

## BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1929

NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have new 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 is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to make it readable and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by these other than members of the staff cannot be used. All remittance for advertising space must be made by check or money order payable to the order of the publisher. The Eccentric will be glad to accept payment by check or money order payable to the order of the publisher.

## Sound Logic

One of the most important "stories" this newspaper has carried in many months is on the front page of this edition under a prominent headline. It is the report of the committee which investigated the proposed charter amendment which the people of Birmingham will vote on at the elections March 11.

By virtue of the fact it was received at the time this section of the paper was ready for the press, extended comment must be delayed. However, it is one of the most complete and sound summaries of a problem we have seen.

Its logic is substantial. The men who made the report have gone to great lengths to serve the people of Birmingham and every voter will do well to read it carefully.

## Harry J. Brooks

One year ago the twenty-fifth of this month, Birmingham received a very sad blow. Harry J. Brooks was killed.

The tragedy of this accident, which brought the death of a young man who promised to play an increasingly greater part in the history of airplanes, was felt keenly at the time, not only by his friends and acquaintances, but by those persons who knew him only by reputation, and took pride vicariously in his achievements.

Today—one year later—the village still feels keenly the tragedy that cut short so fine a life.

It was said at the time that his deeds would live long after him; that a young man who had so fine a life and accomplished so many worth-while things could not be forgotten. And today this prediction seems to stand without the slightest shadow of contradiction. For the name of Harry Brooks today is still on the lips of many who sing his praises.

Harry Brooks is gone but his courage and loyalty continue after him, and on the first anniversary of his death, the village feels as keenly of the tragedy and is saddened today as it was a year ago.

## Good Sport

That the first annual ice festival held Saturday at Quorton Lake was a success was attested by the spirit of enjoyment manifested by both the spectators and participants.

The advantages of continuing this recreational activity are numerous and obvious. It is to be hoped that the future will be enjoyed by more than was last Saturday's. Such a thing is well worth while.

## George Washington

Almost two centuries have elapsed since the birth of George Washington, first president of these United States of America. To the man born he elected to share the hard life of the colonists and to throw his power on the side of those brave pioneer souls battling for a new freedom.

His place as "Father of his country" remains imperishable in the archives of time. The years but serve to make his place in American history more secure.

Without Washington's faith, courage, ability and loyalty it is doubtful if independence would have been achieved within another century. He was content to give all, to accept all, in those tragic years stretching from Valley Forge to Yorktown.

Washington lives in the America of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The love of his fellow countrymen continues as the grateful tribute of a mighty nation of freedom. Honor to this memory will be paid Friday.

## A Doomed Man's Comment

Two sentences uttered by William Edward Hickman during his trial for the murder of a small child have been recently brought to light and appear significant as the people of Michigan form opinions on the capital punishment issue to be coped with next Tuesday in Lansing.

When one of the doctors, testifying for the prosecution turned to him and said, "I'd like to vivisection you," Hickman replied quietly, "Why, doctor, you are as bad as I."

More significant was his comment when he read the cries of the newspapers that he be hanged. "One savage act," said this young man whose background was dotted for generations with insanity, "caused the whole world to turn savage."

IT WILL BE INTERESTING for sociologists to watch the manner in which the state's case against Mr. Edith Lewis, on trial in St. Joseph County, for killing her grandchildren, is conducted. Her daughter who makes the accusation, says "We were always at me. She killed it." Will intelligence be used in conducting this case or will the prosecution stoop to the intellectual level of the principals?

## The New Community House

Soon there will rise up from a certain spot in Birmingham the outline of what will attain the physical proportions of the long-looked-for Community House. By next fall it will be completed, and start upon its mission to serve a needed place in the life of Birmingham and vicinity. Thus far, the Community House idea has met with a warm response from local and nearby citizens; that its continued life, in its new edifice, promises to meet greater demands in our community affairs is the hope and faith of those whose support has made it possible.

## The Annual Opportunity

Birmingham citizens, on March 11, are asked to go to the polls and pass judgment on a number of issues, and elect three commissioners. Between now and March 11 The Eccentric will set forth the propositions that confront the electors of this community; to know all about the subject, you are requested to read this newspaper carefully each week, and to discuss with your friends and neighbors, as well as village officials, the questions that come to your mind. Each one year you have an opportunity to assist in shaping the affairs of local government—and this year's opportunity is March 11.

## A Local Airport

The plan to include Birmingham, along with other municipalities, in the purchase of an airport site at East Maple avenue and Crooks road, has been passed up officially by our village commission. Their action has received much commendation, and some criticism; they probably expected both. The Eccentric believes that an airport project is well worth considering, but believes with the commission that the joint project is economically and politically unsound. In the meantime, Royal Oak is going ahead to procure an airport by some method, and thus sets a good example for Birmingham.

## Local Service Clubs

Five years ago Birmingham did not have within it any group of men organized along purely service lines; today it has four groups of men meeting each week in Michigan, and during this hour of fun, frolic, and food, there are generally projected some of the more serious phases of life and living—talks are made by specialists and experts along business, professional, and civic lines, and many programs are given over to matters concerning ethics and codes of practice in the commercial activities of service club members.

Last week there was formed in Birmingham the Gyro club, an organization of young men of this city, and patterned after the Birmingham Exchange, Lions, and Rotary clubs. The addition of the Gyro club to Birmingham's community life is a splendid thing for the village, for out of it will come bigger and better ideals and comprehensions of the relation of a man toward his community through his business, social, and civic activities.

Five years ago most of Birmingham's then business and professional men were rather skeptical towards the formation of a luncheon club, many of them believing "that the town is too small, and such of the fellows won't attend regularly," but such has not been the case. Let the members of the Lewises have their little fun with luncheon clubs; if they wish—but luncheon clubs will grow in numbers and in strength and live to watch tombstones of these two contemporary critics crumble into dust.

## Crime

There is so much "bunk" about crime waves and the way to end crime that one sometimes hesitates to say anything about it. The editor of the Record has more than once pointed out a way to end a good portion of the crime in Michigan and if the present state legislature has any serious intentions of doing anything towards that end, it will pass one bill. That bill will provide that any man found possessing or carrying a concealed weapon without the proper state license shall be given a mandatory 10-year prison term. The fact that he has possession of the weapon shall be sufficient evidence of his guilt. No judge should have a right to impose any other kind of a sentence except life.

No crook ever started out with a gun in his pocket without intending to use it if conditions demanded. That is he would kill if he had to in order to carry out his intent or to escape capture. Every man who ever stopped to consider the question at all cannot help but be convinced that a gun toter is a potential murderer, whether he has ever had a criminal record or not.

Put such a law as that into effect in Michigan, and see how quickly much of your high crime will end.—ELTON R. EATON in *Northville* (Mich.) Record.

THE DEBATING TEAM of Baldwin High School under the coaching of H. Earle Corvett is again establishing a reputation in the elimination series of debates among high schools of the state. Last year Mr. Corvett came to Birmingham. His team finished among the first 16 out of more than 250. It is expected to better that record during 1929.

A MOUTH ORGAN TRUST has been formed in Germany, which is destined to control the harmonica sales of the world. Now for a "bigger and better mouth organ week."

## Try Smiling

When the weather suits you not, try smiling.  
When your coffee isn't hot, try smiling.  
When your neighbors don't do right, try smiling.  
When your relatives all fight, try smiling.  
When it's hard, but then you might try smiling.  
Doesn't change the things of course, try smiling.  
But it cannot make them worse—try smiling.  
And it seems to help your case, try smiling.  
Brightens up a gloomy place, try smiling.  
Then it sort of sets your face—try smiling.

—Author Unknown.

## THE FORTUNES OF WAR



## PEOPLE'S COLUMN

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request.

## APPRECIATION

To the Editor: Inasmuch as I have sold my interest in the Ford Sales and Service to my former partner, Mr. E. W. Osborne, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the people of Birmingham and vicinity for their valued business during the past eight years.

I feel sure they will make no mistake in continuing the use of Ford products, which I honestly believe to be of the highest quality, and know that Mr. Osborne will render the best and courteous service possible.

Am proud to comment on the growth and aggressiveness of Birmingham and will continue to maintain my building and residential business unless future contentment takes me elsewhere.

F. W. CONANT

PENSIONS IN 2000  
To the Editor: This is only 1929, but if history repeats itself there will be veterans of the World War still alive and fraying pensions in the year 2000.

Daniel F. Bakerman, last survivor of the Revolutionary War, lived until April 5, 1869, or 80 years after the war ended. Hiram Cronk drew a pension as a veteran of the War of 1812 until his death on May 13, 1905, at the age of 105 years. Five soldiers of the Mexican War are still on the pension rolls 80 years after the close of that war.

In this connection it is interesting to note that two women who are mothers of Civil War veterans are still drawing pensions today. They are Samantha Button of West McHenry, Ill., and Samantha Farrer, a negro woman of Athens, Ala.

Although the Civil War ended in 1865, it is quite probable that a veteran or two who followed Grant to the altar may be drawing a pension in 1950. Considering the vast number of prisoners taken by the French in 1870, it is not unreasonable to suppose that some of them will still be in the land of living in the year 2000. The youngest of 17 who enlisted in 1917 would be 70 years old then. And with the greater span of life which modern science is making possible there will doubtless be many to attain that age.

## OLD SUBSCRIBER

WE HEARD IT SAID BY—  
Mrs. Vincent Norton, Lone Pine road: "Many birds have been saved by considering Birmingham and the Hills will put out food for them during this cold spell. I have seen several rare birds in the town lately but they will not let unless they have food. I suggest such foods and mixed chicken feed. It can be placed on the back porch or on the ground where it is trampled down. While it is true that the sparrows get some of the benefit of it, the other birds also do."

## The Other Chap Says Something

FROM A MAN WHO SHOULD KNOW

Legislators and others interested in the proposal that Michigan adopt capital punishment for murder, which will probably be debated soon by the Legislature, may have been interested in the subject by reading an article in the January issue of "Plain Talk" magazine. It is entitled, "Are Murderers Afraid to Die?" and is the result of an interview with Dr. Amos T. Squire, former head physician at Sing Sing, where New York's executions take place.

Dr. Squire gave the signal for 135 executions in his 25 years at Sing Sing. Of the 135 men, Dr. Squire says, only one gave indications that he was afraid to die. From this is drawn the conclusion that capital punishment, as a crime-deterrent, is a failure. Dr. Squire says that life imprisonment is regarded by many, if not most criminals, as much more repugnant than the death penalty. One man, as Dr. Squire points out, the famous Alvin Karpis, voluntarily came to his hanging in New York State when the death penalty was in effect, only to be sentenced to life imprisonment in Oklahoma. He declared that life imprisonment was "a great" penalty—that it "would be worse than death."

The difficulty in Michigan as elsewhere, is not with the penalty, but with the infrequency of capture and conviction. It is not the death penalty that makes murders few in large European cities—it is the almost absolute certainty of being caught. There are probably more unsolved murders on the police books of each large city in the United States, than all of the big European cities together.

Dr. Squire's concluding words offer a suggestion, both for those who look to the death penalty out of despair because of the present serious crime situation, and for those seeking to prevent passage of a capital punishment bill: "I believe the only thing that will check crime is the possibility for the death penalty of life sentences to an institution in the far distant part of the world where the prisoners have no communication with their families and friends, and where hope of pardon. A fairly certain punishment of this kind would do far more to secure the minds of criminals and deter them from crime than the threat of the death chair, which, as I have said, merely warns."—Hyman Levinson Farmington (Mich.) Enterprise.

## SCHOOL LOSING GROUND

In his address before the 7000 educators in the assemblage at Mechanics Hall, President Lowell of Harvard University, certainly gave his auditors something to think about. He pointed out, and something to carry back with them to their various home towns. It was an indictment of the secondary schools of the country, unusually vigorous in its clear-thinking, plain speaking college president. And, we venture to assert, it was just what was needed. The time has come when the schools were losing ground in power by trying to do too much; by getting too many "extras" into their curriculum and not well using them through in adequate style; by making things too easy

and, allowing too many "electives"; by including subjects that the pupils are too immature to study thoroughly, and which sometimes the teacher does not know profoundly enough to use in training the mind. We have no doubt that the speaker had some facts and figures in mind, even if he did not name them. In the matter of mounting costs, the secondary schools, Dr. Lowell rammed home some facts that the educators can hardly help chewing upon—and right there he hit the gravest fault of these schools, extravagance and mounting expenditures. He showed that cost of instruction at Harvard on a per pupil basis, has increased 67 per cent in 15 years. In the public schools, for the same period and on the same basis, it has increased 167 per cent.

No wonder the best friends of our secondary schools grow apprehensive as they think of these terrific increases and wonder where the end will be. No wonder the people are beginning to regard our schools with growing distrust. "The public may ask itself why so rapid an increase and whereunto it will grow," was the pregnant thought Dr. Lowell left in the minds of his hearers. It is not too much to say that it is asking itself just that. The president of Harvard has opened up the most significant topic for discussion the National Association can possibly find during this convention. It transcends all the eloquent theories that can be advanced for it is practical and affects every school in the land. For that great service Dr. Lowell deserves the thanks of every taxpayer and parent in the land. —Boston (Mass.) Post

## The WORLD and All

## Movie Professors

Movies have been used in schools and colleges of all grades for several years, and occupy a distinct place in our educational system.

But New York Medical school has introduced the movie for clinical demonstrations. A surgeon performs an operation before the movie camera, and the work as he proceeds. The thing is thoroughly done, and if necessary several sections are made with several cases, until a perfect demonstration of this particular operation is shown.

Then the talking film can be shown at any time to a group of students in surgery. This is a decided advance in surgical training. The class doesn't have to wait for a case of the nature it is studying to come to the hospital. The talking film can be made wherever the cases happen to be available, and then distributed to as many colleges as want them.

A medical school can run its students through a systematic course, operation by operation, and the desired film will be there, waiting to tell all about it while it operates.

The very best surgeons will be thus always at hand in every class, and the student will be able to operate on carefully selected patients. Surgery de-lux!

## A Bargain in Quorton Lake Estates

If you are looking for a building site on one of the most highly developed roads in fashionable Quorton Lake Estates, we are offering for immediate acceptance a 70-foot lot at considerably below the market.



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## Friendly Thoughts

By G. Dewey Kimball



I lost my money but retained my friend  
And so the damage done with ease I mend.  
More trials, fame and fortune—bed and board.  
There's nothing else but friendship men should hoard.

A simple ceremony can be arranged or more pretensions. Our facilities make it possible for us to furnish services "within the means of all."

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"I bought a new car and gave up my piano-player as first payment."  
"I don't know they accepted piano-players. It is payment in new cars."  
"They don't usually, but the salesman told me to keep your boy."  
"Then ring him up and ask him if he expects me to keep asking him all night waiting for it." —Tit Bits

The proud mother of a promising son met some friends at a party.  
"By the way, Mrs. Johnson," inquired one of the guests, "how did your boy get on at his last examination?"  
"Not well at all. They had the nerve to ask him about things that happened before he was born." —Belfast Evening Telegraph

It ought to help the boys and girls of tomorrow to appreciate the neighborliness of the world to see and hear talking movies of the French chamber of deputies considering a treaty with the United States; to see and hear American merchants buying and selling in Berlin.

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