

# The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1936

**NOTE:** The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which are timely and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be received here before 12:30 p. m. of the day preceding publication, however, to make such superficial changes in the copy as are required by law of the state. Because of a limited amount of space, the Eccentric is unable to accept for publication any material which is of a nature which would reflect unfavorably upon any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of the Eccentric. We will gladly accept any material thought to be of interest to our readers.

**In One Month We Received 12 Pages Of "Free Publicity" From Bureaucrats!**

"Government by propaganda" is well illustrated these days in the amount of free publicity material that reaches newspaper offices from State and Federal governments. Some of this material contains some current news value—but most of it does not. And, by the way, most of it never is printed in newspapers at all.

We have just completed a survey of the amount of such material that has come to The Eccentric during one month; when you realize that this material is prepared and written by people employed by government, paid for by the taxpayers, you are impressed with the tremendous cost attending the efforts of public officials to "cover" the type of stuff that they want the public to read.

"In the good old days" few departments of public business employed public agents, reporters or public officers and news agencies used to look over a public official's news records, get data firsthand, and then release the material to the public. Nowadays, however, nearly every State and Federal department has its paid press agents, and through them public officials endeavor to release information.

During the month referred to above, the total weight of the "free publicity" we received amounted to four and three-quarter pounds!

Two and three-quarter pounds of this came from Washington, D. C., and two pounds came from Lansing, Michigan.

Thirty-two separate pieces of mail came from various departments in each of the two cities.

From Washington the material amounted to an equivalent of 63 regular newspaper columns; from Lansing the material amounted to 34 columns.

Together, if printed, the material would have required 97 newspaper columns, or 12 solid pages and one column over of free publicity in one month. If The Eccentric had published all this material in an average month of four issues, it would have required approximately three solid newspaper pages in each issue.

That, Dear Taxpayers, gives you an idea of modern press agency in State and Federal government!

There are 10,414 weekly newspapers in the United States, and there are 2,078 daily newspapers in the United States, or a total of 12,619 newspapers, practically all of whom receive the Washington free publicity.

If each of these newspapers received the 32 pieces of mail that we did during this one month, the total sent out from Washington under free postage would amount to the staggering total of 401,808 pieces of mail!

If every newspaper in the nation had published this average of 63 columns, a total of 39,734 newspaper pages would have been required!

Allowing for 100 columns of free newspapers for Michigan, the total number of pieces sent out from Lansing would be 14,400 in the month, making a total of 113,000 columns, or 1,912 newspaper pages.

Here are the various departments from Washington that sent out the free publicity:

- Farm Credit Administration
- Resettlement Administration
- U. S. Dept. of Labor, Dept. of Commerce
- Works Progress Administration, Federal Emergency Relief Administration, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Federal Housing Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, a 24-page speech delivered by Secretary Harold Ickes, and some stuff from the Detroit office of the Michigan Works Progress Administration.

From Lansing mail came the following departments:

- Secretary of State, State Highway Dept., Dept. of Public Instruction, Michigan Public Utilities Commission, Dept. of Labor & Industry, and the Dept. of Agriculture.

While desiring to co-operate with government in providing a local outlet for some of the legitimate news of the day, and admitting that there is a justifiable reason for some intelligently furnished publicity, yet we cannot but feel sad to think that modern bureaucracy in government expects newspapers to do so much of their propaganda.

We are saddened by the apparent uninterrupted flow of this free publicity—when there is so much need for more constructive work.

The only bright spot in the whole picture is that that causes waste-basket manufacturers to sell more of their merchandise to newspaper offices throughout the country; and the combustible properties of the free publicity matter as it starts so many fires when the furnace goes out.

(And then, to cap the whole affair, it's so nice to get, in a free franked government envelope from Washington, the following card—printed at government expense—from Iador Lubin, Commissioner of Labor Statistics for the United States Department of Labor: "AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR, THE STAFF OF THE BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS WISHES TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR FRIENDLY COOPERATION AND TO EXPRESS THE HOPE THAT THE COMING YEAR MAY BE A PROSPEROUS ONE FOR ALL MEMBERS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.")

## Here's A Sample Of Work Relief Inefficiency

If you really want to know how much "boondoggling" can take place in some of the work projects backed by the federal government, just talk to one or more contractors in charge of one of these projects.

Recently we observed a report of how one contractor, engaged in a road project, figured that he could do the job, with machinery and good workers, at \$100,000. However, in order to comply with the government's requirements, he boosted his price to \$210,000—and got the job. The project was started, but work was so slow that the contractor decided to do as follows: he brought in machinery, kept about 70 men on the job, and sent 189 men, with picks, shovels, hoes, etc., into a nearby woods, telling them to amuse themselves in any way they saw fit. Each week he paid these non-workers the allowable wages included in the contract.

By using the machinery and 70 men, he finished the work ahead of time and made more profit than he had worked the 189 men. That's a sample of "efficiency in boondoggling." (We understand, too, that contractors are now talking of building club-houses for this type of "shirkers" required on government jobs, encouraging them to play checkers, and similar diversions, while those willing to do a day's work are kept on the job.)

## Hitler Is A Modest Chap!

Here is a manner of self-esteem that nearly always is the attitude of a self-appointed dictator—a manner revealed in the words of Hitler, recently spoken in Germany when he celebrated his third year as German's leader:

"All that I am, I am through you; all that you are, you are through me. Never has there been a closer bond between a leader and followers than between you and me."

There, Dear Americans, you have a word-picture of the relationship between one man and sixty million people in Germany.

What a slender thread German hangs by, these days—the mere whim and caprice of one man can change their whole destiny!

Personally, we prefer the United States Constitution as our leader!

## "Taps" For The Budget

Uncle Sam won't be able to balance his current budget at all now that the soldier bonus has been passed. President Roosevelt's estimate, given early in January, no longer stands; he and Congress will have to continue with an under-balanced budget, or else impose higher tax levies on the nation to meet the increased expenditures due to the bonus and the necessity of paying the farmers for keeping land out of production.

Truly, the bonus has blown "taps" over the dead body of any hope for balancing the federal budget for some time to come.

## The Greedy Pig

We'll, see that Hearst has awarded a prize to a New York artist for drawing the cartoon that best reveals the character of the tax collector, or grabber. The picture shows a huge, over-fed, over-stuffed pig, his belly bursting with food, yet still hungry for more food, as he stands upon his plate. The "food" is taxes—diet that the average person pays in increasing quantities to the perpetual hunger of so many types of tax collectors.

## Displaying Nakedness

Detroit's annual Scarab Ball offers a chance for people to display their nakedness in mid-winter without going to Florida. Some of the boys and girls really have shapely and muscular torsos and . . . . . legs. Will we say? Others really aren't so athletic, are they? More of them ought to dress like Diogenes in a ran-barrel, or like a black cat on a dark night in the denest of shadows.

## Practical Paragraphs

By John Edwin Price

**ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS IN MAN-BUILDING**

Someone has said that the best way to improve a man is to build a better character.

"Sow a thought and reap an act  
Sow an act and reap a habit  
Sow a habit and reap a character  
Sow a character and reap a destiny."

I have previously commented in this column on the essential of right thinking in building a life and a career.

If a man builds his life right; if he does his part in meeting the conditions half way, the character is usually attracted to him.

Certain definite mental attitudes and habits help in building a magnetic power for a better career.

Are you acting toward superiors or customers in such a manner as to make them like and appreciate you more and more?

Pleasantness, orderliness and thoroughness are important things in building up your magnetism so that you will be liked by the men of the world.

Are you becoming more masterful in handling the details of your work where you formerly floundered?

Do you do your work more and more each day with the sureness and finish of a Paderewski at the piano, or do you still fumble and smear the notes together like a child practicing a lesson?

Have you tried learning things relative to your work which may not directly concern it, in order to improve your general knowledge of the interest of the subject, trade or profession?

Have you your own work-book, seeing that the art of playing the drama of life? If so have you developed standards of perfection in regard to the ethics of your work, the man who makes one bar of steel to fit in with the rest of the pieces. So an ethical attitude of mind will bring in nearer perfection.

Work perfectly performed attracts work on which they who have more important work than perfection they will be glad to operate.

Have you noted where the perfect performance of your part adds to your joy others' happiness and the benefit will be all of affected by it directly or indirectly?

Is your performance of your part in the drama of life adding to your appreciation of work well done by others?

These are some of the thoughts, acts and habits which you should try to build into you to bring into type which will draw to you the most desirable destiny.

## People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications from its correspondents. All communications must be signed, unless otherwise noted, and must be self-sufficient in their content. Letters must be in the office of Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

1330 West 28th Place,  
Los Angeles, Calif.,  
January 29, 1936  
Editor, The Birmingham Eccentric:  
Dear Sir:

The issue of the Birmingham Eccentric, you so kindly sent me, arrived, and I thank you so much.

I also appreciate the valuable and lengthy letter regarding the Townsend Plan. That shows a spirit of interest on your part which is sadly lacking in so many newspapers. With that attitude your paper can do much to advance in this very humanitarian movement.

I enjoyed reading all of your very fine edition and again wishing you success and thanking you very sincerely yours,  
(MRS.) MABEL C. DERNBECK

Very sincerely yours,  
Los Angeles, Cal.  
Mr. George R. Averill  
Editor, Birmingham Eccentric.  
Dear Sir:

Many thanks for copy of your paper received a few days ago and also for your courtesy in publishing my letter on the Townsend Plan, in which I am deeply interested.

I am in Jefferson's paroli on the Gettysburg Address is right up to date and shows me that you are on the right side of the fence. Al Smith did not utter when he addressed the dinner party last week. I hope others may wake up before it is too late.

Very sincerely yours,  
E. HARRISON

Editor's Note: The following two letters were written in criticism of a recent article by Mrs. Minnie Hunt Salter, an old resident of Birmingham, who requested permission to submit Weekly articles on "Birmingham Today" to the Eccentric. She has offered to check her column for accuracy, it is printed each week under her own name and by arrangement, of course, and will call these to Mrs. Salter's attention on.

Dear Sir:

Please publish this reply to Mrs. Minnie Hunt Salter, articles under the title "Birmingham Before Today."

While I am, and always have been an ardent reader of your paper, The Eccentric, and while I have believed in its policies and their practical well-founded, I am compelled to answer the article written by Mrs. Minnie Hunt Salter, entitled "Birmingham Before Today."

The article under the title "Birmingham Before Today," Mrs. Minnie Hunt Salter should have obtained the true facts before publishing an article about any of her past neighbors.

First: the house in which John Harris and family lived was not called "The Hen Coop House," but was called "The Harris House," and was occupied by colored people in the south I cannot say; but, the house was called at the time it was purchased by John Harris from a white family.

Second: John Harris was an Indian blood. His father was a full-blooded Cherokee and his mother was a white woman. This was the complex of his father, John Harris was never called "Darky" by his white neighbors, but he was called "Darky" by the colored people of any race, to his face or in secluded places. Mrs. Salter knew her own mind, but she has included in this article an insult to me but a disgrace to The Eccentric.

Third: John Harris never had any children of his own. His first wife had two children by a former marriage. I am not sure if he had a nephew. I have never lived in his house. He was married only twice, to Harriette and to Mrs. . . . .

Your last paragraph relative to your mother, Mrs. Emily Hunt, is a lovely compliment to her, but she was not assisting in whatever way she could, was the noble spirit which the women of true blood and American Patriots showed their loyalty to the cause of true womanhood.

The article is indeed a disgrace and an insult to the cause for which we as well as her, and her mothers so faithfully performed.

—ABE HARRIS.

To the Editor,  
Birmingham Eccentric:

Your last issue, read in the column, "Birmingham Before Today," the senseless, disparaging remarks about the life of our students; in this issue, two instances: Poor Kittle Chaffield, who the house was called, was completely bald and wore a wig, and the story of the motherless boy who was sent to the reform school.

Why not look up those in the present generation, and spare the criticism of people who are not here to defend themselves?

It is said that every family has its skeletons, who care to hear about it? Only the family who performs its duty as well to examine his own family tree.

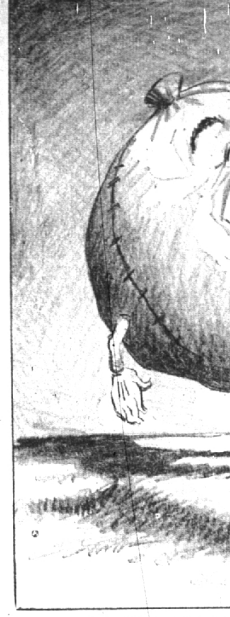
Inasmuch as you called attention to my sojourn in the Reform School, will you kindly print this reply?

A friend of this had 3) J. MARY JOHNSON  
Detroit, Michigan.  
Belvidere, N. J.,  
January 31, 1936.  
Birmingham Eccentric,  
Dear Sir:

After this week my address will be 662 1/2 South Birmingham, as I shall be at home.

I thank you many times for your

## TAPS



kindness in sending the paper to me. Only those who are away from home can appreciate the "news from home."

Very truly,  
HARRIET H. SMITH,  
(Mrs. T. B. Smith)

Editor, Birmingham Eccentric:

It is suggested that this country pay the bonus to veterans with a new kind of money.

This suggestion comes from politicians who are forced to use desperate trickery. They bear the demand that their extravagance must be paid for by the taxpayers, and they are aroused against them, therefore they propose that what they spend they will not repay.

There are thirty million bank depositors in this country who are shareholders in the Government's promise to repay. These thirty million on the bank deposits. They have lost claim on the gold reserve; it is their money that has purchased silver. The new treasury is aimed at wholesale defaulting of the whole country.

It is proposed, in short, that by Act of Congress, by vote of these same tricksters, a Government debt, a payment by the nation to its veterans, shall be discharged with simple presentation of some paper from a printing press. The second step of these men would be that all Government debt would be repaid.

It is less than a year since many of Michigan's representatives in Congress voted to follow this plan, attempting to pay the veterans' claims with a new kind of money. It proposes to cheat the veterans, and it is a policy that would impoverish the country.

YOUNG C. SMITH,  
409 Pierce St.,  
Birmingham, Mich.

**SUNSET**

Here where the lowering sun has  
Set its shade  
I sit in dream and ponder—  
an afraid  
Of what lies in the deeper shades  
Of life and love, of happiness  
And sorrow,  
Submissively awaiting each to-morrow.  
Nor ruing this—that time has  
Filled my zest  
Of life. If so sweet to dream  
And rest  
Here in the lowering shadow of  
The sun.

My heart at peace, my labors  
Nearly done,  
—BLAETRIC McDONALD.

**Jots 'n' Jest**

With scientists going to all that trouble to split the atom, one wonders what any one wants with half an atom.

The veterans are considered lucky dogs, now that Congress has thrown them a bonus to chew on.

Lobsters are more closely related to spiders than to fish, which may account for the very strange dream we had the other night.

People are dying from the heat in South America and from the cold in North America. Someone should advocate a share-the-weather program.

Teacher—What would you call a fat driver?  
Willie—Depends on how near he came to hitting me.

## Who Killed Cock Robin?

It was I, I am the one to get the credit.

Who can deny it? Do not the records support every word the former governor says?

Who killed Cock Robin? As we remember the old nursery rhyme, the "Sparrow with His Bow and Arrow" finally got the credit, or the blame.

Well, we have heard very little blundering by Mr. John Public about his children, Mr. and Mrs. Voter. They haven't been on the radio claiming credit for getting the state of Michigan into a jam.

Yes, as we understand it, they are the people who pay the sales tax and all other taxes.

Furthermore, if we remember rightly, the people of the state of Michigan voted for a 15-mill limitation on taxes on real estate and that upset the old state real estate tax applier. The Emmell amendment was really what forced the passage of the 3 per cent sales tax. Yet Mr. John Public has not been in the air claiming any credit.

It was the voters of the state who "killed Cock Robin"—Schuyler L. Marshall in Clinton County, Republican News.

**ACT OF GOD?**

The famous Mummah-Frey act of the last legislative session barring products of prison labor from the open market is making pretty good headway.

I trouble for a number of statesmen in Michigan. This act was passed at the request of organized labor which claimed that it would result in the loss of the state's prison labor competing with those of free labor.

The Jackson prison has a herd of very high grade cattle and the question is, are the cattlemen making any money or are they not? James F. Thomsen, commissioner of agriculture, says that the cattlemen are not the result of prison labor but the act of God whereas the attorney general says that the act is the result of profound ignorance of the agricultural industry? so the question will result in the loss of the state's prison commission. If they had with the attorney general she personally would have the product of prison labor in the form of beef causing a tremendous loss to the taxpayer.

This act goes to show that legislation passed, with the best of intentions, will often produce what it was not intended to do. Hear, Ho, Hear, Ho, Hear, Ho, Hear, Ho, Hear, Ho.

**THE FELLOWSHIP OF WINTER**

We hear about the products of the various seasons. Winter is not great on producing farm crops. But the most valuable product in the world, which is bread, can be very assiduously cultivated in winter.

There is some reason in imagining that winter conditions are especially favorable to produce friendly friends.

In summer you go off on popular frolics, and people flock the roads of the nation in their cars. But these pursuits don't draw people very closely together. You don't make many friends just by boistering at a ball game.

Winter drives the people indoors and tells them to create social life. That draws people close together. When you serve on some committee with somebody, you get closer to that person in an evening than you would in a week of general familiarity of the good old summer season.—R. M. Jefferies in Lowell Ledger.

**A GREAT BALONEY YEAR**

No matter how you spell it, it's still baloney. No matter how you spell it, it's still baloney. We should keep this in mind as we enter 1936 which may go down in history as the great baloney year.

The year has been the year of the big wind, the grasshopper year, the year of drought and the winter of the blue snow. Right ahead of us is what may go down in history as the great baloney year.

The new year is an election year and the baloney makers are already overhauling their vials preparatory to a record run. The gettings are on hand and baloney bulls are on their one-way trip to the packing plants. The boll weevil may work on cotton, the boll weevil may once again help curtail the corn crop, lentil freezes may nip the peaches and cherries, rat may be on their one-way trip in sight to prevent a great baloney year.

All of us might just as well learn to like it because it will be offered freely next year. — Vern J. Brown in Ingham County News.

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## Happenings of Long Ago

**FIFTY YEARS AGO**

Plymouth has a Chinese laundry man and a proud of her Ho Ho Swap.

H. A. Randall offers three deer for sale cheap.

George E. Daines will have his usual Washington birthday party. Look out for the crowd!

Ginger snap socials are the proper card in our sister villages. Can't we snap talk of her Ho Ho Swap?

A young lady's expense book was found in Uica, and an entry for Saturday last, which read: "Sunday School 1 cent, Black Jack 2 cents."

Hereafter Fred C. High and Miss Lizzie Toynton will drive double, having been married last week Wednesday, amid many friends and with great eclat.

A really interesting sketch of our new county jail, by a lady visitor, will appear in our next issue, as we were crowded out of room this week. But it is good and will safely keep over.

Mrs. G. W. Lane surprised and delighted her husband one day last week, by a birthday present of a beautiful and very valuable gold watch to mark a beginning for a suitable chain, his friend, M. K. Taber, gave him a fellow boy.

Fred Smith drove into town one day last week sitting on top of a big load horse and his horses on a dead run. At Blakeslee & Hanna's corner, he turned without slackening, the sled slowed to a stop, struck a hub and capsized, throwing Freddie sky high, paralyzing the spectators who expected to see him killed before their eyes, but fortune favors the brave, and Fred lives to laugh at the fears of his friends.

**TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO**

We received a letter yesterday in which an insignificant pin-head of little class wrote as follows: "I don't want my paper any longer."—followed by a page and a half of little class writing as follows: "I don't want my paper any longer." We couldn't make it any longer, if we wanted to. Our press will permit the publication of no larger sheet, so no different length goes. The writer will go on just as long as ever.

Some candidates for the office of sustenance are hustling for signatures. Three are in sight and some more out in the brush. Boys, the daily hustling is not a change unless charges are brought, and proved against the present incumbent, John L. Campbell. I don't think there will be any.

Dr. J. L. Campbell had a nice job patching up Joseph Smallbone's big collar bone, which he broke short off one day last week while fishing through the ice. Sliding on a small chunk of ice, Mr. S. slipped and fell with the above result. He is hustling along nicely, but the three pound picker he caught, didn't make half a meal for doctor's dinner.

**FIVE YEARS AGO**

Sunday, Father and Son Week opens with a union Boy Scout service at 11 a. m. in the Presbyterian church, with the Rev. W. Clarence Wright, youngest minister in Birmingham, conducting the services. Feb. 8 to 14 marks the 21st anniversary of Boy Scout activities.

A budget of \$82,850 was adopted by the Bloomfield Village Commissioners Tuesday night, \$38,000 of the amount to be raised by taxation. Revenue of \$24,850 is anticipated from the various departments.

Immediate cash payment of adjusted compensation certificates for World War veterans was emphatically urged in a formal resolution adopted Tuesday by the Charles Edwards Post No. 14 of the Birmingham American Legion at an executive meeting in the community house.