



# *Parks Old Style Bar-B-Q*

IN DETROIT'S NORTH  
END, RODERICK PARKS'  
MULTI-GENERATIONAL  
BARBEQUE STAYS TRUE  
TO FAMILY AND  
TRADITION

---

Photos and Story by Phil Eich,  
Storyville Social, as part of the  
Michigan Main Street Story  
Series

At Parks Old Style Bar-B-Q, we cook the traditional way, the same you would at home, with wood and charcoal. There's no gas in this joint, save for the fryers and heating. We've been doing this a long time.

To make good barbecue, you have to have a passion for what you're doing. We have a very limited menu. We only sell three things, really: barbecue beef, barbecue pork, and barbecue chicken. Plus, we have five or six sides and four or five desserts. We tell people all the time, 'We are not a soul food restaurant; we're a barbecue joint. No more, no less.'

We keep the menu simple because I can teach somebody to be a good griller in a matter of weeks. But if we had a large menu—you've been to

restaurants with a four- or five-page menus—it becomes confusing....and expensive!

This business goes back a long, long ways. We've been here since 1964. Before that, we were Young's Barbecue, and through the years, the business moved around and grew. Now, we've outgrown this space, but we plan to modernize the building.

I'm second-generation and semi-retired. My last day at the helm, good Lord willing, will be March 21, 2024, which is my 80th birthday. Then the third generation can decide what they want to do. I told the youngsters, who are in their 40s and 50s, I will give them this place the same way I got it from my parents, if they want it. My mother and father gave me and my brother, who is

now deceased, the business. When they were through, they gave us everything in the building and all the money in the bank accounts, they retained ownership of the building and fixtures, and we paid rent until my wife and I eventually bought the building. So if the next generation is interested, I'll do the same.

I love Detroit, and I'm proud that we're still here. After the first or maybe the second generation, many businesses simply die, but we're still here.

- Roderick Parks, Parks Old Style Bar-B-Q





# Michigan Main Street Story Series



**MICHIGAN ECONOMIC**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION