

Teaching Royal Oak History in Second Grade

by Royal Oak Historical Commission Chair Karen Crawford

For the last couple of years, the Royal Oak Historical Commission has been discussing the idea of helping Royal Oak's teachers in the actual teaching of our history. It turns out this topic is now designated by the state as something to be taught in the 2nd grade. So, we wondered how much the kids actually learned and how much was retained. We wondered about resources available to the teachers and, for those who did not actually grow up here and who had not learned this themselves at a young age, just what, if anything of a specific nature was actually discussed in class?

We had lots of questions. It took us a while to get the answers that we needed and to figure out what to do about all of it- and how to do it!

These past few months, we have been working with the Royal Oak Public Schools' second grade teachers as well as with Mike Byrnes, a gifted Royal Oak artist. What we have come up with is a series of lessons that the teachers can refer to for all kinds of background information- all of it related to Royal Oak's history in some way. And for the kids, Mike is producing a coloring book with pages geared to reflect the topics of the lessons that the teachers will be teaching. The idea is that coloring the page will reinforce the material that has been shared with the student.

It is our hope that in the years to come, our students will retain even more of our rich history than before. And, hopefully, that will be due to the extra information at the teacher's disposal and the coloring book that they colored.

This material should be in the classrooms this fall.

The Orson Starr House Guild cares for the Michigan Farmhouse circa 1845 at 3123 N. Main Street , Royal Oak , one block south of 13 Mile Road . Additional parking one block south at Salvation Army Citadel. Info: 248-541-6141. Open House second Sundays monthly, 1-4 p.m.