

BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

(Founded in 1878 by Whithead & Mitchell)
Published every Friday at Birmingham, Michigan, in The Eccentric Building, 128-128 North Woodward Avenue. Telephone 11 and 12.
GEORGE RODGERS AVERILL, Editor and Publisher

Subscriptions Rates:
One Year \$1.50
Six Months .75
Three Months .40
All newspapers find advertising "copy" must be in The Eccentric Office by Wednesday noon of each week.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1925

THE CHEAPNESS OF LIFE

"Thou shalt not kill"
Unless something unforeseen happens, this Commandment, taught in ALL of the churches of the world, is about to become a travesty in the city of Chicago. April 17 is the date set by a judge for the hanging of Russell T. Scott, convicted of slaying a fellow being; Scott will be remembered locally as the one who tried to form a corporation to build a \$30,000,000 bridge between Detroit and Windsor a few years ago.

You who read this go about your daily affairs with thoughts of a certain security in the fundamental workings of your government; you believe that, beneath all the sham and hypocrisy that crops up at intervals, there is a certain unwritten law of right and goodness that will attend your lives and keep you from evil. This feeling is partially correct, and may be substantiated with evidence of its existence—but there are exceptions.

You will remember a few months, back that two Chicago boys, sons of multi-millionaires, were tried for the slaying of a mere child. They confessed their guilt and, after hundreds of thousands of dollars were spent in their defense, both boys were sentenced to life imprisonment in the Illinois penitentiary, where they now remain—at least for a time.

It is true that Scott has been convicted—even though he affirms that his own brother did the slaying. A jury found him guilty; the judge sentenced him to hang!

What, actually, is the difference between the case of Scott and that of Loeb and Leopold? Nothing but money. Scott is penniless, unable to hire astute lawyers to place their own interpretations on the laws and inject their trained eloquence into the thought processes of twelve simple-minded jurors.

When the Loeb-Leopold sentence was made known, we praised the judge who would not allow the law to take the lives of the two youths; we said that we believed a new LIGHT had come into courts of justice which decreed that man had no right to legally end a life that he did not create—that such an act was rightfully the privilege of God alone.

Ah, but times change, folks—even in a few months. We are a funny people—we who inhabit this globe. We delve into ahundred new fancies and fables—superficial things—when we have yet to learn, (even by memory), the Ten Commandments.

Do you feel secure about your own affairs? Do you believe that absolute, inviolate fairness may be extended to you should you ever find yourself in the toils of the law? Then disillusion yourselves—unless you have a lot of money to hire mentalities to think for YOU.

Any lawyer or judge will concede the truth of this statement. Society, through its laws, still disobeys one of the Ten Commandments.

BILLY'S PANTS

Our wife went up-town the other day and purchased a pair of pants for five-year-old Billy. The pants weighed 12 ounces when they were draped about Billy's anatomy. Last night I undressed the youngster, and, as I dropped the said pants to the floor, the result almost knocked the plaster off the ceiling of the room below. I weighed the pants and they tipped the scales at three pounds. This is what I found in the pockets: nine buckeyes, six small pieces of hard coal, four handkerchiefs, a handful of assorted nails, three milk bottle caps, several yards of string, a piece of lead pencil, a tin whistle, two pennies, and some loose gravel. We put the stuff back into the pockets, firmly convinced that the manufacturer of boys pants need never be afraid of over-stocking the market.

GETTING THE STATE TO HELP

At last there seems to be a concentrated effort on the part of Birmingham's officials to determine the width of Woodward avenue through this village. Whether 150 feet is too wide, or not wide enough, is a matter still unsolved. The people are entitled to a voice in determining that.

Village President Shain and Commissioners Bingham and Bell are agreed, however, that the State of Michigan shall not skip lightly over Birmingham when it comes to fixing something to solve the problem of a 204-ft. highway between Detroit and Pontiac. When you realize that the State has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to obtain right-of-way outside of Birmingham—notably in Ferndale—you must commend Birmingham's officials for taking the stand they have in the matter.

Just how far our village will get in widening Woodward avenue, or in widening any other suitable thoroughfare for the 204-ft. highway, is still a mystery. But our local commissioners ought to have all the aid they can muster—so, folks, show your interest in your "home town" by making known your opinions on this most vital question.

REGARDING THAT GASOLINE TAX

The Constitution of the State of Michigan is about due for remodeling. Any statute that will allow a small fraction of the people to get together and enact laws without providing the possibility of referendum is manifestly undemocratic, and ought to be abolished. We refer specifically to the method pursued recently in placing a two-cent gasoline tax upon the people of Michigan. We are heartily in accord with the gasoline tax, and what it will accomplish for the motorist, as well as for the industrial prosperity of the Wolverine State. It is foolish to believe that new roads can be built, and old ones maintained, without the public paying for them. And the

gasoline tax should prove a practical solution for the problem.

Michigan, under the terms of our Federal Government, may pass, from time to time, any laws which are manifestly necessary to the welfare of the people who comprise it, providing it does not conflict with the Constitution of the United States. That is the reason we have a State Legislature. But it does not follow that the men and women we send to our Legislature will always do what we want them to do; there may arise times when they will want to do something that is obviously wrong, even unfair, and the rank and file of our citizens ought to have a right to say whether a certain piece of proposed legislation shall become a law.

We are in accord with the gasoline tax—but opposed to the method used to adopt it. As long as an "immediate effect" clause may be attached to a piece of legislation in Michigan, just that long is there a possibility of the comfort and well-being of our citizens being menaced.

WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

The recurrence of the birthday of the Father of our country succeeds each year in attracting a great amount of attention. The profound impression made by his very remarkable character is still very vivid.

There is a certain grandeur in the personality of this great patriot that rises above ordinary levels. It is claimed that Washington was not as politically skillful as other leaders of his time, men like Jefferson and Hamilton for instance. But he had characteristics that are almost unique.

One might speak long of his marvellous military skill and his superb courage and resolution. Another great characteristic was his extremely high and conscientious sense of duty.

It was significant of his heroic turn of mind that at the age of 13, when most youngsters of today think of kicking-up their heels and having a high old time, George was writing out a schedule of 110 maxims of civility and good behavior. All through his life he was ever following this star of ideal conduct.

This high sense of obligation led him to take a quite unique political position when he became president. Where the other great leaders divided into parties and were much influenced by the appeals of prejudice and passion, Washington never aligned himself with any political organization. That might not be considered a good method for our times, but he followed this course because he feared the results of the bitter conflict that was springing up among American statesmen. His broad and generous mind could see good in all parties. He strove to bring the conflicting factions together, and make each see the merit in the other point of view. We need more of Washington's conscience and breadth of view in our business and political conduct of today.

FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS of Long Ago

Just Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Made Up the Hilarious Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

43 Years Ago
Lots of rain, ice, and snow on last Tuesday.
We smell a wedding down in Southfield. Sent us some cake when it comes off. H. H. there will be trouble in District No. 3.

Grant Race returned to Lansing on Tuesday night, to attend his duties as messenger to the speaker of the House of Representatives during the extra session which convened on Wednesday last.

A large dancing party took place at Geo. Gorman's near Franklin last Monday evening. Excellent music was furnished by Messrs. McHenry and Gamm, and a number of our village folks attended.

John Heth runs a cutting box to cut corn stalks by power, and one day last week, something got loose, and we can just imagine John getting out right lively. Verdict: cutting box a total wreck.

Last week, Thursday, the bell in our high school fell from the belfry, a distance of about 20 feet, but fortunately no damage was done except knocking off a lot of plaster. Teachers and scholars were somewhat frightened.

Mrs. Gaylord Simpson had about \$30.00 stolen from her house on Tuesday last, by persons unknown. There are strong suspicions of certain parties, and hopes are entertained that the money will be recovered. We aren't at liberty to give more explicit details at present.

Cy Jarvis and P. H. Sherman last Sunday did, with malice aforethought, dig up the outside doors of Birmingham School Building, so that the snow swirling out in a great profusion. The building was in school in fitted according to all requirements of law.

A warrant was sworn out by J. J. Tompkins, before Justice Hedin, on Friday last week, for the arrest of Harrison Benedict for slandering the complainant. Benedict was asked to come and learn more of our village, and he refused to do so. He had ground for him recently.

Twenty young ladies and gentlemen helped Miss Carrie Mitchell celebrate her sixteenth birthday anniversary last Friday evening in a very appropriate manner. The party was a very quick and pleasantly. The young Miss received a number of pretty presents and guests from Detroit helped aid to the enjoyment.

Miss Mammie Jarvis did not occupy her accustomed place in the bank Monday and Tuesday, being detained by a sore throat. Her sister, Mrs. Baker, and Mrs. Chapman, of Chicago, are spending a few days in Detroit. Mrs. E. J. Fealy, of Detroit, is the mother of the former little school teacher, Miss Annie Baker, who taught here in '19.

Last Saturday, Mrs. Clara Allen reached her 75th birthday. The event was celebrated in a manner that the world could not soon forget. The memory of all participating parties in the afternoon, about 20 of Miss Allen's lady friends with a profusion

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of choice edibles, presented themselves at the good lady's home with the intention of staying in town. Everyone agreed that it was one of the merriest little parties on record.

The many friends of Rev. Francis Church, formerly pastor of the Baptist Church of Birmingham, will be glad to know that he is enjoying his vacation in Hyannis very much, and has the hearty support of his people and everything is in prosperous condition. His friends here have just been informed that a little son has recently been welcomed at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Church.

WE HEARD IT SAID BY

(Little Editorials picked up by the Staff in and around Birmingham.)

George H. Mitchell, an old-time resident now living on Brown street: "How times do change. And with the times the old habits add (reinstatement). Now here some one says to me along about dusk, 'I am going to drive over to Mr. Clemens and back.' It doesn't mean anything to me. But I can remember well, when we wanted to go over to Mr. Clemens, as we often had to do for a six weeks, we would start before daylight in the morning in order to arrive in time for dinner and get started home. These folks that drive their fancy automobiles over can't picture what a trip like that would be of mere means."

Lloyd L. Stanley, of Madison avenue: "It was with a feeling of satisfaction that I viewed the Sunday evening services in the Presbyterian church, a week ago when the service was dedicated to the boy scout week. About fifty boys assembled for the service, addition to the fifteen teen directors, and the attitude of the boys and their interest so great in the action that I felt repaid for all of the time that I spent in the service recently. It was the anniversary week of boy scout work in America and the week had been crowded with such events and had the boys failed to turn out strong for the Sunday service it would have been a great pity. In the fact that they did come proves that our energies in that direction have been well spent."

George Boutwell, of Lakeview avenue, believes the village makes a mistake in contemplating the purchase of land for municipal buildings from a job central location. Instead of considering the block where the old Town hall now stands, I think the four commission should get land on East or West-Maple avenue. It certainly will cost more, but it will be worth it, and we will be glad ourselves before many years have rolled by."

Luther D. Allen, county road commissioner, former supervisor of Birmingham, says: "The village is capable man for the job. I don't believe we are overlooking the township clerk's office appreciate his efforts to satisfy the public."

Dr. Hugo Erickson, of Harmon street: "The arguments presented by village matter in a recent issue of the Eccentric in favor of an elevated water storage tank, were very convincing. I have received the careful consideration of every thoughtful citizen. Especially would I commend them to read what he says in regard to the ever-present danger of fire and what the water tank would do to the township if the regular supply should fail us at a critical moment. I hope the plan will be adopted with an overwhelming vote on March 9."

Harry S. Starr, village manager: "There was a time in Birmingham when the duties of a village clerk were light and simple. A man with a little help, could handle the job. Those times have changed. The job has become a village clerk created diversified and complicated duties for the clerk, and any candidate for the position should be thoroughly familiar with modern office methods. I have dictated to my typewriter, and in the process of dictation, I have found that a village clerk, Mrs. Lawrie, is an indispensable village employee. She has been on the job four years and knows her duties very well."

Rev. T. J. Edwards, of West Maple road: "As far as I'm concerned, I think the radio is a waste of time, and in the long run, has no educational value. What's the point of sitting before a set and twisting the dial aimlessly around to different stations, just to see how far they will go? I will pick up stations? The average man, myself included, gets away enough of his time without listening to hours at a time, listening to unrelated sounds from the air."

Rev. W. C. McKnight, of West Maple avenue: "I think the speech delivered here Monday night by Pastor J. W. Johnson, was the most perfect and complete affair of facts and

evident applications ever presented before a local audience. I regarded the lecture as a definite stroke for the good of prohibition."

Hazel Clark Lawler, village clerk (Albany) 210 women and 31 men, have applied for registration, so that they might vote in the spring election. They are affidavits will be presented the 28th of this month, when everyone, who has not, must register in order to vote for village officers."

James Bayley, township clerk: "At the time of the fall presidential election we made thorough canvass of the entire township for people who could vote if they would register, and we were able to get 92 out of 100. However, to accommodate those who can't get up town in the day time, we are holding two special registration days, March 14 and 21, when someone will be in the township office until 9:30 p. m."

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