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Birmingham Eccentric

"For a Bigger and Better Birmingham"

PART TWO

OAKLAND COUNTY'S GREATEST WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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Glimpses at and about Birmingham

By RAYMOND GIRARDIN

Large trucks parked these cold nights on Woodward avenue in Birmingham and outside the limits their motors running softly and almost with caution, their drivers in a cramp crouch, on the seat asleep, are not uncommon. The men are given a certain amount of time to make their hauls and the sleep they get is incidental. Then too, for some reason or other, it is not customary to drive up to a hotel in a truck like a tourist. Many are on the road two and three days at a time, breaking their trips only with short stops for food or a brief fling at sleep. The feeling of guilt that asserts itself in me as I pass while on my way to a comfortable bed is wholly without reason. Obviously they are in their own lives and I in mine. When the drivers are not making their runs they probably are having a gay old time of it at the movies, amusement parks or dances, places where I never can do more than feel stupid. Yet somehow, and without reason, there is that guilt which asserts itself.

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And what paper, may I ask, was the young man's succinct query when he said he *seen* by the paper that the police had found an *abandonated* car . . . the season for hands warmly resting in pockets. . . . man and the beast. . . . I mean that raccoon coat. . . . and the store windows indicate clearly enough that an exchange of Christmas presents with almost everyone is expected . . . they are exchanged before Christmas, on Christmas Day, and heaven knows they are exchanged after Christmas . . . Those vines on the police station need some green paint . . . or why don't they take them down for winter . . . what has happened to the drivers who used to put their cars away during the cold months . . . came . . . to prefer cracked radiators and wind bitten ears to the annual attack of moths, I suppose. . . .

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Because I smiled to myself when I recalled a memory which should have faded long ago, a kindly old woman in an antiquated automobile smiled back. She thought, I suppose, that the antiquity of the machine amused me. If anyone can tell me what to do to reassure people in this sort of a predicament I shall bequeath him my autographed first edition of "The Adventures of Ned Toodles." It is serious enough to be obliged to ride in automobiles of so early a vintage without having some idiot appear to be enjoying it. My only hope is that the woman, who, I repeat, was kindly looking, will see this and understand.

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The screech of the fire siren and Woodward at Maple is littered, with running men. In a surprisingly short time the trucks are under way, their occupants removing white aprons, coats of business suits and, at one time I noticed, a derby hat, in favor of boots and rubber coats. However spectacular may be the sight of city firemen sliding down shining poles at a station in the middle of night, it is not comparable to the response of a volunteer department. The former is mechanical, like the lighting of a city by turning a switch; the latter is more human, like the man who used to carry a torch and climb the light poles. I have the word of Fire Chief Frank W. Kuhn of Pontiac that Birmingham's department is one of the finest of its kind in the state.

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Being society editor, our Clarice Tapson receives a large number of calls daily from persons reporting events of the week. Usually the news is taken over the phone. So when, after giving her name and address, a woman asked Miss Tapson yesterday whether she could "take this," the answer was a courteous "Yes." The "this" it developed, was "a loaf of bread, a head of lettuce and have you any tomatoes." Miss Tapson did not wait to find out whether there was a society note at the end of the list.

INFANT SCHLAACK GIRL IS CALLED BY DEATH

Barbara Jean Schlaack, the two weeks' old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Merritt Schlaack, of Hanna street, died last Thursday at her home.

Burial was in Greenwood cemetery, the same day.

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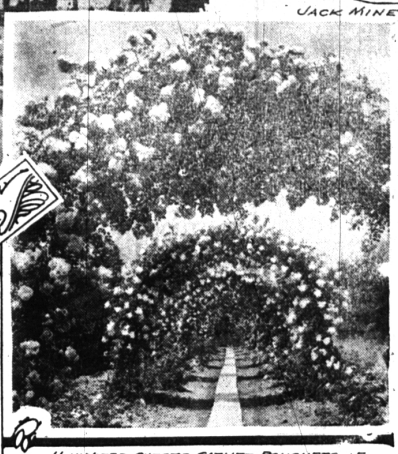
Jack Miner Tells Why He Bars Visitors From Bird Sanctuary

JACK MINER — COPYRIGHT FRANK LEroy CLARK

MINER'S BIRD SANCTUARY IS NATIONALLY FAMOUS.



UNINVITED GUESTS GATHER BOUQUETS OF MINER'S FLOWERS.

THE UNINVITED INVASION

By JACK MINER

In glancing back over my enjoyable life, which has been far more beautiful than any dream I have ever had, I sometimes wonder if there could be another man on earth whose experience has caused him to change his mind more often than mine has. Especially the last 20 years.

For illustration: I have, on several occasions, walked up to a six-foot fence that surrounded a beautiful home. There I have stood with both hands against the iron bars and looked through at the narrow walks, over-hung with a great variety of beautiful flowers, that, together with the lovely foliage of the different shrubs, have caused me to stop at the gate, only to find it locked. Saying in plain English, "You stay out!" I have tried to think up some scheme whereby the gate would be unlocked and I admitted. But what was the use. I was only Jack Miner. I had no money to distinguish myself and never would have. My lot was to stay out, and as I strolled away my thoughts were, "What kind of a man lives there? He surely must be of the dog in the manger type."

Today, I am sorry I ever thought wrong of that man. Experience has taught me. Yes, I know why the six-foot fence was there. Reader, let me say kindly to you. "When you stand face to face with what I have described, please don't condemn that man, until you have had at least 15 years' experience keeping an open house, home and grounds for "the Well Meaning but Thoughtless Public!"

Not long ago, I listened to what I considered a beautiful sermon in our church, but the dear man spilled the beans for me, when he wound up by weaving in "The House by the Side of the Road." He went on to state how an aged couple lived back in a little glen. At the road entrance, was a sign, "COME IN," and as you followed the winding path and crossed a little brook, on stepping stones, you suddenly came upon a Crystal Spring, trickling from a huge rock, that was over-hung with small shrubbery and vines.

Here was a cup and another sign, "TAKE A DRINK," and as you advanced further you suddenly came upon a small clearing. Here was their home. Upon the front veranda was a barrel of choice apples and a sign "HELP YOURSELF." It was a beautiful theme, though I couldn't help but think, as I looked the preacher in the face, "My dear fellow, if you knew what you were talking about, you would not say the things you are saying."

Times Have Changed

That night after we had gone to bed (which was the first privacy we had had all day) my wife asked, "What did you think of this morning's sermon?" Now I try to be big enough not to pick faults. I never heard a sermon that did not give me many good thoughts, but this time I broke my rule and said, "It was all right, except for the windup." "The House by the Side of the Road," pictured as he pictured it, was probably a very fine thing when the country was in the ox cart stage, and our speed limit was "14 miles in 15 hours" and our neighbors were 10 miles apart. But today, with our double geared lightning communication, our suicide speed limit and so many persons who apparently have no interest in this world, except the $25 or $50 interest they have in an old second-hand car, I tell you, we are facing a different proposition."

Personally, I found out that I am within one hour of nearly two million people, including those of Detroit. There has often been from 1,500 to 2,500 persons here in one Sunday. Now, as for the drinking cup and the barrel of apples the preacher described, why, bless your life, who would want to be the fifteen-hundredth one to follow the artificial faces of the present day, and put his lips to the germ-corroded old tin cup? The apples and the sign "Help Yourself"? Why, today, Henry would say to Jim, "Hurry, take hold with me, and we will put the whole barrel in our car."

Modern Visitors

A few odd years ago, as we were coming home from church, another Ford went by. A voice shouted, "Hello, Jack!" and out of the open side of the car a man was waving a big bunch of Darwin tulips. I presume that was his way of letting me know that, during his absence, he had honored me by a visit. As soon as I arrived home, and could break away from the many persons that were there to greet me, I strolled over to my choice tulip bed. What an aggravating sight it was! For this innocent, ignorant man had plucked the whole side bare. Tulips that I had paid a shilling apiece for. I can not think wrong of that man, because he evidently thought tulips came up like grass. A nice new lot of blooms the next day.

Well, that same day, about 4:15, we returned from Sunday school. The road in front of the house was a line up of cars. People were tramping all over our premises and had frightened every bird away. Up near the house were eight or ten old-hard tire, ballroom top cars that apparently had not had a bath since the hail storm of 1912. When we got to the door of our home, we were greeted with another "Hello Jack! Say, Jack, we came right in and made ourselves at home. Jack, I want you to meet my people from Smithville. We've been all over the place, but they wanted to meet you."

Tracked With Mud

And we found from 20 to 30 persons in our house. Strangers we had never seen before nor since. They had used our home, from bathroom to kitchen. Imagine, if you can, what the place was like. They had tramped all over the 25 acres of sticky clay and all over our house smoking and spitting, "waiting for Jack to come home."

Speaking of smoking, really, I can only thank God that I haven't been burned out, years ago. I have picked up as many as three smouldering stubs in my barn yard, in one day. THE THOUGHTLESS PUBLIC! I have signs, "NO SMOKING, PLEASE," posted in many places throughout my building, and yet, an aged man, right in my presence, deliberately walked up and struck a match on one of them, and started his pipe agoing.

When spoken to this man replied, in the presence of at least 25 other men, "I smoke around my own buildings. I'm careful with my fires."

Not so long ago, when we were eating dinner, I heard a horn blowing at our door. As I approached, a gruff voice said, "Who in—Blank—parked their car right in this driveway?" "Pardon me Mister," I said, "that is my car." "Well, isn't this public property!" was his reply.

I overheard another man say, "He has a right to do this. The Government is paying him."

Now, what I have mentioned are only flashes of what I have had to endure, on my own property. When you see a fence in front of my place, please don't blame me for it. Dear people, it is the hardest job I ever went at. It is the thoughtless public that have erected that fence, not Jack Miner. I think that I have done remarkably well in holding out as long as I have, when, in our public parks, saying nothing about a private home, there has to be a man wearing a blue coat and brass buttons to keep the public from carrying off everything but the grizzly bear.

Hates to be Cross

I have tried not to speak a cross word to a living person and I know that I have used rich and poor alike. If any have been slighted, I am sure it is the former. But now that I am going to start over. I am going to add firmness to my list. Experience has taught me three lessons. First—you can not DO anything for the public, nor HAVE anything for the public unless you CONTROL the public. Second—KINDNESS, without FIRMNESS is a total failure. Third—and this is the best of all—fully 90 per cent of the people that come here, are just lovely.

Now, as for my place being "Government property." Nothing could be farther from fact. My property belongs to me just the same as yours belongs to you, and the very minute that you come off the road, you are my guest. I want you to realize that, and to know that I am anxious to treat you as a guest.

So many persons have volunteered their advice as to how I can make this a paying proposition, more especially on Sunday. I don't know how many have told me to put up a gas station, a hot dog—post card—and general souvenir stand. I could go this suggestion one better, I could have a nice dancing floor, way back among the beautiful growth of evergreens, where all the young people from Dan to Beer-sheba could gather nights, especially Saturday nights. I could charge them 25 cents to get in and the rest they had to get out. I could have a little bootlegging going on in the distance. Just far enough away so I could get the big profit and the other fellow get caught and pay the fine. In fact, I could create a little Hell right here on my way to Heaven.

"Oh, but," a woman says, "Mr. Miner, I am Mrs. Dr. Golden Slippers." In reply, let me say, "There is nothing here for sale, and Mrs. Dr. Golden Slippers has no more right nor privilege here than Mrs. Hank Over-alls." You know, there are a lot of things that money can not buy and I want to be included. And along this line, let me say to my many friends, "Don't offer tips here. It is wrong education, and so embarrassing to some other fellow who is tipped out.

If the people, after looking around the premises, would only leave! But a great percentage of them will stand around our back door. Last summer I saw the members of our household ironing on the back veranda with 53 persons looking on and asking questions. This particular bunch stood for over an hour, taking in the sights. The next week our ironing was done in the basement, beside a kerosene lamp. Ladies, I ask you to put yourselves in the same embarrassing position. What are the comforts of home, when you are driven into the basement for privacy and have to lock the doors to keep the thoughtless public out?

Bars All on Sunday

Now for this Sunday recreation, or making this a dumping place on Sunday. Let me tell you this.

My father bought and paid for this land and, in 1878, moved his family here. There was one thing he did not buy, as it was not for sale. That is the Christian atmosphere that was established, and, although he was not a professing Christian, there is this that I do know: He would not have brought his big family here, if there had not been that Spirit of Christianity established. This Christianity cost somebody something and it is not mine to dispose of, but I am duty bound to hold fast and "By the help of God" I am going to. So please tell the world there is absolutely no PUBLIC Admittance at Jack Miner's on Sunday.

As much as I would like to meet the Hon. David Lloyd George and President Calvin Coolidge, I would rather be deprived of the honor than break my Sunday rule and admit them while 100 persons stood out on the road, unable to come in, because it was the Sabbath Day.

Will Move Flowers

I am going to build a fence this Spring. I am going to move my choicest flowers and plant them beside the road so you won't have to ask permission or get out of your car to see them, and from April 1 to 20 my front gate will be open to the public. Then you can come in, and go up into my "obblookatory" and take a look at the birds. Bring your field glasses with you and you can see the "tags" on the legs of the wild geese. But remember that the best time to see them is early in the morning.

Then from July 1 to 20 I am going to open the gate again to the public and give you a general view of this little spot that is so near and dear to us. The gate will be closed every night at 6 o'clock sharp to permit birds to come in to roost. Please don't come "when it is raining or shortly after while the ground is still soft and sticky. because then we never walk through these clay grounds. You can see all there is here in less than an hour. This will permit us to start from the gate with a new party every hour.

Yes, I am going to change my plan. I am going to try and be kind, yet I am going to be as firm as the British Lion.

Now in closing, dear people, don't think harsh of me for locking the gate. It is not because I want to, but because I have got to. Really, I don't know what I have done to cause it, but the fact is, I don't get as much privacy as a side show ape and even Jack Dempsey couldn't stand this hustle and bustle around his home year in and year out.

Gets Many Tips

Let me say to the average country property owner, if you will take one-half the pride and one-quarter of the expense you have put into your automobile the last eight years and convert it into love and willing hands for home-building for the next eight years, you will attract the public sent, I will direct my Sunday visitors to you.

Now don't forget the time for a visit to Jack Miner's—April 1 to 20 to see the birds, then July 1 to 20 to have a walk through the trees and flowers. But not after 6 p. m. So, tell the world. Don't let your friends come any other time of the year and be disappointed by finding the gate locked. There is this exception: Parties of 50 or more that are interested enough to make special arrangements will be cheerfully admitted at any time except Sundays and after 6 p. m. Yes, I am here to do all you could expect any human individual to do. So let us apply the Golden Rule on both sides of the fence, but kindly consider I am only one, while you are millions.

Bank To Distribute Christmas Savings

The First National Bank will distribute about $15,000 to its 300 depositors in the Christmas Savings club, Dec. 1. These clubs range in size from $7.50 to $1,000. The money will be used for Christmas shopping, taxes, interest, payments on homes, and other matters of this nature. Each year people seem to be more interested in this kind of saving and save a definite amount for a definite purpose, bank officials say.

This is the third year the First National Bank has put on this Christmas club account. Each year it becomes more popular.

The First National Bank looks forward to a greater number of depositors during the coming year, officers declare.

Charles Carroll of Springfield, Mass., who makes a business of supplying worms and other bait to fishermen, is known as "the worm king of the world."

Farmers of Weld county, Colorado, have appealed for state protection against herds of antelopes which have been destroying their crops.

The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.—H. W. Beecher.

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