

IN OAKLAND

GOP Roots Deep

The independent spirit of the frontier found expression in the Republican movement which appropriately was born in Michigan, a part of the Northwest Territory, whose famous ordinance of 1787 formed the legal basis of protest against the extension of slavery.

As early as April 15, 1854, Z. B. Knight editorialized in the Pontiac Gazette for independent individual nominations in Michigan without any bias or pressure placed on the people. "This is the true Republican way of doing business."

Already the name "Republican" in a political sense was in the air. Organizational meetings were held in a school house at Ripon, Wis., out of which came the first Republican Convention "under the Oaks" in Jackson, July 6, 1854.

ONE OF the principal speakers at the convention was the Rev. Mr. Cook of Oakland. Appointed to the first nominating committee among others were Moses Wisner, Nathan Power and Edward Simmons.

The Oakland Resolutions Committee members were Z. B. Knight and Charles Draper.

In the fall of 1856, Republicans lost ground in the county in spite of the election to governor of Moses Wisner.

The spring elections of 1859 again saw the Republicans gain ground in the state and in the county and on March 12, 1860, Governor Wisner addressed the Republican County Convention in Pontiac.

This convention adopted 17 resolutions against slavery and the Democrat Party and its principles, as well as against President Buchanan's administration.

AT THIS time a Republican Club was organized in Farmington to enhance the active party movement in Oakland. The Republican 4th Congressional District Convention was held on June 5, 1860, in

Flint and elected Rowland E. Trowbridge of Oakland unanimously as candidate for representative in Congress.

On July 22, 1860, in Birmingham, between 200 and 300 Republicans met at their wigwag and listened to a warmly received speech from the Hon. Dewitt C. Leach, the member of Congress from that district. Oakland was represented at the National Convention of 1860 in Chicago by D. C. Buckland of Pontiac.

REPUBLICANS won majorities in the November election and despite Pontiac's remaining Democratic the rest of the state ticket was elected by the largest majority ever given in Michigan to that time.

The Oakland County Lincoln Republican Club was first organized following a county caucus on Feb. 11, 1888, in the Oddfellows Hall, Pontiac, and was known as the "Michigan Club." One year later this was changed to the present name, and the club installed as its first president Charles F. Kimball.

SEVERAL prominent Republicans from Oakland attended the fiftieth anniversary of the party, including Fred M. Warner of Farmington, then Michigan secretary of state and later to become the second governor of Michigan to be from Oakland.

Campaigning and fund-raising was done on an individual basis and enthusiasm for any one candidate was more or less spontaneous. Around 1929, the Republican Party in Oakland was a small operation centered around the courthouse in Pontiac.

IN 1932 women in the county began to have a greater voice. The first Republican Women's Club in the county was organized by Mrs. B. E. Norton of Rochester.

The beginning of something new

implies: the ending of something old, and the transition between the two is usually dictated by need. In the case of the Republican Party of Oakland County, the need was clearly revealed in post-World War II voting statistics.

Historically a "safe" Republican county of tree-shaded suburban lanes and unhurried farm towns, Oakland County, about 1946, began to experience economic and sociological changes. An expanding Detroit population stirred restlessly and pushed inexorably into Oakland.

New cities sprang up, while old ones doubled and tripled their populations. Commercial and industrial development soared. Farmland disappeared before neat rows of split-levels and ranch houses.

PROGRESS, of course, is not without its price. And politically the cost was dear. A new population brought with it new social patterns, new political identifications. Republican dominance of the county began to wane.

While in 1946 the GOP was still taking a comfortable 65.4 per cent of the total county vote, by 1950 the margin had slipped to 51.4 per cent, by 1956 it was down to 50.6 per cent.

The demands of change called into existence a Republican organization that reflected the new Oakland County—vigorous, young, confident.

As the center of population shifted southward, the first permanent headquarters, then located in the Pontiac State Bank Building, was moved to 351 N. Woodward in Birmingham in September, 1957. The county GOP set out to organize the county—to find and identify all the GOP voters, get them registered and get them out to vote.

IN 1960, the county party, under the leadership of Arthur G. Elliott, Jr. (now chairman of the El-



THE OAKLAND County Republican party is guided in 1964 by (from left) Helen Hendershott, Marg Beattie, Charles L. Lyle and Jack I. Slater, Jr. The county's first GOP club was organized in Farmington in the spring of 1860.

public State Central Committee), undertook to recruit and train some 5,000 precinct workers.

To augment this working force, the formulation of more Republican Women's Clubs, more mixed groups, more Young Republican people, and more informal campaign kaffee klatches and discussion sessions designed to stimulate grass roots political action were encouraged.

The Federation of Woman's Clubs was reorganized under Mrs. George S. Hodges and became known as the Oakland County Council of Republican Women's Clubs. They have provided thousands of volunteer hours in fund-raising, the staffing of the Republican headquarters, hostessing "can-

didate coffees" and other activities.

THE CURRENT president is Mrs. Joseph R. Hainline of Birmingham. Over 4,000 women from throughout the county attended a tea given by Mrs. Richard Nixon at Kimball High School in Royal Oak in 1960.

In April, 1961, the headquarters was moved to its present location, 744 S. Adams, Birmingham, and the responsibility for bolstering the organizational structure passed to the present county chairman, Charles L. Lyle of Birmingham.

In 1962 the percentage of Republican votes climbed to 56.1 per cent and Oakland County had its third Republican governor in the election of George Romney.

American Legion Dates Back to WWI

"For God and Country" sums up the belief upheld for 45 years by the Charles Edwards Post of the Birmingham-Troy American Legion.

The local post was chartered on July 5, 1919, taking their name

from Charles Edwards, the first Birmingham soldier killed in World War I. The chapter, which now numbers 200, began with 21 charter members.

Activities in the 1920's centered on helping former servicemen fill

out the necessary papers relative to their associations in the army and welfare work in the city. In 1928 the post was awarded a gavel set as the outstanding post in the sixth district and was considered one of the outstanding groups in

the state.

THE THIRTIES began with a membership of 71. Although activities were curtailed due to the depression, the practice of soldier grave-marking and morning services on Memorial Day began.

About this time the post acquired what it thought would be its permanent home on S. Woodward Ave. The building was sold in 1960, and the legion set up new headquarters in Troy on Crooks and Maple road in 1962. The junior baseball league, still going strong today for boys age 16 to 19, was also started then.

1940 began with bequests, including a flag pole to the school board and a flag to the YMCA Camp. Other donations were booklets on flag etiquette; funds and sponsorship of Boys' State, a youth convention held annually in Lansing; gifts for wounded veterans; and funds for a softball team.

The war years saw Birmingham legionnaires playing host to numerous servicemen stationed in the vicinity.

In 1954 the post donated an electric scoreboard to Seahelm High School and outfitted a new room in a Battle Creek hospital. Since then, the group has also organized a unit of the Sons of the American Legion and a trapshooting club.

THE CURRENT POST is under the direction of Commander William Kampher, Senior Vice Commander Edward Gline, Junior Vice Commander Alton Jones and Adjutant Jon Capron.

Some of the long-time members of the post include Dr. Peter Aristos, Dr. George Reynolds, Carl Ely, Dick Dewey, Russell Fisher and Heilmer Leaf.

An annual fund-raising event, which has become the mainstay of the legionnaires in Birmingham and throughout the United States, is their poppy sale in May, which benefits veterans and their families.

FIRST FORMAL meeting of the American Legion Ladies' Auxiliary was called by Major H. A. O'Dell, post commander, on Feb. 28, 1922. Charter members numbered 18.

Membership has risen to 85 and includes mothers, wives, daughters and sisters of deceased veterans or members of the American Legion as well as women who have served in the armed services.

Projects include the rehabilitation of disabled veterans and gifts and services for hospitalized veterans. Programs of the auxiliary include community service, national security and legislation, with activities in music, radio and international study.

The Girls' State program, similar to the legion's Boys' State, provides instruction in vocational guidance and the fundamentals of government.

Current officers include Mrs. Jon Capron, president; Mrs. Myron Collins, 1st vice president; Mrs. Roy Webb, 2nd vice president; Mrs. Charles Larson, treasurer; Mrs. Hugh McHugh, secretary; Mrs. Marian Bibby, historian; Mrs. James Dutton, chaplain; and Mrs. James Casey, sergeant-at-arms.



LEGIONNAIRES MARCH IN THE 1956 'GET OUT THE VOTE' PARADE
The Charles Edwards Post led Birmingham in a colorful display of patriotism.