

1923, Detroit, Michigan. Ty Cobb was playing for the Detroit Tigers. Ernie Harwell hadn't started grammar school.



There were no Lions, no Red Wings, no Pistons. The other pro sports team in town was the Detroit Stars of the National Negro Baseball League. The Tigers played baseball in a place called Bennett Park. No luxury boxes, no giant instant replay screens.

In 1923, there were no iPods, no computers, and no copy or fax machines. Copies of documents were made with carbon paper. Typists couldn't make mistakes. Documents were all delivered by US mail, or by personal courier.

There was no television. There were only two radio stations in town, both AM, there was no FM. Movies wouldn't talk for another four years. No cell phones, either. Those were the days.

Venerable old Detroit buildings like the Guardian Building, the Fisher Building and the Penobscot Building had yet to be built. There was no bridge to Belle Isle in 1923, the old wooden bridge having burnt down. The first Hudson's Thanksgiving Day Parade would not make its way down Woodward Avenue until the next year.

Detroit was a boom town in the Twenties, with building going on all over. Detroit was already the world's automotive capital, but the automobile was still something new on the city scene. The first traffic light was not patented until 1923, by Garrett Augustus Morgan, the son of slaves.

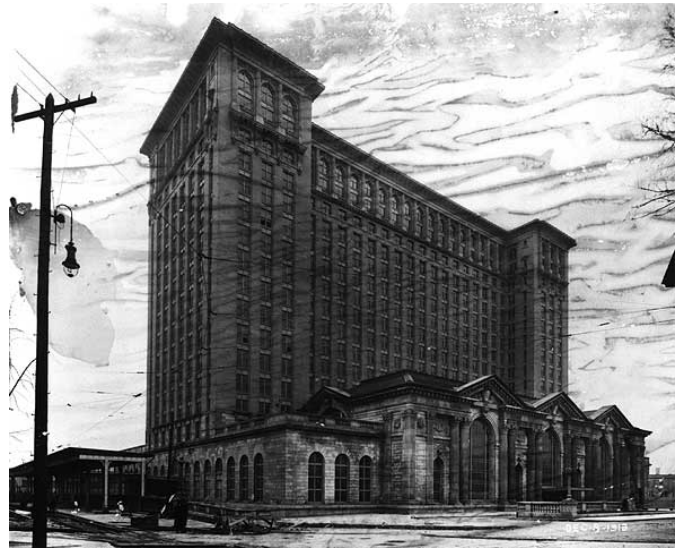


At the start of 1923, Warren Harding was President of the U.S. Alexander Groesbeck was Governor of the State of Michigan. And John C. Lodge was Mayor of the City of Detroit. There was no Lodge Freeway then. There were no freeways at all, anywhere



World War I had ended five years before and US involvement in World War II was still eighteen years away. There were still Civil War Veterans living in the city, and would be for several years thereafter. The GAR Building, built for veterans to conduct their meetings, was still in business at 1942 Grand River.

The hub of transportation in Detroit was the Michigan Central Train Depot, which had opened in 1913. As the US has moved beyond reliance on passenger rail traffic, the building has now been empty for decades, and has become a national poster child for urban decay. It is shown here before its 1913 opening. Passenger air travel was still by zeppelin.



In 1923, all citizens of the United States were living through the failed national experiment known as Prohibition. All the fashionable and not so fashionable bars and restaurants were restricted to serving tea, coffee and soda water (allegedly). The Detroit River was a major destination for “Rum Runners”, smuggling in illegal liquor from Canada.

The families of many people, who consider themselves long time residents of the Detroit area, still lived in Europe or the American South in the Twenties.

The physical and social landscape of Detroit changed almost completely since 1923. In addition, the way we live our lives is so fundamentally different now, that our ancestors from the Detroit of 1923, might well think that we had come from another planet. Indeed, our current way of life is much closer to the future depicted in the Saturday matinee world of Flash Gordon and Buck Rogers, than that of the Roaring Twenties.

Into that Detroit of long ago, the Bernstein brothers decided to open a law practice. The firm was called Bernstein and Bernstein from the start, though at one time or another all four of the Bernstein brothers, Nathaniel, Jacob, Mandell and David, worked with the firm. Though Nathaniel moved his practice to the state of Indiana in the early Thirties, and Jacob died a very young man, in the early Forties, members of the Bernstein family have continued to be associated with the firm, in an unbroken line, for over 85 years, to the present day.

Bernstein and Bernstein has, from the first, built its reputation on dedicated, personal service to its clients, the average citizen of the Detroit area, whose lives had been disrupted by personal injury, whatever the cause. That tradition, as well, has continued to the present day. Through all the changes that the passing generations have brought to Detroiters, the dedication of Bernstein and Bernstein has remained constant. The need of the injured and helpless has continued as well, and the firm’s lawyers work tirelessly for justice for their clients.

Over the years, the firm's mission has taken its lawyers many places. Current partners recall going to Eloise Sanitarium, in western Wayne County, and wearing surgical masks while interviewing quarantined patients, foundry workers, victims of silico-tuberculosis, acquired during their employment.

The lawyers of Bernstein and Bernstein continue to offer personal service even in an era where many law firms judge their success by the size of their TV advertising budget. You won't see Bernstein and Bernstein lawyers on TV or on billboards, though we are often confused with particular firms that advertise to excess, confusing personal service



to clients, with slick marketing. Marketing is not the practice of law, and advertising concern for clients is not the same thing as proving passion for clients in the courtroom.

You won't see Bernstein and Bernstein during a commercial break on the Judge Judy show. We are where we always have been, in the courtroom, fighting for our clients, fighting for you. As we have since 1923. The slick advertisers can't make the same statement.

While much of the Detroit landscape has changed since the firm was founded in 1923, a few landmarks remain. In 1923, in addition to the founding of the firm, the First National Building opened on the corner of Woodward and Congress, where

it still stands. Bernstein and Bernstein was one of the buildings first tenants, and when it moved out (The firm's Detroit office is now located in the historic Buhl Building), it was the buildings longest continuous tenant. This symbolizes the firm's dedication to the area and its citizens.

The firm has expanded over the years, and now has offices in Southfield, Warren, Taylor and Flint, as well as Detroit, its commitment to the injured, and helpless is unchanged.

In an age where justice for the hurt and defenseless is under constant attack by moneyed interests and an often uncaring court system, Bernstein and Bernstein remains committed to its mission of helping those who cannot help themselves. It is a noble mission, and one that has not changed for 85 years.