

## Historical Marker - L2075 - Theodore H. Roethke Childhood Home / Theodore H. Roethke (Marker ID#:L2075)



### Front - Title/Description

#### ***Theodore H. Roethke Childhood Home***

Distinguished poet Theodore Roethke (1908-1963) was born in Saginaw and grew up in this house. The house was built around 1911 for his parents, Otto and Helen Roethke. Otto's brother Carl lived in the adjacent fieldstone house. Together the brothers managed the William Roethke Floral Company, founded in the 1880s by their father, Wilhelm Roethke, a Prussian immigrant. The company's extensive greenhouses once stood on the land behind these two houses. Theodore worked in the greenhouses with his father and his experiences inspired many of his poems. Roethke attended local schools and the University of Michigan, obtaining a masters degree in literature in 1936, and he taught at universities throughout the country.

#### **Significant Date:**

Industry and Invention (1875-1915)

**Registry Year:** 1999    **Erected Date:** 2000

### Marker Location

**Address:** 1805 Gratiot Ave

**City:** Saginaw

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:**

**County:** Saginaw

**Township:**

**Lat:** 43.41507800 / **Long:** -83.98756500

**Web URL:**

### Back - Title/Description

#### ***Theodore H. Roethke***

Theodore Roethke (1908-1963) wrote of his poetry: The greenhouse "is my symbol for the whole of life, a womb, a heaven-on-earth." Roethke drew inspiration from his childhood experiences of working in his family's Saginaw floral company. Beginning in 1941 with Open House, the distinguished poet and teacher published extensively, receiving a Pulitzer Prize for poetry and two National Book Awards among an array of honors. In 1959 Yale University awarded him the prestigious Bollingen Prize. Roethke taught at Michigan State College (present-day Michigan State University) and at colleges in Pennsylvania and Vermont before joining the faculty of the University of Washington at Seattle in 1947. Roethke died in Washington in 1963. His remains are interred in Saginaw's Oakwood Cemetery.