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GEORGE RODGERS AYERLL, Editor and Publisher  
RAYMOND GIRARDIN, Managing Editor  
PAUL NEAL AYERLL, Advertising Manager  
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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1928.**  
NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesday. The right to insert, however, is made in the case of the copy submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and the character of the material. The Eccentric assumes no mechanical liability in the composing room, headlines written in these other than members of its staff, will be used.

**The Township Fire Hazard**

Fire, with its gnawing red fingers, reached out last week and, as firemen from Birmingham stood helplessly, the big old house, owned by the William Brush estate, soon became but a basement filled with glowing embers. True, the property that burned was unoccupied, and probably possessed little value, but it eloquently exemplified what happens to buildings when nothing can be done by firemen to extinguish flames.

What happened to the old Brush house might have been transferred to some other spot in Bloomfield Township where there is no organized fire protection, and the result would have been the same; indeed, numerous times within the past few years both large and small buildings in this Township have been completely destroyed by fire because no help could be given. Fire is the menace that confronts every owner of combustible property; but those who provide fire fighting facilities stand a better chance to have their property saved than those who do not.

Birmingham's firemen were quick in responding to the Brush fire; with more chemicals at their disposal, they might have saved part of the building. As you know, after emptying their available supply into the flames, they started out to locate a water supply to mix more chemicals—but there was none any water within a quarter of a mile of the premises, the Brush house having been vacant for several years in this case.

We recall a few years ago when the beautiful barn on the E. P. Hammond estate burned in Bloomfield Hills there was a water supply on the premises, but the hydrant connection was not made. The couplings of the fire equipment that arrived on the scene. What appeared to be a mere detail in a water system, in this case, destroyed the entire value of it all.

Some day the residents in Bloomfield Township will get together with their officials and buy some fire fighting equipment of their own. It is a shame upon Birmingham's help—for Birmingham certainly has all it can do to take care of itself.

**An Unsound Proposition**

In the growth of a community, as in the growth of an individual family, ability to add comforts and conveniences commensurate with ability to pay for them ought to be the greatest concern; a community that installs improvements beyond its ability to pay for them soon becomes like the family that eats ice cream and cake with a bread and butter income—both reach the verge of bankruptcy. With the community, the limit of bonded indebtedness is soon reached, and the taxpayers cannot have further improvements until they reduce bond issues, while with the family the sheriff soon gets all its possessions.

An issue of very great dimensions confronts Birmingham with the presentation, a few weeks ago, of a petition to amend the village charter so that the village at large will pay three-quarters of the cost of a public improvement, as against the one-half that is now paid. This petition calls for a vote of the people at the next election; economically unsound, it is to be hoped that local citizens study it carefully before they are called upon to make a decision at the polls.

A majority of the village commission is opposed to the proposed amendment; they see in it a real threat to the very economic life-blood of the community, namely: the local tax rate. Under the present plan of assessment for improvements, the residents along any given piece of property decide whether or not they can afford to pay five-sixths of the cost under the proposed charter amendment the abutting property would pay but one-sixth. Why then three-quarters to come from—where? Why from their own pocketbooks, of course, for it is they who pay the taxes.

Birmingham wants to keep its taxes as low as possible, it will oppose any attempt to allow the village at large to pay any more than it now does for improvements.

GAR WOOD, DETROIT's famous speedboat king, set a record of 92 miles per hour on the Detroit River recently. Which is said to be faster than even the speeds accomplished by runabouts on that slippery stream of boundary that separates government control of liquor from the 18th amendment. (Government shipbuilders please copy.)

WELL, NOW THAT the cold weather is coming, I'll be able to wear my shirt a little longer, being as my vest will keep in handy," said Ben Spivins, of Wagon Tracks, this week as he ordered his winter coat.

BOTH PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES are said to be good mixers. Which is all right as long as what they mix with is not too spirited.

**BIRMINGHAM (MICH.) ECCENTRIC—THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1928**

**An Annexation Problem**

Residents of the territory located between Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills Village, east of Woodward avenue, have a problem at hand in deciding to which of the two mentioned communities it wishes to become annexed, it seems. At the recent vote on annexation to Bloomfield Hills Village last week, the proposition lost because of the negative vote cast by the township, even though those directly affected approved the plan.

Birmingham and Bloomfield Hills Village, although both pledged to residential growth and planning, really offer distinct types of municipal services, Birmingham's chief help lies in its ability to construct sewer, water, street, and lesser important improvements, usually found to be necessary where the development is along the lines of large or small lots, while Bloomfield Hills Village offers only the estate type of development.

Obviously, then, if the territory in question is not of the estate type, it seems to us that it would benefit only by annexation to Birmingham; on the other hand, if the development is for small or large estate, where most improvements are installed separately and maintained by individual property owners, it can obtain municipal benefits of a protective or restrictive nature by joining with the Hills Village.

Which of the two communities offers the benefits required in this case rests with the affected territory, for it really makes no difference to the entire township where it is annexed under present forms of village government.

**Justice Without Mercy**

When the State Bar Association, in its annual meeting at Bay City last week, went on record as favoring the retention of the Habitual Criminal act for this state, it overlooked an opportunity to lend aid toward the remedying of a serious blunder made by the state legislature.

Had the association recommended the repeal of the act, it might have been done, and carry out the recommendation, for the State Bar Association has considerable influence.

Instead, however, the State of Michigan will continue jailing for life, persons who have been convicted of four felonies. No matter the age of the criminal, no matter the circumstances of the crime, if the fourth felony is committed, the act makes it mandatory for a judge to impose a life sentence.

The average conscientious voter marks his ballot in favor of a candidate for the bench whom he thinks is most capable of handling the duties of the office. Part of the duty of a judge is to mete out a sentence in proportion to the severity of the crime of which the accused is found guilty.

However, when the judge has absolutely no voice in the matter, as in the instance of the habitual criminal act, he might just as well be an adding machine, devoid of human intelligence.

Justice and mercy are vain cries under this mandate. A judge may know in his heart and mind that to impose a life penalty in some cases is wrong, yet he has no alternative; he can show no mercy for the act has removed the ideal of all justice, from this part of the state law.

The state legislature has passed sentence, in a cold, unreasoning and unmerciful manner, on every person brought to court in Michigan's future who has committed four crimes which are called "felonies." The legislature has thus constituted a despotic, for merely to override a bank account requires only constitutes a felony.) And in approving the act, the Bar Association is aiding in this flagrant miscarriage of justice.

BIRMINGHAM, FOR THE PAST year, seems to have been merely one excavation after another. Improvements of every description have been, or are being, installed. How close, after all, we live to the earth!

SAYS THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE: "They are having lots of trouble getting someone to run as provisional president of Mexico. They have to run faster than a bullet from a gun." Hailing from Chicago, the Tribune ought to know its bullets.

SAID GOVERNOR SMITH of New York to Governor Ritchie of Maryland: "I say, gov'nor, what was that the Governor of North Carolina said to the Governor of South Carolina?" And Ritchie was heard to gurgel: "Why, I think it was something about there being a long time between drinks."

AL(COHO) SMITH REPRESENTS a party that has as its emblem an ordinary donkey. That will prevent the Democrats from ever trading the donkey for a camel.

**"Ode To A Waterfowl"**

Frailly, as he behoves the capability of a huckster's daughter,  
She hung her clothes from off her limbs and went into the water.  
With all the muscle and the brawn her blacksmith father gave her,  
She fell into the briny deep, and who came out to save her?  
Why, none but Johnny Olip's boy who, like his father, was a waterfowl.  
Brushed off a fly and then exclaimed: "young girl, you must not bother."  
The son of one who paints your house—my dad preserves the finish  
Of all the houses in this town—but that will not diminish  
The point that once adorned your face—your curls are gone forever.  
Your looks were made for times of drouth, and not for wet, wet weather."

Nevertheless, the young man plunged into the damp and pulled up to the dry, dry shore, the blacksmith's soaked daughter.  
She tossed her head from side to side, and cried into the breezes,  
She straightened out her dry, dry clothes, and covered up her knees.  
Said he to her: "I saved your life, I pulled you from the water,  
Your eyes are red whereas instead the color when you bougher  
Was meant to stay upon your cheek—you are a foolish daughter."  
(G. R. A.)  
(The End)

**CHURCHES HALF-CENTURY OLD SQUABBLE OVER TREE-CUTTING RECALLED**

Cutting down many of Birmingham's trees recalls today an incident in the life of Joseph Utter, prominent resident of Birmingham before his death in 1877. Mr. Utter planted the trees on west Maple avenue between Chester and Bates streets, when the trees were but two inches in diameter.

His daughter, Miss Mary Utter of 107 Townsend street, relates that the trees were planted in 1864 and were brought from her father's 320 acre farm where the Birmingham Golf club course now lies.

Miss Utter was born on her father's farm in 1868 and when she was a child they moved to their home for many years at 315 West Maple. Several citizens are now the rectory of the St. James Episcopal Church and is occupied by Mr. Utter.

While other individuals were responsible for the trees planted at other points along Maple, east and west of Woodward avenue, Mr. Utter worked diligently in planting saplings transplanted from his farm near his home.

The contrast between the removal of trees in 1868 and when she was a child they moved to their home for many years at 315 West Maple avenue was a dirt road and there were no sidewalks.

"After having the trees cut down quite a disturbance arose. It seemed there was a sort of written law that the trees were village property and could not be destroyed. J. Raynale, who was angry about the episode and village officials were also vexed, but later believed that the act was justified."

She said the trees were soon replaced with two elms which were planted in the yard. "Maple avenue presented a different aspect at that time," continued Miss Utter. "There was nothing but paths for handwalks and cows frequently wandered along the street or were driven past the well shaded street from pasture. Every house was fenced then by a picket fence so stray animals did not trample in the yard."

Mr. Utter is the last of her immediate family living in Birmingham. Three brothers are all dead, two dying in the Civil war. George Mitchell, a cousin, is her nearest relative here and another cousin, John Holly, lives in Flint.

**WE HEARD IT SAID BY—**

Mrs. S. C. Root, of Los Angeles, Cal., mother of Charles J. Shain, who died here this summer: "Enclosed is my check for renewal to Birmingham this summer. I like the news of the old home-town, but observations on my trip to Birmingham this summer make me wonder what has happened—for it doesn't look like home to me anymore."

Inmates of the Hummerston, Eng. monthly write and print a monthly magazine.

**A Thought for the Week**  
AS a mark is not set up in order to be missed, so neither is such a thing as natural evil produced in the World.  
—EPICETUS.

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**MISS KEYES' HOME FALLING UNDER AX OF CONTRACTORS**  
A patchwork kettle-holder and an illuminated Lord's Prayer hanging on the walls of a little white house at west Maple and Bates streets are mute symbols of hospitality and religion.  
This was the home of Miss Jenny Keyes, friend of Miss Mattie Baldwin, and of all who knew her.  
Today, carpenters are busy with hammer and saw, making structural alterations. Friends no longer call in for a chat and a cup of tea.  
**Died in March**  
Jenny Keyes was born in a house on west Maple, where the Quorton building now stands. When she was 12 years old, she moved, with her mother and sister, to the little white house on the corner. There they lived, for a time, in the basement of the second story was completed.  
Her mother and sister died in 1907, but Jenny Keyes remained there until her own death in March of this year.  
At one time, she was a dressmaker, earning 50 cents for a 12 hour day.  
For many years she worked in Franks' Blacking, a wallpaper and window-shade store, which stood on the site of Erwin's Market.  
**Mourning Loss of Tree**  
Of the well-known Centennial tree, a beautiful cut-leaf maple, planted by the grandfather of the present Dr. Raynale, she mourned. "The men came with a new axe and a new saw, and it was the noon hour. But they lifted that axe, and stuck it into the trunk of the tree... and then they set down to their dinner."  
Her loving heart was hurt by this sight to age and hurt.  
Miss Keyes never let her sentimental heart rule her lively and progressive mind. Sadly, she saw the old landmarks pass away, and gallantly faced the change.  
When the Wabek building was begun and the smoke from the steam excavator marred the purity of her freshly painted home, all she remarked was:  
"I have never been one of these machines at work before. I mean to enjoy it." Her friends believe she did.  
**Always a Smile**  
The familiar figure of the long black gown and the black hat, going downtown for her midday meal to overcome her loneliness, with a word for everyone, always a smile for children, can be seen no more except in the memories of those who loved her.  
Her house was open to all who cared to call, and many did. The doors and windows let in the sun and wind today and the carpenters are busy with hammer and saw.

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