

HISTORY OF A PIECE OF LAND IN NORTHERN ROYAL OAK: TENHAVE WOODS

By Bob Muller and Ted Vickers

When the Royal Oak area was first settled, it was actually part of Bloomfield Twp. In 1827, it became part of Troy Township and finally Royal Oak Township in 1832. Royal Oak Township was divided into 36 sections. The township boundaries were Greenfield, 14 Mile Rd, Dequindre, and Eight Mile Road. In Royal Oak Township of the 1800's, Tenhave Woods would have been located on the east side of N 1/2 of SW 1/4 of Section 4 (Area A) and west side of the NW 1/4 of the SE 1/4 of section 4 (Area C). Please see the map on the next page that shows the location of these land sections. Even though it was originally thought that this land was inhabitable, surveys that were taken a few years before 1820 found this land to be rich in trees and good farming land. Trees found in this area included aspen, oak, sugar maple ash, elm beech and ironwood. Many of these same tree species are still abundant in Tenhave Woods today. After the surveys were taken and the price of land became \$1.25/acre (80-acre minimum purchase) the land began opening up for settlement. The first piece of property purchased in Royal Oak Township was in 1820 by John Luther and David McKintry in Section 33 of what is now in the city Ferndale. The second purchaser was Alexander Campbell in 1821 in section 9 of what is now in the City of Royal Oak. Cromwell Goodwin became the 14th purchaser of land in Royal Oak Township. The Goodwin's settled on land at the northeast corner of Crooks and 13 Mile Road and includes land known today as Tenhave Woods. The Nature Society realizes that the Goodwin's are an important piece to the extremely valuable piece of land that is now one of our nature parks. We think it is important to trace some of their history along with other owners of that land.

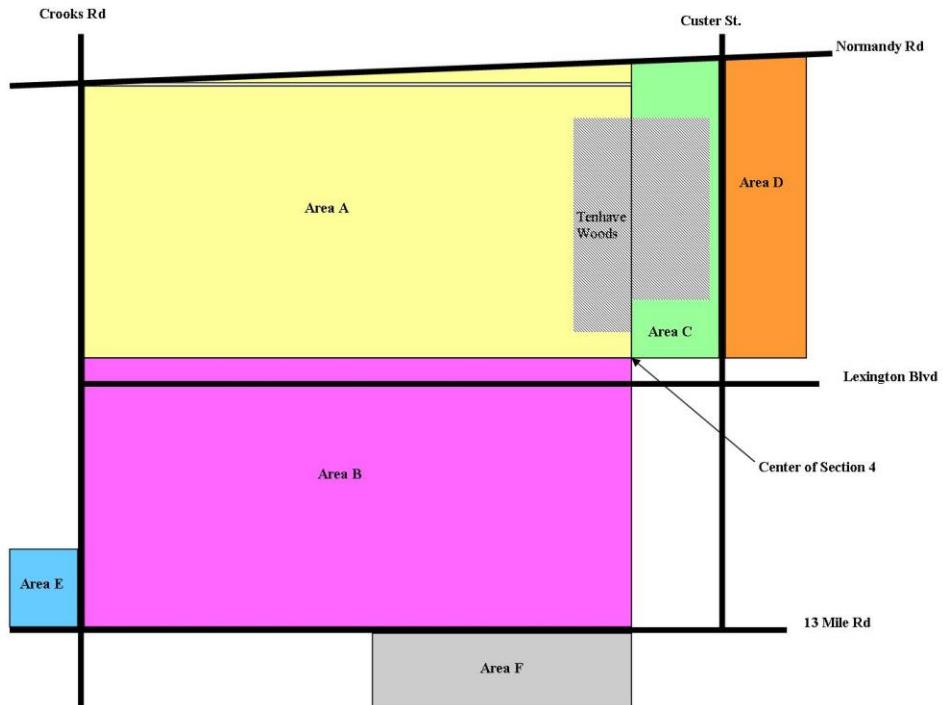
The following shows the land that the Goodwin's owned beginning in 1824 and continued to live on until around 1888, when Samuel Volney Goodwin moved to Birmingham, Michigan. A map is on the next page.

AREA	LANDOWNER in 1825	LANDOWNER in 1837
A	Cromwell Goodwin	Samuel Blois Goodwin
B	Cromwell Goodwin	Seth Goodwin
C	T. Finn	Samuel Blois Goodwin
D	T. Finn	Samuel Blois Goodwin
E		Seth Goodwin
F		Seth Goodwin

AREA	LANDOWNER in 1860	LANDOWNER in 1875
A	Samuel Blois Goodwin	Samuel Volney Goodwin
B	William White	A. White
C	Samuel Blois Goodwin	Samuel Volney Goodwin
D	James Todd	James Todd
E	William White	A. White
F	William White	A. White

AREA	LAND DESCRIPTION	ACRES
A	N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4	82
B	S $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4	80
C	W $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4	18
D	E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4	18
E	Part of E $\frac{1}{2}$ of the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 5	5
F	Part of N $\frac{1}{2}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 9	15

Below is a map of the land once owned by the Goodwins in Royal Oak Township



CROMWELL GOODWIN'S ANCESTORS

Cromwell's ancestors first reached America in the 1630's. In 1632, William Goodwin (d.1673) emigrated from England to Braintree, Massachusetts. Shortly after arriving, he moved to Newtown, Massachusetts. In 1638, William moved to Hartford, Connecticut. His brother, Ozias Goodwin (1596-1683), might possibly have immigrated with William or after William's move to Hartford. Ozias's great, great, great, great grandson was Cromwell Goodwin.

Ozais was born in 1596 in Bocking, Essex Co., England and died before 1683 in Hartford, Connecticut. He and his wife, Mary, became residents of Hartford in 1639. Ozais's son, **William** (b.1629-d.1689) and William's son, **Nathaniel** (b.1673-d.1726), both remained Hartford residents. **Abraham** Goodwin, son of Nathaniel, was the first of these Goodwin's to leave Hartford. Around 1723, Abraham moved 25 miles westward to Litchfield, Connecticut. His son, **Charles**, (b.1731-d.1787), a Litchfield resident, was said to have been, a soldier in the French and Indian War. In August 1776, Charles was an ensign in the Battle of Long Island and in the spring of 1777, he was part of the New York State Militia that defended Peekskill and other towns on the Hudson River. He was a lieutenant in the Defense of Horseneck, Connecticut, and was part of a Company that joined forces with George Washington in March 1781 at Phillipsburg. After the war, he settled down as a farmer in New Hartford. **Joseph Goodwin** (b.1756-d.1835) was Charles' son and continued the Goodwin's presence in Litchfield. In the Revolutionary War, Joseph was a sergeant in charge of a company of the New York State Militia. He marched to relief of New York in August 1776 and was discharged a month later. He was a private in the Company of Light Dragoons commanded by Capt. Moses Seymour. In July 1779, the company was dispatched to repel Tryon's invasion of some towns in Connecticut. Joseph was discharged in September 1779. He remained in Litchfield until 1792. It is not known where he went from there. Records showed in 1835 that he lived near Romeo, Michigan. Joseph and his wife, Sally, had five children. Their third child was **Cromwell Goodwin**.

CROMWELL GOODWIN

Cromwell was born on May 17, 1783, in Litchfield, Connecticut.

In 1804, Cromwell married **Irene Thompson** (b. August 30, 1782). Soon after getting married, they moved from Litchfield to East Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York (230 miles northwest of Litchfield). Between 1805 and 1824, they had nine children, three of whom died in infancy. Cromwell was a soldier in the War of 1812 and was stationed at Buffalo, New York. He was a private in Captain William B. Hamlin's Company and Lt. Colonel Samuel Blakeslee's Regiment. He served from December 23, 1813, to January 6, 1814. In 1824, only 20 years after moving to East Bloomfield, Cromwell (age 41) along with his wife and six children packed up again. With oxen and cart in tow, they traveled over 70 miles on land to Buffalo, New York and then travelled by water on the sailing vessel, *Minerve*, to Detroit, Michigan. Because of unfavorable winds, they had difficulty docking at Detroit. The captain of the vessel hired Cromwell to throw his ox team overboard and use the oxen to pull the vessel to the dock. As soon as they got off the boat, the Goodwin's immediately started with their ox team and wagon into the wilderness to their property at present day 13 Mile Road and Crooks.

On May 17, 1824 (his 41st birthday), **Cromwell Goodwin** purchased from the United States of America, 80 acres in the west half of SW 1/4 of Section 4 and in June 1825, he purchased 80 additional acres in the east half of SW 1/4 of Section 4. See [link](#) for deed information. The total paid for both parcels was \$200 and includes the land shown in Areas A & B. When Cromwell settled in Royal Oak Township, he became its first bricklayer.

It seems that when people moved west, they often went to areas that friends or acquaintances had already settled in. Soon after Cromwell arrived, he held a “bee” (a social gathering where people combine work, competition, and amusement) to build a road northward to Josiah Alger’s place on the southern edge of Troy Township. Alger was an acquaintance from Ontario County, New York. Alger arrived here before Cromwell, purchasing his land from the Federal Government in October 1823. This road would be the beginning of Crooks Road between 13 Mile and 14 Mile Roads. A point of interest here is that Alger purchased the SE ¼ of section 32 in Troy Township. A part of this land is now known as Cummingston Park.

Both Joseph Chase and Socrates Hopkins were not only from the same town as Cromwell (East Bloomfield, New York), but according to the 1820 Federal census, they were also neighbors. When Joseph and Socrates moved west to Royal Oak Township, they once again became Cromwell’s neighbors. Joseph Chase arrived in late 1824 and settled just south of Cromwell, in the NW corner of section 9 (SE corner of Crooks and 13 Mile Rd). That area became known as Chase’s Corner. Joseph was the first postmaster 1826 to 1838. The store at the Corners was a frame building, built in 1826 by Jarvis Phelps, carpenter for David Chase (Joseph’s son). Jarvis Phelps (b.1800-d.1846) married Esther Goodwin (b.1805-d.1836), a daughter of Cromwell Goodwin, in 1829. They had two children. The store stood on the west side of Crooks Road, near the Almon Starr’s brick dwelling house. In this store, Mr. David Chase had a good stock of merchandise, and its where the post office was kept, he is being the deputy postmaster under his father. This store would make it very convenient for the Goodwins to pick up needed supplies. David continued in trade at this place until 1854, when he left for Detroit. Socrates Hopkins (b.1790-d.1842) also arrived in 1824 and lived just north of Cromwell in the NE ¼ of Section 5 (NE corner of Crooks and Normandy). Socrates was a farmer, Justice of the Peace, and a Freemason.

Cromwell bought the E ½ of the SE ¼ of Section 5 in 1830 from G. Cox and sold all but five acres (Area E) to Gervase (Jarvis) Phelps. Sometime after that, Cromwell built a house on that property (northwest corner of 13 Mile Road and Crooks).

After his sons were old enough, **Samuel and Seth** took over ownership of the farm from Cromwell. The 3rd son, **Charles**, moved to California in 1850. Daughter, **Harriet**, died in 1826 and the other two girls married and left the farm. Harriet (age 17) became the first person of European ancestry to die in Oakland County. She is buried in Section K of Royal Oak cemetery near her mother, father and two sisters.

Cromwell Goodwin died on September 16, 1862, and is buried alongside his wife, Irene, in Royal Oak Cemetery. Irene died on February 8, 1851.

The children of Cromwell Goodwin & Irene (Thompson) Goodwin were:

- **Esther** was born September 18, 1805 & died September 25, 1836. Esther is buried in Royal Oak Cemetery. Esther married **Gervase (Jarvis) Dwight Phelps** (b.1800-d.1846) in 1829. Jarvis built the Chase Corner’s store in the year 1826. Their children were Harriet Louisa Phelps (b.1829 & was married to Edmund Hamilton); Walter Amos Phelps (b.1831 & was married to Charity A. Hamilton); Orville Seth Phelps (b.1834 & was married to Mary Butterfield);
- **Sheldon (b.1807-d.1808)**
- **Harriet** was born July 10, 1809, and died August 14, 1826. She is buried in Section K in the Royal Oak Cemetery.
- **Samuel Blois** was born in 1812. See below for more information about him.
- **Levi** was born in 1814 and died in 1815.

- **Charles** was born **October 8, 1816**. He moved to California in 1850. He became an extensive farmer & stock-raiser at Lakeport, Lake County, CA. Charles married **Rebecca J. Yates** on March 24, 1880. Their adopted child was Cora Lee Arnold (b.1870 & she married Solomon C. Stone)
- **Seth** was born in 1819. There is more information about him further on in this report.
- **Lydia** was born in 1821 and died in 1880. Lydia is buried in Royal Oak Cemetery. Lydia married **Henry Sillman**. Their child was Charles Sillman. Lydia also married **Briggs** (no first name). Their child was Harriet Briggs
- **Mary** was born & died in 1824.

SAMUEL BLOIS GOODWIN

Samuel Blois Goodwin was born on January 9, 1812, in East Bloomfield, New York. He was the son of Cromwell Goodwin and Irene (Thompson) Goodwin.

Cromwell sold 82 acres of the north portion of Area A of the farm to his 19-year-old son, Samuel, for \$200 in 1831. The eastern edge of that land (about 7 ½ acres) contains part of what is known today as Tenhave Woods.

In 1833, Samuel traveled to Lyons, New York, to marry **Lucy Olive Rouse** (b. June 26, 1814). Her parents were Abraham and Lydia (Wright) Rouse, an original Pennsylvania German family. They immigrated to New York and lived in Lyons, New York (about 25 miles northeast of E. Bloomfield). Around 1830, Abraham moved to and owned land in the NW ¼ of Section 11 (Campbell and 13 Mile). That land was only two miles east of Samuel's farm.

In 1834, Samuel Goodwin purchased Areas C & D from James Johnson. Johnson purchased the land in 1831 from Thomas Flinn, who had originally purchased the land from the United States government in May of 1825. The western part of that land (approximately 15 acres) is now called Tenhave Woods. At this point, Samuel Goodwin now owns all of the property (approximately 22 acres) known today as Tenhave Woods.

Many times, the Nature Society would start a nature walk with the statement “welcome to the Sam Goodwin farm”. Sam cleared the land until he reached the swamp forest on the west edge of Tenhave Woods and stopped; you cannot plow a swamp and he would need a woodlot anyway. We know that James Johnson built a water powered sawmill in 1832 adjacent to this woodlot and we are sure Sam cut trees and dragged them through the woods to Johnson’s sawmill to be cut into lumber for his farm. We know that the land was never clear cut as the diversity of woodland plants would not be here today if he had.

Between 1834 and 1850, Samuel and Lucy had six children. Besides Volney, who would eventually take over the ownership of the Goodwin farm, there was a son who died as an infant and four girls who would eventually marry and leave the farm.

Samuel was commissioned in 1835 (age 23) by Stevens T. Mason, acting Governor of Michigan Territory, as a 1st Lieutenant in the Michigan Militia. In 1837, the brigade he was in was stationed along the Maumee River during the Toledo War of 1837 until the dispute was settled. Samuel won a premium for his butter at the first fair of the Michigan State Agricultural Society in 1849.

Samuel B. Goodwin died on December 13, 1878. Samuel is buried alongside his wife, Lucy Olive, in Royal Oak Cemetery. She died on June 22, 1881.

The children of Samuel Blois Goodwin & Lucy Olive (Rouse) Goodwin were:

- **Lucy Ann** was born January 11, 1834. She married **Ramsdell Valentine** in 1856. After 1865, Ramsdell was a farmer from Fentonville, Michigan. Their children were Eva Jane Valentine (b. 1857 & was married to William A. Wadley); Charles Goodwin Valentine (b.1859 & was married to Keren H. Hilbert)
- **Lydia Jane** was born April 17, 1835, and died July 13, 1874). She married **John D. Wait**. Their children were Mary Jane Wait (b.1863); William Wait (b.1864); John Wait (b.1866); James Llewellyn Wait (b.1868-d.1868); Orrin L. Wait (born 1869), Effie Wait (b.1872); Charles Wait (b.1874)
- **Andrew Van Tile** was born August 12, 1836, and died November 18, 1836. Andrew is buried in Royal Oak Cemetery.
- **Harriet Celestia** was born May 25, 1839, and died June 14, 1899. Harriet is buried in Royal Oak Cemetery along with her husband. She was still living on the Goodwin farm in 1860. She married **Archibald Crumbie** in 1861. In 1870, they lived in Bloomfield Twp. where Archibald was a farm laborer. In 1880, they lived in Romulus where Archibald was a carpenter. Their children were Elmer Ellsworth Crumbie (b.1864-d.1886); Effie Ellen Crumbie (b. 1866 & was married to Ernest L. Martin); Ida Udella Crumbie (b.1868); David Burt Crumbie (b.1873)
- **Samuel Volney** was born in 1843. See page 8 for more information about him.
- **Olive Rosetta** was born July 3, 1850, and died sometime between 1910 and 1920. She married **Elisha Williams Ames** (b.1844) in 1868. They resided in Newbury Twp in Wabaunsee County, Kansas in 1870, where Elisha was a farmer. They continued to reside in Wabaunsee County through 1910. Their children were Cecila (b.1872 & d.1962 and was a teacher); Walter (b.1875); Lillie (b.1878; Howard (b.1886)

SETH GOODWIN

Seth Goodwin was born on June 27, 1819, in East Bloomfield, New York. He was the son of Cromwell Goodwin and Irene (Thompson) Goodwin.

In 1835, Cromwell sells to his youngest son, Seth (only 16 years old), the south half of the farm (Area B) and the five acres on the southeast corner of Crooks and 13 Mile Rd (Area E) that Cromwell purchased in 1830. Cromwell was quoted saying “The above described pieces of land are here by conveyed to the above, Seth Goodwin, as well for the love that I bear to him as my son as for the above consideration, or any other consideration that there could or might be made by him or any other person”. The line between Samuel and Seth’s farms can still be seen as a row of oak trees running just north of Lexington from Marais Street to just past the front side of the High School. See page 11 for a map showing that line of trees.

The land in SW 1/4 of section 4 now seems to be a total of 162 acres (Samuel’s 82 and Seth’s 80) whereas above you will notice Cromwell bought 160 acres from the US government. When the land was surveyed, markers called monuments were placed at the corners. In the 1800’s there would have been wooden stakes. The land ends up being described to these monuments. The north boundary of Cromwell’s land should have been an east west line at the half section point which would have been one half mile north of 13 Mile Road. The northwest corner is correct, but the northeast corner is north of where it should be.

This is most likely where the additional two acres came from. This is why today the boundary between Royal Oak and Clawson does not run down Normandy.

In 1837, Seth purchased 15 acres of land (Area F). It was quite probable that Seth was going to use this land as part of his woodlot. This land today is part of Starr JC Park. Seth married **Polly Minerva Haight** (b.1817 in Cohocton, New York) in 1842.

The children of Seth Godwin & Polly Haight were:

- **Sarah Amy Goodwin** was born August 16, 1844, and married Holden White
- **Cynthia Minerva Goodwin** was born June 28, 1850, and married Augustus W. Slayton
- **Celia Goodwin** was born May 8, 1853, and married Charles L. Train.

In December 1853, Samuel B. Goodwin sells land (Area D) to Seth. In August 1857, Seth and Polly sold land (Areas B, E & F) to William White for \$5,000. That same year, Seth and Polly moved to Detroit. Polly passed away on January 16, 1860. In February 1860, Seth sells land (Area D) to J. Todd. Seth married **Maria Melissa Smith** (b.1839) in 1864. They had one child, **Carrie Louise Goodwin** (b. November 18, 1869). The 1870 and 1880 Federal Census shows Seth living in Detroit's Ward #5. Seth died on October 31, 1900. Seth is buried alongside his first wife, Polly, in Royal Oak Cemetery.

VOLNEY GOODWIN

Volney Goodwin was born on July 26, 1843, in Royal Oak Township, Michigan. He was the son of Samuel Blois Goodwin and Lucy Olive (Rouse) Goodwin.

In 1864, 21-year-old Volney, Samuel B. Goodwin's son, purchased the south 40 acres of Area A and the south 10 acres of Area C of his father's land for \$1,500. In 1873, Volney purchased the remainder of his father's land for \$1,500. Volney remained on the farm during the Civil War because of a hernia caused by a plowing accident. Samuel Volney Goodwin married **Ann Rachel Nicholson** in 1870. Ann (b. May 10, 1849) was born in South Sandwich Twp, Essex Co. Ontario, Canada. Her parents were Robert and Ann (Pickering) Nicholson and they immigrated to the United States from England in 1830. Volney and Ann had five children from 1871 to 1894. There were 11 years between the birth of their 1st and 2nd child.

Two remained in the local area and the other three eventually moved away from Detroit. **Their children were John Wesley, Levi Pickering, Ann Elizabeth, Fredrick Volney and Frank Nicholson Goodwin.** See [link](#) for information about Volney and Ann Rachel's children. Volney and Ann moved the family from the farm to Birmingham, Michigan in 1888 to provide better educational privileges for their children. The farm was rented until 1902, the year Volney died. In Birmingham, they lived at the southeast corner of Chester and Willits St. When Wesley, their eldest child, died in 1905, Ann had the house Wesley was building (on Willits St., west of Chester), completed. Afterwards, she moved into it and stayed there for the remainder of her years.



Volney Wedding Photo



Ann Rachel Wedding Photo



Samuel Volney & Ann Rachel Goodwin



Volney



Ann Rachel

In 1904 after Samuel Volney's death, his widow, Ann, along with minor and adult children, now living in Birmingham, sold the 100 acres (Areas A & C) to Edgar Freer. A description is given as to the state of the property in a court petition drawn up in April 1904 by Annie E. and Fredrick V. Goodwin for infants (minor children) to sell real estate. "That said premises are run down and buildings and fences have become dilapidated and out of repair and there is no money in the hands of the estate to improve the same or repair them." Thus, this ends Goodwin's three generations (1824 to 1904) as Royal Oak family landowners. Volney died on December 30, 1902. Volney is buried alongside his wife, Ann, in Royal Oak Cemetery. She died on February 18, 1917.

See [link](#) for survey maps that include SW ¼ of Section 4 (Goodwin land) for the years 1856, 1872, 1890, 1916 and 1921 to see how land ownership of the Goodwin farm changed over the years.

Many of the Goodwin's who lived in the SW ¼ of Section 4 are buried in Royal Oak Cemetery. See [link](#) for the location of their graves.

The Nature Society believes that they have discovered something special. By 1828 a significant part of Royal Oak Township had been purchased. By 1857 only six of these families still owned land here. By 1872 only four of these families did and by 1890 only the Goodwin's family still owned their land. Of the historical Royal Oak families, most are people that did notable things in our community. They were in politics, started business or helped develop the city as it grew. Aside from the road building "bee", we can't find any major contribution from the Goodwins. Yet, what we feel is important about the Goodwin's is they stayed on the land purchased from the United States for three generations, longer than any other pioneer family. We believe they need to take their place in the history of Royal Oak as one of our important pioneer families.

Aerial View Of Where The Cromwell Goodwin Farm (1825) Once Was



Cromwell Goodwin's 160-acre farm is lined in orange. Tenhave Woods is lined in red. Samuel Goodwin purchased some land to the east Cromwell's land in 1834, some of which included the eastern half of Tenhave.



The Goodwin's farmhouse photo was taken around 1888. We believe from left to right, Ann Nicholson, Ann R., Levi sitting down in chair, John Wesley standing behind Levi and Volney on his horse.



Above two photos are of the Goodwin's farmhouse sometime after they had moved off of the farm.

OWNERSHIP AFTER THE GOODWINS

In 1905, Edgar Freer sold the 100 acres to Emma Robbins and in 1908 she sold it to Joseph Folta, a city of Detroit catholic priest. The land that Seth Goodwin sold to Edgar White after two generations in his family was sold to Helen Balicki in 1909. Helen then sold this land to Joseph Folta in 1912. Now Joseph Folta owns all the land Cromwell purchased from the government (Areas A & B), the 18 acres Samuel B. Goodwin purchased from James Johnson (Area C), the five acres in the southeast corner of section 5 (Area E), and the 15 acres in the northwest corner of section 9 (Area F). As an interesting historical note, Folta in 1919 took out a mortgage from John Dodge, who was one of the Dodge brothers that founded the Dodge Motor Company. Folta paid it off to his widow, Matilda Dodge, later of Meadow Brook Manor fame. Folta sold all of this land to Robert Adix in December 1916. In 1917, Robert Adix sold interests in the property to three other members of his family as well as small interests in the land to 13 other people. Folta took Robert Adix and the others to court in 1920, as he had not received payment for the land. The court ruled in Folta's favor and had the land returned to him. In 1920, the Charter Oak Articles of Association was filed by Joseph Folta and others for the purpose of holding, buying, selling, improving, mortgaging, lending, renting and dealing in real estate. Charter Oaks plated Arlington Heights Subdivision in 1923. In 1924, Folta transferred ownership of the lands he owned to the Charter Oak Corporation except for the five acres on the southeast corner of Section 5 (Area E). It seems that Joseph Folta retained the five acres in section 5 for his own use. Royal Oak Twigs and Acorns has a reprint of a 1924 Tribune article by Clara Erb Kidder on Royal Oak history. In the article she states that Cromwell built his home in section 5 on a site now occupied by father Folta. Sometime between the 1924 and 1940, Charter Oak lost their land to the state for taxes as we have records of this land being transferred from the State Tax Office Board to the City of Royal Oak in 1941, with a few remaining lots coming back to the city by 1947. This was done for a lack of bidders at public auction and the City needing it for public purposes and not for land sale.

The developing auto industry was drawing people from across the country to fill their factories. Joseph Folta and Charter Oak saw the need and opportunity. All of SW ¼ of Section 4 (Areas A, B & C) could have been 50-foot lots with houses and streets. It didn't happen. The Great Depression stopped the population growth and Charter Oak land was lost to the State of Michigan. During World War II, the land was transferred from the State to the City of Royal Oak. With the end of the war and the baby boom, the City needed another high school and more parks. This chain of events limited the number of buildings placed upon this land and gave us a gift we have all failed to see before.

If you stand on Crooks Road just north of the High School, you can easily visualize the Goodwin's farm. Nowhere else in the city is it possible to still imagine seeing a farm from the 1800's. Take a walk in Tenhave Woods, an original settler's woodlot, and see what the land looked like when those settlers arrived. If you know what to look for, this is a window that you can look into to see the past.

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