

# I Am My City's Keeper!

*I am my city's keeper—Government means but me;  
I am the wool of the fabric, weak or strong tho I be;  
I am "one of the people," and mine forever the blame  
If the finger of scorn be pointed at a town that is sunk  
in shame.*

*I am my city's keeper—thru me will she fall or rise;  
Mine is the hand that crushes or lifts her spires to the  
skies,  
I am the force that guides her, and mine forever the  
praise  
If she girds herself with a glory that shines thru the  
length of days.*

*I am my city's keeper—mine her exalted towers,  
Mine are her splendid highways, and her gardens  
bright with flowers,  
Her laws are my own creation, and I thrill with a  
reverent bliss,  
Because, thank God, I have helped her to be the town  
that she is!*  
—THELMA STILLSON FISHER  
of Battle Creek, Mich.

## Please Read These Figures:

Herewith are presented some easily understood figures showing you just how every penny that you pay into the City treasury is spent. On the basis of each dollar, you will observe just how little you pay for the various items that go to make up the tax budget of 1934-35:

Budget Item	Cents Levied	Budget Item	Cents Levied
Debt	31.40	Springdale Park	2.97
Police	10.65	Misc. Depts.	1.83
Fire	8.24	Municipal Bldg.	1.61
Contingent Fund	7.13	Manager's Dept.	1.55
Library	6.33	Justice Court	1.25
Street Lights	5.51	Trees and Parks	1.23
Genl. Admin.	3.82	Health Dept.	1.11
Sewer Dept.	3.56	Assessor's Dept.	.94
Treas. Dept.	3.38	Commission	.81
Welfare Dept.	3.01	Clerk's Dept.	.66
Street Dept.	3.01		

Cents: 100.00

### City of Birmingham Operating Budgets

For the Years 1927 to 1934, Incl.

Year	Amount
1927	\$190,460.00
1928	228,859.50
1929	282,712.72
1930	285,413.00
1931	249,800.00
1932	165,499.00
1933	
1-1-33 to 6-30-33	41,786.34
7-1-33 to 6-30-34	143,664.33
1934-35	143,070.00

NOTE: The above amounts are exclusive of debt service or contingent fund.

### Comparative City Tax Rates For 8 Years

Based on Adjusted Valuations  
With 1934 As Base

Year	Per \$1000 Adjusted Valuation
1927	\$25.93
1928	23.99
1929	25.97
1930	26.53
1931	24.97
1932	21.68
1933	17.82
1934	15.81

General Obligation  
BONDED DEBT  
General Obligation \$739,640.00  
Water Dept. 189,275.00  
Short Term Notes 249,000.00

## Do You Realize How Little You Pay For Schools?

Distribution of Each \$1.00 of School Tax, 1934-5

Instruction and Supplies	\$ .421
Debt	.393
Operating	.124
General Control	.050
Maintenance	.007
Auxiliary Agencies	.005
	\$1.000

TAX ON A HOME ASSESSED AT \$3000

	per yr.	per mo.
Instruction and Supplies	\$13.95	\$1.17
Debt	13.01	1.08
Operating	4.12	.34
General Control	1.64	.14
Maintenance	.24	.02
Auxiliary Agencies	.16	.01
	\$33.12	\$2.76

## AN OPEN LETTER FROM OUR CITY COMMISSION:

EVERY Monday night, Birmingham's City Commission meets to discuss and solve the problems that you, as citizens of this community, create in the common effort to maintain what we are pleased to call modern civilization. Fifty-two evenings every year (with plenty of in-between special sessions, and endless hours of our own time for which we get no payment, and very little public acclamation), the men you have elected to operate your town, meet.

You pay us each the tremendous sum of five dollars per meeting! Reckoned against the average number of hours we give you, you pay us approximately fifty cents per hour.

If you think for one moment that we are on this job for the money that is in it, you are mistaken! We who are now serving as your Commissioners, as well as those who have done so in the past, are on this job because we feel it is one very definite way in which we can shoulder our share of the community's obligation!

We realize that, under our form of democratic government, every person must serve his town in some way. Acting as your City Commission is, in the opinion of you who elected us, a splendid manner of manifesting our social and political responsibility to the common cause of good government.

Many times each of us on the Commission have had to cancel social engagements and business engagements, because of the necessity of carrying on your City government. More than once, each of us has had to forego pleasant gatherings, public entertainments, so that we would live up to the obligations we each assumed when we were elected to office.

More than once, when perhaps our family needed us because of illness, we have gone forth to attend the public business—DEFENDING YOUR INTERESTS!

Very little praise do you, the public of Birmingham, shower upon your public servants. We are not complaining about this, either, because we realize that it is the lot of the average public official to be "the forgotten man." We, too, can remember how, before we accepted this office, or were engaged in direct contact with government, we neglected to thank those who have served us on township board, school board, library board, or city commission. In these strenuous days of so much human complexity, we well realize how difficult it is to be eternally thanking everybody who does something for us—so we are sympathetic to you, the public, in your neglect of us, your servants.

But, let's not cry too much about this.

Let's get down to a mutual understanding of our common problem—a problem that rests between you, the public, and your City Commission, your representatives in local government.

You want your City government to continue, of course. You want to be assured that the Fire Department is ready to serve on a minute's notice.

You want to know that, day or night, your life and your property are assured Police protection.

You want your water supply kept going, your sanitary sewer system kept working, your streets kept passable.

You undoubtedly wish your City to continue the operation of its public library.

And there is no question but what you want the public schools kept going.

Well, your City Commission and your School Board are more than willing to operate, for you, these necessary public services.

But to do so, costs money! It means that you can only show your desire for these public services by PAYING YOUR TAXES!

There is no mystery about all this business of government—not at all!

But there is some mystery connected, to date, with the whereabouts of all the money with which to give you these public services.

If you have not paid your taxes, then you hold the key to part of this mystery. If you have paid your taxes, then you can still perform a civic service by talking to everyone of your acquaintance, suggesting the need for prompt payment of taxes, and going just as far as you can to induce another to pay his or her current or delinquent taxes.

City Treasurer Corson stands ready to accept your tax payments at the City Hall—we suggest that you see him before March 18, when additional penalties go into effect.

In the name of good government, and for good government we, your representatives in local civic affairs, beseech you to show your American tradition to the cause of free government by accepting this present challenge to support government at home!

BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION,  
HARRY ALLEN, Mayor  
A. J. Brandt, Luther Heacock  
Frank S. Packard, Lawrence Hulbert  
Arthur Kane

## An Example of Dollars Saved By Living Within The Birmingham Limits

A property owner living in the City, east of Adams Ave., has made the statement during the tax campaign that he received nothing for his City tax. He lives in a house assessed at \$3,000, on which he carries a \$3500 insurance policy.

Assuming that this man lived in the same general location, but outside the City, the following data has been compiled as to his annual cost for the services supplied as a result of his living in the City and paying City taxes:

**TOWNSHIP TAX** Dollars  
Troy Township tax rate for 1934-35 is \$5.14 a thousand, which on a \$5000 value would give a total tax of \$25.70

**INSURANCE**  
If this property was located outside the City, it would bear an insurance rate of \$9.50 per thousand as against \$5.50 within the City or a difference of \$4.00 per thousand for a 3-year policy. The additional cost per year for a \$3500 policy would, therefore, be 1 1/2 times \$3500 times \$4.00 = 4.66

**ADDITIONAL COST OF WATER**  
If this property was outside the City, the owner would be required either to put in his own well or to pay double rates for City water. As it would be much cheaper for him to pay double rates for City water, we will assume the latter case as the more conservative. As the minimum rate for water within the City is \$9.00 a year, the extra cost for water outside the City is taken as 10.00

**LIBRARY SERVICES**  
If this property owner lived outside the City, he would be required to pay \$2.00 per year to the library for each library card in his family. In assuming that he would have only one such card, the additional cost would be 2.00

**POLICE PROTECTION**  
The only private Police Patrol Agency operating in Birmingham, gives us a figure of \$5.00 a month or \$50 a year if paid in advance, for a patrol service that is certainly no more efficient than our own police department supplies. The extra cost per year for this is taken as 50.00

Total cost for the above services if the property owner resided in his present neighborhood, but outside the City limits. \$82.08  
City tax if paid within 2 months after billing. 47.43

Saving per year by being a Birmingham tax payer. \$34.65

The above figures do not include benefits received by his property in the City in the shape of sewer maintenance, Health Dept. activities, protection of inspection of weights and measures, protection from construction of fire traps next door, street lights—such as they are, nor other services supplied by the City.

H. H. CORSON,  
City Treasurer.

## Who Created Our Debts?

Burn this deeply upon your mind!

The debts of the City of Birmingham, and of this School District, were created by everyone of us who, in days when we all were more prosperous, voted for the various bond issues that were presented to us at election time.

You remember those "easy money" days—and so do we, who are called upon by you, the citizens, to administer your local government. 'Twas in those "boom days" when everybody wanted to own a couple of railroads and at least one ocean-going yacht, that we so willingly saddled upon ourselves this burden of public debt.

Your present City Commission has inherited this tax burden—they didn't shove it down your throat at all. And you well know it.

Perhaps there's a moral to this, and if we interpret it aright, it means simply this: in the future, Birmingham, and this School District will proceed darned carefully when it comes to acquiring more public debts—and don't you, the public, try to force your officials into more debt, if you want your taxes kept down.

# PAY YOUR TAXES NOW!