The Birmingham Eccentric

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NOTE: The Eccentric is pleased to publish stories of events which have news value and which are written by persons not connected with the editorial staff of the paper. All copy must be presented before noon on Wednesdays. The right is reserved, however, to make such superficial changes in the work submitted as are necessary to the style of the paper and as are required by laws of the state. Because of a mechanical situation in the composing room, headlines written by those other than members of the staff cannot be used. Any erroneous reflection upon the character, standing or reputation of any person, firm or corporation which may appear in the columns of The Eccentric will be gladly corrected upon being brought to the attention of the publisher.

Willkie Wins G.O.P. Trust

Nomination of Wendell L. Willkie by the Republican Party as its candidate for President of the United States is the healthiest civic condition we have observed for more than a generation.

Here is a man who never before sought a political office, skyrocketed by sheer public demand in less than 50 days to his stellar place in Republican circles; here is a former Democrat, if you please, who voted for Mr. Roosevelt in 1932, about to challenge the Democratic Party for residence in the White House; here is a man who has not "played the game of politics," who owes no predatory allegiance to any group; here is a man who rose from humble beginning to head a great utility corporation, paying him $75,000 per year; here is a man who fought the New Deal's unfair inroads into the realm of private business who fought them so fairly that he even won their respect.

Here is our nation's contemporary "man of destiny," able, forceful, leaning toward the "under-dog."

In Wendell L. Willkie, in our humble estimation, the United States has a man whose interest in the nation even transcends mere partisanship; a man whose sole ambition will be to preserve our Constitution, and the right of individuals to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Mr. Willkie may be counted on to give a good account of himself. We believe that he will endeavor to defend the case of the average American; he will wage his campaign upon the premise that individual honest effort is entitled to reward, and that it is no crime to be a success.

Indeed, Mr. Willkie is the type of man who ought to have been selected by his own Party in 1932 and 1936; for Mr. Willkie, unlike Mr. Roosevelt, has had to make his own way in life; he is, therefore, not a theorist, but an experienced chap who knows how to fit blue-prints to the realities of life.

So we salute Wendell L. Willkie, the next President of the United States.

Civil Liberties In Birmingham

Last Thursday evening, three very foolish young Birmingham men rode about in an automobile, carrying toy pistols and wearing masks, and when they stopped at a service station at Woodward and Oak, to pick up a friend, they were mistaken for holdup men. Not long afterward, they were arrested and jailed for the night. Next day, the Oakland County Prosecutor's office dismissed the case.

It was probably quite proper for Birmingham police to hold suspected persons overnight, but we fail to see the necessity or justice in holding these prisoners or any others incommunicado. While that appears to be a fairly common practice, it is still reprehensible, especially when the prisoners are of families known in the community, and when they have never been arrested before. Unlike the practice of Hitler and Stalin, American law presumes a suspected person innocent until proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and as long as that is the case, there is no reason why Birmingham residents should be held in jail for hours, denied the privilege of communicating with friends.

Asked about the matter, Police Chief John P. Hackett admitted that prisoners were sometimes denied the right to telephone friends. "It depends on the nature of the offense," he said.

In the case last week, this abridgement of civil liberty served no conceivable end except to punish the boys. (Incidentally, it caused great worry to the parents of the missing trio.) But the job of the police here is not to punish, unlike the situation in Germany and Russia where the Gestapo and Ogpu are a terroristic separate branch of the government, answerable to no one but the dictator. In America, only the courts have the legal power to inflict punishment. Let's keep it that way.

TWO MILLION TWO HUNDRED thousand more Americans will be called upon, starting next year, to pay income taxes. This was assured by Congress when it passed the statute to raise money for the more than four and a half billion dollar defense plans for this nation. Married persons must pay on all income above $2,000, instead of $2,500; single persons from $800 instead of $1,000. Thus does an evil world, requiring war to settle international differences, cause people to spend money that ought to go for more humane needs.

IN 1939 OUR NATION'S salt output was the largest in history, totalling 9,277,911 tons. We don't know what the pepper output has been, or the sand—but plenty of the latter is needed today to cement the selfish factions in a spirit of unanimous endeavor for national defense.

BY THE WAY, the newspapers seem to have overlooked entirely one actual candidate for President: Norman Thomas, on the Socialist Party ticket.

People Tired of "Politicians"

We are writing this before the Republicans in Philadelphia have nominated their candidate for President. We don't as yet know who won that nomination, but we are struck with the almost meteor-like rise of Wendell Willkie, as a candidate for that honor. Mr. Willkie's sudden ascendency is proof that the American public is really "fed up" on mere politicians; it is proof that American business, if it ever engages ethically in politics, and puts forth candidates of proven ability and character, Tmerican business can do much to make democracy work in the United States. In the planning of and production of wealth, if American industry's business and financial leaders were no more competent than are most American public officials in high places, America would not produce much wealth, and our standard of living would be much lower than it is. Willkie's rise ought to give this nation renewed faith and hope in the future, for his popularity when this was written (Tuesday of last week) proves absolutely that the American people are willing to recognize qualities of able leadership when they are presented. (Since writing the above, Willkie won the G.O.P. nomination.)

Bosses Honor Critic

Several weeks ago we revealed our personal feelings upon having been selected as a Republican Presidential-Elector-at-large when the State Convention was held at Grand Rapids. Here is what our friend, Floyd J. Miller, publisher of the nearby Royal Oak Daily Tribune has to say on the same subject:

A lot of laughs have been going on up around Michigan the last few days because George R. Averill, editor of The Birmingham Eccentric, has been named as one of Michigan's Republican presidential electors.

Averill is deserving enough of such an honor, but it seemed an odd thing that he should be named for it by a state convention so completely controlled by the party bosses whom he has been lambasting on every possible occasion. That's just one of the queer things about politics.

By this time I presume he has received his official credentials. At any rate he did not attend the convention and knew nothing about the honor until he arrived in Cheboygan in company with Rep. Elton R. Eaton of Plymouth and myself on our way to the Upper Peninsula. There, another Republican friend was the first to give him the laugh and inquire (with a smile, of course) if he had sold out to Frank McKay and Ed Barnard. You know how one pal likes to make another one squirm.

This sort of situation, though, is not unusual in politics, as Averill has since pointed out in his own newspaper. In discussing the matter frankly, he made it plain that he was just as opposed as ever to the boss situation in the Republican party. In fact, Averill is president of the Michigan Fourth Estate Group, composed principally of weekly and small daily publishers who are trying to let a little daylight into political rule in Michigan.

It seemed to me that this act on the part of the bosses was a way of announcing that their control of the convention was so absolute that they could even name one of their foremost critics to an honorary position. If they thought they were going to embarrass Averill, though, they were mightily fooled, for he has announced again, and loudly, that he is just as determined as ever to help oust the McKay-Barnard machine. Having done that (and we all know it's the truth) he is going to fool them in turn by accepting the job.

It doesn't mean much, but it's a nice bit of political by-play.

Proud France Not Broken

France, perhaps as proud as any nation on earth, has bowed its head and shoulders for the yoke of bondage that Germany has placed upon it. Historians will probably reveal that, in the main, France lacked a dependable leadership of character—all men and women, especially in its political realms. France was corroded with cheap politics, even with traitors in its Chamber of Deputies. While we personally lament France's defeat, we agree with those who hold that some day it will rise again—stronger, cleaner, and more capable of enduring, because of the burden its people must bear for at least a generation to come. If Germany's treatment of her vanquished foes is not decent and fair, Germany can expect its own defeat when, by the very nature of future events, natural law immutably declares that evil always destroys itself.

AT LAST MURRAY D. VAN WAGONER, State Highway Commissioner, has announced his candidacy for Governor, on the Democratic ticket, this fall. "Pat," as he is known to thousands in this State, is a pretty well-liked chap—many Republicans think highly of the Oakland County man; he certainly will give his opponents a good fight. If Governor Dickinson is the Republican nominee. Mr. Van Wagoner will probably win the support of many otherwise Republicans.

NEVER IN THE CONTEMPORARY history of Michigan was there such clear-cut evidence that "political bosses" are directing the affairs of this Commonwealth. If Governor Dickinson has the personal courage of character, which he is supposed to have, he ought to admit that Bosses McKay, Barnard, and McKeighan control his administration. This trio was in much evidence at Philadelphia; many pictures were taken of the Governor, several showing him with the Bosses.

CITIZENS OF THESE United States do need more self-discipline. Personally, the editor of this newspaper believes in the necessity of sacrifice to preserve this great nation. To pay for adequate national defense we are willing to work for a year—or the remainder of our life, if need be—to provide money for Uncle Sam to build up strong defenses. We would hope, of course, that very little of the money went to grafters or politicians.

'YOU'LL HAVE TO TRAIN FOR THE TITLE!'

People's Column

The Eccentric is pleased to receive communications for this column. All communications must be signed, but signatures will be withheld if accidental upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words, and must be in the office by Tuesday noon for publication the following Thursday.

German Competition

(Editor's Note: In last week's Eccentric there appeared on the editorial page an article by Dr. V. O. Watts, economist and counsel in that field for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. He maintained that American business men have and will be able to hold their own in Latin America, made in fact have been gaining while Germany lost. The war will reduce further Germany's ability to compete, he believes. Further figures on the point appear herewith.)

To The Editor:

My article on "Yankee Traders Can Hold Their Own" referred to figures given by the Pan-American Union, Washington, D. C., in their bulletins No. 178 and 178A.

These figures show the following republics which they term the "Latin American Republics": Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela.

The United States has for sometime been the most important seller and buyer for all of these republics except Argentina and Uruguay. In Argentina, we rank second to Great Britain and fall behind especially on our purchases from Argentina. In the case of Uruguay we are usually second to Great Britain but in the last two or three years have ranked behind Germany as well owing to an agreement made not long ago between Germany and Uruguay.

You may be interested in some of the following figures. In 1939 we sold to Colombia 25.3% of her imports and bought 60.9% of her exports; for Costa Rica the figures were respectively 56.8% and 45.6%; for Cuba, 75.3% and 74.0%; for Ecuador, 48.7% and 49.1%; for Honduras 65.3%, 90.7%; for Gautemala, 1.2%, 65.8%; for Mexico, 62.2%, 72.0%; for Nicaragua, 68.4%, 77.5%; for Peru, 41.1%, 30.4%; for El Salvador, 47.5%, 60.9%.

Since 1913 the increase in our sales to these Latin American countries has been noticeably greater than the increase in our purchases from them.

In 1939 from Argentina we sold 17.2% of her imports as against 19.9% by United Kingdom and took 11.9% of her exports as against 32.9% for the United Kingdom. To Uruguay we sold 5.2% of her imports as against 18.3% by United Kingdom and 16.4% by Germany. From her we took 13.9% of her exports as against 18.5% taken by United Kingdom and 12.4% taken by Germany.

Ordinarily of course our commodity imports from Latin America are somewhat greater than our commodity exports on account of the fact that we look to Latin America shipping, banking, and insurance services as well as services of our capital—all of which constitute sales but do not appear in the figures for commodities.

V. O. WATTS.

To the Editor:

Kindly permit me to add to the article pertaining to myself in your last issue. The publication mentioned in a catalog of books, pamphlets and articles on cremation, including the collection of the Cremation Association of America; that are now in the John Crerar Library in Chicago. I founded the latter nucleus of cremation literature in the Windy City while President of the C. A. of A. in 1915 and have been connected with the above-mentioned great library ever since as a member of its book committee. The collection has grown by leaps and bounds. From 17 items which it contained at its inception it has now increased to 1,131 items, including some that are priceless because they could not be duplicated.

The John Crerar Library is one of the two great reference libraries in Chicago, the Newberry being the other. It was founded in 1894 when the late John Crerar, a Chicago merchant, endowed it with $2,500,000. It now occupies its own building on Randolph street, opposite the Chicago Public Library.

The only connection the Cremation Association of America (of which, by the way, J. Howard Wendorph of this city is now president,) has with the aforesaid collection is to make annual appropriations for it which are expended by the book committee. Copies of the catalog will be forwarded to every member of the national cremation society, the remainder being distributed among the larger libraries throughout the country. Anybody interested will find a copy at the Baldwin Public Library.

In addition to a statement on the title-page of the catalog that the edition was printed in honor of Crerar's birthday, I received a specially bound copy with the following inscription in the handwriting of J. Christian Bay, the librarian: "To Dr. Hugo Erichsen—With the respects and gratitude of the John Crerar Library."

It is a very great honor and duly appreciated.

HUGO ERICHSEN, M. D.,
President Emeritus; Cremation Association of America.

Happenings of Long Ago

50 YEARS AGO
July 3, 1890

Hot weather is really quite refreshing. Maurice Blair of Clawson is shipping large numbers of baseball bats of his own manufacture.

Those promoted by Miss Mamie Young, teacher of the grammar room at the school, without examination are Bertha Bigelow, Anna Cooper, Maude Keyser, Bert Quarton, Fred Quarton, Frances Quick and Estella Ward.

Miss Nella Smith, of Clarkston, is here again to assist her grandmother, Mrs. M. Smith, in the bakery.

25 YEARS AGO
July 2, 1915

Two accidents on the D. U. R. Monday night a car hit a wagon load of household goods and baled hay just north of the village, while Tuesday, a car hit a big truck loaded with a huge crane and steel rails. Passengers were hurt.

Alex Grant, carpenter employed by J. C. Young, drowns in Straits Lake.

Judson Bradway is just about buying all the land adjoining him. He has acquired the Trowbridge Farm for $65,000.

W. I. Deer and son Frank have installed a fine porcelain fountain or wash basin with running hot and cold water at all times. They now have a model shop.

What a cold, backward June this has been!

Fink Bros. 4 1-2x36, $28.70, at Oakland Garage.

5 YEARS AGO
July 2, 1935

Earl G. Potter is the new president of the school board.

Eighty-five men have applied for the post of headmaster of Cranbrook school.

Mrs. J. B. Howarth has passed away.

Beer drinking in alleys must stop, City Manager Parry says.

Treasurer Carson, Assessor Egbert, Clerk Hanley and Health Officer Kemp have all been given raises in salary.

Congressional Comment

by Representative George A. Dondero (17th Michigan District)

State of Our National Defense

Last week I devoted my remarks to information as to the amount of certain essential military equipment "on hand" and "on order." This week I give data concerning the condition of the Navy.

According to the report of the Navy Department, we had, as of May 1, 1940, the following vessels in commission:

Battleships	15
Heavy Cruisers	18
Light Cruisers	19
Aircraft Carriers	6
Destroyers	188
Submarines	63
Mine Layers	36
Patrol Boats	43
Auxiliaries	122
Miscellaneous	23

Of the battleships listed, 3 are over age; 2 of the light cruisers are over age; 116 of the destroyers are over age; and 42 of the submarines are over age.

In addition to the number of vessels given in the table, the Navy Department reports the following vessels not in commission:

Destroyers	25
Submarines	37

Under Construction

As of May 1, 1940, the Navy Department reports the following vessels under construction:

Battleships	8
Aircraft Carriers	1
Cruisers	6
Destroyers	27
Submarines	14
Tenders	8
Mine Sweepers and Layers	1
Repair Ships	1

Eventual Total

A consolidation of these tables shows that the nation is to have, upon the completion of vessels now under construction, a Navy of the following strength:

Battleships	23
Cruisers	42
Aircraft Carriers	7
Destroyers	256
Submarines	114
Mine Layers	47
Patrol Boats	43
Auxiliaries	133
Miscellaneous	23

Included in the foregoing totals are the 35 destroyers and the 47 submarines not now in commission.

Apparently

Recently a contralto broadcast from the bottom of an American harbor. A deep C diva.—Humorist.

Fifth Column

A CAST-OFF doll donated to a California toy-lending library turned out to be a rare French trinket worth $2000. There is no truth to the rumor that it will be swapped for 4000 Maginot lines.

* * *

A Canadian magistrate recently dismissed a dog bite case with the theory that every dog is entitled to at least two bites before being punished. Only question remaining for some Portia to settle: how big may the bites be?

* * *

Germany, despite pre-war glucoses, has not yet run out of oil, food, munitions, or nations to conquer.

* * *

A Missouri inventor has patented a parachute which he says is absolutely foolproof—the user doesn't even have to pull a rip-cord. If fellows like that would only devote their attentions to the airplane—.

Knocking on Wood!

with JOHN H. HARWOOD

"WHAT sort of a guy is this Wendell Willkie?" millions of Americans were asking themselves last Friday morning when news of the Republican convention blitzkrieg filtered through to the hinterland on blaring radios. "I never heard of him until two weeks ago," was the remark heard on many sides. Yet, many have the feeling that he will be the next President of the United States.

Attention of this observer was first drawn to Willkie several years ago when the New Deal was attempting its squeeze play in the South with the Tennessee Valley Authority, and president of the company most concerned was speaking right out loud in church—flaying Mr. Roosevelt to a fare thee well. Yet, plenty of people have been doing that ever since Mr. R told Chief Justice Hughes "I will" on March 4, 1933.

Another Variety

But Mr. Willkie is different, it seems. Instead of being an arch-constructed, dyed-in-the-wool, Union League, mossbacked, die-hard wheelhorse politician, of which the people are getting tired, or a reactionary business man who hasn't had a new idea since McKinley, Mr. Willkie is apparently somewhat of a liberal. Not only that, he is a big man with ability, personality and a flair for winning people's confidence.

William Allen White, the eminent Emporia editor, asked this question in a recent article he wrote about Willkie: Is he just a pretty smooth guy or has he really something on the ball? Is he ruggedly honest in his brutal candor or is it merely the approach of a smooth bond salesman?

Wrote Mr. White:

"I can hardly qualify as an expert witness in testifying for Mr. Willkie. I have seen him just three times. I have talked with him for perhaps half an hour. I have watched him in action at short range, a matter of ten or twelve feet away, and have heard him speak off the record two or three times. And I like him? I am satisfied that his independence is genuine. I had read several pounds of the propaganda stuff about him that is being sent out from Wall Street and points west. I am prepared to say it is by all odds the slickest literary goosegrease that I have taken out of the second class mail for a long time. The appeal of this stuff is that Willkie is displaying in his samble case, business experience; the business man's scorn of political expedients; a frankness that is a kind of intransigent don't-give-a-damnitiveness about political traditions and conventions; a general political attack which will settle the balance between Andrew Jackson with his "to the victor belong the spoils," and old Commodore Vanderbilt's public be damned."

To me this seems genuine chiefly because Willkie was once an unreconstructed hickory-shirt and blue-jeans Democrat."

Indeed, Willkie's economic platform is particularly attractive to this observer. We have warmly applauded Mr. Hull's reciprocal trade agreements as a step away from American self-contained tariff rates which have been a great tax on consumers for the special benefit of certain industries and groups. The GOP nominee apparently believes much as the same as the 1,000 economists who protested Hoover's signing of the Hawley-Smooth bill in 1930, helping bring this country and the world into a mire of depression.

Sound Economics

Mr. Willkie also has bragged about the fact that his company has discovered the amazing if economic truth that one of the very fundamentals of capitalism—that prices can be cut but consumption increased so that the consumers get a bigger dollar and the producer loses nothing because of greater sales. Because producers don't see this truth, or are hesitant to try the idea, is the biggest reason for our 10,000,000 unemployed. Willkie's company cut its rates in half and doubled its sales, but Democrats insisted that this was done with fewer of TVA competition. At any rate, it was done.

The only fly in the ointment, as far as this servitneer is concerned, is the question of Mr. Willkie's foreign policy. How much does he agree with the President that America must again save the world for Democracy by fighting an European war?

All in all, it should be an interesting campaign for the Republicans have chosen a man, unlike any of their candidates in years, who can stand on his toes and slug it out with the opponent. And if he should be elected, his record certainly can be no worse than some of those made by the many mediocre politicians and soldiers the Bosses in the past have picked to run for president. This time the Bosses were badly spoft.

In fact, with nothing to lose, this commentator will even go so far as to climb out on a limb and predict that Willkie is the Messiah that the Republicans have long been crying for in the wilderness.

The Real Issue

War vs. Peace is the real issue of the campaign, declares the Detroit News, following the lead of The Birmingham Eccentric—without a doubt!

"Popular sentiment still is steadfast in opposing war, and no political party will openly defy it," says The News.

"Nevertheless, intervention vs. isolation will be the issue, either more or less clearly formulated. As is noted, the nearer it comes to a flat choice between war and peace, the better it will be, in all likelihood for the future of America.

"The time has arrived for facing squarely an issue too long obscured by emotionalism, which national leadership at Washington has been at no pains to dispel. Indeed, there have been desperately few voices raised, either in or out of Washington, for facing this issue as it needs to be faced, rationally and realistically."

PARAGRAPHS

Literal Interpretation

Little Wilfred had been absent from Sunday school and the teacher called to inquire why. "The real reason," said the boy's mother, "is because I fear he is learning things that only tend to make him mischievous."

"Mischievous!" exclaimed the astonished teacher. "Really, I don't understand how Sunday school could have that effect on him."

"You see," explained the parent, "it's like this. The last time Wilfred went to Sunday School he came home convinced that people are made of dust, and I found him trying to draw his little sister into the vacuum cleaner."

Uncalled for Sympathy

Mrs. Greener (at her first football game)—Oh, isn't it awful? I'm sure they will kill that poor boy underneath.

Daughter—Don't be silly, mother! He doesn't mind it; he's unconscious by this time.

Just Absent-Minded

Judge—You maintain that you threw your wife out of the second story window through forgetfulness?

Prisoner—Yes, your honor. You see, we used to live on the ground floor and I'd clean forgotten we'd moved.

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