

The Birmingham Eccentric

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THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1937

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 submitted before noon on Wednesday. The right to
reprint, however, to make such material available to the
work presented as necessary to the style of the paper
and the editor's discretion. The editor cannot be held
responsible for any person, firm or corporation which may
appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be held
entirely responsible for the accuracy of the material.

Editor's Note: Vernon J. Brown, publisher of
The Ingham County News, Mason, and member
of the Michigan Legislature, writes the third
of a series of 12 "guest editorials" for The
Eccentric which will appear regularly during
the absence of Publisher George R. Averill.

Being Company

Unfortunately for this guest-editor, but perhaps
fortunately for the readers of the Birmingham Eccentric,
he has been quite impossible to get a personal
visit to the city and its environs for the pur-
pose of that intimate touch which any writer who
attempts the task should possess. What is said by this
editor will have to be generalized in its applica-
tion. What is known of Birmingham by this writer
has been gathered on previous casual visits, and by
such general knowledge as has been obtained by
other means.

There are two distinct types of newspapers. There
is that type of metropolitan journalism which makes
of the newspapers of that class something of a nation
wide and world wide interest. In traveling by the
modern method of leisurely motoring across the con-
tinent, one picks up at the end of each day's journey,
newspaper of the town in which he happens to
stop for the night. He scans the headlines for the
general news of the day. He looks carefully to see
if in the date lines there is some item from his own
state capital of the state in which he finds himself.
He reads the news from Washington and from for-
eign cities. Unless something out of the ordinary
he seldom glances at the local news columns, yet if
he is in his home city he would read that column
first of all. For the purpose of the traveler, the so-
journer, one paper is as good as another; in fact
one travels along all alone in an air of uniformity.
But for the other type, the genuine home news-
paper, one paper is as good as another; in fact
one travels along all alone in an air of uniformity.

There comes to the editorial desk of this writer
each week scores of home weeklies. No two are even
remotely alike. Each glows with the personality
of the editor and publisher. Each rings with the in-
imate doings of the inhabitants of that particular
locality. As one editor recently put it so concisely,
"Not pretending to concern itself greatly with the
world, the home weekly placidly minds the
business of its own neighborhood."
Thus is understood the statement when it is said
that each hometown newspaper carries each week an
intimate picture of the town and its inhabitants; the
desires, the hopes, the aspirations, the ideals of its
people; the business of its merchants; the welfare of
its back-country—the rural and agricultural region
tributary to it; a portrayal of its educational, cul-
tural, and character-building agencies. Without ever
actually visiting a town or small city, the observing
eye scanning each week the columns of its ex-
changes, actually becomes acquainted with a town.
He feels at home and among friends when finally he
does visit the place.

And so Birmingham is not actually a strange and
far away place to this writer even though the little
city, in its own normal mind, the rising country
of Ingham; snug and complacent in its stability and
security; content and satisfied with its mere escape
from want; not accustomed to ostentation nor pomp
—even though our own little city stands quite in
contrast to Birmingham.

The readers of the News greet the readers of the
Eccentric, extending the hand of fellowship and
common understanding in the problems of our great
state. We know Birmingham folk have hearts at-
tuned to certain characteristic ideals, unique and
symbolic of Birmingham alone and common only to
Birmingham. We realize you Birmingham folks care
not, and probably do not desire to know each other,
as intimately as we in the more rural communities
know each other but we know you like your town
and your ways just as we know and like ours.

So being company we hope to keep our company
manner with us—at least until this column is filled.
We shall refrain from giving that advice which is
handed out each week to our Mason readers, but
though little of it is taken by our own inhabitants,
we shall confine what is written for Birmingham
readers to those matters of your concern.

Drinks

One thought we gather from the columns of the
last issue of The Eccentric is in reference to liquor
control, so-called. It is noted that the great com-
monwealth of Michigan, recognizing, of course, the
need of Birmingham residents, has decided to locate
in your city one of the many state liquor stores in
control of the revenues of the state may be in-
creased and its vast monopoly thereby extended.

Those who at Lansing are faced with the problem
of balancing the expenses of the state against its
expenditures, turn naturally to the liquor control
commission for the latest news of "how much profit
we may expect the state to make on its liquor busi-
ness next year?" It is a natural question, but the an-
swer is not easy to obtain.

One day during the past week our own photo-
grapher snapped the pictures of nineteen drunk men
who were unloaded from Lansing's "Black Maria"
in front of the Michigan county jail. Eighteen of the

nineteen men, mostly young fellows, registered as
from the transient bummer maintained by the state
emergency welfare administration. Once it was sub-
sidized by the federal welfare authorities but for a
year or more it is maintained out of state funds
alone. It costs a lot of money. It accommodates a
lot of unmarried transients, able bodied men who
ought to be regularly employed. They receive free
board and room and what little work they do is paid
for in cash. Over the holiday week these posted
bums went on a general drunk. They wound up in
the courts and will be boarded at the expense of
Ingham county, tax payers for the next month.

How much profit comes from the liquor sold to
these men?

If there is no profit in this how much is there in
any of which the state sells?

Well, at any rate it is also noted that some of the
Birmingham folks still drink water, at least it is
recorded that a new 1,000-gallon well had been added
to the city water system. Or is this to be used
only for mixer purposes to take care of the trade
which the new liquor store is to create?

Selling Michigan
The value of advertising was brought to the front
recently when a Detroit resident came up state. He
confessed to some residents of north Michigan towns
where he stopped that this was his first visit north
or west of Lansing. He stated that he had toured the
west had visited Yellowstone and the Grand Can-
yon; had traveled the Rockies of the west and the
Alleghenies of the east—but he had never seen Michi-
gan. He further confessed that his first trip north
had been taken because while on a winter vacation
spent in Florida he had witnessed a showing of north
Michigan moving pictures exhibited by officials of
the four Michigan tourist associations.

This Detroit visitor had never seen his Michigan
was impressed with the scenic attractions shown on
the screen and at his first opportunity had taken a
week end to see some of the spots shown in picture.
He was delighted with his first venture and prom-
ised his listeners that he is to take a long trip north
to see more of his state.

It is strange that one who is to go to Florida to find
out about Michigan. Perhaps Michigan in its adver-
tising campaigns is scattering its shots too much.
Perhaps the rule of seeing America first might well
be paraphrased to make it read, "Sell Michigan to
Michigan first. Once sold, Michiganders will sell
Michigan to others."

School Taxes

Sunday the editor enjoyed a visit from a young
man of this vicinity, home for the holiday week-
end and employed in one of the more pretentious
schools of the state. The young teacher, now near-
ing the end of his first year in public school teach-
ing is well grounded. Even as a boy in high school he
gained a reputation for clear thinking. In college he
was outstanding in those courses where individual
thought is employed. He comes from one of the
most successful homes and the term "most success-
ful" is used with deliberate intent for a home is
successful when it produces successful young men
and women who go out into the world well pre-
pared to handle the life and demonstrate their
ability in this respect. This home has produced a
kind of young men and young women—an impres-
sive number of such in this day of small families.

This editorial is not intended to discuss family
affairs but the public schools. The family may be
considered in the background for the discussion
might be had.

What was said during the discussion led us to dig
up some statistics on the public schools of Michigan.
The history of state aid for the public school from its
inception, its long years under primary school inter-
ference, and its recent years under state revenue
in impressive amount have been turned into the
treasures of the school districts to aid in support of
operating costs.

The question was asked as to what theory was
behind the school aid we first presented. "If the
school district must face the financial responsibility
for support of the public school, why does the state
take any hand at all? If the state is to take a hand,
why does not the state do it, let certain standards
be followed everywhere and see that the taxpay-
ing public gets its money in a substantial way,
the question put by this young teacher.

This writer went to his files and extracted there-
from a report that was recently compiled by a com-
mittee of the Michigan Education association. Its
compilations are recent and its findings are generally
accepted as correct. At the close of the year 1935
contrasts are discovered as between the school dis-
tricts of the state. For instance, in the report is
found a list of districts grouped as to size, each
group being arranged alphabetically. On page 1,
1,399 are the districts in the size group of less than
1,000 and 1,329 inhabitants. Listed almost
by side are Algonac and Chassell. Algonac has
473 pupils enrolled and Chassell, 400. Taxable
property in the Algonac district amounts to \$7,760
per pupil while in Chassell it amounts to only \$467.
If the entire cost of operating the public school
were to be placed against the property to be found
in the respective local districts then either the Al-
gonac children would enjoy 10 times as fine school
facilities as the Chassell children would have or the
Algonac folks would pay taxes 10 times as great as
Algonac folks.

Bad Axe and Caro are two county seat towns in
the same section of the state. Broken down into as-
sessable property for each child enrolled in the
schools, Caro has two dollars to one found in the
Bad Axe district. Algonac and Chassell are nearly
apart geographically but each Midland pupil has
approximately two dollars of assessed valuation be-
hind him to one dollar, backing an Alton pupil.

So that is the answer to the young teacher's ques-
tion. It happens that in the district where our young
teacher is employed there is found less of revenue
but the property owners are insisting on keeping
within the 73-mill tax limitations and asking the
state at large to support the local schools. This
school is listed among those districts of 1,000 to
1,399 and its state classification is another seven
of approximately equal size. In the last mentioned
there is found only \$750 of assessed valuation for
each child enrolled in the schools while in the dis-
tricts where our young friend teaches, the ratio is
\$1,344 for each enrolled pupil.
The state has undertaken the huge task of doing
three things at once in its program of state aid for
the public school. (1) It seeks to guarantee at least
a minimum educational program to every child
born in Michigan whether it be in Algonac or Chassell,
Caro or Bad Axe. (2) To accomplish the first

IT'S GOOD EXERCISE, ANYHOW



objective it sets another, namely to lift standards
here and cut out extravagant and wasteful methods.
(3) To gradually work toward a common
standard in a state marked with such contrasts as
exist between Saugatuck with its \$136 per pupil
cost and Saint Louis with its \$41 per pupil cost.

The Sunday afternoon discussion brought both of
us new light on the school question.

Beauty

No state in the union can offer greater beauty
than Michigan in June. Just now in this section of
the state it is spring and its life time has passed.
Flowers are in bloom and the insects are busy.
The fruit orchards, following in close train, have
come roses and peonies and then a succession of
annuals for which this state is famous. Mention has
not been made of the millions of wild flowers which
carpet the outdoors of their own accord nor of the
various dog-wood and crab and other native
flowering shrubs and trees.

This being June the month of bloom provides a
suitable season to take note of the fact that thus
far the battle of the women—and a few men—who
belong to the federation of garden clubs, has not
been won. Garden club members last year entered
upon a campaign to rid the roadsides of Michigan
of the horrid "tacker signs" which mar the pleasure
of every motorist who delights in natural beauty
and to place some degree of control on the more
arbitrary signboards which commercial interests
erect.

Similar efforts in other states have succeeded. But
in Michigan where unparalleled beauty exists on every

hand until scarred and obscured by the rude hand
of commercialism, the matter of protecting this
beauty seems of little concern. Bills introduced at
the behest of garden club members, have languished
and still languish in the state legislature.

Garden club members of course are idealists. They
have to be to enjoy gardens. They appear to be
entirely supine when it comes to getting desired
legislation through the channels of lawmaking. Per-
haps they need to cut aside some of their idealism
and settle down to some real political strategy. Per-
haps they require some practical advice.

And In Closing

There is a peculiar feeling in writing such an
assignment as Editor George Averill gave to this
confederate. At home as we write floats before our
eyes the hundreds of personal friends and close
acquaintances which one enjoys in such a town as
Mason. By some token that spirit is lacking. Like a
hunter who fires his gun into the air, there comes
over this editor the feeling that he cannot lay the
whites of the eyes. However new friends are always
to be desired and that day which goes by and no
new face met and no new personality proved, seems
lost at least in part.

The world is wide. Humanity is far flung. Every-
where in every clime men and women pursue their
lives in total indifference to those of other climes.
And so it is that we who come to know our own
people so well frequently lose much in not knowing
others at least partially.

Thanks for reading if you have come as far as
this point.

WASHINGTON LETTER

BY SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Townsend Clubs Look to National Convention for New Impetus

WASHINGTON—Those hope-
fuls who look to Dr. Townsend
for the panacea for all ills, and
problems are encouraged by the
thought that the third national
convention of the Townsend clubs
will be held here late in July may give
the movement new impetus.
Dr. Townsend and his devoted
followers have not been very
well pleased by recent develop-
ments.

In an attempt to borrow
\$5,000,000 on his personal prom-
issory notes for loans of \$10 and
\$20 per person, Dr. Townsend encountered
the opposition of the Securities
Exchange Commission. The
commission explained that any-
one who offered notes to the
public for more than \$100,000,
and used the proceeds to finance
would have to file an application
for registration.
Bitterness over this incident
partially dictated the answer of
Townsend clubs throughout the
country that they would hold a
national convention this summer
in Washington's Potomac hotel,
which is located directly
across Pennsylvania avenue from
the SEC.

The doctor notified all those
who had already advanced him
money that unless they wished to
have him keep it as a gift, their
names would be returned. En-
thusiastic response to this an-
nouncement from individual
members and clubs has taken the
form of from \$10 to \$100 gifts.
When Dr. Townsend originally
asked for \$5,000,000 in loans to
be secured by his personal notes,
he said, "My personal assets are
at this time, aside from the Town-
send National Weekly which I
own, I have no other assets. I
already pledged to the Townsend
movement, are about \$500."
When J. W. Brainerd, manager
of the weekly, discovered recently
that some clubs were admit-

Random Remarks

Benjamin N. Cardozo, Associate
Justice, Supreme Court:
"One does not get away to be
a farmer because drought or wind
or pest may have rendered the
farm barren."

Harry L. Hopkins, Relief Admin-
istrator:
"People ought to be encouraged
to make profits; they cannot em-
ploy people if they don't make
profits."

Everett D. Martin:
"Philosophy is disturbing the
world now, not economics."

Henry F. Ashurst, Senator from
Arizona:
"Destiny distributes triumphs
and defeats with charming non-
chalance."

Rev. W. Harold Weigle:
"America is fast becoming the
most lawless nation in the world
today."

COMMENCEMENT DAY Though
this is their glorious day. Day
time and tide
in long chain of rhythmic days,
must bring
Sorrow and joy to them, their
heart will cling
To this one day forevermore.
To their pride,
The first beauty of their
youth, their joy
In victory, their earnestness, their
test.

To face and conquer life, to give
their best
Hail this day. Each happy girl
and boy
Stands at the crossroads, eager
Now to go
Life beckons them to tread the
untrodden road.
Their feet mark time—they gather
or up their load.
Armed now to vanquish every
evil foe,
This radiant day opens a mystic
door
That will swing wide for them
forevermore.
—Beatrice McDonald.

'My Country, 'Tis of Thee'...

By T. H. MILLINGTON

Roosevelt Hits A Bullseye
During the past week many
attacks have been made by editors
and commentators upon President
Roosevelt in his message to Con-
gress on the subject of tax-evasion.

This writer, in
reading the message, and
Secretary Morgenthau or the
President could have done less
without neglecting their duty.
The course of events is to
body that exaction by hundreds of
millions of dollars in income tax
and undistributed earnings tax, is
largely indulged in by those best
able to pay, and that such evasion
is a proportionately heavier tax
burden upon those less able to
pay.

Many commentators emphasize
the fact that it is the letter of the
law and not the moral principle
involved which determines tax
liability. I question that doctrine.
Some of the methods of evasion
used are pretty crude, and seem
to be no refinement in principle,
at least, upon a thief's establishment
of what is known as a "fence."

It is revealing such as these
which make it difficult to defend
and advocate the American sys-
tem. It is such bookkeeping dis-
honesty and exhibition of low moral
ethics which arouse the suspi-
cions and covetousness of the
rational element in society, leaving
the great mass of average citizens
placed between the very wealthy
and the very poor, thus bearing
the brunt of the actions from both
above and below.

The wealthy law-evader and the

lawless rioter both belong in the
same category. They belong to
that element in our country which
is so difficult to carry
the message to the masses. The
High idealism of citizens
ship contemplated by the creators
of the Constitution and the exalt-
ed moral personal responsibility
promised under the ten first
amendments (the so-called Bill of
Rights) all too often are absent
in those who have profited most
and generously from the freedom
action in their gaining of wealth
in this great country, and is large-
ly justified envy of the lawless el-
ement.

This personal freedom and in-
itiative, guaranteed under the Con-
stitution and the manifold bless-
ings flowing therefrom, and exist-
ing in no other country, are, in the
cases under discussion, the "cru-
cifix before us." It is today a
reality that there are those who
enjoy the fruits of the solid state
of citizenry left to hold over dem-
ocratic government. Enriched and
honest democratic government can
only be built and continued up-
on the enlightened and honest
citizenry.

If American democracy fails, it
will not be because we have a
"Roosevelt-Bugger" constitution.
It will not be because of the in-
adequacy of the Constitution. It
will be because of the lack of
standard penetrating not only our
political life but our social, econ-
omic and religious life as well.

Men who fail daily to do their
government, whether it be the
voters who defer it or the million-
aire who make it difficult to defend
and advocate the American sys-
tem. It is such bookkeeping dis-
honesty and exhibition of low moral
ethics which arouse the suspi-
cions and covetousness of the
rational element in society, leaving
the great mass of average citizens
placed between the very wealthy
and the very poor, thus bearing
the brunt of the actions from both
above and below.

PEOPLE'S COLUMN

To the Editor,
Birmingham Eccentric.

Dear Sir:
Last Friday afternoon I attend-
ed the final Assembly of the High
School students and the induct-
ion of nine of them into the National
Honor Society, by Gross Pointe
high school students.

It was the most satisfying cer-
emony conducted by young men
and women I ever witnessed. Mal-
vin Hart, Principal of the High
School, and the Faculty, must be
congratulated for their part in the
attainment of these honored
students, but in the decorum and
respectful attention of the 600
high school students.

A definite goal was pointed to
these boys and girls of Birming-
ham. They should have before them
are: Education, Leadership, Ser-
vice, and Character. I feel com-
pelled that the final decision of the
Juries must have been very close,
and after all, the inner realization
of one's achievement is not only
the most important reward. As one
rather shy, but persistently in-
dustrious boy said to me later, "I
never make the Honor Society." I
told him I was sure that he would
be so fine a citizen as any induct-
ed into the Society. He is clean,
honorable and ambitious.

About a score of parents with
them the ceremony, and the hon-
or given their sons and daughters
could not but reflect on them, and
on their homes. Understanding,
encouragement, a sustained guid-
ance of healthy living, with em-
phasis on enough REST, must have
motivated the routine in these
homes, always.

Isn't it true that we publicized
some of the good deeds of our
young citizens, and our older
citizens? We have held the
misdeeds. I recommend to the
National Honor Society that at
each induction of High School
Graduates, an Alumni of pre-
vious decades be similarly honored
for his proved "A" ranking citi-
zenship in our Democracy. His
qualifications being based entirely
on Leadership, Service, Character,
and an unspurred thirst for Ed-
ucation, and Knowledge.

MRS. H. A. CORSON,
Prin. Baldwin P. T. A.
To Melvin C. Hart, Principal,
Baldwin High School,
Birmingham, Michigan.
Dear Mr. Hart:
We were greatly surprised and
regret very much to learn that you
are to be coming to the Principal of
the Baldwin High School next year.

Your service to Birmingham
in the position you have held for
the past eighteen years, and the
influence of your life can never be
measured in terms of dollars. We
feel greatly indebted to you for the
dignified and efficient leader-
ship you have given, our children
and the community. Your stimulat-
ing and constructive influence has
been felt not alone in intellectual
life of our growing youth, but in
their spiritual development also.
As a member of the First Meth-
odist Church and as an official we
have come to know that your in-
terest was always that of a devoted
and consistent layman. We
shall miss you greatly from our
community if you decide to leave
this community. We want to
extend to you and to Mrs. Hart our
deepest appreciation for the ser-
vice you have rendered and trust
that the way will open to larger
fields of labor in the work which
you are so capable to render, and
to which you have devoted your
life.

With every good wish we re-
main, cordially yours,
The Official Board of the
First Methodist Church,
Birmingham, Mich.
By order of the Official Board
in session June 7th, 1937.

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