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Thumb-nail Sketches of Birmingham Business Leaders

Today marks the sixth anniversary of John McKee's entrance into the service station business in Birmingham.



—Armed Photo—
Mr. McKee

Previous to that time his life had been devoted to such diverse occupations as serving a grocer's apprenticeship in Ireland and working as a conductor on the Detroit United Railway between Detroit and Pontiac.

Mr. McKee was born in County Down, Ireland, and spent the rest of the members of his family to the United States in 1909 when he was 23 years old. He came immediately to Detroit where an aunt resided, and there his grocer's apprenticeship stood him in good stead, for he found work with Lee and Cady, wholesale grocers. Later followed a period of employment with the Ford Motor Company, and his association with the D. U. R. which lasted 12 years.

In 1914 he paid his first and only return visit to his native Erin. His principal mission was to get married, but he also came near to being prevailed upon by the old grocer for whom he once worked and who urged him to remain and take over the business. The nabob of American life was betting too strongly within him, however, and he turned with his bride back to the United States to make his permanent home.

Mr. McKee has lived in Birmingham for 12 years. The two service stations he now owns are being augmented by a third, across from one of the others at Woodward and Lincoln avenues. It will be open about Oct. 1.

H. Kenneth Bingham might still be in the railroad business today if he hadn't taken a month's vacation in 1925.



—Armed Photo—
Mr. Bingham

He was employed by the DeLaware and Hudson Railroad at the time, and during his brief vacation he volunteered to assist his father, then a partner in the insurance firm of Sparks and Bingham. A brief contact with the firm influenced him to resign his job with the railroad, his name was added to the insurance firm, and he has remained in that business ever since.

Bingham, Sparks and Bingham became Bingham and Bingham in 1928, and the first of this year, following the death of Mr. Bingham, Sr., who was one of Birmingham's foremost civic leaders, the son came into full charge of the business.

Mr. Bingham was a leading candidate for the title of Birmingham's best dressed business man, has been a member of the village all his life. He is a graduate of Ballou High School, and attended military school in Hampton, Va., and Dartmouth and Michigan State colleges.

His favorite recreation—fishing—he follows in the form of an annual trip to Canadian lakes every summer. Although he is capable of a highly creditable showing with the rod and line, he bases his chief claim to fame on the fact that he has never yet fallen out of a boat.

Nineteen years ago a tall, slight youth of Grecian physique stepped across the gang-plank of a liner in the New York harbor with exactly \$25 in his pocket—just enough to enable him to be admitted to this country under the legal requirements for aliens.



—Armed Photo—
Mr. Aristos

He was Peter D. Aristos, now a chiropractor in the Levinson Building here, who, at the age of 19, had taken to traveling as a "flak" with three young companions. The four had just finished high school in the Greek colony of Constantinople where they had grown up with their families under Turkish domination. Their desire to see the world had led them naturally to America, to which young Aristos' brother had preceded him by 25 days.

Relatives sheltered the youth in the American metropolis for the years while he earned his share as a factory hand. Rising at 6 o'clock every morning and hurrying to work with a dinner bucket under his arm did not appeal to his sensitive nature, however, and he determined from the start that the world some day enter the ranks of professional men.

The War came to interrupt his plans, but after spending 11 months in France with the A. E. F. in 1918, he returned to this country and shortly afterwards enrolled in the Palmer School of Chiropractic in Davenport, Ia.

After completing his course in June, 1922, he opened an office in Birmingham where he has been located ever since.

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