



photo courtory WEST BLOOMFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The signing of Keego Harbor's first city charter took place on Feb. 22, 1955, in the library of the old Keego school building. Officials at this event included: Charles Lesf (left and standing), Estes Orbond, Jack Loveland, Ed Corey and Fire Chief Ben Moses. Front row included: Lila Rose (left), Raiph Opel and Wilmer Nebb.

## historic highlights

The following historic highlights were compiled by Lillian Sue Warner of the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society, serving the township and the tri-cities of Orchard Lake, Keego Harbor and Sylvana Lake.

- Township of West Bloomfield was created by act of legislative council on April 22, 1833, four years before Michigan was admitted to the Union.
- First school already was in existence in 1833 and was a log cabin between Pine Lake and Walnut Lake. The second school was erected in the Scotch settlement between Orchard Lake and Green Lake. Present Scotch Elementary School, built in 1926, is near the original site. The third school to serve the community was near Walnut Lake and was succeeded by a frame structure, built around 1885, and is used as a business lodgy.
- Straits Lake post office opened in 1836.
- Orchard Lake post office opened in 1872.
- Gen. Joseph Copeland built "his castle" on the east shore of Orchard Lake in 1872. It was later enlarged to become the Orchard Lake Hotel, a venture which falled five years later. In 1877, the building respende as the Orchard Lake Military Academy, known as the "West Point of the West" and closed in 1999 because of financial difficulties. At that time, it became the residence of the tector whon the S.S. Cyril and Methodius Sominary moved from Delroit to its new location on the shores of Orchard Lake. It is now known as the Orchard Lake Schools, S.S. Cyril and Methodius Sominary, and St. Mary's College and Preparatory School.
- The cornections for the Orchard Lake Community Church was laid in 1871 and the building was completed in 1874. It is now known as the Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbytorian.
- Is now known as the Orchard Lake Community Church, Presbyterian.

  The first peach orchards in the township were planted in the 1890s, but many were wiped out by blight shortly after the turn of the century.

- The turn of the century also brought the motor car and the Detroit United Railway, an electric street car service, that had a profound effect on rural West Bloomfeld opening the area to an increasing number of weekenders from Detroit and Pontiac. The trolley also was used by Pontiac merchants, who commuted each day on the car known as the "businessmen's special" and noted for its speed.
- Our Lady of Refuge Parish founded in 1909.
- Poine Lake Country Club "for men" was formed in 1911 with most members being auto executives.
- Popular Strong's Pavilion was built on the shores of Dollar Lake in Keego Harbor in 1911 and was first used as a dance hail and boat livery and later as a roller rink (now a boat storage).
- On June 24, 1908, West Bloomfield voted to become a franchised territory served by Detroit Edison Co. The franchise specified that "said current shall not be used in such manner as to cause wanton waste of light."
- Countryside improvement Association of Orchard Lake and Pine Lake, now of West Bloomfield Township, was formed in 1911 "to protect the environment from the dangers of the automobile." The organization still is active in 1983 as a philanthropic group.
- In September 1919, Orchard Lake Road was paved from Pontiac all the way to the city of Orchard Lake, past the old toligate site (Orchard Lake Road and Pontiac Trail) and for some distance down the road toward Farmington.
- First woman elected to public office in West Bloomfield was Laura Harger in 1919. She was elected clerk by male voters because women did not get the right to vote until 1920.
- in 1915, the Covert Road Act, a tax to maintain roads, was passed and was unpopular with the West Bloomfield farmers who felt that it would benefit Detroit

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