

## Radio Program Honors Local Woman for War Victim Help

By Alice E. Morgan

Birmingham people who heard the Hearts of Gold award go to Mrs. Gertrude Potter on the "Ladies Be Seated" program last week Wednesday afternoon were no more surprised than Mrs. Potter herself. She had no idea that she had been proposed for the honor, and certainly none that her name would be selected from the hundreds which are received each day.

Mrs. Potter's hobby, sending clothing and food packages to war victims of Europe, was presented to the program director as one worthy of their award. In an interview Thursday she said she had not yet received her gift from the sponsor, but was watching for it eagerly.

This 84-year-old lady has continued a job which she accepted during the war, when she served as chairman of an overseas relief committee for a local church. She realized that, although the war had stopped, want in those countries had not. After the church committee disbanded, she continued the work, herself.

Friends and neighbors, aware of what she is doing, keep a more or less constant supply of used clothing coming to her home. Mrs. Potter makes necessary repairs, sews on buttons, and cleans whatever garments are soiled and ships them on. She does all the packing, herself, and has been complimented by the postoffice for the condition of her boxes and mail.

### Mrs. Gertrude Potter

ing permit. "Your packages are the best wrapped and best looking ones we receive," a postal clerk told her recently. "These slips are also the best we receive, for there's no information lacking and it is all clear."

**Clothing and Food**  
Mrs. Potter explained that there are 30 packages on each package where the string crosses. She crosses-ties each one of these with smaller twine, to avoid slipping and coming apart.

At present she is sending clothing packages to several places in continental Europe, as well as food and clothing to Birmingham, England. An orphanage at Warsaw sends her saying that through her efforts they had been able to offer warm clothing to nearly 100 families. For her work through this group she has had numerous letters from the headmaster, as well as one from the wife of Poland's premier.

For a year she was co-sponsor of a relief movement for the orphanage, this at Arnhem. She selected articles of clothing to send to this boys' family, using her own experience as a mother of two sons as to what articles would be most needed.

Among those who she is helping now are three families who, one can see at a glance, are her favorites. Mrs. Potter's face lights up and her voice takes on a different tone as she speaks of "her" family in Holland with several children; the eight children in the family of a Norwegian fisherman and the family of German refugees.

### Father Escapes

The latter were separated during the war, and the parents placed in concentration camps. The father escaped, but dared not return to his children who were being cared for by neighbors, until after the arrival of American troops who subsequently freed the mother. Some time ago they wrote Mrs. Potter of the new baby. She began gathering at once, some used items and others which she and her daughter purchased, until shortly a whole box of baby clothes left Birmingham for Europe.

She also sent this family a complete change of clothing for each of their five other children, the first warm, whole clothes they had seen in months. Norway, Germany, Finland, Holland, England and Poland are among the countries to which her boxes go. From each comes, in return, letters of thanks which she

said "bring tears to my eyes. They are so thankful to get whole clothes and warm clothes. Their letters are so pitiful and they are so deeply touched they hardly know what to say."

### Small Gifts

"They send me little gifts, some of them. They can't send much because their governments won't let them, and because they haven't much to send. I've had these (she motioned to a pair of small wooden shoes) some china, but mostly it is pamphlets about their countries. I had quite a few telling me about the big wedding in England.

"I've never lost a package, and I haven't sent one out which I have not had a thank-you letter for. I do remember just how many I have sent, but it is hundreds. Why, one week I sent over 200 pounds of clothes."

The packages which go to England—Birmingham, Coventry, Devonshire, and Stratford-on-Avon are among the shipping points there—are mostly food. However, Mrs. Potter with an eye to frugality, packs the various items in layers of clothing, so no box carries any "dead" space at all.

"I have so many things, too. I don't know how they heard of me, but quite often I get a box of things from the Fox theatre in Detroit. They are things which are left there and never called for. In one I had 50 scarves, and in another I had 50 pairs of the time I finished sorting them all, just a little. One letter told how a pilot parachute.

Referring to the packages to England again, Mrs. Potter said that she had managed to have a three-pound can of shortening in each one. One letter told how wonderful this was, simply because the recipients were tired of boiled fat and could now fry it.

### Basket of Letters

Nearly every letter, and she has a market basket full of them, tells Mrs. Potter how the items are used. The families use what they can and distribute the rest among their neighbors, less fortunate than themselves. Some tell her of bare necessities, and if there is any possible way of getting them, Mrs. Potter has them in the mail once.

One such case, a "tall thin gentleman" who needed a pair of trousers, wrote and told her the suit he received was the first one he had had in three years.

"All the letters are full of so much humor and courage," she said. "It's a pleasure to do what I can for them, and I hope I can go on for many, many months. I've never met any of these people, but I feel I know them all. Some of the letters I had to have translated for me. One of the teachers at a Quaker school translated those from Poland and the Norwegian consul in Detroit has done one for me. Most of them are in English, so I don't have much trouble.

"I sometimes wonder about being able to get the things. So far I have never run short, she glanced around the comfortable living room where 11 cartons were in various stages of preparation for their ocean trip. "I have always said that demand and supply are equal. It may be by the time the supply runs out the demand will be filled. I hope it will work out that way.

In the meantime, Mrs. Potter, who has lived in Birmingham for the past 25 years, continues her work.

With the exception of the program recognition, her reward is simply the personal satisfaction a kind, warm-hearted person gets from helping someone less fortunate. Some have described this type of person as selfish, because they work for their own joy as well as another's comfort. If this

## Invite Local Boys to Try Out for St. Louis Cards

MONROE, Mich.—The St. Louis Cardinals have announced that arrangements for a baseball try-out camp here August 13 and 14 have been completed. The Cardinals are returning to Monroe for another camp this year because of the great success they had with their workouts last year. Ernest D. Steffens of Detroit has handled preliminary arrangements for the camp, which will be located at Sycamore Field, East 9th St. and South Monroe Avenue.

Workouts at the camp, which will get under way at 11 o'clock each morning, will be under the supervision of Cardinal scouts Bob Kling, Jack Stucky, J. F. Alcock, and Stefan. All four men are veterans of the national pastime, fully qualified to pass judgment on the talent that will parade before them during the camp.

Highlighting activities at the drills will be games between teams made up of players in attendance. These games will be preceded by exercises in fielding and throwing. All phases of the workouts will be open free to any players 17 to 23 years of age who would like to have their abilities appraised by major league scouts.

"Since the Cardinals do not supply such equipment as baseball shoes, gloves or mitts, it is suggested that those planning to attend the camp bring their own. Cardinals will pay all expense incident to attending the camp for any players signing contracts.

be so, it is a wonderful selfishness and a great deal more of it should flourish in the world.

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**CITY OF BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN**  
Notice of Special Assessment NO. 334  
ETON ROAD ASPHALTIC CONCRETE

Notice is hereby given that Special Assessment Roll No. 334, heretofore made by the assessor for the purpose of defraying the cost of construction of Asphaltic Concrete Surface on Eton Road from Yorkshire to Derby, is now on file in my office for public inspection.

Notice is also hereby given that the (Commission of the City of Birmingham will meet in the Commission Room in the Municipal Building in said City on Monday, the 8th day of August, 1949, at 8 P.M. to review said assessment, at which time and place opportunity will be given to all persons interested to be heard.

IRENE E. HANLEY  
City Clerk

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