

DOWNTOWN—50 YEARS AGO



Take a look at this expose of Birmingham's Main street 50 years ago. How many of the skyscrapers can you identify, and how many of the old business shops can you remember?

That building on the extreme left housed Tom Hanna's old shoe store. It stood on the corner of Sagittaw street and West Maple avenue. Just over its roof you can catch a glimpse of the fire tower which vied with the Methodist Church steeple for the most conspicuous thing in town.

Next to the shoe shop was George Toms' barber parlor. Later George Beech took over the tonorial equipment in the same shop.

The next door marks the entrance to the tailor shop once owned and operated by E. L. Jennings. E. T. Day had a shop in the rooms overhead. In the next suite Herb Lee made a go of a grocery shop and next door Mrs. Furman prospered at the millinery business.

Tommy Rogers' Harness Shop was squeezed in next door, with Robert Mitchell's enterprising grocery store a close second. The next building which is partially visible on the extreme right of the picture was the scene of Daines and Bell's thriving furniture and undertaking business.

Not a soul who lived in that good old day who can't tell a yarn or two about this block or some of its occupants.

For instance, there was George Toms who liked to fish even more than he liked to see the customers come into his shop. One day George Mitchell was standing in his father's shop when Toms came dashing in from the rear entrance, ran out the front door, back through his own shop, out through the back alley and into the Mitchell establishment again. About the fourth time this variation took place young George Mitchell became curious and stooped Toms who was at the point of expiration from fatigue.

"What's all the rush for, George?" asked Mitchell.

"Bigelow's after me and wants a shave," puffed George, "but I've got to go fishing with Jack Baldwin," and the chase was on once more.

George had a son, Charles, who now lives in Lansing and was former bank examiner there.

Down the block a few doors worked Tommy Rogers, quiet old harness maker who minded his own business, and so did everybody else. He disliked to be bothered at his work, a characteristic which the young village cut-ups soon discovered, and used to keep themselves well supplied with mischief. Sneaking up to the window of the shop three or four of them would tap on the glass, cut call and make things generally obnoxious for poor Tommy.

The harness maker would stand the racket for a very few minutes before seizing a long horsewhip and taking after the fleet-footed boys. One day, just as the gang had thoroughly aroused Tommy, young Wilbur Davidson the preacher's son happened innocently by. Rogers came dashing out of the shop, saw Davidson and began to apply the horsewhip zealously, gloating over his final triumph over the cut-ups. The undeserving youngster, greatly chagrined, later considered joining the gang for the sake of vengeance.

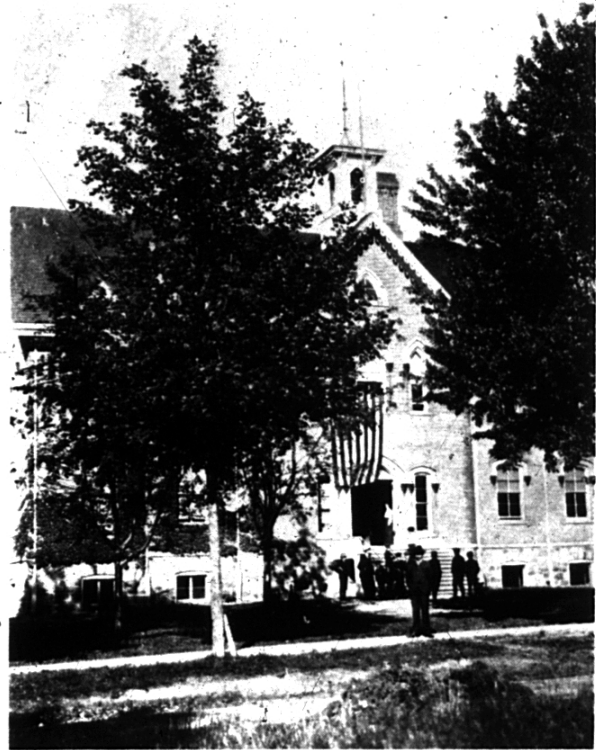
Far from hum-drum was village life in those days. Birmingham always knew how to keep dullness away!

Yesterday—Today



Frank Hagerman, prominent Birmingham resident today and "Yesterday." Today he is president of the First State Bank. "Yesterday" he was prominent in the promotion of many village activities and progressive organizations.

Where Wisdom Began



The old Hill School erected in 1868 remains, in part, one of Birmingham's earliest landmarks. The present school includes additions which were made later but the original structure is still in use. The school, named after Rev. S. N. Hill, a Birmingham pastor, was called the "new high school" at the time but the name was later changed. The building of Birmingham's first school, followed the burning of the old Academy building.

The Academy faced east on Fierce street, the school rooms overhead, and ran along west Maple avenue.

A. B. C.'s preceding the erection

of the Hill school were learned by some from J. R. Corson, Sr., in his little home in the building still standing directly opposite the rectory of the St. James Church on west Maple avenue. The first teacher of the Hill School was Prof. David Bemis, who taught for one year and was succeeded by Prof. Zeno C. Speger. Among the former teachers of the school who still live are Miss Leonora McDonald, Miss Maude Utter, Mrs. S. Crosby Marsaw, Miss Mabel Keyser, Miss Sarah Emis, Miss Margaret Pepper and Mrs. L. Hanna Kirk.

Reunions are held at the school each year.

Post Office

Birmingham's post office is to be made first class by July 1, 1928, according to announcement made by Postmaster James W. Cobb. The steady growth of Birmingham has warranted this, Mr. Cobb said. In order to be rated as a "First Class" post office it is necessary that the office sell stamps to the amount of \$10,000 during one year from January 1 to December 31. The sale this year has increased to an extent to authorize this, receipts for the first three months totaling \$10,700. A first class office means better service and often a federal building, he explained.

At present there are seven village carriers employed, besides four rural carriers. Also there is a system of special delivery which handles packages too heavy or bulky for the regular carriers as well as special delivery letters and packages.

CORRECTION

Through a typographical error on page three of this supplement, The Eccentric is said to have been founded in 1887. This is incorrect. The paper was founded in 1878.

Township Park

Realizing the need of a public park, Bloomfield Township approved recently the purchase of 55 acres of land bounded on the north and west by the Bloomfield estates subdivision, on the east by the Kensington road and on the south by the Quarton road. In the near future both this park and the Waterworks Park on West Maple will be available to the people of the township.

The land, which will be paid for by a half mill tax, amounting to 50 cents on a \$1,000, was purchased from Louis Colombo, Detroit attorney.

The territory includes a large field that could be used for landing of pleasure airplanes and an area that in winter would be used for ice skating. Many large shade trees and an abundance of foliage will make this spot naturally beautiful, Robert Y. Moore, township supervisor, said. The grounds have both hills and lowlands, cut by the river Rouge and a large spring. There is a possibility that a golf course might also be laid out.

The new parksite is a quarter mile from the proposed Grand Trunk highway and the new Grand Trunk railway right of way is the eastern boundary. It is easily reached by Birmingham people being only two blocks from the village limits.