

She Sees Romance Along Woodward

By AGNES C. O'DELL

My husband was late in calling for me to drive home. This, in itself, was not unusual, but he brought up to the peak of the traffic rush.

In order not to be unreasonable back seat driver who is often advised, urgently, to "keep her shirt on" (a withering thing even if married), I searched my mind for some mental diversion—some engrossing game that might permit me to test my watchful eye from the road ahead.

"Someone, somewhere, has said 'go, act, think and remember beyond the self—for there it is, despite appearance, where we really live.' So, as I would 'really live,' I remembered."

The traffic was very heavy and as we had a long way to drive the "act" part of my game was assured.

Looking for Beauty
The "act" part was strictly up to me so I decided to seek what possible beauty and romance might be lurking along the borders of "Wider Woodward" which was our path to home. Here, I approached the "thinking" stage. Muttering for pleasure (and speeding on a modern, landscaped parkway or adventuring along some out-of-the-way byway is one thing (two if you must be technical) and both are delightful. Quite another thing is the daily drive from home to office and back again over a congested highway during the rush hours of the morning.

Charming articles are being written descriptive of the opulent beauties and romances of the former but to write romance or beauty from our own "Wider Woodward" takes the delicate handling of a dreamer or, at least, an optimist.

At first lightning glance (for lightning it needs to be between my windshield and the traffic) at the middle distances immediately before us, it seemed, but an have some out-of-the-way byway is one thing (two if you must be technical) and both are delightful. Quite another thing is the daily drive from home to office and back again over a congested highway during the rush hours of the morning.

Just the "Wider," itself, spells a romance of a kind. The idea of this eight lane super highway, though even more notable, was born and nurtured for many long years in the dreams and vision of the Detroit Athletic Club's far-seeing members.

Once again trail
Wider Woodward was once an Indian trail to Pontiac, and the redmen had to wade through Royal Oak, at that. Later, it became a plank road and had its toll gates. Two women, now living in Bloomfield Hills, who have lived in and about Birmingham all their lives, do not have to tax their memories overmuch to recall that their fathers had been share holders in this plank road. As little girls, fully aware of this distinction, they used to take great delight in whirling up old "Kitty" horse and racing through the toll gates without paying toll—always with the sharp excitement and hope that the sheriff would pursue them. They used to try to get lost in the hills of Bloomfield and would start out without food or money to see if they could survive if ever really lost. Once, they found themselves as far as what is now Auburn Heights where there was a general store. Being very tired and hungry, they tried to barter their hair ribbons for something to eat—but no luck!

There is Hedge's, a familiar landmark. It has been there a long time—the sign on the building, the wooden Indians and all. I would hardly call it an architectural masterpiece, but it has character and has taken on a certain grace with the years. Though I do not know Mr. Hedge, if there is such, I am sure that he must have a creed or a tradition to which he holds so sincerely that, in spite of off-and-on-again amendments, Hedge's seems to have prospered and without a "bar." There are usually

lots of children eating there with their parents and perhaps this is not unusual, but the atmosphere given it a wholesome atmosphere. In hunting season it flaunts outdoor life—deer, moose and even buffalo, boldly in the raw but I have never seen quite so sure whether they are real or stuffed. The moose, especially, seemed to have a moth eaten appearance. However, Hedge's arrests my wandering eye and I raise some local color.

The Shrine of the Little Flower is from pictures—how beautiful! This, too, breathes of an ideal and has many pilgrims to it through the "Wider Woodward" appeal. The tower has serenity and a majestic sturdiness.

That Loy Cabin
The little log cabin that had been built as a sample of the kind of living that every normal human being might enjoy during some phase of his life. Its appeal is to those who would choose to "get away from it all" in some far wood-cedged or beside some cool, running trout stream. The desire for it springs from the nicest part of human make-up—though I must confess that my only contact with a log cabin made me spring high and wide from my seat. It could show situated through a crack directly overhead. However, this cabin, over on the west side, was built by a lumber company and I am sure will never lack. Someone had a great idea, it is very attractive in the morning sunlight but just at dusk or twilight with that wisp of smoke from its chimney fingerling the sky it holds a heap of romance.

As the traffic began to thin, I found I need not look drive any longer and could admire the old farm house that lately has had its fog lifted to a new outlook. I have heard that it was built over one hundred years ago and that the original family has never been continuously in this year. Since its recent sale the ninety year old farm has been given a new look and see the transformation. I know just how she feels—perhaps her son-in-law, who was asked to help her—when he was asked how he liked the changes—"it was pretty nice, as it is."

Filled With Antiques
However, the new owners have been kind with their alterations and have retained much of the original farm house charm. They have filled it with antiques which make the most difficult to be comfortable in, spite of the fact that the antiques are really sort of a pain in the neck. Everything, it seems, finally became commercialized. Anyway, the old farm house has a great interest for its remaining years.

Then the cemeteries have tales to tell. One of them, who died owned by a man who held the record for land only to get it back in the life's progression. Again, it was sold and again came back and now proves to be an excellent investment. I am sure, possibly, but probably.

Another cemetery drapes its fetters in summer with garlands of roses as a happy remembrance to the eyes of the passing world and still another seeks in winter to drive our minds with a familiar tower of ice. John Mason Brown, the dramatic critic, thinks there are better nice things for a winter than ice. Which is a bit beside the point but interesting.

Beyond "Wider Woodward" Birmingham is a retreat for men, tired of all faiths for though it is a Catholic city for its times all men just to pass the shirt at its lovely gate and start down the road. The sign on the building, the wooden Indians and all. I would hardly call it an architectural masterpiece, but it has character and has taken on a certain grace with the years. Though I do not know Mr. Hedge, if there is such, I am sure that he must have a creed or a tradition to which he holds so sincerely that, in spite of off-and-on-again amendments, Hedge's seems to have prospered and without a "bar." There are usually

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