HOME BUILDING AND GARDEN NEWS

Detroit Paper Describes Birmingham 50 Years Ago

(Fifty years ago, the editor of the Detroit Evening News sent out a reporter and Joseph Knaemer, artist, to do a "piece" about that sleepy village to the north, Birmingham. The article must have tickled the fancy of the then editor of The Eccentric, for he reprinted it in full. The editor today is likewise amused a half century later, and the article is printed again.)

LOVELY BIRMINGHAM

One of Detroit's Beautifully Shaded Suburbs

Some of the Principal Features of this Quaint Village

A Local Oddity—A Water System Supplied by a Flowing Well—Extraordinary Burglar Story—New Feature of Landlordism—Detroiters Who Live in Birmingham.

Eighteen miles from the metropolis nestles in a mass of foliage the quaint old town of Birmingham. Probably, notwithstanding the proximity of this charming place, few Detroiters know much about it or have ever been there.

Settled in 1819

Birmingham was first settled in 1819, and was incorporated a village in 1865. It boasts of a commodious hotel called "The National" where is dispensed such wholesome food and simple entertainment as the stranger has a right to expect. Those who prefer it would find little difficulty in obtaining accommodation for a long or short period in private houses where boarders are taken. The manufactories of the place are not extensive, consisting of three flour and two saw mills, the chief articles of export being lumber, hardwood and farm produce.

The town consists of two principal streets, viz., Maple and Saginaw avenues, both of them wide thoroughfares lined with beautiful shade-giving trees. These avenues intersect and at their point of intersection the chief business of the town is conducted. Here Messrs. Whitehead & Mitchell are building a bank, and here also are situated the chief stores and hotel. Saginaw avenue is the Woodward avenue of Birmingham, and here are many handsome residences surrounded by their well kept lawns and gardens.

Situated in the midst of a well wooded and undulating country, it is remarkable that the wearied Detroit citizens have not discovered in Birmingham an agreeable suburban resort, where the simple pleasures of a country life may be enjoyed, if only as a relaxation from the gayeties and turmoil of the city. Perhaps this is partly due to the inadequate suburban train service, but no one can doubt that the time is at hand when the railroad company will see that suburban traffic is not to be sneezed at, and with an improved service of trains one may look to see wonders in this direction.

Not Exactly Booming

Notwithstanding a recent attempt by land speculators to push their subdivision near the depot, Birmingham can hardly be said to be booming rapidly. It is not, however, by any means a deserted village. One may look in vain for copses

"where once a garden smiled
And still where many a garden
flower grows wild."

There are, however, many beautiful gardens and houses, and a Detroiter who resolved to build for himself a country house in Birmingham need have no fear of being buried alive.

Immense Reservoir

The water system of Birmingham is worthy of special notice. The water is deep. It runs into an immense reservoir 50 feet deep and over 60 feet in circumference. A 60 horse-power engine pumps the water directly into the mains. The water works were erected on the Holly system at a total cost of $17,000.

The intellectual as well as the physical needs of the town are cared for in the establishment of a public school where over 200 children receive instructions, a library of 2,000 volumes, and the publication of a bright little weekly newspaper The Eccentric which it is only fair to say has nothing eccentric about it but its name. The proprietors of The Eccentric are Messrs. Whitehead & Mitchell, and these gentlemen are veritable hustlers, for besides the newspaper they run a grocery and drug store, a bank, and a telephone office. They also engage in real estate.

Tenant Farmers

There is growing up about Birmingham a class of tenant farmers renting, or working on shares, for the benefit of the former occupier of the farm. Among those who thus rent out their farms may be mentioned Major Jones, a miller who owns a farm which he rents; Julius F. Rundel, a prominent sheep breeder and importer of the famous Shropshire and other breeds, his son working the farm on shares; Frank Ford, who owns a farm in Troy, his brother working it for him on shares; M. K. Taber, who owns a large farm, also in Troy, which he rents out, and Orin Poppleton, a wealthy landowner. Mr. Poppleton is rather a remarkable character, and owns extensive pine lands in the South.

The Poppletons Score!

It may be confidently asserted that there are no flies on Mr. Poppleton. Some years ago some burglar took it into his head to carry the war into the Poppleton camp. It is not easy to catch Poppletons asleep. Accordingly the burglar met with a warm reception. The Poppletons, father and son, hearing a noise in the night, sprang from their warm couches, and arming themselves with revolvers prepared, like "the stronf man armed," in the Scriptures, to keep their house and to do or die in defense of lares and penates. A council of war was held, and it was arranged that one should slam a door to frighten the felonious intruder, while the other potted him from a convenient ambush. All went just as was expected. The burglar was frightened and put his head out of a window, and as he did so pop! went Mr. Poppleton's poggun, and Mr. Burglar was hurried out of an unsympathizing world unobserved.

Another some what noted man in Birmingham is Wesley Faint, the father of Lena Faint, a little girl of 13, whose fame contributions to The Sunday News give evidence of future promise. Wesley Faint is a painter, and thinks nothing of an 18 mile walk to Novi and 10 hours' work when he gets there. Mr. Faint is a good deal of a humorist, and has his own opinion on a good many interesting and disputed subjects. He is not exactly a dogmatic theologian, but said, apropos to Joshua's remarkable power of continuing the sunshine, that he (Joshua) was "a sort of a Jesus-ma nto work for by the job."

Detroit Commuters

There are several Detroiters interested in Birmingham; among them are J. R. Cooper, the coppersmith, who has a 100-acre stock farm in Birmingham; G. A. Wasgins, general state agent for the Pennsylvania life insurance company, who owns a farm of over 300 acres in Birmingham and breeds Shetland ponies and Jersey cattle; Julian Leet, agent for the Bolton heating and lighting company, of Detroit, who is building a house according to plans of C. Varney & Co., the local architects. The peculiarity of this house is that its walls are partly composed of stones taken from the famous battle fields of America, and which bear appropriate inscriptions. Horace Randolph, a old traveling man for K. D. Baker's American Eagle Tobacco Co., Detroit, has built himself a pleasant residence on Maple avenue, surrounded by beautiful grounds and enjoying an extensive and charming view of the country. Miss Martha Baldwin is the principal of the Norvell School, Detroit, and Miss Post is a teacher in the Wilkins school. Both of these teachers retire to Birmingham at the end of the week to spend the day of rest in the country. Other Detroiters residing at Birmingham are Mr. Quick, freight agent of the Grand Trunk and other railroads; Mr. Sherrer, Mr. Patton, of the Milwaukee railroad, Mr. Akin and Mr. Wilson.

Among the oddities of the place is Leo Mathewson, a species of natural Huckleberry Finn. The gazette News article caught him shooting sparrows. As a sparrow shooter he is generally allowed to be null secundus. He is personally remarkable to eccentricity, and his face bears the stamp of rural simplicity associated with the idea of "elaborate duplicity" in a public scarecrow. It only remains to add that Lee's father is a Seventh Day Adventist, a circumstance that occasionally results in religious controversy with his son. Although Lee is an institution, in fact quite one of the sights of Birmingham (if one may be permitted a pun), He is not, however, as ferocious as his name implies.

2 Fires in 13 Years

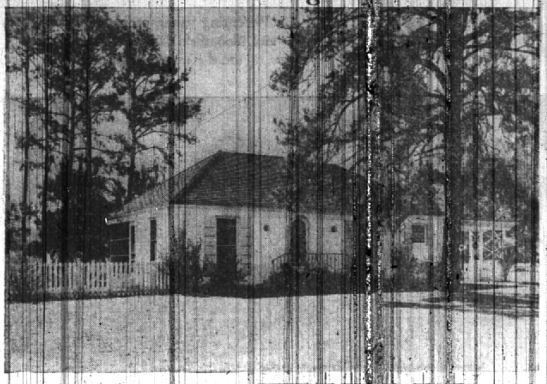
Another institution, but from a different point of view, is Mr. Partridge, page grandfather of the Mysone body fire, Michigan. He was caught in the act as he was sauntering down Saginaw street, a jaunty man and a dandy.

Birmingham is happy in only one instance, namely, from fire, only two fires having occurred in the town.

This pleasant town is the place to spend a happy day. The News says, say "See Naples and die." The good people of Birmingham, on the contrary, say, "See Birmingham and live forever."

Although it would appear from a recent letter in The Eccentric that there are some so ruthless as to advise it to "shun Birmingham like a pestilence." The News thinks otherwise, and that is any consolation to the Birminghamites.

Modern Home Has Dignity and Charm



A house to delight those who need only a few rooms but wish them generous in size. The screened porch, deep casement windows, and double-purpose arbor give distinction and a sense of size that is impressive.

The plan is economically and conveniently arranged. There is much light and a feeling of openness. The dining room, opening from the well-proportioned living room, gives a feeling of additional spaciousness and yet provides for necessary privacy. No space is wasted, and ample closet space is provided for both bedrooms.

The fine details, the pleasing fenestration, the contrasting entrance and the excellent proportions of this modern home located in the Southwest give it an unusual case. This property was assigned a valuation of $4,650 by the Federal Housing Administration. Monthly payments on a maximum mortgage in relation to the valuation, over a period of 25 years, would average about $21, exclusive of taxes and hazard insurance. Similar properties located in other cities will vary in cost.

Defense Bond Quiz

Q. What is a U. S. Defense Savings Bond.

A. This bond is proof that you have loaned money to the United States Government for national defense. Your Bond bears interest at the rate of 2.9 percent a year, if held to maturity (ten years).

Q. Why should I buy Defense Bonds.

A. Because money talks. The dictators it speaks defiance; To friends of freedom, it says, "Here's my hand!"

To purchase Defense Bonds and Stamps, go to the nearest post office or bank, or write to the Treasurer of the United States, Washington, D. C.

Job-Lo Trips Business Indicator

Despite of unfavorable weather, business of the Job-Lo Food Company has increased approximately 20 per cent over the corresponding period in 1940, Ralph G. Fletcher, general manager, reported this week.

Both the number of group reservations, and the number of individual fare-paying riders have increased, Fletcher said. On the basis of the current outlook, the company expects about 135,000 advance bookings, as compared with 100,000 in the 1940 season.

Use an Eccentric Classified Ad for quick results.

Gardeners' Corner

Doris T. Patten, Editor

Mock Orange or Philadelphus

It is nearly past blooming time for the mock orange, well known botanically as Philadelphus and popularly as syringa. As soon as the blossom is over, prune the tall growing, old-fashioned type known as lemoine mock orange should have old blossomy wood removed and the bush should be thinned out if the branches are crowded. The newer lemoine mock orange blooms on new growth (this year's wood) so you can safely prune wood that has already bloomed, allowing the new branches coming on from the root to develop and produce next year's flowers in profusion. If you have any doubt about the kind of Philadelphus that you have, look to see whether it is a few new shoots are coming up and are about three feet high now. These new branches show that old wood should be cut back. If you don't cut back the shrub, next year's flowers will bloom on branches that are just beginning to grow out of the ground stems so your shrub will be a mass of foliage and no flowers.

Biennials and Perennials

Seeds of biennials for delphinium next year should be sown any time now. Perennial seeds now will produce plants large enough to survive and bloom next year.

The card of young seedlings demanding attention. They are baby, so don't underfeed them, don't like weeds, don't like to be going to be away for any length of time, on the other hand, during one's own plants pays good dividends in satisfaction, well as quantity of flowers and vegetables. Need only two or three weeks, hardly need more than that if you have plants ready to set out, plants take them, and plants again the other people.

Sowing

The method of sowing seeds varies with the kind of seed. You prefer to use in preference watering by settling the soil in a saucer. Once the seeds have germinated the water should be applied in a manner not to disturb the seed in process of growth. Leaves of a true leaves appear the seedlings are picked out transplanted into flats, boxes with spaces apart and kept safe from the weather until they have become established. At this point a warning with a "Bug" bombing seems to give them trouble with cutworms. Another method is to sow in a flat of compost in which is mixed the soil, or sand, should be clean, sieved and moist, sow the seed in rows, cover the seed with soil, sift sand or soil over the seed, and screen or sprinkle the surface. Cover the seed to depth equal to the diameter of the seed. Very fine seeds like snapdragon just be scattered on the surface.

For Color

Color in next June's garden, foxgloves, columbines, sweet williams, violas, lupins and annual phlox.

Cut Tips Over In Crash, Tuesday

Two cars of George Paul, 1940, of 510 East Farnum, were tipped over in a crash Tuesday afternoon. Paul was driving on Redding road when he collided with one driven by Jane Suffield, by Jane Suffield, 10 years old, of 1848 Redding. The front end of the Suffield car was badly damaged. Paul said no one was hurt.

City Makes Deal With Grand Trunk

A deal with the Grand Trunk railroad was authorized by the City Commission Monday night, paving the way for possible future opening of Cambridge road, near Buckingham and the Grand Trunk right-of-way. (When the railroad was made, it was agreed that the carrier would provide a right-of-way for Cambridge.)

The Commission was told Monday night that the Grand Trunk had been unable to buy a tiny corner of lot 199, Birmingham Estates subdivision, needed for the right-of-way. However, the carrier owned lot 200, and agreed to give 6,440 square feet of it to the City in return for payment of $49.60 in special assessments due on the lot. Cambridge can thus be opened by a night job.

The offer was accepted by the City.

Saugatuck Named

Saugatuck, at the mouth of the Kalamazoo river, gets its name from an Indian word So-gatah, meaning "mouth of the river." Saugatuck was an Indian Village in prehistoric times.

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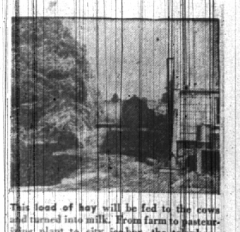
FORAGE crops are the backbone of balanced agriculture. They help to increase the quality of the soil. And they feed the livestock that makes up a big share of the state's farm wealth. With nearly 3,000,000 acres in hay crops, Michigan ranks third among the states in its acreage of alfalfa hay and fourth in acreage of all varieties of tame hay.

Michigan farmers depend on the telephone to buy and sell hay, order seed, hire hay crews and baling machinery. And that's only the start. The telephone saves time and money in the business of raising cattle, sheep and horses. It helps in delivering milk to the breakfast table, bringing you tender, juicy steaks, and supplying the wool for fine clothing—all products based on forage crops.



This load of hay will be fed to the cows and turned into milk. From farm to pasteurizing plant to city ice-box, the telephone helps move milk quickly and smoothly.

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—A State with Richer Blood—No. 17 of a series of advertisements on Michigan's Natural Resources.