Editorial Page of The Birmingham Eccentric

A Free, Responsible and Aggressive Press is Democracy's First Line of Defense

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GEORGE R. AVERILL — Editor and Publisher
PAUL NEAL AVERILL — Business Manager
GEORGE WM. AVERILL — Managing Editor
HAROLD P. BUERGE — Advertising Manager

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Let Us "Pull Together" —as Free Men

Now that the United States government has declared this nation to be living in a state of emergency, the voices of many are raised in that old and familiar chorus: "Let us put aside our personal and political differences, and all pull together!"

To be sure, in the all-out effort to produce the munitions of defense, the chorus makes sense.

But to expect the American people to follow, without any convictions of their own to be expressed, the leadership of any segment of the general government is merely to submit to a form of voluntary totalitarianism.

We don't expect free Americans ever to do that.

Specifically, we raise the question: What about Secretary of State Dean Acheson? Since he has lost the confidence of a majority of the American people—including Democrats as well as Republicans—are we going to shut up and accept him as perfection merely because the President of the United States wants us to?

THE PRESIDENT IS AN elected official, for a certain term of years. Being human, he will make mistakes, but short of impeachment proceedings, he must live out his term. A Secretary of State is an appointed official, who can be removed at any time by the man who appointed him . . . the President himself.

Certainly the President knows how much of a debit upon the balance sheet of his administration Mr. Acheson is. Only the President's blind stubbornness keeps Acheson on the job.

And as long as he is on the job, this nation will not have complete confidence in the motives and acts of Harry S. Truman.

As we plunge into the current tension, more mistakes are bound to be made. Some of them will be excusable, some of them will not.

But more of them will be forgiven if Truman has at his side men and women who are not under public suspicion and dislike . . . and Acheson, the stripped-pants diplomatic intellectual whose handling of Asiatic problems has done much to create our present world mess, will continue to be a tremendous brake on the up-surge of morale of America.

PERSONALLY, WE DO NOT dislike or hate Mr. Acheson. Were he our neighbor, we'd get a kick out of lending him our lawnmower, or gabbing over the back fence . . . but, by all the gods ever conjured up by the minds of men, we don't believe him presently fit to hold his office, and join millions of other Americans who want him to get off his job!

As we said in the beginning of this comment, the times do call for the need of Americans "to pull together."

This we intend to do in every phase of the business of building up a common defense of the weapons of war . . .

But to expect loyal Americans, whether they be mere citizens or public officials, to abdicate from the protective processes of the free government we are fighting to defend . . . well, that type of elemental existence is reserved only for totalitarian peoples.

The darkest hour ever faced by a free people ought to, somehow, elevate their leaders to heroic and inspired examples of greatness!

TO THIS END WE RAISE our voice in pleading prayer that Almighty God will, in some manner, enter into the head and heart of Harry S. Truman, and make him a figure that will become beloved by future generations of human beings—not only in the United States, but in every land where freedom hungers to live and thrive!

We pray thus not merely to glorify one man, but rather to have that one man rise to the supreme heights of man's earthly estate, thus exemplifying the greatness of our people . . . to the glory of free men " . . . made in the image and likeness of God!"

We Thrive On "Crises"

Invest some public situation with dramatic tinges and at once you whip up an hysteria so typical of the average American citizen's desire for a great crusade to meet and solve that situation.

For example, take the case of the recent Michigan election, plus the recount for Governor. At first Harry F. Kelly appeared to have won the election.

Within a few days it was discovered that many votes for Governor Williams had not been counted, so Williams began to overcome Kelly's lead. Now, with the recount made on a state-wide basis, Williams indeed forged several thousand votes ahead of Kelly. The latter now has conceded victory to Gov. Williams.

All in all, approximately eleven thousand votes, out of nearly two million cast in all of Michigan for Governor, changed position. While the recount was going on charges of ignorance, stupidity, political prejudice, etc., were hurled in every direction. Election officials and voters alike were criticized.

YET THE ACTUAL NUMBER of mistakes, we are told by various election officials, is no greater this year than in past elections—the fact that Kelly and Williams ran so close in total merely accentuated the normal number of errors.

But to read various comments from election officials, some newspaper editorials, and partisan politicians, one would think that Michigan was on the brink of some unheard of epochal disaster.

So there arises demands for new election laws, for millions of dollars worth of new voting machines in Wayne County, for more intelligent precinct election officials, etc., etc.

After all, nothing like a "good old dramatic crisis" to sweep our civic affairs into desired Utopia!

Political Arrogance

Nothing but an extreme sense of political arrogance could have caused the Washington Bureaucrats to request that the automobile companies refrain from increasing prices of their products.

To pick out one industry to voluntarily retain present prices against an always increasing cost of labor and materials, and leave untouched other industries, is some kind of economic discrimination.

If the bureaucrats want prices held steady, then let 'em use their available emergency powers . . . but this they don't want to do, because it would also include wage controls, and Truman's boys and girls still want to play up to the labor unions for votes. (Even though inflation is the wicked harvest.)

From Our Point of View

Even if half of the unkind things said about Secretary of State Dean Acheson were untrue, the gentleman has outlived his total usefulness to the nation. After all, it is what the people BELIEVE about a person, whether right or wrong, that determines that person's value in a democracy—sad as such an observation may be.

In America are hundreds of thousands of young married couples who, living frugally within their means, are enjoying reasonable amounts of happiness. Contrast them with, for example, thrice-married Mickey Rooney, the child movie star who grew up and made several fortunes, but cannot seem to make marriage a success. Do you think Mickey really ever was completely happy, completely a human success?

So They Say . . .

E. Emerson Andrews, official, charitable foundation:
"Give to no organization unknown to you, without investigation."

Horace W. Donegan, preacher:
"It isn't easy to be a Christian in these troubled times."

Andre Prince, wholesale fish merchant:
"I am a gourmet and I've got the gout to prove it."

Paul G. Hoffman, former E. C. A. head:
"The voice of Moscow is listened to and partially obeyed by 800,000 today."

Seymour L. Wolfbein, official, Bureau of Labor Statistics:
"Every study we have made shows that more employers want employes with education."

The Hope of Men of Good Will

Happenings of Long Ago

Bits Of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

50 YEARS AGO
December 21, 1900

The birthdays of William Snichter, G. A. Mudge and A. E. Greuber were celebrated by a group of their friends at the National Hotel Monday evening, Dec. 17, 1900. Several of their friends were present at the very delicious banquet.

Farmers in this vicinity will do well to read the Detroit Sugar company's reports in this paper and learn where contracts for raising beets may be made. There certainly is money to be made in this industry.

The Birmingham Sanitarium is once more in first-class order, the confusion of moving having been overcome. The private offices and reception rooms are now in apple pie order, to use an old expression.

Mrs. Law is to be at the next meeting of the W.C.T.U. Saturday, Dec. 29 at Mrs. Miller's home on Middle street. At the close of the exercises a 10 cent supper will be served by the delightful hostess.

If there is anyone wishing a good 13-jeweled, heavy coin silver watch, open face Elgin make, they had better hurry to see Mitchell where they can buy one for just half the cost.

20 YEARS AGO
December 22, 1930

J. C. Snyder, faculty member of Cranbrook school was killed and his companion, Russell Chappell injured in a motor crash near St. Thomas, Ont. The two were en route to Mr. Snyder's home in Little Neck, N. Y., for the Christmas holidays.

Judges, headed by Village Manager James Parry, will tour the Birmingham business area this week to decide upon the winner of the store decorations contest. The merchant displaying the best window will receive a permanent trophy.

Emerson Gravlin, 283 Merrill, while cleaning his attic ran across an old poster announcing a two-day trip from Birmingham to Port Huron for $1. Others advertising boat trips bore pieces equally amazing.

The Oakland county sheriff, register of deeds, clerk and treasurer have refused to accept salary cuts proposed as a means of lowering the 1931 budget. All other elected and appointed officials expressed their willingness to aid in the matter.

An elaborate Christmas party is planned by Birmingham this year. While gaiety reigns those families who are seeing hard times will not be forgotten. Plans are under way by several organizations to supply gifts and Christmas baskets for all.

5 YEARS AGO
December 27, 1945

The splendid spirit of helpfulness of Birmingham's people is again made apparent, Mrs. Cleveland Walcutt, chairman of the drive to collect clothing for the war zones of Europe says the response here is wonderful. She added that many items of clothing in excellent condition had already been turned in.

Moderator Blair K. Swartz will head a panel composed of Dr. F. D. Sluts, Dayton, O., Dr. Dwight B. Ireland, the Rev. Dr. M. W. Crump and Mrs. Philip Pretz, all of Birmingham who will speak on "Who Is the Educated Person?" on Jan. 16. The talk is sponsored by the Community Council.

The annual ice carnival, sponsored by Baldwin high school will be held Saturday at Quarton Lake. William Saffell and Mary K. Smith have been selected king and queen with Robert Warner in charge of coronation ceremonies.

Some 5,000 Christmas letters still remain in the postoffice awaiting delivery. These are items of mail which required directory service because of improper addresses and were held over in order that other mail might not be delayed.

Robert C. Peck has been named assistant cashier of the Wayne State bank, starting Jan. 1. He has been assistant manager of the Wabeek State bank's Birmingham office for the past 13 years.

People's Column

The Eccentric welcomes letters for this column. All letters must be signed, but signatures will be kept confidential upon request. Letters must be limited to 500 words.

To the Editor:

If there's any room on the International Appeasement Bandwagon, I'd like to get on.

After the Western Powers have exhausted all peaceful ways to settle the present conflict with Stalin, I think we should go all out on the appeasement idea.

We should tell Stalin that we will let him have all of the U. S. S. R. for his very own.

If the Reds still aren't satisfied we could offer them the original blueprints on our New Deal-Fair Deal.

Goliath was slain by a little fellow named David who was armed with a mere sling and five smooth stones. If Joe wants to keep playing the role of Goliath no doubt somebody will come to the front with a small military sling and let him have it.

FRED WEAVER,
St. Louis, Mo.

Birmingham Gun Club Elects New Officers

E. D. Mansfield, 984 Forest, will head the Birmingham Gun club for the coming year.

Other officers are Robert Porritt, vice-president; W. E. Bertolet, secretary-treasurer; Lou Brungraber, field captain, and Ed Parks, steward.

Forest fires each year destroy enough pulp size trees to produce 3,250,000 tons of newsprint—enough to supply every newspaper in the U. S. for one year.

Always at Christmas

By BEATRICE McDONALD

Heaven is close to earth on Christmas Day.
The shepherds tend their flocks. The angels sing.
And Bethlehem seems not so far away,
For Christmas is a precious shining thing.

Whatever else is lost among the years,
The years that claim their toll of good and ill,
This day we lay aside our doubts and fears.
The Christ Child's day brings gladness and goodwill.

Today more than at other times we pray
God's mercy will descend on those in need,
His comfort will go out to hearts that bleed,
For heaven is close to earth on Christmas Day.

ONE THING OR ANOTHER — *By George Wm. Averill*

WILL WILLIAMS CHANGE HIS TUNE?

Now that Governor "Soapy" is certain of going back to Lansing, he'll have to change his theme song from "Tea for Two" to "Alone."

We hope City Commissioner Chad M. Ritchie doesn't give up his campaign for water coolers in the city hall. The water in the present wall-type fountains, which now comes out in tired and wilted streams, is anything but refreshing. If Ritchie comes through, I'm seriously considering presenting him with a plastic ice cube as a "campaign" decoration.

Youngsters soon enough learn the truth about Santa Claus. But while the illusion lasts, it is an exciting experience, not to be denied any small boy or girl.

But to have Santa Claus become too commercial in his attitude with children—that's going too far.

This will illustrate what I mean: A large Detroit Department store this Christmas season has two Santa Clauses.

One is the usual type of department store Santa, who listens to the wishes of the youngsters lined up to talk to him. Full of smiles and joviality, he is the kind of Santa the youngsters have heard about.

Then there is the second Santa. If the mothers want to have their children photographed on their visit to Santa, then the little ones line up before this fellow.

This second-rate Santa is strictly business. He pulls the youngster over to his knee, snap! goes the camera shutter and the boy or girl is immediately sent on his way (sometimes with a push) to make way for the next in line.

Next year my little fellow is going to line up before the regular, old fashioned kind of Santa Claus. But his mother and I will keep this year's photograph. One is enough, especially when next year he might get the idea that Santa really isn't a kind, old gentleman after all.

(In case you're interested, the photos sell for 3 for $2, or 6 for $3.)

"Oakland Hospital" is not necessarily the name by which the new 300-bed hospital on Adams road will be known, I learned this week.

A name had to be selected for the papers of incorporation. "Oakland" was that name.

But when the time for its formal dedication comes around, it can be given a better name—if one can be found.

Some have already suggested it be called "Community Memorial Hospital." Others have proposed "Christ's Cross Memorial Hospital", to tie in with the English-type names already used for many of our streets, and "Cranbrook" and "Christ Church" which also are of English origin.

If you have similar ideas for a new, more appropriate hospital name, send them along to me, together with a few sentences on why you selected it.

LOOKING AHEAD — *By George S. Benson*

The VANISHING RICH

It is hard to imagine a society where there will not be some people poor and some people rich.

Jesus commented that we "have the poor with us always." If he had been talking about economic systems, no doubt he could have said the same about the rich.

Indeed; there has been no variety of economic system able to perpetuate itself that eliminates both the rich and the poor. Perhaps it is an economic law that there shall be people at both ends of the scale.

Some folks have called efforts to eliminate the rich and the poor: "redistribution of wealth."

IT IS TRUE that most of the attempts at tinkering with economy include taking from the rich to give to the poor. Whether the poor are thus being eliminated, or even helped, is certainly doubtful.

However, it is obvious that in America the rich are rapidly disappearing. You can bid adieu to the vanishing rich.

Is anybody sorry? There are few mourners.

But I can tell you that all of us ought to mourn the passing of the rich. Most of all, the poor will miss them. For what will happen to the idea of redistributing wealth, when there are no rich?

Will the Utopia then be here? Will everybody go to work, in order to keep the status quo?

OR WILL SOMEBODY get lazy and become poor, while his neighbor works hard and becomes rich? Then redistribute all over again?

These things are interesting possibilities. But the rich are definitely vanishing.

An economist of Notre Dame University, Father Keller, has shown that the amount of national income kept in 1928 by those who had incomes of $25,000 or more, after taxes, shrank from 11 per cent to 2.2 per cent in 1945.

He says these "rich" taxpayers were able to keep only $2 billion in 1945, whereas they had retained $9 billion in 1928.

THE NOTRE DAME economist says further that if the government had taken every bit of the income these "rich" people were able to keep for themselves in 1945, leaving them no income at all, the federal government could have got along on that amount less than three weeks out of the year!

That certainly means that somebody besides the rich is paying those tremendous sums that are expended yearly by our government. Who are they? The poor?

Well, our Notre Dame economist shows that the poor were doing considerably better in 1945 than they were in 1929, receiving a larger and larger share of the national income.

Those with incomes under $5,000 were able to keep 72 per cent of the national income in 1929, but retained more than 90 per cent of it in 1945.

APPARENTLY, THEN, if taxes are going to be paid in the future, the "poor" are the ones who are going to do it!

There's the fallacy of "soak" the rich" tax proposals. These methods won't work, simply because all the national income does not go to the rich!

A sad thing it is, that common folks with only food and clothing incomes are fooled into thinking that wealthy people pay the taxes.

Actually, taxes take nearly one dollar out of every three that we earn. We spend more on government than on food. Everybody pays, and pays plenty!

Because the rich are vanishing, more and more taxes will have to fall upon people of moderate and low incomes. A larger and larger proportion of money each person spends will be earmarked to pay the costs of government.

THERE ARE OTHER reasons why America should want to keep the idea of some folks getting higher incomes than others, besides the fact that wealthy people can and do pay taxes.

But the "vanishing rich" should tell us a few things about taxes and who pays them. You do!

MICHIGAN MIRROR — *By Gene Alleman*

WILLIAMS READY TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS

Politics has come to a grinding halt for the average Michigan voter—except for the numerous state appointments still unfilled. Two-thirds of the way through the recount Governor Williams was rubbing his hands with glee. His was an opportunity seldom afforded a Democrat in the midwest. Many of the top appointive jobs were opening. He promised he would be ready for them.

Williams' luck has been poor in the past. When the dust settled over the embattled liquor control commission, Gen. Kunzig retained his $10,380 job, John Kozaren (Williams' appointee) was no longer chairman; David Martin (Democrat) was ostracized for voting Republican Harry Henderson the chairmanship; Martin then was approved by a Republican senate. Confusing, isn't it?

Says Williams: "I can't help but remember how the same two men (Martin and Henderson) were prime movers in issuing 200 S.D.D. (liquor take-out) licenses immediately before I took office". But Williams reappointed Martin. The legislature promises to take steps to halt the "sloppy operation" of the LCC.

But war and Christmas now crowd our front pages. With most commentators weeping because "United States has lost its first war," Yuletide shopping has continued unabated. Stores all over the state have been cleaned out despite a substantial price rise since 1949.

Michigan's retail business is stumped. With the times so unsettled and controls again peering over the transom, buying becomes a problem. And if all predictions are correct January will see more stringent price controls reinstalled.

If Congress reduces draft standards, 50 per cent of those in 1-A who failed their first exams will be eligible. That would add 30,000 men to Michigan's manpower pool.

Thirty thousand more soldiers will cost some $240,000,000 per year to keep. Average cost of the G.I. today is $8,100 yearly. Before the war the cost was $3,200.

The V.F.W. has scorned the proposed merger of all state veterans' agencies. G. Edwin Slater, state commander, says it would lead to chaos and build "the finest political machine in Michigan history . . ."

Circuit Judge Harry J. Salmon, Lansing, made news when he set aside as "unlawful" a $1,160,000 annual increase granted the Consumers Power Co. by the public service commission. If sustained by the supreme court the utility company will repay $1,500,000 to $2,000,000 to users.

Government delay and indecision in awarding defense contracts plus curtailment of essential materials may put tens of thousands of Michigan workers out of work. Already the peacetime record of persons employed, set last year, is receding.

General Motors Corporation is financing an institute of industrial health at the University of Michigan. The $1,500,000 endowment will enable researchers "to investigate many facets of industrial health that urgently need exploration . . ." company officials stated.

Michigan's relatively young winter tourist industry is girding for at least 500,000 winter sports seekers. There are 36 winter sports areas which agree that the summer season was "on and off" but that this winter looks like a banner year.

Older, but less heralded is Michigan's vegetable industry, a $50,000,000 business. Quietly it thrives with only the Michigan Vegetable Growers Council to boom its possibilities.

And the Wolverine state may also have uranium. Four applications for leases are still being investigated and two are being explored further. The two most promising are in Dickinson and Baraga counties.

Main Street — by Ralph Stein

DRUNK DRIVERS LOSE THEIR LICENSES

Travelers Safety Service