to present the Annual Royal Oak Outdoor Art Fair, which has been held for more than 50 years. The council also works with the Royal Oak Public Library to feature local artists throughout the year.⁸⁰³

Royal Oak Garden Club

The Royal Oak Garden Club was established in 1932. Two years later, it joined the Federated Garden Clubs of Michigan (now Michigan Garden Clubs) and the National Garden Clubs, Inc. The club's main goals are horticultural education and community service. Its membership is open to any adult interested in gardening; Royal Oak residency is not required.⁸⁰⁴ The club currently has around 70 members. Club members plant and maintain the perennial garden at the Royal Oak Community Garden, on the grounds of Churchill Community Education Center, and maintain public gardens at the Detroit Zoo and near the Royal Oak senior center.⁸⁰⁵ The club holds general meetings at the Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior Community Center at 3500 Marais Avenue.

Royal Oak Historical Society

Royal Oak Historical Society was first established as a social group in 1939. Residents would gather annually to show off family heirlooms related to the city's history.⁸⁰⁶ As of 1997, the city's collection of historical objects was dispersed between the library and the Starr House. The

⁸⁰² International RCL Eastern Zone, USA, "Post 84, USA," accessed January 17, 2024, https://rclusa.org/Post-84?fbclid=IwAR1fwzDlqYLB2j2Konjz9xwa1a8_zgegtIsWzWfwkuGV-JwgIfoSs1drvew.

⁸⁰³ Royal Oak Arts Council, "About Us," January 18, 2024, <https://royaloakarts.com/?fbclid=IwAR2simM18Oy3KU6K808cK0TkCT5oskqqV6l1GnU93Qi8uFXd-Cr8eVcMXrQ>.

⁸⁰⁴ Royal Oak Garden Club, "About," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.royaloakgardenclubmi.org/>.

⁸⁰⁵ Mike McConnell, "As it grows, Royal Oak Garden Club to host silent auction," *Royal Oak Tribune*, published December 1, 2023, accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2023/12/01/as-it-grows-royal-oak-garden-club-to-host-silent-auction/>.

⁸⁰⁶ Brianne Turczynski, "Looking Back: Royal Oak's community dynamics change, and grow, along with its city," Metromode, published October 14, 2021, accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.secondwavemedia.com/metromode/features/LookingBackRoyalOak.aspx>.

historical society museum was also seeking a permanent home for its collection. In 2003, it was permitted by the Royal Oak School District to display artifacts in the Churchill Community Center.⁸⁰⁷ The following year, Royal Oak opened its own museum to house the city's historic artifacts, and the historical society acquired a large collection from a local collector.⁸⁰⁸ In 2009, the City of Royal Oak entered into an agreement with the Royal Oak Historical Society and Museum to lease the Northwood Fire Station (Webster RoadFire Station #2) as its permanent home.⁸⁰⁹ The historical society is managed by a curator and a team of volunteers. The society collects, preserves, and provides information and objects which reflect Royal Oak's past for present and future generations. It also organizes various events that promote cultural enrichment each year, hosts community events such as historical walking tours and lectures, presents special exhibits in the museum, and provides a venue for other groups and individuals to display their collections.⁸¹⁰

Royal Oak Lodge #464 Free and Accepted Masons

This lodge originated in a meeting between two members of the Birmingham Lodge No. 44—Peter Backer and Charles A. Allen—and Dr. William Gass. They discussed a lack of social activities in the village and how setting up a lodge there would help remedy that. The first meeting at Dr. Gass' office had about 20 attendees. A second meeting was held at San Sara Hall, formerly the Old Sixth District School Building, at the southeastern corner of Fourth and Williams streets (411 Williams Street). A suitable location for a lodge was discussed. The attendees agreed that the hall could be altered for use as a lodge. The owner, Captain M.A. Parr, agreed to sell the hall for \$3,500. A third meeting was held to discuss how to go about paying for the building. It was thought best to form a Masonic Temple Association and to sell stock in it for \$5 per share. On May 11, 1911, Grand Master Roscoe G. Swift granted his dispensation to the 33 brethren of the new Royal Oak Lodge. The first meeting of the new lodge was held on May 13, 1911. On May 29, 1912, the Committee on Lodges in Grand Lodge Session recommended that Royal Oak Lodge be granted a charter and that it be known as No. 464. Grand Master James H. Thompson and his staff constituted, dedicated, and consecrated Royal Oak Lodge No. 464 on July 25, 1912. As the building had been constructed in 1868, it was decided in 1923 that a new temple would be built.⁸¹¹ That year, it was announced that the lodge would be occupying the second floor of a new business block on Main Street between Fourth and Fifth streets. The second floor featured a kitchen, dining room, club rooms, and lodge rooms.⁸¹² On May 13, 1924, the new lodge room was dedicated by Grand Master Charles A. Durand and his staff

⁸⁰⁷ Royal Oak Historical Society, "The Royal Oak Historical Society Museum," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/museum-history>.

⁸⁰⁸ Brianne Turczynski, "Looking Back: Royal Oak's community dynamics change, and grow, along with its city," Metromode, published October 14, 2021, accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.secondwavemedia.com/metromode/features/LookingBackRoyalOak.aspx>.

⁸⁰⁹ Royal Oak Historical Society, "The Royal Oak Historical Society Museum," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/museum-history>.

⁸¹⁰ Royal Oak Historical Society, "Home/About," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com>.

⁸¹¹ Charles Fey, *History of Freemasonry in Oakland County, Michigan*, (Royal Oak, Michigan: Self-published, 1949), 83-84, accessed January 25, 2024,

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071414505&seq=267&q1=royal+oak>.

⁸¹² "Masons Erect Home in North," *Detroit Free Press*, May 20, 1923, 36.

(Figure 140).⁸¹³ The 1926 and 1931–1950 Sanborn maps show the lodge as being on the second floor of 414–416 South Main Street.⁸¹⁴ This building was demolished between 2002 and 2005.⁸¹⁵ By 1926, the Salvation Army had taken over the first lodge, and by 1951 it had been demolished.⁸¹⁶ The lodge currently meets at 850 Horace Brown Drive in Madison Heights.⁸¹⁷ This lodge room was built and decorated around 1984.⁸¹⁸



Figure 140. The new business block constructed on Main Street between Fourth and Fifth streets (Detroit Free Press 1923)

The Royal Oak Nature Society

The Royal Oak Nature Society is a volunteer group that works with the City of Royal Oak to protect, maintain, and promote the usage of the city's two nature preserves: Cummingston Park and Tenhave Woods.⁸¹⁹ The formation of this group was inspired by the 1999 Parks and

⁸¹³ Charles Fey, *History of Freemasonry in Oakland County, Michigan*, (Royal Oak, Michigan: Self-published, 1949), 84, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015071414505&seq=267&q1=royal+oak>.

⁸¹⁴ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950).

⁸¹⁵ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2002 and 2005, accessed January 25, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

⁸¹⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926); NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed January 24, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

⁸¹⁷ Royal Oak Lodge 464 F. & A.M., "Home," accessed January 25, 2024, <https://464-mi.ourlodgepage.com/>.

⁸¹⁸ Northwood Ancient-Craft No. 551, "Lodge Renovation," *Trestleboard*, p. 6, published January 2009, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.nac551.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Masons-News-01-09.pdf>.

⁸¹⁹ City of Royal Oak, "Nature Society," accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/407/Nature-Society>.

Recreation Master Plan, which noted that the two parks were underutilized and needed work. As a result of the plan, in February 2000, the Royal Oak Parks and Recreation Advisory Board made a recommendation to the Royal Oak City Commission that both parks become Conservancy Parks. The Royal Oak Nature Society was officially established on January 17, 2001, with a kick-off meeting at Starr Elementary. Its board of directors was approved at a general meeting in February 2002.⁸²⁰ The society has been in the process of developing an arboretum and wildflower garden (the Fred A. Erb Arboretum) behind the Royal Oak Senior Center since 2007.⁸²¹

Soroptimists

Soroptimist, loosely translated “beast for women,” was formed in 1921 in Oakland, California, at a time when women could not join service organizations. The group currently has over 25,000 members and supporters in countries across North America, Latin America, and the Pacific Rim. It is one of five federations that makes up Soroptimist International, which has clubs in more than 120 countries. Its mission is to provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.⁸²²

The Royal Oak club, formed by its sister club in Detroit, was officially installed on March 1, 1937. A junior group, called the Venture Club, was concurrently installed. At that time, the Soroptimist Club resembled the Rotary Club in that it was a classified service group consisting of executives, and only one woman in each profession was eligible for membership. The Venture Club consisted of young women in their twenties who were starting out in the business world. Each member was to be sponsored by a Soroptimist sister who would act as her adviser.⁸²³ Now known as Soroptimist International of Oakland County, the service club works to improve the lives of women in local communities and throughout the world.⁸²⁴

South Oakland Family YMCA

The South Oakland Family YMCA is at 1016 West 11 Mile Road. Royal Oak was one of several suburban Detroit locations constructed following World War II between 1944 and 1950.⁸²⁵ The building was expanded in subsequent years, the original portion of the building being demolished between 1973 and 1983.⁸²⁶ A Grand Reopening was held in February 2022 to showcase renovations, which included a new group exercise studio, a new Child Watch, a new front desk,

⁸²⁰ The Royal Oak Nature Society, “The Royal Oak Nature Society,” accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36021/Nature-Society-Information-May-2023>.

⁸²¹ City of Royal Oak, “Nature Society,” accessed January 17, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/407/Nature-Society>.

⁸²² Soroptimist, “About Us,” accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.soroptimist.org/about-us/index.html>.

⁸²³ Elizabeth Maury, “I Wish to Report,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 27, 1937, 12.

⁸²⁴ Dorsey College, “Financial Aid News and Updates,” accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.dorsey.edu/financial-aid-news-and-updates/>.

⁸²⁵ University of Michigan Library, “YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit, Metropolitan Offices records, 1877-2012,” accessed January 18, 2024, <https://findingaids.lib.umich.edu/catalog/umich-bhl-90124>.

⁸²⁶ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1973 and 1983, accessed January 18, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

an updated lobby, new paint and flooring throughout most of the building, new staff offices, and new paint in the locker rooms.⁸²⁷

VFW Acorn Post 1669

The history of the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) can be traced back to 1899, when veterans of the Spanish–American War (1898) and the Philippine Insurrection (1899–1902) formed local organizations to secure rights and benefits for their service. Many came home sick or wounded, and there was no medical care or veterans' pension for them, so they were left to care for themselves. Some of these veterans banded together and formed organizations with what would become known as the VFW. The movement rapidly gained momentum after chapters were formed in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. The membership grew to 5,000 by 1915, and by 1936, that number had increased to nearly 200,000.⁸²⁸

This particular VFW post was established in 1929. It celebrated its first anniversary with a dance at the IOOF Hall in Royal Oak. Since receiving its charter the previous year, the post had increased its membership from 13 to 40.⁸²⁹ The current building at 214 East Fourth Street in Royal Oak appears to have been constructed circa 1950–1951, as it does not appear on the 1931–1950 Sanborn map but appears in a 1951 aerial photograph.⁸³⁰

Women's Club

The Women's Club was established in 1902 and is one of the oldest and most progressive clubs in Royal Oak. Civic projects included reorganizing the public library and securing adequate mail delivery. To support the youth of the area, the Women's Club formed two clubs for girls: the Younger Business Girls' Club and the Royal Oaks Girls' Club. All three clubs held meetings in a church building that had been moved to a site donated by Mr. George Martin, whose wife was the organizer and first president of the Women's Club.⁸³¹ The Women's Club is still active and meets in the same building. Their mission continues to be community service, open opportunities for women, and supporting education.⁸³²

⁸²⁷ YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit, “Join us for the South Oakland Family YMCA Grand Reopening Celebration,” accessed January 18, 2024, <https://ymcadetroit.org/join-us-for-the-south-oakland-family-ymca-grand-reopening-celebration/>.

⁸²⁸ Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), “About Us,” accessed January 17, 2024, <https://vfw1669.org/di/vfw/v2/default.asp?pid=4890>.

⁸²⁹ “Acorn post, Veterans of Foreign Wars,” *Detroit Free Press*, March 31, 1930, 8.

⁸³⁰ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950); NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1951, accessed January 23, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicaerials.com).

⁸³¹ “Women's Club is Civic Factor,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1924.

⁸³² Royal Oak Woman's Club, “Making New Best Friends Since 1902,” <https://www.rowc.org/>.

Associated Resources

Table 17. Royal Oak clubs, location, date, and status information

Club Name	Location	Date Established	Active
American Legion–Frank Wendland Post 253	1505 North Main Street	1920	Yes
Ancient Order of Hibernians Norman O'Brien Division 1	1005 East 11 Mile Road	Unknown	Yes
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Royal Oak Detroit #34	205 South Troy Street	1926	Yes
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks Royal Oak Detroit #34	2401 East Fourth Street	1926	Yes
Fraternal Order of Eagles Union Aerie No. 2092	401 East Fourth Street	1926	Yes
Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge No. 424	East 11 Mile Road	1892	No
Kiwanis Club	1314 Northwood Boulevard	1927	Yes
Knights of Columbus Bishop Gallagher Council No. 2569	702 South Lafayette Avenue	1925	Yes
Knights of Columbus Bishop Gallagher Council No. 2569	406 East Fourth Street	1925	Yes
Knights of Columbus Bishop Gallagher Council No. 2569	2401 East Fourth Street	1925	Yes
Lions Club	1505 North Main Street	1928	Yes
Metro Detroit Youth Clubs–Jack & Patti Salter Club	1545 East Lincoln Avenue	1958	Yes
Optimist Club	None	1946	Yes
Order of the White Shrine of Jerusalem No. 31, Royal Oak	None	Unknown	No
Rotary Club of Royal Oak	529 Hendrie Boulevard	1924	Yes
Royal Canadian Legion Post 84	1005 East 11 Mile Road	1935	Yes
Royal Oak Arts Council	None	1976	Yes
Royal Oak Garden Club	3500 Marais Avenue	1932	Yes
Royal Oak Historical Society	1411 West Webster Road	1939	Yes
Royal Oak Lodge #464 F.&A.M.	411 Williams Street	1912	Yes
Royal Oak Lodge #464 F.&A.M.	414–416 South Main Street	1912	Yes
Royal Oak Nature Society	1600 North Campbell Road	2001	Yes
Soroptimist Club	Unknown	1937	Yes
South Oakland Family YMCA	1016 West 11 Mile Road	ca. 1950	Yes
VFW Acorn Post 1669	214 East Fourth Street	1929	Yes
Women's Club	404 South Pleasant Street	1902	Yes

Recreation/Culture

Outdoor Recreation

In the 1930s and 1940s, the Royal Oak Park Commission, led by Myron L. Zucker, proposed an ambitious park and playground development plan. The committee recommended several small sites throughout the city, with one playground to each 0.25 mi so that children would not have to cross a major road to reach a recreation site. Zucker sought community input on parks, and the community responded with such suggestions as lighted softball fields, nature trails, children's

gardens, a nursery, a bird sanctuary, artificial lakes, wading pools, drill grounds, a bandstand, and a youth hostel.⁸³³

Under Zucker's leadership, the city commission voted to name the city-owned property at 13 Mile Road and Woodward Avenue, known as the Braybant property, Memorial Park to honor Royal Oak's war dead.⁸³⁴ On Monday, June 26, 1939, the City of Royal Oak established the 24.19-ac Memorial Park. It currently features a baseball and softball field, a football field, a tennis court, a pavilion, picnic tables, a playground, concessions, and restrooms.⁸³⁵

Because of the vision of Zucker and others, Royal Oak currently has more than 50 recreation facilities: 11 community parks, 24 neighborhood parks, 16 mini-parks, nature parks, and urban plazas as well as a golf course, community center, and senior community center.⁸³⁶ As of December 2022, the City of Royal Oak boasted 51 parks comprising 340 ac of city property. The park land makes up 4.5 percent of the total square miles in the city (Table 18).⁸³⁷

Associated Resources

Table 18. Royal Oak Parks, Location, Size, Establishment, and Amenities Information

Park Name	Location	Size (ac)	Date Established	Amenities
13 Mile/Main Park	3224 North Main Street	0.10	1973–1983	Two raised beds, a rock garden, and benches
Barton Park North	25 Pingree Boulevard	0.57	1985	playground, bicycle rack, outdoor fitness equipment
Barton Park South	333 North Troy Street	0.48	1985	gazebo, two chess tables, memorial signage.
Bassett Park	120-248 Campbell Road	1.31	1956	play structure and sandbox, swing set, climber
Centennial Commons	203 South Troy Street	1.9	2022	ping pong, water feature, stage, chess tables, veteran's memorial
Clawson Park	1901 Essex Street	2.21	1956	Ball field, play structure, 3 swing sets, tire swing
Cody Park	1798 Cody Road	1.75	1956	Multipurpose field, play structure, swing set, outdoor fitness equipment, sandbox
Cummingston Park	5199 Elmhurst Avenue	30.12	1925	Play structure, swing set, nature preserve
Dickinson Park	4307 Amherst Road	4.91	1958	Ball field, multipurpose field, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets, sandbox
Dondero Park	Dondero & Hoffman Avenues	3.42	1956	Ball field, 2 tennis courts, basketball courts, play structure, 2 swing sets, tire swing

⁸³³ City of Royal Oak, "Parks," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/541/Parks>.

⁸³⁴ City of Royal Oak, "Parks," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/541/Parks>.

⁸³⁵ City of Royal Oak, "Memorial Park," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://romi.gov/Facilities/Facility/Details/Memorial-Park-40>.

⁸³⁶ City of Royal Oak, "Parks," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/541/Parks>; City of Royal Oak, "2023-2027 Recreation Plan," Prepared by McKenna, 2022.

⁸³⁷ City of Royal Oak, "2023-2027 Recreation Plan," Prepared by McKenna, 2022.

Park Name	Location	Size (ac)	Date Established	Amenities
Elks Park	2100 Normandy Road	4.35	1952	Ball field, multipurpose field, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets, volleyball court
Exchange Park	1201 Montrose Avenue	14.49	1956	2 ball fields, multipurpose field, 2 tennis courts, basketball court, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets
Fernwood Park	701 Lockwood Road	1	1956	Basketball court, play structure, swing set, sandbox
Franklin Park	East Harrison & Mohawk Avenues	0.56	1941	Tennis court, play structure, swing set, sandbox
Fred Pieper Optimist Park	Rochester Road & Montrose Avenue	3.08	1988	Ball field, volleyball court, play structure, 2 swing sets, sandbox, tire swing
Fries Park	Normandy & Greenfield Roads	1.41	1955	Greenspace
Fulton Park	4230 North Fulton Place	0.41	1955	Play structure, swing set, jungle climbers, sandbox
Grant Park	598 East Irving Avenue	4.24	1980s	Soccer field, ball field, play structures, swing set, outdoor fitness equipment
Gunn Dyer Park	3607 Hunter Avenue	2.36	1956	Ball field, multipurpose field, play structure, 2 swing sets, jungle climber
Hamer Finch Wilkins Park (formerly Beechwood Park)	706 Walnut Avenue	0.29	1965	Open space
Huntington Woods Park	25681 Dundee Road	0.55	Unknown	Play structure, swing set/tire swing, sandbox
Kenwood Park	2000 Forest Avenue	8.83	1965	2 Ballfields, soccer field, 2 tennis courts, play structure, multipurpose field, 2 swing sets, climber, tire swing, sandbox
Lawson Park	1300 Longfellow Avenue	2.61	1965	Ball field, baseball court, play structure, swing sets, jungle climber, outdoor fitness equipment, pavilion
Lions Club Park	1103 Orchard Grove Drive	1.08	1995	Play structure, 2 swing sets
Lockman Park	1504 North Connecticut Avenue	9.18	1939	2 tennis courts, basketball court, play structure, 2 swing sets, tire swing
Maddock Park	2454 East Lincoln Avenue	2.57	1970	Play structure, 2 swing sets
Marais (Dickie Putnam) Park	1002 West Webster Road	2.52	1955	Sledding hill
Marks Park	East Second Street & South Blair Avenue	1.71	1956	Soccer field, play structure, 2 swing sets
Mark Twain (Dog) Park	North Campbell Road & Ottawa Avenue	7.18	1954 (date associated with construction of Mark Twain Elementary School)	Dog run, nature trail

Park Name	Location	Size (ac)	Date Established	Amenities
Maudlin Park	4101-4211 Samoset Road	1.79	1956	Multipurpose field, play structure, 2 swing sets
Meininger Park	611 Maxwell Avenue	8.13	1985	2 Tennis courts, play structure, 2 swing sets, sandbox
Memorial Park	31050 Woodward Avenue	24.19	1939	3 ballfields, skate park, play structure, 2 swing sets, pavilion
Miller Park	3102 Garden Avenue	1.51	1956	Multipurpose field, 2 play structures, swing set
Milt Hey Hudson Park	617 East Hudson Avenue	1.86	Redesign complete estimated 2024	Soccer field, ball field, basketball court, play structure, 2 swing sets
Normandy Oaks Park	4234 Delemere Boulevard	36.2	2020	Soccer field, multipurpose field, play structure, climber, walking path, sledding hill, splash pad, pavilion, restrooms
Pioneer Park	4000 Normandy Road	3.02	1955	2 play structures, 2 swing sets, sandbox
Quickstad Park	Normandy Road & Lexington Boulevard	31.50	1955	3 soccer fields, nature preserve
Realtor Park	132 Amelia Street	1.49	1967	Soccer fields, play structure, 2 swing sets, jungle climber, community garden
Red Run Park	707 Girard Avenue	19.7	1956	2 ball fields, soccer fields, 2 tennis court, basketball court, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets, jungle climber
Rotary Park	2600-2698 West 13 Mile Road	0.80	1971	Open space
Royal Oak Arboretum	920 West Windemere Avenue	7.81	1958	Leo Mahany/Harold Meininger Senior Community Center, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets, nature trail
Starr Jaycee Park	1321 West 13 Mile Road	28.78	1955	3 ballfields, multipurpose field, volleyball court, disc golf, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets, jungle climber, tire swing, sandbox, 3 pavilions, mini train rides (May-October)
Sullivan Park	4421 Samoset Road	2.86	1955	Soccer field, play structure, 3 swing sets, jungle climber
Upton Park	4300-4398 Mankato Avenue	3.86	1956	8 pickleball courts, multipurpose field, play structure, 2 swing sets, sandbox
V.F.W. Park	South Campbell Road & East Lincoln Avenue	5.76	1942	In front of Jack & Patti Salter Community Center, ball fields, play structure, 2 swing sets, gaga ball, pavilion, sandbox
Wagner Park	138-222 Detroit Avenue	14.09	1956	Picnic areas, disc golf, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets
Waterworks Park	Marywood Drive & Lloyd Avenue	6.15	1939	Site of original Waterworks facility, soccer field, 2 tennis courts, ball field, play structure, 2 swing sets, sandbox, outdoor fitness equipment
Wendland Park	300-498 California Avenue	0.79	Unknown	Play structure, swing set, sandbox
Westwood Park	3137 Warick Road	1.03	1954	Multipurpose field, 2 play structures, 2 swing sets

Park Name	Location	Size (ac)	Date Established	Amenities
Whittier Park	East Farnum Avenue & North Alexander Avenue	6.93	1941	3 soccer fields, 8 pickleball courts, ball field, basketball court, play structure, 2 swing sets, sandbox
Worden Park	1403 Lexington Boulevard	22.67	1958	4 ball fields, multipurpose field, 6 tennis courts, John Lindell Ice Arena

Sports Centers

Royal Oak has had three bowling alleys and an ice rink providing recreation activities to the community. Two of the bowling alleys are no longer extant (Table 19).

Bowlero Lanes and Lounge

Bowlero Lanes and Lounge, a 16-lane bowling alley at 4209 Coolidge Highway, has been locally owned and operated since 1957.⁸³⁸ Construction began on the building between 1955 and 1957; with additions between 1973 and 1983.⁸³⁹ The Pocket Lounge was added to the building in 1962. From 1971 to at least 1979, the alley was owned by the Walby family. As of 1979, more than 40 leagues bowled there.⁸⁴⁰ The alley, now owned by the Elliott family, was closed from 2018 to 2019 for a \$1.4 million overhaul of the interior, which now features a 1970s aesthetic.⁸⁴¹

John Lindell Ice Arena

John Lindell Ice Arena, at 1403 Lexington Boulevard, was originally constructed in 1971 with one indoor rink and one outdoor rink. It was named for John Lindell, who served as Royal Oak's Director of Parks and Recreation for 16 years. The second rink was enclosed in 1995 as part of a \$3.5 million renovation. The rink is home to the Royal Oak Hockey Club, the New Edge Figure Skating Club, the Royal Oak Ravens High School Hockey Team, and the Shrine Knights High School Hockey Team.⁸⁴²

Red Run Lanes

This 16-lane bowling alley, constructed in 1947, was formerly at 1808 Rochester Road.⁸⁴³ It was acquired by Walby Inc. of Troy, Michigan, in 1973.⁸⁴⁴ In 1983, the alley fell victim to robbers who broke in through the roof of the building and stole cash from several vending machines and

⁸³⁸ Bowlero Lanes & Lounge, “Bowling & Games,” accessed January 16, 2024, <https://bowlerodetroit.com/bowling-arcade-games>.

⁸³⁹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1955, 1957, 1973, 1983, accessed January 16, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

⁸⁴⁰ Cathy Trost, “Bowling,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 29, 1979, 125.

⁸⁴¹ John Monaghan, “Bowlero boasts \$1.4M overhaul,” *Detroit Free Press*, August 25, 2019, E2.

⁸⁴² John Lindell Ice Arena Royal Oak, “About,” accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.royaloakicearena.com/about>.

⁸⁴³ Matt Fiorito, “It’s out with the old and in with new at Red Run,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1989, 52.

⁸⁴⁴ “Michigan Business,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1973, 24.

video games.⁸⁴⁵ That year, Doris and Eugene Anderson acquired the establishment and began making improvements. The eight remaining original wood lanes installed in 1947, which were in rough condition, were replaced by synthetic slabs in 1989.⁸⁴⁶ The building was demolished and replaced with a shopping plaza by 1999.⁸⁴⁷

Royal Oak Bowling/Royal Oak Lanes

Formerly at 1017 South Washington Avenue, this bowling alley was constructed between 1941 and 1944 (Figure 141).⁸⁴⁸ It closed in 2006 due to low patronage and was demolished by 2009.⁸⁴⁹ A condominium-over-commercial complex has been constructed in its place.

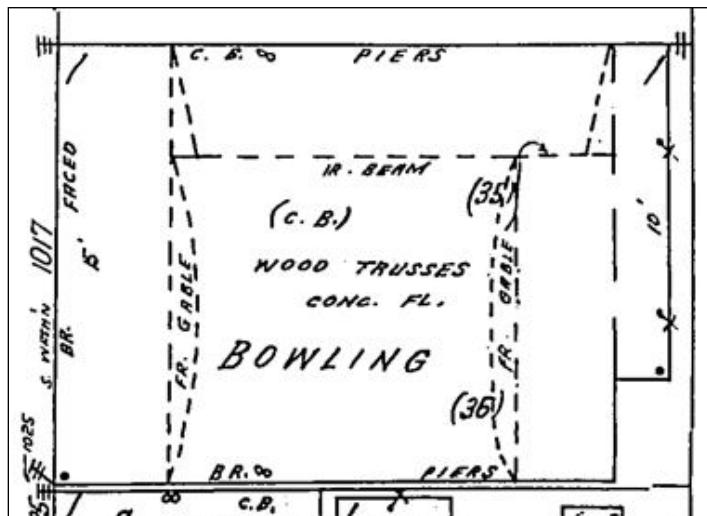


Figure 141. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 34.

Associated Resources

Table 19. Royal Oak Sports Centers, Location, Date, and Status

Sports Center Name	Address	Constructed	Extant
Bowlero Lanes and Lounge	4209 Coolidge Highway	1957	Yes
John Lindell Ice Arena	1403 Lexington Boulevard	1971	Yes
Red Run Lanes	1808 Rochester Road	1947	No
Royal Oak Bowling/Royal Oak Lanes	1017 South Washington Avenue	1941–1944	No

⁸⁴⁵ “They went through the roof,” *Detroit Free Press*, June 23, 1983, 134.

⁸⁴⁶ Matt Fiorito, “It’s out with the old and in with new at Red Run,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 3, 1989, 52.

⁸⁴⁷ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1999, accessed January 25, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](#).

⁸⁴⁸ NETROnline, topographic map of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1941, accessed January 25, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](#); “Gavie Rolls 718 Series,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 25, 1944, 14.

⁸⁴⁹ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2009, accessed January 25, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](#).

Golf Courses

The first golf course established in Royal Oak was the Red Run Golf Club in 1914. Between 1961-1962 a second golf course was added to the community amenities. Both courses are still extant (Table 20).

Red Run Golf Club

The Red Run Golf Club, at 2036 Rochester Road (Figure 142), was founded in 1914 and was designed by Willie Park, Jr.⁸⁵⁰ Park Jr. (1864–1925) was born in Musselburgh, Scotland, and his father was the four-time Open Champion. Willie worked for his uncle Mungo Park as assistant groundskeeper and club professional at Tyneside Golf Club in Northumberland, United Kingdom. In 1886, Park Sr. was asked to design a golf course at Innerleithen on the Borders of Scotland, but when he was unable to do so, Park Jr. stepped in and completed the design, effectively launching his career as a golf course designer. Park Jr. also continued playing in tournaments and owned a factory and chain of retail stores for manufacturing and selling golf clubs and balls. Park Jr. successfully designed golf courses throughout the world, but it was in the United States where he made his mark as a course designer. Park Jr. established a home base in Montreal, Canada, and also had offices in Toronto and New York. He is noted for designing 60 golf courses throughout the United States and Canada.⁸⁵¹

⁸⁵⁰ Red Run Golf Club, “About us” <https://www.redrungolfclub.com/public>.

⁸⁵¹ Architects/Top100/WillieParkJr, <https://www.top100golfcourses.com/architect/willie-park-junior>.

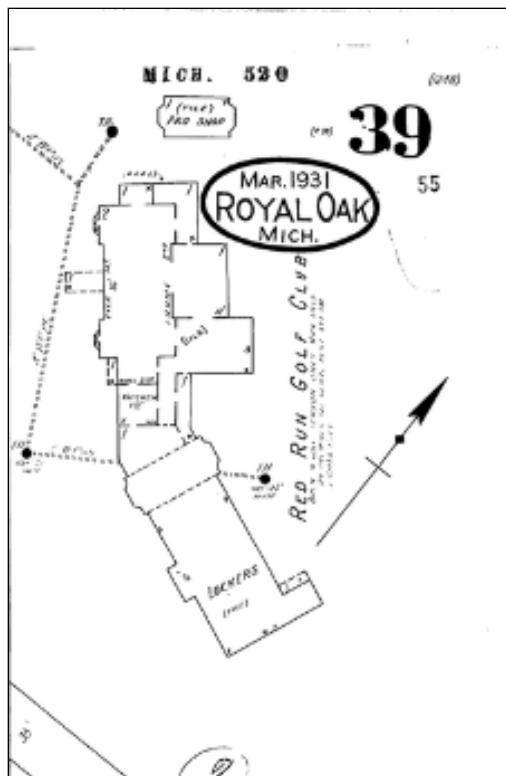


Figure 142. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. Royal Oak. March 1931–January 1950, Sheet 39.

Royal Oak Golf Club

Royal Oak Golf Club, at 3417 Don Soper Drive, is a municipal nine-hole golf course that adaptively reused 63 ac of former farmland. The Royal Oak Golf Club was the dream of local resident Don Soper, and was constructed in 1961–1962, opening on Memorial Day in 1962.⁸⁵² The golf course does not appear to have been designed by a noted architect but remains an active golf club.

Associated Resources

Table 20. Royal Oak golf courses, location, date, and status

Golf Course Name	Address	Established	Extant
Red Run Golf Club	2036 Rochester Road	1914	Yes
Royal Oak Golf Club	3417 Don Soper Drive	1961–1962	Yes

⁸⁵² Royal Oak Golf Club, <https://www.royaloakgc.com/bio>.

Detroit Zoological Park

Zoological parks were established in Europe in the late 1600s and increased in popularity in the 1800s. Efforts to establish a zoological park in the greater Detroit area were initiated in 1911 when the Detroit Zoological Society was founded. The society raised funds and purchased land at the intersection of Woodward Avenue and 10 Mile Road, in Royal Oak, with a deed restriction that the land could only be developed as a zoo.⁸⁵³ In the early 1920s, efforts to appropriate funds for the site in McComb, Oakland, and Wayne counties were underway but were contested by Wayne County Supervisor John C. Nagel, who wanted the zoo located at River Rouge and entirely within Wayne County. The society argued the Woodward–10 Mile site was more accessible to the public and therefore would give the most public benefit.⁸⁵⁴ Later in September 1922, Horace H. Rackham, a Detroit millionaire, pledged to donate 165 ac to the Woodward–10 Mile site for the purposes of enlarging the zoo and also to create a municipal golf course, which is named in his honor.⁸⁵⁵ The society deeded the land to the City of Detroit in 1924 with the condition that the city would provide funds for upkeep, purchase and care of animals, and equipment. The Detroit Zoological Park is unique in that it was the first in the United States to employ barless animal enclosures to maximize viewer enjoyment.⁸⁵⁶

With approval of the selected site and allocation of funding, efforts were begun to design and construct the Detroit Zoological Park. The master plan designer of the zoo was Arthur A. Shurtleff (Shurcliff), a nationally known landscape architect.⁸⁵⁷ Shurcliff changed his name from Shurtleff to reflect its original spelling. In 1894, Shurcliff completed a degree in mechanical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and then went on to study landscape architecture at Harvard. Shurcliff worked in renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmstead's office for eight years prior to establishing his own firm. In 1928, he joined the team helmed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to recreate Colonial Williamsburg, where he continued to serve as the site's chief landscape architect throughout the remainder of his career.⁸⁵⁸

Heinrich Hagenbeck was brought onto the project to consult on the barless exhibits. He was the son of Carl Hagenbeck, who was the originator of the cageless exhibit method. Heinrich Hagenbeck worked with John Hulimann, a Swiss sculptor, to develop models of the various exhibit spaces. Hagenbeck worked on the Detroit Zoological Park from 1927 until the zoo opened in 1928 and received a contract for additional work in 1929.⁸⁵⁹

The Detroit Zoological Park opened to great acclaim to the public on August 1, 1928. Opening day featured elephants and camels to give children rides around the park. The park initially

⁸⁵³ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁵⁴ "Says Zoo Issue is now Clear," *Detroit Free Press*, September 2, 1922, 10.

⁸⁵⁵ "Rackham Gives Land for Zoo," *Detroit Free Press*, September 16, 1922, 5.

⁸⁵⁶ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁵⁷ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁵⁸ Arthur Asahel Shurcliff (1870-1957). The Cultural Landscape Foundation. <https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/arthur-asahel-shurcliff>.

⁸⁵⁹ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

consisted of four habitats: an African steppe, an arctic display, an African animal display, and North American animals, including an aviary, in addition to the natural beauty of the park.⁸⁶⁰

Frank McInnis was another important designer associated with the early development of the zoo. McInnis graduated from Michigan State University with a degree in landscape architecture in 1926 and began working for the City of Detroit Department of Parks and Boulevards. He was transferred to the zoo in 1929.⁸⁶¹ The stock market crash in October 1929 resulted in the Great Depression. Relief efforts included development of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Works Progress Administration (WPA). Using CCC and WPA labor, McInnis was able to maintain the park and landscape the essentially barren zoo. Other exhibits were also constructed during the 1930s in an attempt to elevate employment in the greater Detroit area.⁸⁶²

The Detroit Zoological Park has continued to expand its exhibits over the course of time and is now approximately 195 ac, 75 ac more than the original planned development.⁸⁶³ The Detroit Zoological Park was listed in the NRHP in 1990 as a historic district pursuant to Criterion A as one of the earliest modern zoos in the United States and Criterion C for its landscape design. At the time of the nomination, there were 46 contributing resources and 14 noncontributing resources. The period of significance is 1916–1940, which reflects the early planning stages of the park to 50 years prior to the approval of the nomination.

Museums

Royal Oak has three extant museums, Habatat Galleries, Orson Starr House Museum, and the Royal Oak Historical Museum (Table 21).

Habatat Galleries

Established in 1971, Habatat Galleries is the oldest and largest art gallery in the United States exclusively devoted to glass. The gallery is the site of the original International Glass Invitational, which has introduced and exhibited the greatest artists working creatively with glass for over 50 years.⁸⁶⁴ Portions of the building were constructed in the 1950s; the large center section was built between 1973 and 1983.

Orson Starr House Museum

The oldest standing residence in Royal Oak, a wood-frame house, was built in 1845 by Orson Starr (Figure 143). The Starr family made their living by producing bricks and cowbells. Descendants of the Starr family resided here until 1976, when it was acquired by the City of

⁸⁶⁰ “Zoo Park to be Open to Public Wednesday,” *Daily Tribune*, July 28, 1928, 1 and 3.

⁸⁶¹ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁶² Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁶³ Miriam E. Rutz, National Register Nomination for the Detroit Zoological Park, December 1989.

⁸⁶⁴ Habatat Galleries, “About,” accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.habatat.com/about/>.

Royal Oak.⁸⁶⁵ The city made some overdue repairs, restored the house to reflect the mid-1800s, and opened it as a museum.⁸⁶⁶ General tours, as well as ghost tours, are given of the house.



Figure 143. The Orson Starr House (Scaramuzzino undated)

Royal Oak Historical Society Museum

The Royal Oak Historical Society was founded in 1939 for the purposes of collecting, preserving, and displaying information and objects of the city's past for current and future generations. The Royal Oak Historical Society Museum is in the Royal Oak Fire Department Northwood Station at 1420 West Webster Road.⁸⁶⁷ In 2009, the historical society and museum entered into an agreement with the City of Royal Oak to lease the former fire station as its permanent home.⁸⁶⁸ The Northwood Fire Station was constructed at a cost of \$65,000.00 and opened in 1928. The Northwood fire district responded to calls west of Rochester Road, from Catalpa Drive to 14 Mile Road, and all alarms north of Catalpa Drive to the city line and west of Woodward from Webster to 14 Mile Road.⁸⁶⁹

⁸⁶⁵ City of Royal Oak, "Orson Starr House," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/621/Orson-Starr-House>.

⁸⁶⁶ Detroit Rock City Paranormal, "The Orson Starr House, Royal Oak, Mi," accessed January 18, 2024, <https://www.detroitrockcityparanormal.com/the-orson-starr-house-1#:~:text=In%201976%20the%20city%20of,opened%20it%20as%20a%20museum>.

⁸⁶⁷ Royal Oak Historical Society, "About Us," <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/>.

⁸⁶⁸ Royal Oak Historical Society, "The Royal Oak Historical Society Museum," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://royaloakhistoricalsociety.com/museum-history>.

⁸⁶⁹ City of Royal Oak, Government, Public Safety, Fire. "History." <https://www.romi.gov/259/History>

Associated Resources

Table 21. Royal Oak museums, location, date, and status

Museum Name	Address	Established	Extant
Habitat Galleries	4400 Fernlee Avenue	1971	Yes
Orson Starr House Museum	3123 North Main Street	ca. 1976	Yes
Royal Oak Historical Society Museum	1420 West Webster Road	1939	Yes

Theatres

Six theatres have entertained the Royal Oak community, four of which are extant (Table 22).

The Baldwin Theatre

Ground was broken in early April of 1921 for construction of the first theater in Royal Oak. The theater proprietors were Citizens Theater Company, and the building was at Washington Avenue and Fifth Street (it also is on Lafayette Avenue). The proprietors held a contest with a \$50 cash prize to name the theater that same year.⁸⁷⁰ Designed by Frederick D. Madison, the Baldwin Theatre opened in 1922 as a vaudeville theater.⁸⁷¹ In 1928, the Baldwin Theatre discontinued the vaudeville shows and exclusively showed “high class exclusive motion pictures at lower prices.”⁸⁷² In the 1940s, the theater was renamed the Washington Theatre (Figure 144). Following restoration, the theater reopened in 1985 as the Baldwin Theatre operated by the Stagecrafters and remains a theatre for live performances.⁸⁷³

⁸⁷⁰ “Hartrick Turns First for New Theatre,” *The Daily Tribune*, April 8, 1921, 1.

⁸⁷¹ Advertisement, *Royal Oak Tribune*, June 23, 1922, 2; Advertisement, *Royal Oak Tribune*, February 2, 1923, 4.

⁸⁷² Advertisement, *Daily Tribune*, March 2, 1928, 2.

⁸⁷³ Stagecrafters, “History,” <https://www.stagecrafters.org/about-us/history.html>.



Figure 144. The Washington Theater (Margolies, 1976)

Emagine Royal Oak

Emagine Royal Oak was built at 200 North Main Street (to the rear of the Main Art Theater) between 2010 and 2012.⁸⁷⁴ A bowling alley called Star Lanes is at the northern end of the building and a restaurant is at the southern end. A building constructed between 1926 and 1950 and demolished between 2002 and 2005 formerly occupied the southern portion of the site.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁴ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2010 and 2012, accessed January 16, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

⁸⁷⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926 and 1931/1950); NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2002 and 2005, accessed January 16, 2024, HistoricAerials.com.

Main Art Theater

The Main Art Theater was constructed in 1941 on the former Jacob Erb property on the eastern side of Main Street between the old Erb homestead and what was then the Great Atlantic & Pacific Tea company market north of First Street (Figure 145). It was built and owned by Lewis G. Erb, Mrs. Clara Erb Kidder, and Mrs. Fred B. Erb and was initially leased to Jack Krass, who operated the Dix and Coliseum theaters in Detroit. The building was designed by Bennett and Straight, architects out of Dearborn, Michigan. The contractor was Frank Steige of Royal Oak. The building had a modern design, with two store buildings and the lobby fronting on Main Street. The auditorium initially contained more than 800 seats. Customer parking was to the rear of the building.⁸⁷⁶ The theater was operated by Landmark Theatres beginning in 1997. Initially a single-screen theater, it contained three screens while operated by Landmark.⁸⁷⁷ The building was demolished between 2020 and 2023.⁸⁷⁸ A new building that will contain apartments, office space, and commercial space is in the process of being constructed.⁸⁷⁹



Figure 145. Main Theater (ROHS undated)

Oak Drive-In Theatre

Oak Drive-In Theatre was established at 2916 Normandy Road in 1949 (Figure 146). Because it was a few blocks east of Woodward Avenue, a marquee sat on top of a store on the eastern side

⁸⁷⁶ “Work Starts at Once on Main Street,” *The Daily Tribune*, February 12, 1941, 1, accessed January 12, 2024, <http://www.roptribune.org/Archive/1941/February/February,%2012%201941.pdf>.

⁸⁷⁷ Landmark Theatres, “Main Art Theatre,” accessed January 12, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160309053833/http://www.landmarktheatres.com/detroit/main-art-theatre/info>.

⁸⁷⁸ NETROnline, aerial view of Royal Oak, Michigan, 2020, accessed January 12, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicaerials.com).

⁸⁷⁹ Mike McConnell, “Royal Oak to deal with development, parking, sustainability, more in 2023,” *Royal Oak Tribune*, published December 22, 2022, accessed January 23, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2022/12/22/royal-oak-to-deal-with-development-parking-sustainability-more-in-2023/>.

of Woodward Avenue that showed which movies were playing. When it opened, it had the world's largest screen (35,000 ft²), a 1,000-car capacity, individual in-car RCA speakers, modern restrooms, and a refreshment stand.⁸⁸⁰ The site was redeveloped into an industrial park between 1983 and 1987.⁸⁸¹



Figure 146. View of the Oak Drive-In Theatre screen (Water Winter Wonderland 1980)

Royal Oak Music Theatre

The Royal Oak Music Theatre, formerly known as the Kunsky Royal Oak, was initially a movie house. The theatre was owned by John H. Kunsky, a Detroit businessman and film house entrepreneur and opened on March 6, 1928 (Figure 147 and Figure 148).⁸⁸² The theatre is Art Deco with decorative detailing and was said to be well appointed on the interior. Beginning in 1978, the theatre transitioned to a more club-like live act venue and the name was changed at the time. The Royal Oak Music Theatre remains a vibrant live venue hosting many big-name acts.⁸⁸⁴

⁸⁸⁰ Water Winter Wonderland, “Oak Drive-In Theatre,” accessed December 29, 2023, <https://www.waterwinterwonderland.com/driveintheaters.aspx?id=89&type=1>.

⁸⁸¹ NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1983 and 1987, accessed December 29, 2023, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicaerials.com).

⁸⁸² Advertisement, *The Daily Tribune*, March 3, 1928, 9

⁸⁸⁴ Royal Oak Music Theatre, <https://www.royaloakmusictheatre.com/venue-info/history>.



Figure 147. View of the Washington Square Building, which houses the Royal Oak Music Theatre Advertisement (*The Daily Tribune* 1928)



Figure 148. Crowd outside the Royal Oak Theatre (ROHS 1936)

Royal Theatre

The Royal Theatre, built prior to 1916, was at 312 (formerly #320) South Main Street. The 1916 and 1921 Sanborn maps state that motion pictures were shown here.⁸⁸⁵ The 1926 Sanborn map described the building as a movie theater with a sloping roof; a balcony had apparently been added since 1921.⁸⁸⁶ The building had apparently become a store by 1950.⁸⁸⁷ The building is now occupied by a Mexican restaurant, and the front façade has been slightly modified.



Figure 149. Royal Theatre (ROHS undated)

Associated Resources

Table 22. Royal Oak Theatres, Location, Construction Date, and Status

Theatre Name	Address	Established	Extant
Baldwin Theatre	415 South Lafayette Avenue	1921	Yes
Emagine Royal Oak	200 North Main Street	ca. 2011	Yes

⁸⁸⁵ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1916 and 1921).

⁸⁸⁶ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1926).

⁸⁸⁷ Sanborn Map Company, Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Royal Oak, Oakland County, Michigan, (Sanborn Map Company, 1931/1950).

Theatre Name	Address	Established	Extant
Main Art Theater	118 North Main Street	1941	No
Oak Drive-In Theatre	2916 Normandy Road	1949	No
Royal Oak Music Theatre	318 West Fourth Street	1928	Yes
Royal Theatre	312 South Main Street	Pre-1916	Yes

Festivals

Arts, Beats & Eats

Arts, Beats & Eats offers a unique presentation of musicians, artists, and food exhibits from the Detroit metropolitan area and across the country. It provides family entertainment at a low cost; an admission fee was added in 2009. It was announced in November 2009 that the festival would be relocated from the City of Pontiac to Downtown Royal Oak, and 2010 represented the festival's most successful year to date, hosting more than 400,000 people over four days. More than \$350,000 was raised for local charities, and the economic impact to the region was measured at \$39 million. The festival celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2022.⁸⁸⁸

Shakespeare Royal Oak

Shakespeare Royal Oak has presented Michigan's premier outdoor Shakespeare festival since 2001. The annual festival takes place every summer in Starr Jaycee Park on West 13 Mile Road. The group performs a different play every year, sometimes putting a more modern spin on Shakespeare's works.⁸⁸⁹

Woodward Dream Cruise

In 1995, the Woodward Dream Cruise was started by Nelson House and a group of volunteers who sought to recreate and relive the nostalgic heydays of the 1950s and 1960s when young people cruised up and down Woodward Avenue. It was initially intended to be a small fundraiser to raise money for a soccer field in Ferndale. However, in the first year, there were about 250,000 participants, nearly 10 times the number of people expected. Today, it is the world's largest one-day automotive event. It draws 1.5 million people and 40,000 classic cars annually from around the world.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁸ Arts, Beats & Eats, "Festival Overview," accessed January 16, 2024, <https://artsbeatseats.com/overview>.

⁸⁸⁹ Shakespeare Royal Oak, "Welcome to Shakespeare Royal Oak," accessed January 16, 2024, <https://shakespeareroyal oak.com/>.

⁸⁹⁰ City of Royal Oak, "Annual Events," accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/539/Special-Events>.

Public Art

War Memorial

The War Memorial was unveiled on June 17, 1946, in former City Hall Park at the northeastern corner of Third and Williams streets. The memorial contained the names of 102 men who died in World War II.⁸⁹¹ The memorial was the result of the efforts of a War Council organization that had been appointed by the City Commission in late fall 1943.⁸⁹² In 1953, the city's former city hall building at 211 South Williams Street was completed on the park site. Separate twin granite pillars honoring Royal Oak residents killed in the Korean and Vietnam wars were added to the southwestern corner of the lawn near City Hall in 1969. In 1972, a third memorial, a two-ton stone memorial honoring those killed in World War I, was added in the same general location. For 40 years, this memorial rested on the lawn of the northeastern corner of City Hall, 165 feet away from the group of markers at Third and Williams streets. Upon the renovation of the parking lot in front of the old city hall in 1985, the Royal Oak Downtown Development Authority relocated the three veterans' memorial monuments to the western edge of a wide pedestrian island. The three monuments were consolidated into one, connected Veterans Memorial with a new marble base and two flag poles. In the early 2000s, concerns were raised about the location of the memorial due to a resurgence of business activity in downtown, a lack of space for large ceremonies, and the location's insufficiently respectful setting along an alley. The memorial was moved to its current location near Troy and Second streets in 2021. Centennial Commons, inclusive of the Veterans War Memorial and the Barbara A. Hallman Memorial Plaza, was dedicated on December 4, 2021.⁸⁹³ The memorial honors those who sacrificed their lives in service to our country in the Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, and Vietnam.⁸⁹⁴

Marshall Fredericks Sculpture

The Royal Oak studio of renowned sculptor Marshall Fredericks was at Woodward Avenue and Normandy Road. He worked out of his Royal Oak studio for more than 50 years and taught at the Cranbrook Academy of Art. Fredericks created public sculptures throughout the United States and elsewhere. He is probably best known locally for the Spirit of Detroit statue outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Building in Detroit. The Royal Oak Public Library has a few

⁸⁹¹ City of Royal Oak, "History of the War Memorial," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1557/History-of-the-Veterans-War-Memorial>.

⁸⁹² City of Royal Oak, "Royal Oak War Memorial Database," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1682/Royal-Oak-War-Memorial-Database>.

⁸⁹³ City of Royal Oak, "History of the War Memorial," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1557/History-of-the-Veterans-War-Memorial>.

⁸⁹⁴ City of Royal Oak, "Royal Oak War Memorial Database," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1682/Royal-Oak-War-Memorial-Database>.

of Fredericks' smaller sculptures, and others exist elsewhere throughout the city including at Beaumont Hospital.⁸⁹⁵

On the façade of William Beaumont Hospital is an aluminum sculpture entitled “The Family Protected by Healing Herbs.” It was inspired by the Bible verse “The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nation” (Revelation 22:2). The sculpture was awarded the Gold Medal in Sculpture by the Architectural League of New York in 1956.⁸⁹⁶

One of Fredericks' last public works is the “Star Dream Fountain” at the Barbara Hallman Memorial Plaza between city hall and the library. The sculpture is based on a 1947 preliminary design for the Cleveland War Memorial. Fredericks worked on the sculpture for more than six years and donated the time he spent working on it. The fountain was installed in 1997. Donors raised about \$500,000 to pay for materials and the installation. It was one of the last works Fredericks lived to see installed prior to his death at age 90 in April 1998. He explained the fountain as two young people springing up on a cluster of stars “free from the limitations of earth and olden days.” The allegorical work symbolizes man’s continuous search for spiritual peace.⁸⁹⁷

Art Programs

Royal Oak features a variety of art programs. The Public Piano Project places painted pianos around the city for the public to play. They are painted in unique designs by individuals, families, and groups.⁸⁹⁸ The Business Mural Program, administered by the Royal Oak Commission for the Arts, allows businesses interesting in having a mural painted on their buildings to do so with the approval of the Commission for the Arts. The City Commission then designates the mural as art. The content is not limited by the city, but the mural should not advertise the business, which would violate the sign code. Funding for the murals is not provided by the city.⁸⁹⁹ The East 11 Mile Road Public Art Program involves the purchase and installation of artwork to be permanently displayed along East 11 Mile Road from Troy Street to Campbell Road. It was funded with up to \$40,000 from community development block grant (CDBG) funding.⁹⁰⁰ The Art Explored Program displays works of art from local and regional artists around the city. Artists

⁸⁹⁵ Mike McConnell, “Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain’s 20th Anniversary in city,” *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>.

⁸⁹⁶ Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum Digital Archives and Objects Collection, “William Beaumont Hospital with “The Family Protected by Healing Herbs,” accessed January 12, 2024, <https://omeka.svsu.edu/items/show/1464>.

⁸⁹⁷ Mike McConnell, “Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain’s 20th Anniversary in city,” *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>; Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum Digital Archives and Objects Collection, “Star Dream Fountain” in the Center of Barbara Hallman Plaza in Royal Oak, Michigan,” accessed January 12, 2024, <https://omeka.svsu.edu/items/show/3392>.

⁸⁹⁸ City of Royal Oak, “Public Piano Project,” accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1642/Public-Piano-Project>.

⁸⁹⁹ City of Royal Oak, “Business Mural Program,” accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/1652/Business-Mural-Program>.

⁹⁰⁰ City of Royal Oak, “East 11 Mile Road Public Art Program,” accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/207/East-11-Mile-Road-Public-Art-Program>.

are compensated for lending their art to the city for a one-year period. Each piece is accompanied by a plaque with the artist's name, the title of the work, and other relevant information. The Commission of the Arts then recommends the renewal, purchase, or removal of the artwork.⁹⁰¹

Health and Medicine

The earliest doctors in Royal Oak appear to have been Dr. F. Curtis and Dr. Bradley, who both came to Royal Oak in 1829. A series of doctors came and went until Dr. Albert P. Ohlmacher opened the Royal Oak Private Hospital in 1930. Aside from a short closure in the fall of 1942, Royal Oak has had at least one hospital to tend to the population of Royal Oak and surrounding communities (Table 23).

Royal Oak General Hospital

The Royal Oak Private Hospital was founded in 1930 by Dr. Albert P. Ohlmacher. Dr. Ohlmacher was born in Ohio and attended the University of Michigan circa 1922. The hospital occupied the fourth floor of the Washington Square Building at Washington Avenue and Fourth Street. With the United States entering World War II, many local doctors were enlisted, resulting in a loss of medical professionals, on top of Detroit hospitals already experiencing overcrowding and lack of personnel. In 1942, Dr. Ohlmacher enlisted in the U.S. Army at 64 years of age, leaving the Royal Oak hospital without a doctor. In an effort to keep the hospital open, the Royal Oak Women's Club requested the city commission to take over management of the hospital. On October 14, 1942, the city entered a contract with Dr. Ohlmacher to purchase the hospital and its inventory for \$8,800. The hospital briefly closed for alterations and reopened in December 1942 as Royal Oak General Hospital. In 1954, the hospital had 24 beds and was staffed by 55 employees. The hospital was closed when the William Beaumont Hospital opened in 1955. Many of the hospital staff began working at Beaumont Hospital.⁹⁰²

Beaumont Hospital

In the 1940s, the South Oakland Hospital Authority and a similar group in Birmingham and Bloomfield formed a committee to advocate for a hospital to support Detroit's growing northern suburbs. The groups merged to form Oakland Hospital and chose 112 ac of farmland in Royal Oak as the location of the hospital. After the hospital was confused with Oakwood Hospital in Dearborn, Michigan, the hospital name was changed to honor Fort Mackinac army surgeon, Dr. William Beaumont.⁹⁰³

⁹⁰¹ City of Royal Oak, "Art Explored," accessed January 16, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/215/Art-Explored>.

⁹⁰² City of Royal Oak, Reader's Corner: Remembering Royal Oak General Hospital, accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?ID=54&ARC=55/>.

⁹⁰³ Beaumont Health System, "From the Ground Up-Beaumont Health System," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.beaumont.org/about-us/history/from-the-ground-up-beaumont-health-system/>.

The William Beaumont Hospital, constructed at 13 Mile Road west of Woodward Avenue (Figure 150), was open to the public on Sunday, January 9, 1955.⁹⁰⁴ The five-story building was designed by the architecture firm of Ellerbe and Company of St. Paul, Minnesota. Construction was carried out by the general contractor O.W. Burke at a cost of \$4,280,000, which included equipment.⁹⁰⁵ The hospital established residency programs in 1962 and a Research Institute in 1966.⁹⁰⁶ The hospital has grown from a 238-bed community to an 1,101-bed academic and referral center with Level I adult trauma and Level II pediatric trauma designations.⁹⁰⁷

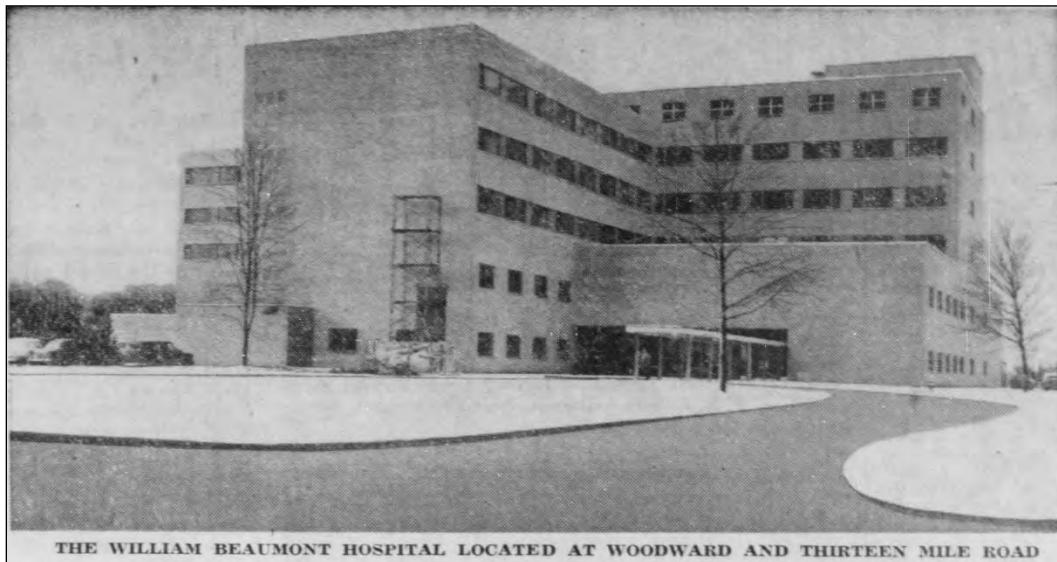


Figure 150. The new William Beaumont Hospital (Detroit Free Press 1955)

Beaumont opened a second hospital in Troy, Michigan, in 1977. It has grown from 189-bed hospital to 530 beds.⁹⁰⁸ In 2007, Beaumont acquired Bon Secours Hospital in Gross Pointe, Michigan, with 280 beds.⁹⁰⁹ The medical students at Oakland University train at the three Beaumont hospitals. At the time of reporting the University and Hospital had an affiliation agreement valid through 2041.⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰⁴ "Thousands to See Beaumont Hospital," *Detroit Free Press*, January 9, 1955, 8E.

⁹⁰⁵ "Most Modern Hospital Open Doors," *Detroit Free Press*, January 9, 1955, 8E.

⁹⁰⁶ Troy Historic Village, "Beaumont Health System Celebrates its 60th Birthday," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.troyhistoricvillage.org/feb-17-2015-beaumont-health-system-celebrates-its-60th-birthday/>.

⁹⁰⁷ Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, "About the School," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://oakland.edu/medicine/about/>.

⁹⁰⁸ Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, "About the School," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://oakland.edu/medicine/about/>.

⁹⁰⁹ Beaumont Health System, "From the Ground Up-Beaumont Health System," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.beaumont.org/about-us/history/from-the-ground-up-beaumont-health-system/>.

⁹¹⁰ Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, "About the School," accessed October 11, 2023, <https://oakland.edu/medicine/about/>.

In 2022, the Beaumont and Spectrum health systems merged to form a 22-hospital system renamed Corewell Health. At that time, the William Beaumont Hospital name was changed to Corewell Health William Beaumont University Hospital.⁹¹¹

Henry Ford Health System

Henry Ford Hospital opened in 1915 bound by West Grand Boulevard and Hamilton, Byron and Bethune avenues, in Detroit, Michigan.⁹¹² The Henry Ford Health System opened the Preferred Medical Center, P.C., in Royal Oak in 1984 as one of eight outpatient centers opened in 1984 and 1985.⁹¹³ The center was at 26300 Woodward Avenue. Plans for a larger medical facility began to form in 2018.⁹¹⁴ A six-story office tower was designed by the Gensler architecture firm and opened in 2021. The general contractor was Clark Construction Company, and National Specialty Contractors performed the general trades work.⁹¹⁵ The facility at 110 East Second Street offers adult and pediatric primary care, a variety of specialty care services, ambulatory surgery, and same-day care services.⁹¹⁶

Associated Resources

Table 23. Royal Oak Medical Centers, Location, Date Of Establishment, and Status

Name	Address	Established	Extant
Royal Oak General Hospital	Fourth floor of the Washington Square Building at Washington Avenue and Fourth Street	1930	Yes
Beaumont Hospital	William Beaumont Medical Building, 3535 West 13 Mile Road	1955	Yes
Henry Ford Health System Preferred Medical Center, P.C.	26300 Woodward Avenue	1984	Yes
Henry Ford Medical Center	110 East Second Street	2021	Yes

⁹¹¹ JC Reindl, “Newly Merged Beaumont-Spectrum Health System Rebrands as Corewell Health,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 11, 2022.

⁹¹² Henry Ford Health, “The Beginning Years,” accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.henryford.com/about/culture/history/hfhs/beginning/>.

⁹¹³ Henry Ford Health, “The Great Expansion,” accessed October 11, 2023, <https://www.henryford.com/about/culture/history/hfhs/expansion/>.

⁹¹⁴ “New Tower in Downtown Royal Oak to House Major Henry Ford Health Center,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 20, 2018, accessed October 19, 2023, <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/oakland/2018/09/20/henry-ford-health-system-downtown-royal-oak-tower/1363188002/>.

⁹¹⁵ National Specialty Contractors, LLC, “Henry Ford Health Royal Oak City Center,” accessed October 19, 2023, <https://www.nationalspecialtycontractors.com/projects/henry-ford-health-royal-oak-city-center/>.

⁹¹⁶ Henry Ford Health, “Henry Ford Medical Center-Royal Oak,” accessed October 19, 2023, https://www.henryford.com/locations/royal-oak?utm_campaign=website-link&utm_medium=organic&utm_source=local-listing/.

Doctors

Dr. F. Curtis and Dr. Bradley both came to Royal Oak in 1829. Dr. Curtis was from eastern New York, on the Hudson River, and had a small practice in Royal Oak. Dr. Bradley was from western New York. After practicing in Royal Oak, he relocated to Birmingham and subsequently Fenton, Michigan. Dr. Rose came to Royal Oak in 1831 and eventually moved to Detroit. Dr. Burnett was a young doctor who moved to Royal Oak in 1842 and died shortly thereafter. In 1849, Dr. Drake came to Royal Oak from Cayuga County, New York. Vermont native Dr. Brewster settled in Royal Oak in 1845. Dr. Glazier from Troy, Michigan, came to Royal Oak circa 1852, followed by Dr. Lathrop in 1868.⁹¹⁷

The 1912 *History of Oakland County* lists four doctors as practicing in Royal Oak. They include Drs. James W. Anderson, William S. Gass, Ainsley Smith, J. S. Morrison, and Snyder. Dr. Anderson graduated in 1891 and was a member of the County Medical Society.⁹¹⁸ As a result of a scarlet fever epidemic in Royal Oak in 1915, Dr. Gass (who served as Health Officer) quarantined around 40 houses. The schools were fumigated, and many social and church functions were postponed.⁹¹⁹ Dr. Ainsley Smith was a member of the temperance (anti-liquor) movement.⁹²⁰ Dr. J.S. Morrison (Figure 151) was originally from Toronto and served as a director of the First State Bank of Royal Oak.⁹²¹ He was elected as a director of the Oakland County Medical Society for 1935.⁹²²

⁹¹⁷ S.W. Durant, *History of Oakland County, Michigan* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts, 1877), 50-51.

⁹¹⁸ Thaddeus D. Seeley, *History of Oakland County Michigan* (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1912), 257-258.

⁹¹⁹ "Suburban News – Royal Oak," *Detroit Evening Times*, February 12, 1915, 11.

⁹²⁰ "Defines Liquor Issue," *Detroit Free Press*, January 13, 1910, 12.

⁹²¹ "Canadian 'Champ' In Chess Exhibits," *Detroit Free Press*, February 5, 1926, 5; First State Bank of Royal Oak Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1927, 57.

⁹²² "Dr. Ekelund New President of Oakland Medical Society," *Detroit Free Press*, December 14, 1934, 14.



Figure 151. Dr. J.S. Morrison (Detroit Free Press 1924)

Dr. Jack Kevorkian lived at 333 East 11 Mile Road in Royal Oak.⁹²³ He became a household name across the nation, igniting the assisted suicide debate. Dr. Kevorkian was born in Pontiac, Michigan, in 1928 to Armenian immigrants and graduated from the University of Michigan Medical School with a specialty in pathology in 1952. He published, "The Fundus Oculi and the Determination of Death" in 1956 which discussed his efforts to photograph the eyes of dying patients, a practice that earned him the nickname "Doctor Death." In December 1958, Dr. Kevorkian presented a paper in Washington, D.C., advocating for medical experimentation on consenting convicts during executions. Embarrassed, University of Michigan officials ask Dr. Kevorkian to leave his residency. He published an article in *The American Journal of Clinical Pathology* detailing his experiments on transfusing blood from cadavers to live patients in 1961. In 1970, he became chief pathologist at Saratoga General Hospital in Detroit. In the late 1970s, he left medicine and moved to California to direct and produce a movie based on George Frideric Handel's "Messiah." The movie was not successful, and Dr. Kevorkian returned to medicine.⁹²⁴

In the 1980s, Dr. Kevorkian published multiple articles on euthanasia and ethics in the obscure German journal *Medicine and Law* including "The Last Fearsome Taboo: Medical Aspects of Planned Death" in 1988. Beginning in 1987, he advertised as a "physician consultant" for "death counseling" in Detroit newspapers. Dr. Kevorkian built his death machine, the Thanatron (Greek

⁹²³ Judy Davids, "Royal Oak Remembers Jack Kevorkian," Patch Media, electronic document accessed October 16, 2023, <https://patch.com/michigan/royaloak/royal-oak-remembers-jack-kevorkian/>.

⁹²⁴ WGBH Educational Foundation, *Frontline*, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian's Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

for “death machine”), at the kitchen table in his Royal Oak apartment in 1989.⁹²⁵ It was designed to administer an intravenous saline solution drip to the patient with a button that when depressed by the patient began the administration of thiopental for 60 seconds, then switched to administering a lethal dose of potassium chloride resulting in death.⁹²⁶ The machine was used on Janet Adkins in 1990. Her death was the catalyst of Dr. Kevorkian’s legal issues stemming from assisted suicide.⁹²⁷

The State Board of Medicine revoked Dr. Kevorkian’s medical license to practice in Michigan in 1991, followed by California in 1993.⁹²⁸ Because Kevorkian was unable to access the medications needed for the Thanatron, he assembled the Mercitron, which delivered carbon monoxide through a gas mask to his patients.⁹²⁹ Dr. Kevorkian is credited with performing more than 100 assisted suicides. Kevorkian was charged with several of the deaths that resulted in case dismissals before going to trial, a mistrial, and acquittals until the death of Thomas Youk.⁹³⁰

Thomas Youk’s death was broadcasted on CBS’s “60 Minutes” and showed Kevorkian administering the lethal injection. Kevorkian was convicted of second-degree murder and delivery of a controlled substance resulting in death.⁹³¹ Kevorkian was sentenced to 25 years in prison with the possibility of parole. In 2007, an ill and frail Kevorkian was released from prison for good behavior, after serving a little more than eight years, with the promise he would not assist in any more suicides. Kevorkian ran for U.S. Congress in 2008 with an unsuccessful bid. Kevorkian died in 2011 at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak.⁹³²

⁹²⁵ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

⁹²⁶ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, The Thanaron, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/aboutk/thanatronblurb.html/>.

⁹²⁷ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

⁹²⁸ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

⁹²⁹ Biography.com, “Jack Kevorkian Biography,” accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.biography.com/scientists/jack-kevorkian/>.

⁹³⁰ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

⁹³¹ WGBH Educational Foundation, Frontline, The Kevorkian Verdict, Chronology of Dr. Jack Kevorkian’s Life and Assisted Suicide Campaign, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/kevorkian/chronology.html/>.

⁹³² Biography.com, “Jack Kevorkian Biography,” accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.biography.com/scientists/jack-kevorkian/>.

CRITERION B—PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST

Father Charles E. Coughlin

Father Charles E. Coughlin was born in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, on October 25, 1891. Upon graduating from St. Michael's College in Toronto, he considered entering politics but was persuaded into entering the Church. He was incardinated at the Diocese of Detroit in 1923.⁹³³ In 1926, Detroit Bishop Michael Gallagher assigned Fr. Coughlin the task of establishing a parish in Royal Oak, Michigan. The bishop chose the recently canonized St. Therese, the Little Flower, as the patron of the new faith community. Fr. Coughlin proceeded over the next four decades to build a flourishing parish and nationally renowned Shrine.⁹³⁴

Soon after the establishment of the parish, Fr. Coughlin hosted a radio show that was originally broadcasted by WJR—Detroit and focused on theological topics. By 1929, WLW—Cincinnati, and WMAQ—Chicago began broadcasting the show on Sunday afternoons.⁹³⁵ As the show grew in reach, the content became more political. Around October 1929, Fr. Coughlin broadcast several sermons on communism and a year later a series of sermons on labor situations.⁹³⁶ In 1930, his broadcasts were distributed through the Columbia Broadcasting system with a total of 18 stations.⁹³⁷ That year, at the beginning of the Great Depression, Fr. Coughlin spoke out against President Herbert Hoover, international bankers, and prohibition. He also accused Russia of fomenting revolution in the United States.⁹³⁸ By January 1931, it was reported that Fr. Coughlin received and responded to as many as 200,000 letters per week. At the time, Fr. Coughlin noted the purpose of his broadcast as an effort to bring religion directly to the lives of the people and make his hearers realize that it has an intimate place in their lives.⁹³⁹ That same year, the Columbia Broadcasting Company changed its policy regarding religious broadcasts and no longer sold time to religious programs over the entirety of their channels. This resulted in a summer hiatus of the radio program before it resumed on independent radio channels including WOR—Newark, New Jersey; WGAR—Cleveland, Ohio; WGR—Buffalo, New York; WGAR—Cleveland, Ohio; KSTP—St. Paul, Minnesota; WTIC—Hartford, Connecticut; WEEI—Boston, Massachusetts; MPAG—Worcester, Massachusetts; WCSH—Portland, Maine; and WJAK—Providence, Rhode Island.⁹⁴⁰

In April 1932, Cardinal William O'Connell, the archbishop of Boston criticized Fr. Coughlin for “fanning the fires of unrest” in his national radio show. The radio show was paused until the fall of 1932. Cardinal O'Connell noted his comments were spoken as a “Catholic citizen,” not a

⁹³³ Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹³⁴ National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, “Parish History,” accessed September 6, 2023, <https://shrinechurch.com/history/>.

⁹³⁵ “Fr. Coughlin on 3 Stations,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 21, 1929, 8.

⁹³⁶ “High Spots on the Air Today,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 29, 1930, 1-10.

⁹³⁷ “Talks of Priest Draw Criticism,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, April 18, 1932, 5.

⁹³⁸ Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹³⁹ “Radio Priest Gets 200,000 Letters a Week from 'Fans',” *The Times Herald*, January 29, 1931, 1.

⁹⁴⁰ “Independent Hookup Arranged for Priest,” *Battle Creek Enquirer*, August 13, 1931, 16.

prelate of the church. Fr. Coughlin's superior, Detroit Bishop Right Reverend Michael J. Gallagher did not comment on the matter.⁹⁴¹

In 1933, Fr. Coughlin also started proclaiming, "It's Roosevelt or Ruin," in favor of the administration's monetary policies.⁹⁴² The national financial crisis of 1933 culminated in the banking holiday in March 1933.⁹⁴³ With the closing of the banks, Fr. Coughlin became a spokesman for the New Deal. He visited the White House, spoke with Raymond Moley, gathered together a brain trust of his own, and hired priests to handle his parish work.⁹⁴⁴ Fr. Coughlin spoke about banking issues in Detroit and named the bankers he blamed for their failures. This created an uproar and debate on whether Fr. Coughlin was speaking for the Catholic Church and if he should be discussing controversial topics outside of church doctrine. On March 30th, shortly after his controversial banking comments, a black-powder bomb exploded in the basement of Fr. Coughlin's home and was believed to be in retaliation for Fr. Coughlin's public statements (Figure 152 and Figure 153). The *Detroit Free Press* put the radio stations that broadcasted Fr. Coughlin's Sunday afternoon show on notice that they would be held accountable for statements made by Fr. Coughlin if he was allowed to continue to broadcast.⁹⁴⁵ Coughlin's allegations were reviewed by a judge and in September 1933, the judge found the two federal banks in Detroit were solvent on their last operating day, and there was no evidence of criminal activity. Fr. Coughlin maintained his stance that the banks were mismanaged and did not agree with the verdict.⁹⁴⁶

⁹⁴¹ "Talks of Priest Draw Criticism," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, April 18, 1932, 5.

⁹⁴² "It's 'Roosevelt or Ruin' Says Fr. Coughlin; Critic Apologizes," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, December 4, 1933, 3.

⁹⁴³ "Police without Clue in Royal Oak Bombing as Controversy Continues," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, March 31, 1933, 8.

⁹⁴⁴ Ed Edstrom, "Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces," *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁴⁵ "Police without Clue in Royal Oak Bombing as Controversy Continues," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, March 31, 1933, 8.

⁹⁴⁶ "Fr. Coughlin's Berates Bank Verdict, Judge Finds No 'Criminality' as Probe is Closed," *The Ludington Daily News*, September 19, 1933, 1.



Figure 152. Reverend Father Coughlin (Battle Creek Enquirer 1933)



Fr. Coughlin's Home Bombed

This is the home of the Rev. Fr. Charles E. Coughlin that was damaged by a bomb while the priest slept. Bombing of the militant churchman's home, in a Detroit suburb, followed three days of controversy arising from the priest's talk on Detroit's banking situation.

Figure 153. Fr. Coughlin's Home (Ironwood Daily Globe 1933)

In 1933, Fr. Coughlin debuted a weekly, children's religious instruction broadcast in the fall and winter months of 1933–1934 over the Michigan Radio Network. At the time of its inception, it was believed to be the first program of its kind.⁹⁴⁷ Fr. Coughlin also authored three books in the early 1930s: *Christ or the Red Serpent* (1930), *By the Sweat of Thy Brow* (1931), and *The New Deal in Money* (1933).⁹⁴⁸

The financial crisis of 1933 resulted in the Roosevelt administration enacting the Emergency Banking Act, suspending the gold standard, enacting the Agricultural Relief Act with the Thomas amendment, and finally, Congress enacted a resolution to abrogate the gold clause in all U.S. contracts. Together, these measures weakened the dollar's link to gold. Next, the administration enacted the gold purchase plan, which devaluated the American dollar, to reinflate the value of gold compared with U.S. dollars. In January 1934, the Gold Reserve Act was passed, which resurrected the gold standard and re-established financial links between America and the rest of the world.⁹⁴⁹ In February 1934, Fr. Coughlin described the National Recovery Act

⁹⁴⁷ "Sunday School Program Begins in October, Fr. Coughlin to Broadcast Especially for Children," *Battle Creek Enquirer*, September 21, 1933, 11.

⁹⁴⁸ Ed Edstrom, "Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces," *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁴⁹ Federal Reserve History, "Roosevelt's Gold Program," accessed October 20, 2023, <https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/roosevelts-gold-program/>.

as “not the end but the beginning of a huge industrial modification” and advocated for a change in its provisions, which would fix minimum wages at 80 cents per hour and set the maximum number of weekly work hours at 30.⁹⁵⁰ That April, he attacked the policies of the Roosevelt Administration and urged the use of silver as the monetary base.⁹⁵¹

Fr. Coughlin’s income decreased in 1934, and by the following year, he was proclaiming “Roosevelt and Ruin.” He became as anti-New Deal as he had been anti-big industry and finance. Money began to come in, enough to set up his “National Union for Social Justice.”⁹⁵² That November, Fr. Coughlin made an appeal for converts to his new third party. He launched the enterprise in his radio broadcast. Coughlin proposed an organization “superior to political parties in principle and independent of them in power,” with local units where needed. The organization would be financed with contributions from its members. He outlined 16 basic tenets to which members of the organization must subscribe. Bishop Gallagher indicated his approval of this program. Coughlin also predicted the death of both the Republican and Democratic party organizations as they then were known.⁹⁵³

In December 1934, Fr. Coughlin proposed a \$10 billion government program of road building, reforestation, power development, land reclamation, and slum elimination to help curb the depression. The program would be financed with new currency created by Congress.⁹⁵⁴

In March 1935, Fr. Coughlin was asked to speak out against lynching and to support the Costigan–Wagner anti-lynching bill.⁹⁵⁵ The following month, Bishop Gallagher declared that Fr. Coughlin had his support, that Fr. Coughlin represented the church, and that he would continue to back him until a lawful superior ruled otherwise.⁹⁵⁶

His National Union for Social Justice campaigned for William Lemke in 1936.⁹⁵⁷ Troubles for Fr. Coughlin arose in July of that year when he called President Roosevelt “a liar.”⁹⁵⁸ The Pope forced Coughlin to apologize.⁹⁵⁹ Despite a public apology, Fr. Coughlin resolved to work to unseat President Roosevelt in the next election. At that time, the Vatican interviewed Fr. Coughlin and his superior, Bishop Gallagher, to review Fr. Coughlin’s participation in the presidential campaign.⁹⁶⁰

⁹⁵⁰ “Coughlin Says NRA is Only Beginning,” *The New York Times*, February 5, 1934, 2, accessed January 29, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/1934/02/05/archives/coughlin-says-nra-is-only-beginning-radio-priest-advocates-rise-in.html>.

⁹⁵¹ “Bloc in Congress Dined by ‘Patriots,’ *Detroit Free Press*, April 25, 1934, 1.

⁹⁵² Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁵³ “Coughlin Starts His Own Party,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 13, 1934, 4.

⁹⁵⁴ “Coughlin Turns upon Cardinal,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 10, 1934, 7.

⁹⁵⁵ “Father Coughlin Asked to Speak Against Lynching,” *The Detroit Tribune*, March 16, 1935, 1.

⁹⁵⁶ “Bishop Gallagher Declares Coughlin Has His Support,” *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1935, 1.

⁹⁵⁷ Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁵⁸ “Fr. Coughlin Telephones to Vatican,” *The Times Herald*, July 24, 1936, 1-2.

⁹⁵⁹ Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁶⁰ “Fr. Coughlin Telephones to Vatican,” *The Times Herald*, July 24, 1936, 1-2.

That October, Fr. Coughlin accused the New Deal of tending toward dictatorship. He stated that the Roosevelt administration not only failed “to remove the causes which beget communists,” but has also “demonstrated a friendly and sympathetic interest for those countries where dictators have gained authority by their appeals to class hatred and to godlessness.”⁹⁶¹ The following month he announced that his National Union for Social Justice would become inactive, as it had been thoroughly discredited as a result of the recent election, and that he would be ending his broadcasting activities.⁹⁶²

In January 1937, Fr. Coughlin began a new series of 52 Sunday broadcasts with a memorial service for the late Bishop Gallagher. He stated that Bishop Gallagher had recently visited the shrine and had expressed his desire that Fr. Coughlin resume his broadcasting activities primarily to expound Christian doctrines and to expose Communist fallacies. Although Fr. Coughlin was reluctant to do so, he did so out of a duty to fulfill the last wish of his bishop.⁹⁶³ The following month, he stated that from then on, his broadcasts would not be political in nature and announced a plan for three nationwide programs each Sunday. He had previously been broadcasting in the afternoon and evening and expressed his desire to make the Children’s Hour, a local broadcast, into a national network program.⁹⁶⁴

From 1937 to 1942, Fr. Coughlin published a magazine entitled *Social Justice*.⁹⁶⁵ When Archbishop Mooney of Detroit attempted to censor it, Fr. Coughlin made it a privately owned paper.⁹⁶⁶ The magazine was suppressed by the government early in World War II after U.S. Attorney General Francis Biddle denounced it as traitorous.⁹⁶⁷

In 1939, Fr. Coughlin discontinued his radio talks for good following a controversy with his superiors. He subsequently focused on his duties as pastor of the shrine. In 1953, he addressed an audience of 1,100 at a First Friday Club luncheon and expressed his support for the lifting of all taxes from and an annual wage for production-line workers. He also urged the lowering of tariffs, the lowering of “this gold curtain,” and described India and China as tremendous markets for the United States.⁹⁶⁸

Fr. Coughlin retired from the Shrine of the Little Flower in 1966 after serving as pastor there for 40 years.⁹⁶⁹ He died in 1979 at the age of 88. His funeral mass was held at the shrine.⁹⁷⁰

⁹⁶¹ “Coughlin Accuses New Deal of Sympathy for Dictators,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 18, 1936, 7.

⁹⁶² “Coughlin Through on Radio, He Says, Suspending NUSJ,” *Detroit Free Press*, November 8, 1936, 1.

⁹⁶³ “Fr. Coughlin Says Bishop Inspired His Return to Air,” *Detroit Free Press*, January 25, 1937, 5.

⁹⁶⁴ “Fr. Coughlin to Present Three Sunday Programs,” *Detroit Free Press*, February 4, 1937, 5.

⁹⁶⁵ Lee Winfrey, “Father Coughlin Censures Reforms,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 25, 1969, 16.

⁹⁶⁶ Ed Edstrom, “Coughlin Has His Ups, Downs and About-Faces,” *The Courier-Journal*, April 26, 1942, 37.

⁹⁶⁷ Lee Winfrey, “Father Coughlin Censures Reforms,” *Detroit Free Press*, May 25, 1969, 16.

⁹⁶⁸ Arthur O’Shea, Jr., “Fr. Coughlin Returns, Backs Annual Wage,” *Detroit Free Press*, December 5, 1953, 5.

⁹⁶⁹ Hiley H. Ward, “Father Coughlin, Now 79, Supports the Revolutionists,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 26, 1970, 30.

⁹⁷⁰ Harry Cook, “Coughlin recalled by friends, foes,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 30, 1979, 130.

Henry J. McGill, Architect

Architect Henry J. McGill of the New York firm McGill and Hamlin was known for his design of Roman Catholic churches in New York as well as other areas.⁹⁷¹ His designs included St. Avellino in Flushing, New York (1941); Church of the Good Shepherd (1939), St. Paul's Rectory; Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak (1938); and Church of the Most Precious Blood in Long Island City, New York.⁹⁷²

The Shrine of the Little Flower was constructed in two stages between 1931 and 1936. The Charity Crucifixion Tower was completed first (1929–1931).⁹⁷³ In March 1929, it was announced that the architectural contract for the construction of the Shrine of the Little Flower's "Tolerance Highway Crucifix" had been given to McGill. The cost was projected to be \$100,000, which would be covered by Fr. Coughlin's radio show audience.⁹⁷⁴ Construction of the tower began that year. The 104-ft limestone tower features sculptural figures designed by Rene Paul Chambellan and executed by Enrico (Harry) Liva, an Italian stone carver from the Ingalls Stone Company in Bedford, Indiana.⁹⁷⁵

McGill had a difficult time devising a plan for the church due to the odd position of the property and various construction restrictions at the time. After many designs, he thought of expanding the wings outward to create the form of a cross. While the church seems circular on the inside, the cross shape is visible from above. The tower forms the base, the Narthex and altar form the long beam, and the two confessionals and the main altar form the cross arm (Figure 154).⁹⁷⁶

⁹⁷¹ Find a Grave, "Henry J McGill," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/132846429/henry-j-mcgill>; Detroit Church Blog, "National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://detroitchurchblog.blogspot.com/2015/04/national-shrine-of-little-flower.html>.

⁹⁷² Find a Grave, "Henry J McGill," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/132846429/henry-j-mcgill>.

⁹⁷³ Detroit Church Blog, "National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://detroitchurchblog.blogspot.com/2015/04/national-shrine-of-little-flower.html>.

⁹⁷⁴ "Prodigal Son Sermon Theme," *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1929, 11.

⁹⁷⁵ Driving for Deco, "Freakin', Tiquen 2023 – Destination Detroit: Part Two – Tabernacles, Tables & Trays," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://drivingfordeco.com/tag/henry-j-mcgill/>.

⁹⁷⁶ Driving for Deco, "Freakin', Tiquen 2023 – Destination Detroit: Part Two – Tabernacles, Tables & Trays," accessed January 29, 2024, <https://drivingfordeco.com/tag/henry-j-mcgill/>.

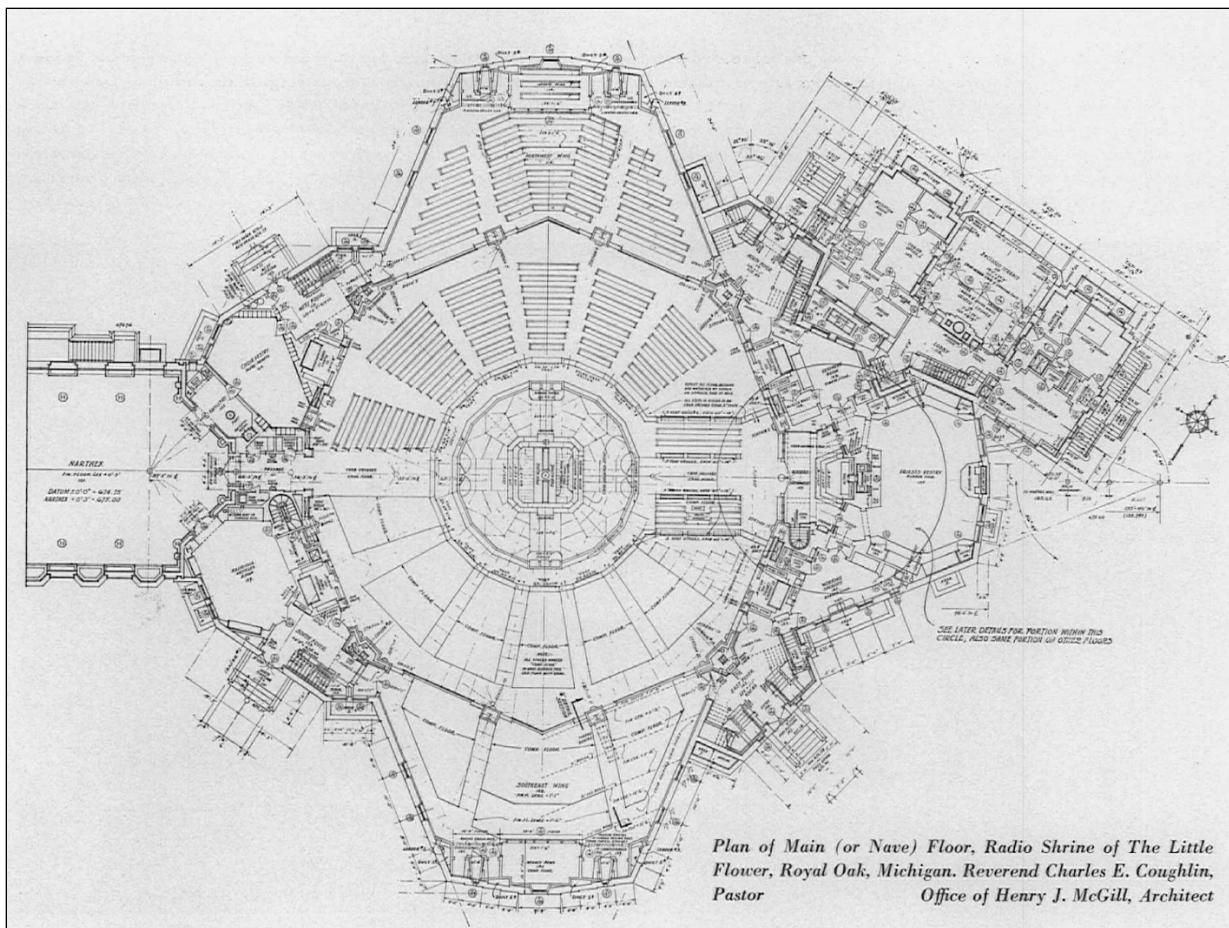


Figure 154. Plan of the main floor of the Shrine of the Little Flower from the Office of Henry J. McGill, Architect

Frederick D. Madison, Architect

Born in 1888, Frederick D. Madison's 40-plus-year career began in 1916 when he opened his first architectural office in Royal Oak. He designed countless schools, office buildings, and stores throughout the city, some of which are discussed below.⁹⁷⁷

Madison was chosen as the architect for the Baldwin Theatre, the first theater in Royal Oak. Ground was broken in early April 1921, and it opened in 1922 as a vaudeville theater.⁹⁷⁸ In 1921, he was commissioned to design the new Royal Oak Savings Bank. The one-story building was designed with modern fire and burglar-proof features and was projected to cost more than \$100,000.⁹⁷⁹ He was also responsible for designing the First State Bank of Royal Oak, which was

⁹⁷⁷ City of Royal Oak, "Happy Birthday, Frederick D. Madison," published April 4, 2021, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=52&ARC=52>.

⁹⁷⁸ "Hartwick Turns First for New Theatre," *The Daily Tribune*, April 8, 1921, 1; Advertisement, *Royal Oak Tribune*, February 2, 1923, 4.

⁹⁷⁹ "Royal Oak to Have Burglar Proof Bank," *Detroit Free Press*, November 27, 1921, 19.

constructed from 1921 to 1922. The cost of the building was \$250,000. Madison moved his offices to the second floor of the building.⁹⁸⁰

Madison was consulting engineer and architect for many of the boards of education in the three townships within the eastern Woodward area, including Royal Oak.⁹⁸¹ In 1922, Madison was hired to study schools in Flint and other Michigan cities for the purpose of designing the Northwood School, which was to be built on land donated by F. Lloyd Clawson in the Northwood subdivision. As a result of his study, the Royal Oak school board decided to build a permanent unit of two rooms, which cost \$25,000. The following year, another two-room section was added when the school became too crowded. This section cost \$20,000. A 14-room section was added soon after due to overcrowding. This section was completed in 1925 (Figure 155).⁹⁸² Royal Oak (Dondero) High School was also designed by Madison. It was constructed by R.R. Patterson of Detroit on a 10-ac lot. It included an impressive auditorium, gymnasium, teachers' restrooms, and other high-class modern amenities that were expected at the time. The school, which cost \$877,455.61 to construct, opened in 1927.⁹⁸³

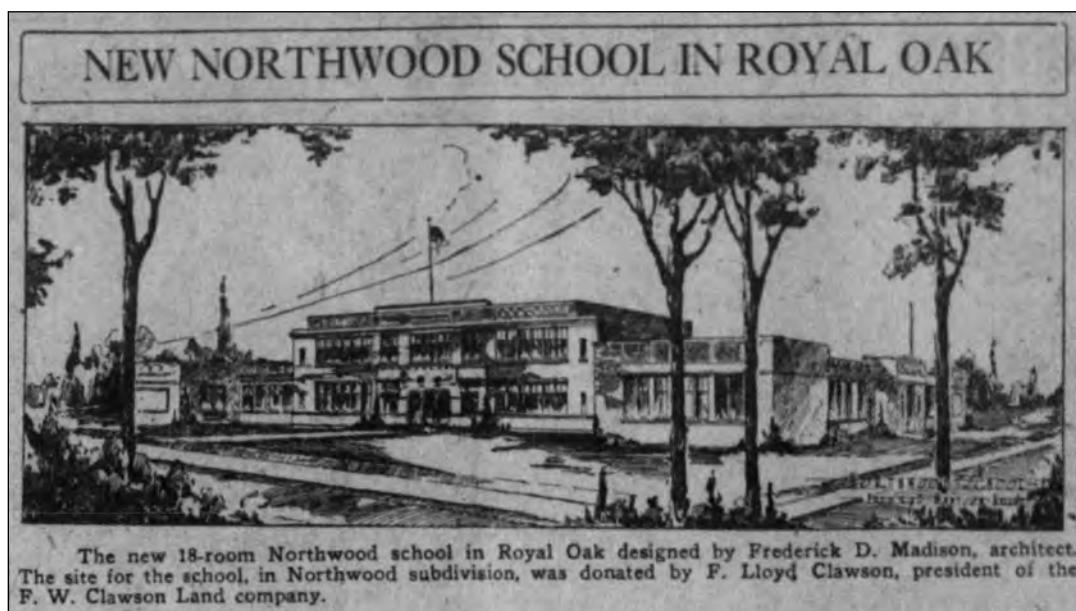


Figure 155. Sketch of the new Northwood school (Detroit Free Press 1925)

In 1923, Madison was chosen to design a building block consisting of a market building, Masonic temple, stores, and offices on Main Street between Fourth and Fifth streets.⁹⁸⁴ At that time, he also served as president of the Royal Oak Exchange Club.⁹⁸⁵

⁹⁸⁰ "First State Bank of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, April 29, 1923, 35.

⁹⁸¹ "Northeast Area Schools Planned," *Detroit Free Press*, May 10, 1925, 82.

⁹⁸² "New Northwood School in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, April 26, 1925, 92.

⁹⁸³ "School to Take Rank with State's Finest," *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1927, 4-6; "Fine Schools Dot Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, 7-6; "Dondero: School mourned as doors close," *Detroit Free Press*, June 9, 2006, 8B.

⁹⁸⁴ "Much Building Waits on Cost," *Detroit Free Press*, March 11, 1923, 30.

Madison also designed the Washington Square Building, which was constructed in 1927. The development consisted of a six-story office building, a theater, and 22 stores. The project was sponsored by Detroit and Royal Oak capital, the cost being estimated at nearly \$2 million. It was constructed by the F.R. Patterson Company of Detroit.⁹⁸⁶ A 1928 Frederick D. Madison advertisement as well as a 1937 Washington Square Building directory showed that Madison rented an office on the second floor.⁹⁸⁷

In 1928, Madison was hired to design the Conga Building, which was home to Royal Oak's Montgomery-Ward store for more than 30 years.⁹⁸⁸ Its design was intended to complement the Washington Square Building across the street. The same color and texture of brick would be used along with terra cotta trim. Upon its completion, the three-story building would be the third largest department store in Oakland County.⁹⁸⁹

Madison, who had been contracted to design the new Royal Oak post office, formed part of a Royal Oak contingent who traveled to Washington, D.C. in January 1932 to confer with government officials in an attempt to obtain the new post office building that was promised to Royal Oak by Congress and the Post Office Department. They had appointments with Senator James Couzens and Representative Seymour D. Person as well as with postal officials. At its previous session, Congress had allocated \$190,000 for the Royal Oak post office. The delegation would ask for the immediate appropriation of this money to relieve unemployment. They would also provide statistics on the community's needs.⁹⁹⁰ The appropriated amount was reduced to \$171,000 in 1933 and construction began in 1935. In accordance with a government provision, local workers, both skilled and unskilled, were employed. Following the completion of the building, a brief dedication ceremony was held on August 29, 1936.⁹⁹¹

In the mid-1930s, Madison was hired to draft preliminary plans for a combined Royal Oak Township Hall, fire hall, and garage. The plans had been delayed pending an announcement by the federal government as to how funding would be allocated to municipalities under the work-wage plan for the purposes of new construction. If supported by legislation, the plans would be rushed to completion and immediately sent to Washington for approval.⁹⁹² This building does not appear to have ever been constructed.

⁹⁸⁵ "Royal Oak Club To Hold Banquet," *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1923, 33.

⁹⁸⁶ "Some Recent Commercial Developments in Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, July 17, 1927, 57.

⁹⁸⁷ Frederick D. Madison Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 75; "Washington Square Building Directory," *Detroit Free Press*, January 3, 1937, 110.

⁹⁸⁸ "Montgomery-Ward Company to Build Large Department Store in the Heart of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 74-75; City of Royal Oak, "Happy Birthday, Frederick D. Madison," published April 4, 2021, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=52&ARC=52>.

⁹⁸⁹ "Montgomery-Ward Company to Build Large Department Store in the Heart of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 74-75.

⁹⁹⁰ "Postal Mission to Washington," *Detroit Free Press*, January 13, 1932, 8.

⁹⁹¹ John A. Kuzemka, "The Royal Oak Post Office: A History," pp. 3-4, accessed November 15, 2023, <https://www.romi.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29631/The-History-of-the-Royal-Oak-Post-Office?fbclid=IwAR09q7nCBWpgJU2Zz8FY3Cd8kjFbzOrEpPnqlxPHJenYRmaeuBxp4S31WSM>.

⁹⁹² "Royal Oak Township Hall Plans Nearing Completion," *Detroit Free Press*, January 30, 1935, 8.

Following World War II, the Royal Oak School District and Oakland County retained his services to design long-range, postwar construction projects.⁹⁹³ Madison was also responsible for designing the Oakland County Jail, the Oakland County Sanitarium, the Genesee County Courthouse, the Genesee County Infirmary, the Genesee County Juvenile Home, the First Methodist Episcopal Church House, the Woodward Avenue Building at Woodward Avenue and 9 Mile Road, and the Deauville Beach Club on Lake St. Clair (1927).⁹⁹⁴ Madison died in 1969 at the age of 81 and was buried in Royal Oak Cemetery.⁹⁹⁵

Marshall Fredericks, Artist

Originally from Rock Island, Illinois, Marshall Fredericks came to the Detroit area in 1932 to teach sculpture and woodcarving at the new Cranbrook Academy of Art.⁹⁹⁶ He set up his studio at 4113 North Woodward Avenue (Woodward Avenue and Normandy Road) in Royal Oak in 1946 (Figure 156) and resided in Birmingham.⁹⁹⁷ Fredericks worked out of his Royal Oak studio for more than 50 years.⁹⁹⁸

⁹⁹³ City of Royal Oak, “Happy Birthday, Frederick D. Madison,” published April 4, 2021, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=52&ARC=52>.

⁹⁹⁴ Frederick D. Madison Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 1928, 75; Frederick D. Madison Ad and Ernest Akroyd Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, April 22, 1923, 33; Deauville Beach Club Ad, *Detroit Free Press*, May 18, 1927, 20.

⁹⁹⁵ City of Royal Oak, “Happy Birthday, Frederick D. Madison,” published April 4, 2021, accessed January 30, 2024, <https://www.romi.gov/Blog.aspx?IID=52&ARC=52>.

⁹⁹⁶ James S. Pooler, “Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 50; “Cranbrook Sets Date for Art School Term,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 17, 1933, 44.

⁹⁹⁷ James S. Pooler, “Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 50.

⁹⁹⁸ Mike McConnell, “Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain’s 20th Anniversary in city,” *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>.

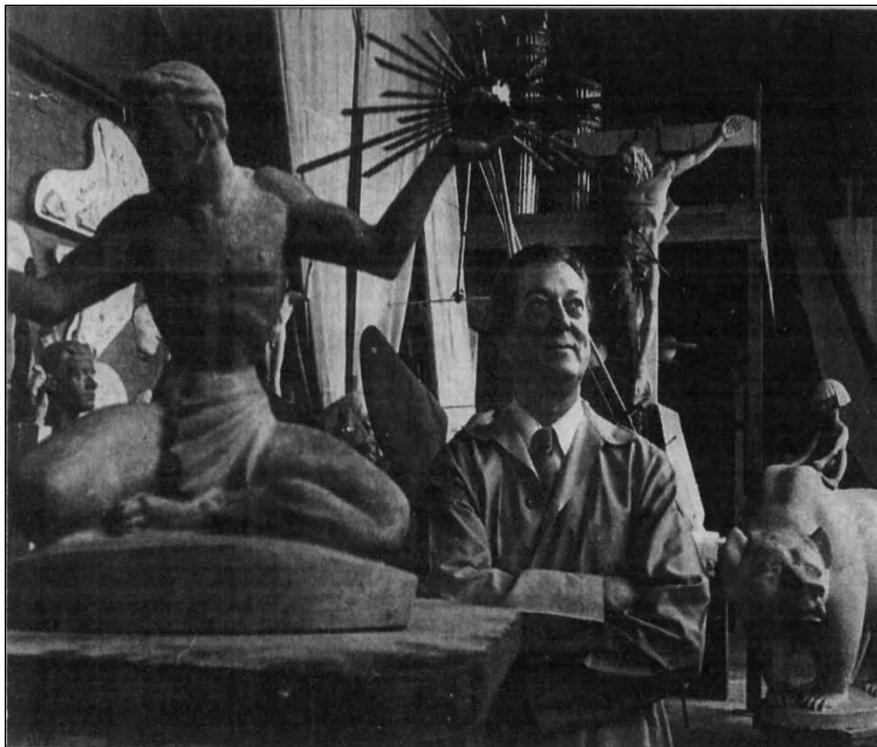


Figure 156. Marshall Fredericks stands amid some of his works in his Royal Oak studio, undated, from Bill Laitner, “Fighting Over Sculptor’s Lot” (Detroit Free Press 2001).

Fredericks created public sculptures throughout the United States and elsewhere.⁹⁹⁹ He designed a 29-ft-tall fountain known as “The Expanding Universe” for “The Peace Court” at the State Department Building in Washington, D.C., which was dedicated in 1963. In the early 1960s, he designed a permanent 26-ft-tall bronze and granite sculpture entitled “The Freedom of the Human Spirit” for the 1964 New York World’s Fair.¹⁰⁰⁰ Fredericks sought permission from New York’s Flushing Meadows–Corona Park for a second casting in honor of Birmingham’s 50th Anniversary. It was installed in Shain Park in Birmingham.¹⁰⁰¹ Fredericks also designed a 35-ft group to be installed in front of Milwaukee’s public museum as well as a large, complex fountain for Cleveland. He also created a large fountain for Port Huron’s Henry McMorran Memorial Auditorium and a large figure of Christ at Little Indian River, Michigan.¹⁰⁰² He is probably best known locally for the Spirit of Detroit statue outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Building

⁹⁹⁹ Mike McConnell, “Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain’s 20th Anniversary in city,” *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>.

¹⁰⁰⁰ James S. Pooler, “Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 50.

¹⁰⁰¹ Birmingham Historical Museum & Park, “Exploring Marshall Fredericks Sculptures,” accessed January 30, 2024, https://cms7files1.revize.com/birmingham/Document_Center/Birmingham%20Museum/Tours/Brochure%20Marshall%20Fredericks%20Sculptures.pdf.

¹⁰⁰² James S. Pooler, “Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak,” *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 50.

in Detroit.¹⁰⁰³ He also designed smaller sculptures including a little fountain at the Danish Old Folks Home in Rochester and the three clowns and the two bears at Royal Oak's library.¹⁰⁰⁴

Not all of Frederick's pieces were intended to be at ground level. He designed an aluminum sculpture entitled "The Family Protected by Healing Herbs" to be mounted on the façade of William Beaumont Hospital. It was inspired by the Bible verse "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Revelation 22:2). The sculpture was awarded the Gold Medal in Sculpture by the Architectural League of New York in 1956.¹⁰⁰⁵

One of Fredericks' last public works is the "Star Dream Fountain" at the Barbara Hallman Memorial Plaza between city hall and the library. The sculpture is based on a 1947 preliminary design for the "Cleveland War Memorial." Fredericks worked on the sculpture for more than six years and donated the time he spent working on it. The fountain was installed in 1997. Donors raised about \$500,000 to pay for materials and the installation. It was one of the last works Fredericks lived to see installed prior to his death at age 90 in April 1998. He explained the fountain as two young people springing up on a cluster of stars, "free from the limitations of earth and olden days." The allegorical work symbolizes man's continuous search for spiritual peace.¹⁰⁰⁶

Frederick's studio at the northwestern corner of Woodward Avenue and Normandy Road was demolished between 1999 and 2002 despite attempts by his heirs and preservationists to sell the site and preserve it.¹⁰⁰⁷ It is now the site of a three-story office building and one-story parking garage.

¹⁰⁰³ Mike McConnell, "Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain's 20th Anniversary in city," *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>.

¹⁰⁰⁴ James S. Pooler, "Marshall Fredericks, the Wizard of Royal Oak," *Detroit Free Press*, September 29, 1963, 50.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum Digital Archives and Objects Collection, "William Beaumont Hospital with "The Family Protected by Healing Herbs," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://omeka.svsu.edu/items/show/1464>.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Mike McConnell, "Royal Oak library to celebrate Star Dream Fountain's 20th Anniversary in city," *Royal Oak Tribune*, published September 1, 2017, accessed January 12, 2024, <https://www.dailytribune.com/2017/09/01/royal-oak-library-to-celebrate-star-dream-fountains-20th-anniversary-in-city/>; Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Museum Digital Archives and Objects Collection, "Star Dream Fountain" in the Center of Barbara Hallman Plaza in Royal Oak, Michigan," accessed January 12, 2024, <https://omeka.svsu.edu/items/show/3392>.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Bill Laitner, "Fighting Over Sculptor's Lot," *Detroit Free Press*, February 21, 2001, 25; NETROnline, aerial views of Royal Oak, Michigan, 1999 and 2002, accessed January 31, 2024, [HistoricAerials.com](https://www.historicairials.com).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

1. Survey areas of Royal Oak with historic and cultural resources. Surveys are useful for establishing new historic districts and for making future land use decisions. Such efforts can aid officials in effectively planning for and protecting resources from demolition and neglect.
 - Identify individual resources and areas that should be prioritized for surveys and create prioritization maps to denote the relative threat to and/or importance of resources.
 - Areas that could be prioritized for survey include those where development pressure is greatest, where there are high rates of vacancy leaving resources vulnerable to demolition, where there is infrastructural degradation, and where there is an increased risk for property damage due to environmental hazards.
 - Conduct resurveys of locally designated properties to record the loss of historic resources and document changes to existing buildings (see Table 1).
 - As a certified local government, Royal Oak is eligible for funding that the Michigan SHPO provides for intensive-level surveys.
 - Intensive-level surveys provide information needed to determine which individual properties and areas are eligible for historic designations and for defining the boundaries of historic districts.
 - Refer to National Register Bulletin 24, “Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning” for useful guidance for undertaking a historic resource survey.

Consider conducting thematic surveys that identify significant sites, neighborhoods, and building that share a common theme. Such surveys are not limited by the geographic boundaries and rigid criteria considerations required in traditional historic resource surveys and could include mid-century properties, schools, or religious properties, WPA properties, important manufacturing sites, and identification of properties associated with traditionally underrepresented communities. Thematic resource surveys are most useful when coupled with context studies such as this one, which provide a frame of reference for the survey and identification of resources.

Commonwealth recommends surveys for five potential districts: Railroad resources, South Washington Avenue Commercial District, Main Street Commercial Corridor, Bungalow Housing types, and churches (Table 24).

Table 24. Resources and Potential Historic Districts Recommended for Future Surveys

Association	Historic Context	Resources	Priority
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Association	Historic Context	Resources	Priority
Railroad Resources	Transportation	Overpasses: 11 Mile Road, 12 Mile Road, 13 Mile Road, 14 Mile Road, Benjamin Avenue, Catalpa Drive, Farnum Avenue, Greenleaf Drive, Normandy Road, Northwood Boulevard, and Webster Road; Stations and Transit Centers: Royal Oak Amtrak Station, SMART Royal Oak Transit Center	Moderate
South Washington Avenue Commercial Corridor	Commerce/Trade	Retail establishments and lodging – 215, 402, 405, 407, 408, 415, 417, 423, 500, 506, 507, 510, 512, 515, 606, 610, 1029, 1129-1133 S. Washington Avenue	High
Main Street Commercial Corridor	Commerce/Trade	Retail establishments – 106-110, 119, 125, 207-211, 215-217, 218-222, 224, 312, 314, 322, 323, 401, 417, and 1224 S. Main Street; 612, 818, 916, 926, 1000, and 1010 N. Main Street	High
Bungalow Housing Types (addresses provided in 1999 windshield report)	Community Development and Planning	727 N. Alexander Avenue, 314 N. Campbell Road, 802 N. Campbell Road, 3216 Merrill Avenue, 3224 Merrill Avenue, 1113 Orchard Grove Drive, 413 Orchard View Drive, 3004 Shenandoah Drive, 1519 E. Thirteen Mile Road, 410 N. Vermont Avenue, 1607 W. Windemere Avenue, 912-926 Whitcomb Avenue (non-contiguous district)	Moderate
Churches	Religious	Oak Missionary Baptist Church, Calvary Christian Ministries, Central Free Will Baptist Church, Christadelphians of North Detroit, Church of the Holy City, Eckankar Mi Satsang Society, Emmanuel Bethel Church, Encounter Church of God and Prophecy, Faith Christian Church, First Church of Christ, Scientist, First Congregational Church, First Presbyterian Church of Royal Oak, First Spiritual Temple of Royal Oak, First Baptist Church of Royal Oak, Hosanna Christian Church, Mitcham Chapel Church, National Shrine of the Little Flower Basilica, Reconciliation Word Ministry, Renaissance Unity, Royal Oak Church of Christ, Royal Oak First United Methodist Church, Royal Oak Missionary Church, St. John's Episcopal Church, St. Mary Catholic Church, St. Paul Lutheran Church, St. Theodora of Sihla Mission, Starr Presbyterian Church, The Aetherius Society, Memorial Free Will Baptist Church, Tree of Life Bible Fellowship, Unity Church of Royal Oak, Woodlawn Church of God (non-contiguous district)	High

2. Maintain inventories of properties that meet the 50-year age threshold for consideration as historically significant and those that qualify for NRHP Criteria Consideration G and have achieved significance within the last 50 years. NPS generally requires that resources must be at least 50 years old to be considered for listing in the NRHP but exceptions are made for extraordinarily important resources of less than 50 years.

- The City should establish processes for identifying and inventorying structures as they hit a certain age threshold as well of those of exceptional cultural value of less than 50 years old.
- The inventories will provide useful information for future planning initiatives and historic resource surveys and can help to reveal development patterns within the community.
- For older structures, keeping a record of geographic areas with concentrations of these resources can help the City to identify areas undergoing development pressure and better plan to preserve and protect important places within these

neighborhoods.

3. Build on this context study and the 1999 windshield report to develop NRHP nominations for resources that meet the Criteria of Evaluation for listing.
 - Pursue NRHP nominations for resources that have been determined eligible for listing in the NRHP (see Table 2).
 - Conduct additional research to determine NRHP eligibility for individual resources and districts with More Information Needed/Unevaluated status.
 - Additional research can explore historic contexts that may be applicable to the City of Royal Oak such as Engineering, Ethnic History, and Industry that were not included in this study or the 1999 report.
4. Identify and develop a hazard mitigation plan for historic properties located within high-hazard areas such as floodways.
 - Identification of potential hazards to such historic resources is the first step in formulating a plan to save historic resources in the event of a disaster.
 - Hazard mitigation plans and related surveys have the potential to reduce flood insurance premiums for historic property owners.
5. Adopt a set of historic resource design standards against which the City's Historic District Commission will review proposals for exterior changes to properties within the local historic districts.
 - This will strengthen the regulatory authority of the Historic District Commission and decrease potential subjectivity in the review process.
 - Amend the Historic Preservation section of the City of Royal Oak's Code of Ordinances to include design standards and add that any proposed exterior changes to properties within the City's local historic districts must be reviewed by the Historic District Commission according to these standards before a certificate of appropriateness is issued.
 - Design standards could also provide guidelines to owners of historic properties on how to make buildings more energy efficient without compromising their historic integrity (e.g., ideal placement of solar panels and addition of energy-efficient inserts to historic windows).
 - Architects, local builders, and industry experts can also be consulted to provide guidance on sourcing appropriate replacement materials for deteriorating features on historic buildings, which can be integrated into the design standards.
6. Adopt historic district preservation zoning incentives to encourage preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures.
 - Incentives could include fee waivers in historic districts, expedited reviews for historic properties, and grants for eligible rehabilitation projects.
 - The City can reach out to the Michigan SHPO to learn about successful incentives

that have been implemented in other communities throughout the state.

7. Amend the City's Zoning Maps to include historic district overlays to encourage preservation of historic buildings and viewsheds.
 - Historic district overlays can disincentivize incompatible development and provide building code and accessory dwelling unit exemptions within established historic districts.
 - The City will likely need to conduct an independent survey to determine which regulations will have the greatest impact.
8. The City can encourage property owners to apply for state and national incentives such as the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program and Michigan's State Historic Preservation Tax Credit.
 - The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentive Program is only available for income-producing properties that are listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP.
 - The State Historic Preservation Tax Credit is available to both commercial and owner-occupied residential properties either listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP, listed in the State Register of Historic Sites, or considered a contributing property within a local Historic District.

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