

No. 16: The Fire Department

2 Volunteer Units Supplement Regular Det. of 18 Firemen

By George Wm. Averill

Birmingham firemen are busy men, although they spend comparatively little time actually fighting fires. Most of their activities are devoted to such precautionary measures as hydrant inspection, various fire-fighting drills, inspection and maintenance of trucks, hoses and other equipment.

The department has 17 paid firemen and is headed by Chief J. H. Smith, who has his office in the Municipal Building during the day but is on 24-hour call. Last month the department roster was supplemented with a mechanic who repairs as needed by the city vehicles, trucks, etc.

Day Starts at 8 A.M. The other 19 regular firemen are divided into two units, each of which serves 24 hours on duty. Their shifts start at 8 o'clock in the morning.

A master captain heads the repair division and is aided by an assistant mechanic. There is a line captain and three firemen in the fighting division. Also there is a fire inspector whose job consists primarily in checking various business establishments for fire hazards. This man also will check fire hazards in residences if the householder calls the department and asks for this service.

Of course, there is always a man on duty to answer incoming calls. This clerk is the one who sounds the alarm in the event of a fire. It is also this man's duty to keep a constant watch on the gas meters at the various city wells, and on the water levels in the city's two huge storage tanks. The water production phase of the fire department's activities will be covered in next week's article.

Two Volunteer Companies In addition to the two units which comprise Company No. 1, the department is able to call on two other companies each made up of eight volunteer firemen. These volunteers are local residents who business who respond only in the general area, as outlined by the fire department.

The local firefighters, both professional and volunteer, have the same equipment. Truck No. 1 is a small pickup, with booster pump and small hose, used for fire fighting. Truck No. 2 is the ladder vehicle, which carries a 53-foot aerial ladder capable of reaching the top of the Municipal Building. On this truck is also carried the equipment needed by the volunteers. This is the truck that carries most of the hose and which hooks up to the hydrant and pumps the water to the fire.

In the event of emergency, such as when the volunteers are called out, the department's old pumper goes into action. A "member" of the local force since June, 1934, this "old reliable" is still capable of pumping a hundred gallons of water should more lines of hose have to be laid by the volunteers.

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Red Cross for varying types of assistance. Frequent requests have come from families of men who have recently enlisted, when considerable time has elapsed between the date of application for an allotment and receipt of payments.

Since March, the chapter has been requested to serve in special capacity by the Quartermaster General. Contact has been made since that time with 89 families with regard to the disposition of the remains of the war dead. As addresses forwarded to the chapter are those given by the men in their last service, it is frequently difficult to locate the next of kin. It is also difficult in many instances for the family to buy as to what disposition is desirable. Consequently, even when the family is located, these contacts are time-consuming.



Happenings of Long Ago

FIFTY YEARS AGO August 5, 1908

There should be an era of weddings here in this section for the railroad has announced the fare to Niagara Falls and return, at \$3.50. Since that is low enough that even a poor newspaper man can afford it, yet editor has just returned from such a trip. Enjoyed it, too.

Don't fail to attend the Eastern Star excursion to Bois Blanc Island. Any member of this new and popular organization can give you full particulars and will be happy to.

If this paper seems a little off this week, remember that Miss Gates has been called home by illness in her family; also that news is mighty scarce and that it's so hot and dry nobody wants to do anything anyway.

In this issue we carry an item from Washington which tells all about the various Regimental Companies of our Army. Read it carefully and know about the banners which your husbands, sons and sweethearts are following into battle.

There's no use talking. The dust on our streets is rapidly making Birmingham anything but a pleasant place to live. The students should get out the fire hose and give the place a good wetting.

At least mud doesn't blow around.

TWENTY YEARS AGO August 9, 1928

Harry L. Wallace and William Storey, village officials of Bloomfield Hills, have been named to investigate thoroughly the proposal of fire protection for the community. The proposed arrangement is one whereby they would pay \$5,000 a year to Birmingham for adequate protection in case of fire.

Bids for the paving of that section of Woodward avenue which lies within Birmingham must be received by August 25, according to Luther D. Allen, member of the County Board Commission. Work is now being done on removing curbs and preparing the surface of the street for permanent paving.

Justice Floyd Buck's monthly report has just been issued, showing that disorderly conduct is the most frequent cause of arrest in Birmingham. The second place on

the report is that of the varied traffic arrests. Major crimes at a low mark in Birmingham, speaking well of the work of our police department and the character of our residents.

In an effort to curb the "flea accident" toll here, a brake test service is being opened at the Lawrence Garage. After motor vehicles have had ample time for this service, accidents caused by faulty brakes will bring the stiffest punishment the law allows.

FIVE YEARS AGO August 5, 1943

Police, neighbors and the fam dog took part in apprehending 14-year old boy not more than an hour after he had broken into a Earl Bisco home and stolen \$1 in cash and a quantity of shoe

About 600 local youngsters bought tickets to the "salsa movie show Saturday morning at the Birmingham Theatre. Tickets include 400 pairs of hose, 350 pounds of used fat, 3 iron, 200 of paper and 50

Three city boys have been arrested for depositing stench bins in local stores as a prank. Fin of \$25 and fines levied again there when they appeared before Justice Forbes S. Hascall.

One Birmingham woman is apparently tired of the somewhat inane question, "so many people when telephoning 'Are you there?' It has come to us from good authority that the lady now answering her phone with cheery, "Yeah, I'm here" bled the question can be asked.

Marion T. Viere, an Eccentric employee, has just received a letter from a young man who address is the Great Lakes Navy Base and who signs himself, "Lonesome Sailor". He says he some local lad in training, the gave Marion's address to the sailor but neglected to mention the Marion's middle name is Thom and that he is the father of a

From 1941 to 1945, during the life of the OPA, Southern Pine production dropped from 10.2 billion feet a year to 7.2 billion feet a year.

The four largest producers of lumber in the nation account for only five percent of the total lumber production.

Politics Not People In the midst of the political campaign that now attracts the attention of practically every American citizen, it is just as well to stop long enough to reflect upon the fact that most Americans are pretty good people.

In the heat of partisan combat and in the effort to win elections, it is human nature for people at times, to say things that reflect heat rather than light. Rabid partisanship is apt to produce biased comment which, in most cases, reflect more upon the maker than upon the target.

In urging Americans to maintain their mental equilibrium, despite the efforts of paid professionals and political propagandists, we suggest that issues which seem so vital, in the heat of a campaign, fade into relative insignificance with the passing of the years.

Berlin Welcomes U. S. Planes Not many years ago, the people of Berlin looked with dread to the approach of British and American aircraft. The Anglo-Saxon combination was then engaged in bombing the German capital for the purpose of, if possible, blasting it off the map.

It is quite a contrast today, with hundreds of American and British planes flying on shuttle schedules in an effort to transport sufficient food to keep more than two million German citizens from starving. Thus, in a few short years, the people of Berlin look to the skies with gratitude and welcome the Anglo-American aircraft.

Fritz Heine, secretary of the Social Democratic Party, recently told a press conference that "I cannot explain in words the admiration Berliners have for the British and American air fleets that are trying to feed them."

The housing shortage in this country will exist so long as the cost of building houses is so high. These costs could be lowered (as could the cost of many other humanly needed commodities), if individual production efforts were increased; but too many leaders don't want production improved, even though the average workman would like to give an honest day's work for a day's wages.

For many years, certain sections of Birmingham have been bothered with starlings that nest in trees; anyone who has ever lived near such a situation gets mighty disgusted with the racket and noise they make. If starlings have no "nature-balance-value", then why not delegate a certain quantity of well-aimed buckshot to eliminate these birds?

From now on the national political campaign will be Dewey vs. Truman; or, in other words, traditional free America vs. haberdashery planning.

200,000,000 Years To Reach Us

It is practically impossible to keep up with the astronomers as they attempt to unravel the mysteries of the cosmos, but it should interest readers everywhere to know that through the use of a new and highly-sensitive type of photo-electric cell, the men who scan the heavens are now studying the light of distant galaxies that started their journey to the earth two hundred million years ago, traveling at a steady speed of 186,000 miles per second.

The astronomers are somewhat astonished by the evidence that comes from the faint light of distant nebulae, when compared with the light of similar nebulae much closer to the earth: What they find is that the further the nebulae is in space, the better is the light that emanates from it. What this means remains uncertain.

For many years a red shift has been observed through the spectrum of the light of the distant nebulae and this has been interpreted to mean that the nebulae are moving away from us and from each other at the explosive speed of 20,000 miles per second. This is generally interpreted as meaning that the universe is expanding at an explosive rate.

When the astronomers study the light that left a distant galaxy some 200,000,000 years ago, they are seeing the galaxy as it was 200,000,000 years ago. In the meantime, no doubt, much may have happened between the galaxy and the earth and this is what the astronomers are attempting to discover. From their study, they hope to be able to determine the nature and extent of the vast universe that amazes man and challenges modern intelligence.

Few sellers will admit that prices are too high; on the other hand, few customers will ever admit that prices are too low. It's just part of that national economic game: get all you can for what you give, whether it's merchandise or money.

The Birmingham Eccentric

Published every Thursday at Birmingham, Mich. in the Eccentric Building, 228-232 North Woodward Avenue Telephone 11 12 and 113

GEORGE W. AVERILL, Editor and Publisher PAUL NEAL AVERILL, Business Manager GEORGE W. AVERILL, Managing Editor HAROLD F. BURGE, Advertising Manager

Entered as Second Class Matter in the U. S. Post Office at Birmingham, Michigan, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Subscription Rates (In Oakland County) (Outside Oakland County) One Year - \$12.00 Six Months - \$7.00 Three Months - \$4.00 Six Months - \$7.00 Three Months - \$4.00

The Eccentric is a member of National Editorial Association, Michigan Press Association, and Universal Press Club.

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BIRMINGHAM MOVERS MOVING • STORAGE • CRATING 277 PIERCE ST. PHONE 1343

Oakland County RED CROSS NEWS Mrs. T. W. Eustis of Birmingham, chairman of home service of the Oakland County chapter, American Red-Cross, announces that during the past two months a total of 1,490 active servicemen, veterans and members of their families have approached the Oakland County chapter, American

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THE ECCENTRIC'S Camera Corner

Any bride would welcome a snap such as this taken at her reception. An album of enlargements from wedding pictures makes a fine marriage gift. For A Summer Bride OFFHAND it's hard to think of a bride than a dozen or so enlargements from snapshots made at her wedding reception. Frequent requests have come from families of men who have recently enlisted, when considerable time has elapsed between the date of application for an allotment and receipt of payments. Since March, the chapter has been requested to serve in special capacity by the Quartermaster General. Contact has been made since that time with 89 families with regard to the disposition of the remains of the war dead. As addresses forwarded to the chapter are those given by the men in their last service, it is frequently difficult to locate the next of kin. It is also difficult in many instances for the family to buy as to what disposition is desirable. Consequently, even when the family is located, these contacts are time-consuming.

Consult with us if you are contemplating improvements or additions to your home. We'll help you with sound advice... tell you how to go about it at a minimum cost and we'll supply you with the finest building materials. STOP IN AT YOUR CONVENIENCE LAWSON & SON 484 Forest Phone 111 BUILDERS SUPPLIES

People's Column July 27, 1948 To the Editor: As a former resident of Birmingham and one who often returns to visit the family, I look forward to receiving your copies of The Eccentric. I have noted with particular interest your issue of July 15 in which you appear to be running a series of feature articles on the municipal government of Birmingham, at present have been commissioned to do a similar job in this territory and, in this connection, we wonder if it would be possible for you to forward me back copies of the issues which have carried the series. JOHN W. HARTMAN Vice-President, Milton E. Bacon and Associates Advertising St. Augustine, Fla. A thoughtful second will keep many a stray match or cigarette from starting a forest fire

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Consult with us if you are contemplating improvements or additions to your home. We'll help you with sound advice... tell you how to go about it at a minimum cost and we'll supply you with the finest building materials. STOP IN AT YOUR CONVENIENCE LAWSON & SON 484 Forest Phone 111 BUILDERS SUPPLIES