ROSEVILLE, MICHIGAN: A HISTORY

Located in the Southeastern part of Macomb County, Roseville, Michigan started out as a small farming community. When Michigan became a state in 1837, the community became part of Orange Township. Because of strong Irish sentiment, the township's name was changed to Erin in 1843. John Cottrell was elected the first township supervisor.

In 1836, William Rose was appointed the area's first postmaster. The permanent office, established in 1840, was called the Roseville Post Office after William's father Denison Rose, a hero of the war of 1812. In 1875, Roseville P.O. became the unincorporated Village of Roseville.

In 1846, a wood plank toll road (Gratiot Avenue/M-3) was constructed through the community, connecting it with Detroit and Mt. Clemens. One of the toll gates was located at Gratiot Avenue and Utica Road. In 1895, the Rapid Railway Company started operating an Interurban electric railcar between Detroit and Mt. Clemens. Its first carbarn and powerhouse were in Roseville, North of Eleven Mile Rd., with the tracks running adjacent to the Gratiot Plank Road. Tolls were collected on the toll road until 1903. The toll gate sign giving the "Rates of Toll" is at the Library. The Interurban remained in use until January 1930.

During this period, three of Roseville's longest standing churches were established. St. Mark's Lutheran Church (originally called German Evangelical Lutheran St. Peter's Congregation) in 1853, Erin Presbyterian Church in 1860 and Sacred Heart Catholic Church in 1861. Of these churches, only St. Mark's Lutheran Church is still standing and operational. Both Erin Presbyterian and Sacred Heart closed their doors in 2017. Erin Presbyterian was sold the same year and demolished in 2020. After many years of deterioration, Sacred Heart was finally sold by the Archdiocese of Detroit in 2025. The church property, in addition to the adjoining property of Apple Annie's Kitchen & Bakery, were sold to Sheetz, a 24/7 Pennsylvania-chain convenience store & gas station. Demolition & the construction is slated to begin in 2026.

In 1852, the first public school was built on Eleven Mile Road near Gratiot Avenue where Burton Junior High School used to be. In 1973, there were 23 public schools in Roseville. For the school year 1994-95, there were ten elementary schools and three secondary schools, with an estimated student population of 6,311. As of the 2025-26 school year, Roseville Community Schools consists of 7 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and 1 high school, with an enrollment of 4,234 students.

In 1886, Erin Township Hall was built at the corner of Gratiot Avenue and Eleven Mile Road. At one time, this building was the Town Hall for the current cities of Eastpointe, Roseville, St. Clair Shores, and a part of Fraser. The Town Hall was torn down when I-696 was built in the 1970's. In 1910, Lake Township (most of which is now St. Clair Shores) was organized. In

1929, East Detroit (now Eastpointe) became a city. When Fraser was incorporated as a city in 1956, followed by Roseville in 1958, Erin Township came to an end. Frank Biehl was the last township supervisor.

In 1926, Roseville was incorporated as a village with John Asmus being elected its first President. When the old Roseville Municipal Building was constructed in 1929 at Gratiot and Meier Road, both the village and township offices were moved into it. It also housed the first public library. In 1958, the village became a city and Arthur Waterman was elected the first mayor. The present City Complex at 29777 Gratiot Avenue was built in 1974.

Until 1950, Roseville was considered a small suburb of Detroit. In the 1950's, Roseville had a population explosion with thousands of people moving to the area. Along with this sudden population change, hundreds of homes were built in the community, four major shopping centers were erected along Gratiot Avenue and many small industrial plants were constructed on the West side of the city. Major highways in Roseville include the I-94 and I-696 expressways, M-3 (Gratiot), and M-97 (Groesbeck).

Population Statistics:

Erin Township		Village/City of Roseville	
1850	974	1940	9,023
1860	1,975	1950	15,816
1870	2,466	1960	50,195
1880	2,692	1970	60,529
1890	2,449	1980	54,311
1900	2,440	1990	51,412
1910	2,225	2000	48,129
1920	2,791	2010	47,299
1930	6,836	2020	47,018

Village Presidents:

John A. Asmus, Louis E. Sandhoff, John M. Lindroth, Orville Dennis, Harry R. McReavy, Earl H. Fessenden, William Harper, Frank Biehl, Roy Diesing, Glen Alsip, and Arthur S. C. Waterman.

City Mayors:

Arthur S. C. Waterman (1959-63, 1965-67), Richard E. Drager (1963-65), William P. McDonald (1967-71), John Perry (1971-73), Lester J. DeClerk (1973-75), Leonard Haggarty (1975-81), Jeanne A. Riesterer (1981-93), Gerald Alsip (1993-2005), Harold Haugh (2005-08), John Chirkun (2009-14), Robert Taylor (2015-present).

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