

The Birmingham Eccentric

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GEORGE B. AVERILL Editor and Publisher
ALLEN TENNY Managing Editor
PAUL W. AVERILL Sales and Advertising Manager
ARTHUR N. WINGERDEN Asst. Advertising Manager
CLAUDE F. WALKER Production Manager

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have new value and which were not previously 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 copy as may be required by the state of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical condition of the printing press, the printing of copy other than that of the regular subscription is not guaranteed. The Eccentric is not responsible for the return of any copy which is not returned upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

The Youthful Mob Spirit

One need not be a mere child howler to attach serious importance to the implications underlying Birmingham's recent Halloween occurrences. That a considerable number of our boys displayed that night a downright disregard for property rights and an appalling disrespect for authority is established beyond a doubt, and it is a fact that deserves the serious attention of all thinking adults.

Undoubtedly, the whole thing started innocently enough, as far as the individual boys were concerned, but as they formed into larger and larger gangs, and the mob spirit came more and more to evidence, they soon lost their identity as individuals and lost their power to reason, even as youths. The actual property damage they did has been conservatively estimated at more than \$100; one of them hit the chief of police with a meg, and another deliberately broke in a window at the police station, admitting later that he did it "just to see what the rest of the gang would do."

Whether or not the police were justified in using the methods they did in controlling the disturbance is difficult to determine, but even now, two weeks after the affair itself, it is difficult to imagine anything else they could have done. Perhaps they were guilty, in one or two instances, of handling the young offenders a bit too roughly, but even that is doubtful, inasmuch as it appears to have been the only manner in which authority could have asserted itself with any effect whatever. Even then, few of the 100 boys who were rounded up seemed to take the affair seriously. To most, it was simply a rather highly entertaining experience.

Granted that most of the 100 were not guilty of any actual wrong doing at the time they were locked up, the fact remains that they were all members of a thoughtless mob which did considerable actual damage and would have done considerable more if it had not been checked. In rounding up the boys, the police could not have been expected to separate the innocent from the guilty immediately, and by bringing them all in, undoubtedly saved a lot of the innocent from becoming guilty.

The important thing is that something must be done to restore in the minds of these boys a proper respect for property and authority. Curfew laws and community celebrations will not do it, although they might serve as effective temporary measures in making Halloween more peaceful and orderly. The teaching of respect for property and authority, however, is a fundamental part of the training of every person from infancy to adulthood. Constant and careful instruction in it is the duty of church, school and home—but especially the home. The home, more than any other institution or individual, has been delinquent in this duty, or such an exhibition as that which occurred here on Halloween would never have taken place.

Is Roosevelt Relenting?

You observe the government at Washington making some concessions from its rugged former movement to a partial admission that perhaps some of the old rugged individualism is necessary to bring about economic recovery. Various close associates to the President are uttering words that make for greater confidence on the part of business and finance. There are reasons for this. One of them may be that Mr. Roosevelt is being tried theory and finding it a rather sad failure, is going to face about, mildly; another is that election time is drawing near, and Washington political strategists want to keep as many Democratic seats in both Houses of Congress as possible.

But from this distance we do not believe that Mr. Roosevelt is going to make any permanent change from his vigorous intention to reform this nation. We may be wrong, but not altogether, when next Spring arrives. If he is able to retain control of both Houses, Mr. Roosevelt will undoubtedly inaugurate additional social and economic reforms through the next Congress. A man who has done the novel and radical things that the President has in no short a time can hardly be expected to change over night. He has strong convictions, and as he recently uttered in his nation-wide speech, "will stand or fall by my convictions."

Michigan's Relief Share

Several Michigan newspapers, turned Democratic since 1932, now lament the fact that Michigan is being gone Republican. They wail about the defeat of their new found political armor, and cry: "Will the Michigan government withdraw welfare aid from Michigan?" Well, if Michigan needs welfare aid from Washington, "plays politics" by refusing to give Michigan an equitable share of public relief, some evil things may happen. Hungry men become angry men. Washington knows that only too well.

In our opinion, Washington—if Roosevelt has his way—will not neglect its humanitarian obligation to Michigan simply because the State recently returned to the Republican fold. So, you few sour-grape editors, show your faith in Washington by refusing to write such pessimistic copy. Be good sports and bear in mind that Roosevelt is too big to be so little as you suggest through your fear that Michigan will lose its rightful share of federal welfare relief.

"I WAS A BIG HEARTY GIRL; if every one's internal case was written on his brow, how many would our pity share who move our envy now!"

Let's Fight Our Own Battles!

Most of the world recalled, last Sunday, that it was just 16 years ago when a blood-streamed and heart-wrenching world ceased the active slaughter of human beings. The World War—the war to end war—had come to a conclusion. Human hate had spent itself through the medium of killing. Millions of men had given their lives—most of them not knowing one another as they fought, under orders from "high command," to keep on shooting.

If ever human beings could learn anything at all, they then ought to have learned that never pay! And, 16 years ago, they had been impressed with the futility of it all. Widows and orphans, physically maimed and mentally disabled ex-soldiers by the millions bore testimony to the devastating results of armed conflict; bankrupt nations offered plenty of statistics to prove that a profitless business.

For many years immediately after the World War numerous agencies for permanent peace were established. The League of Nations, where all international disputes were to be arbitrated, grew astonishingly. It at last began to appear as though the immortal Dove of Peace was about to find a safe and secure perch in international relations.

Then came the world depression—a sort of reckoning day of judgment for the entire civilized world. Every major nation encountered problems of financial disaster; traditional forms of government began to disintegrate. Russia and Germany had lost their Czars and Kaisers; Italy and Turkey became dictatorships; even Great Britain witnessed an internal shift of the responsibility of government toward free people. Hitler ballyhooed himself to complete authority in Germany; Austria saw a similar change under the late Dollfus; Japan reached over into China in the age-old imperialism that has been the program of every modern nation.

Not only that, but the people of the United States abdicated from their traditional position of being governed through a representative Congress, and willingly accepted a quasi-oligarchy of politico-professors.

The entire world has thus shifted its relations towards authority. History alone will be able to record the wisdom of the choice, but let us hopefully suspect that this is a stratum in the foundation of human brotherhood that promises a better day.

Armistic Day ought to remind us of the awfulness of armed conflict. But it does it hardly. For too willfully the world raises its stupid head from the couch of carnality and reaches for physical weapons with the intent to destroy.

This newspaper has always argued against war, and the weapons of war. We have agreed with those who promised that the League of Nations might be able to play an important part in preventing international armament expansion. And we have lived to see how human nature, in every land, is incapable of accepting the tenets of an immediate world brotherhood.

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FROM THE ECCENTRIC COLUMNS—of Long Ago

Bits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Dr. Hewitt has a bay window at his residence on Pierce street. The map that touched off the "busted" cannon has not been heard of since.

M. K. Taber illuminated his residence and indulged in fireworks last week Thursday evening over Grover Cleveland's election.

The J. O. M. society, a new secret organization lately started in our midst. What their course is remains to be seen. We don't think they will do much damage.

Republican office holders are singing "Sweet old refrain," "Joys that we've tasted," previous to their heads falling into the basket.

Before the excitement occasioned by the bursting of the cannon had subsided Saturday night, we heard young men anxiously inquire if "the cannon burst the last time it was fired."

The medical profession is now well represented in Birmingham. We now have five M. D.'s in town, and more precincts to hear from.

The two latest doctors located in town being Dr. Richards and Dr. Bancroft, the latter being a homeopath, we hear.

If any one of our readers found, on getting home one night lately, a basket containing three cans of tomatoes and some groceries in their wagon, they will please return the same to the police office and obtain a reward, as is a poor man. He put his basket in the wrong wagon.

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

Will Hopsan embarks in the pool-room business with a cigar and tobacco store. He has leased room in the National Hotel building and opens up next Saturday. He solicits your patronage.

A Detroit man whose name is Bryson has just bought the Lone Star Farm owned by Will S. Walker. He paid a price so large that Will says he can start a bank and have a big auction sale commencing Friday, Nov. 26.

Miss Lillian Monroe is the happy possessor of a new baby grand piano. She has just received it in years as she owned, when she imparted the news to The Eccentric.

The Huston Hardware Co.'s horse was tied to the brush fence in the street, and the men were setting up a new furnace. Along came Will A. Brush with his auto, and the engine just turned him inside out in a run of half a mile.

The wagon and load were strewn to the east. Our old friend, the mad man, ran.

Shall we progress with electric lights or go backward 20 years with our old-fashioned oil lamps, some say, were better than our acetylene lamps, and still glowing.

Postmaster Hanna paid for gas-light, Apr. 1 to Oct. 31, 1908, \$39.89, from Apr. 1 to Oct. 31, 1909, he paid \$1.00, but he paid \$1.00, and he had more and better light, besides saving matches. "Nul ced."

The OTHER CHAP Says Something

WHEN A BOY GOES TO PRISON he may marry a large group of men, gathered from thirty-four cities in Michigan, heard Judge Farnum say at the trial.

"From the first day that a boy begins to associate with other inmates in Michigan's prisons he is taught by the hardened inmates that government is his enemy," said the Judge. He is told that the policeman, the sheriff, the judge and all society are in league against him. In short, decent society and decent government is his enemy. By the time he completes a term of six months to three years, he has been thoroughly schooled to believe this. His life is almost inevitable. His life has been dedicated to arrogance and law-breaking. Nor does the general attitude of society do much to offset this.

And yet there are many blind streets and we make the turns and go along them, sometimes fully aware that they ARE streets that don't go anywhere.

Envy is a blind street. Envy makes you blind, makes you hate, leads to no benefits at all. Malice is a blind street. We say bitter things about people, half ashamed of ourselves as we say them, and they bounce back and hit us in the face.

Revenge is a blind street. It has been called blind justice, but it is no justice at all. Revenge is supposed to make things even and to right the injury you have received. But it does not; instead it tilts the scales.

Self-indulgence is a blind street. You do things that you know are harmful to you, knowing all the time that you will regret them, but you do them just the same.

Self-pity, another form of self-indulgence, is a blind street. It draws down the corners of your mouth and inspires distaste, rather than pity, in other people.

Anger is a blind street. Even what we like to call "righteous anger" has a bad effect on us as the anger that we all deplore.

Selfishness is a blind street. It turns in upon us and strips us of the blessing of our friends.

There are blind streets all around us and though they are not marked with signs that a child can read nevertheless we KNOW they are blind and will never take us into the open country of a happier life. . . . Then why do we take them?

FIVE YEARS AGO

Birmingham will have rapid transit between Detroit and Pontiac in three years, Sir Henry Thornton, president of the Canadian Northern Railroad, announced last night after a day testifying before a board of determination in Birmingham.

Another victory was gained by the automobile over the horse this week with the closing of the doors of Erby and Nixon's Feed Store at 165 North Woodward avenue, after 31 years of existence.

The Rev. Robert M. Atkins, pastor of the First Methodist Church, will give the sermon at the annual Union Thanksgiving services of Protestant churches in the village. It is announced today. The service will be held Thanksgiving Day at 8 A. M. in the First Baptist Church.

Armistic Day observance in Birmingham Monday was quiet, with business being carried on as usual, and only the schools marking, by brief programs, the 11th anniversary of the cessation of the World War.

Jest For Fun

Petting Time—She: Let's go to the theater. He: Which one? "Doesn't matter, one's as dark as another."

Maggie House—Have an Irishman along with a rabbit—More like the magpie than the rabbit—To wit, I heard old magazines. Like one of England's well-known queens, I'm not amused. Contrariwise, their topical leaves offend my eyes.

Yet, thinking some day there will be sufficient surplus time for me to read such excess baggage through. I let myself continue to amass the mess on desk and table as rapidly as I am able. —Margaret Fishback in "Life"

Famous Evils—Tight—Even in Dreams—Tight Jews went to the mountains on vacation. They took a tramp among the mountains.

"I wish," said one, "that I owned that tallest mountain over there and that it was sold gold."

"That's a lovely thought," said the other. "Our old mountain was sold gold and you owned it, would you give me part of it?"

"Certainly I wouldn't," said like. "Vish yourself a mountain."

Happiness Granted—Happy Husband: I didn't marry you for your money, you know; rather in spite of it. Money doesn't make happiness; in fact, the less money the more happiness!

Young Wife: Then, darling, why should I be so happy? You shall be wonderfully happy. Daddy went bankrupt yesterday.

True Love—She was contemplating marriage, and she had put the suggestion to her father. "But my dear girl," he exclaimed, "you can't seriously think of marrying young Brown. Why, he only earns about \$15 a week. She sighed happily.

"I love, dear dad," she returned; "but a week passes so quickly when you are in love."

One Minute Pulpit

The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious; but the lips of a fool will swallow up himself.—Ecclesiastes 10:12.

The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.—Psalm 119:130.

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Birmingham Business Leaders

No. 44



PICTURE OF LES DOING A LITTLE OVERTIME WHEN HE USED TO TEACH SCHOOL

G. LESTER SELLS

HAS BLINKED AT FOOTLIGHTS IN MANY THEATERS AS A TRAP DRUMMER

coming to Detroit, where his father, a professional musician was called by theater work. . . . Les himself had attained a degree of skill on the trap drums and xylophone, and as a substitute for his father, either while the latter was sick or had offers of more work than he could handle, Les appeared professionally in the orchestra pit of more than one Detroit theater.

Meanwhile, he graduated from Cass Technical High School where, after first studying electrical engineering, and then attended Michigan State Normal College, where his music provided him with an opportunity for working his way to a life teaching certificate. He majored in science and mathematics.

After graduation, he put in two years as principal of the high school at Leland, Mich., and one year as assistant principal at Coloma, Mich. He resigned the latter post to accept a job teaching electrical engineering at the Michigan Radio Trade School in Detroit, but the school went into bankruptcy before the contract became effective, and Les turned to practical work in the electrical trades for a living.

He was employed in various sales and service capacities for the Wagner Electric Company in Detroit for a year, and opened a Birmingham store for that company 4 1/2 years ago. After one year, Les assumed full control of the venture, and has operated the store independently ever since.

Turn of a scientific and inventive mind, Les is happiest when experimenting with radio and other equipment, and would like nothing better than to be given free reign in a laboratory. He has contributed several minor inventions to the radio field.

Les is a member of the Birmingham Lions Club and of Pi Delta Pi Fraternity at Michigan State Normal.

MICHIGAN BELL TELEPHONE CO.

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