The Birmingham Eccentric

PART 3

Thursday, September 25, 1952

Kerleys Wait 20 Years to Realize Dream

By RUTH ANNE SILBAR
Special Writer for The Eccentric

Every year, about this time, I suggest that a Michigan autumn is an opportunity to enter, free, a grand art gallery of color; a short or long motor trip over a portion of this state should thrill you as Mama Nature changes green foliage into glorious colors.

Out near Ortonville on Wolfe Road is a 200-acre tree farm called "Kerley's Headacres." While a tree farm does present a great many headaches and a lot of plain hard work, to the Kerley children, it has also meant fun, and to Mr. and Mrs. Robert V. Kerley of 1269 Pierce, the realization of a dream.

"For 20 years," explained Mr. Kerley, "we have wanted to grow Christmas trees, but not until three years ago when we bought this property did we realize our goal."

"We both came from Oregon," Mrs. Kerley broke in, "where there are big trees and a lot of them, so probably our desire to raise trees had a touch of homesickness to it."

Looking for land on which to grow Christmas trees, the Kerleys had three objectives in mind:

First, the land must be reasonably near to their Birmingham home and to Mr. Kerley's work as research engineer with Ethyl Corporation; it had to be poor soil for farming, but good for growing trees; and lastly, it had to be cheap in price.

WITH THEIR present farm all three objectives have been filled. The rolling sandy soil was in such bad condition that no sensible farmer would touch it, so the land had remained idle for years. Experienced farmers who looked at the property shook their heads and thought the Kerleys were zany to consider buying it.

Of the 65,000 trees now growing on the farm, more than 2,000 white spruce were planted by hand by the Kerley family, but the rest were planted by a mechanical planter.

It must be remembered that this is a family project. The Kerley children, Joyce, 14; John, 12; Tommy, 8 and Linda, 7 years old, all pitch in and work along with their parents.

NORMALLY, tree experts say, the percentage of trees planted by a mechanical planter that will live and grow is usually very low, but at the Kerley farm, it is unusually high.

The reason, Mrs. Kerley explains, is because the Kerley crew follow along after the planter and press the earth down around each little seedling and give it water.

One memorable event occurred after 24,000 trees had been planted. A dry spell came along and the family realized that in order to save the trees, they had to be watered.

The whole family worked 16 hours at a stretch, watering each one of the 24,000 seedlings by hand, but they saved the trees.

ON THE BACK of the tractor, which they jokingly call their "20 horse team," a 200-gallon tank of water was placed and from this each member of the family, equipped with a bucket and a cup, carried water to the pine seedlings.

Most of their trees have been secured from the Michigan State Forestry Department although some were bought from private nurseries.

They have been helped in their tree farm project by three State agencies: the County Agricultural Agent, who tested the soil and informed them that it was good for planting and growing trees, but nothing else; the Conservation Department, who prepared a land use map and told them where to plant what and how, and how best to conserve their land; and lastly, the Forestry Department from whom they got some of their trees and expert advice.

ALONG WITH the tree planting project, the Kerleys are trying to develop a wild life refuge. They have planted about 1000 shrubs such as high and low bush cranberry, snow berry, coral berry and nut trees to encourage wild life.

So far they have seen many pheasant, wild black mallards, quail and song birds. In the swamp on the farm, they see crane and muskrat which are so numerous that one of them bit John.

They have seen raccoon and skunk and thereby hangs a tale.

Mr. Kerley and the children one day saw a mother skunk with five little ones. Four of the young ones and the mother scurried away leaving one young skunk behind.

MR. KERLEY, thinking that it would make a nice pet if deodorized, remembered hearing that if you pick up a skunk by the tail, he can't spray you.

"But that isn't so," giggled Joyce, "because we couldn't get near Dad for a whole week."

The neighbors have told them that they have seen a herd of deer which the Kerleys have yet to see, although they have seen the hoof prints.

John has found an Indian tomahawk head on the farm and two arrow heads also were picked up. Now when the children see something that looks as if it might be an Indian grave, Mrs. Kerley said, they start digging. So far, no Indian graves have been found.

On the property when they bought it was a large house, formerly an inn with a disreputable reputation. The place had been vacant for years and was in the most imaginable state of disrepair.

THERE WAS such a big hole in the roof, Mr. Kerley said, that the rain came in so fast they had a waterfall down the stairs.

However, the house now is livable with the Kerleys doing almost all of the repairing-painting, wall papering and carpentry jobs. The place, originally a farm house more than a 100 years old, has had additions built onto it so that now the house has 13 very large rooms.

The living room itself is 20 feet wide by 37 feet long and has solid walnut woodwork. The barn has hand hewn timber 10 inches square and is built with peg construction.

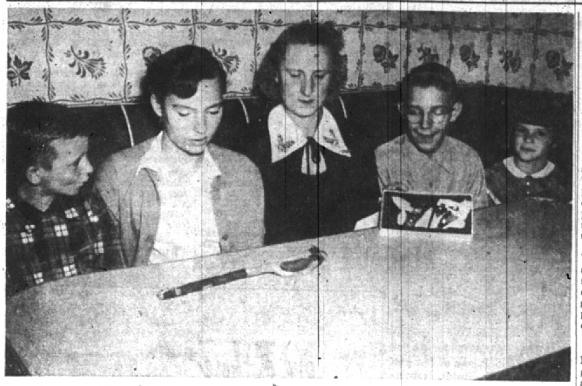
EACH YEAR the Oakland County Soil Conservation District has a one-day flying inspection tour of interesting conservation projects in the county. The Kerley farm, because of its tree planting program, was one of seven examples this year to show what can be done in the proper use of land.

Life on a tree farm is not all that it is chopped out to be.

Even after trees are planted, the Kerleys are by no means finished. The trees have to be pruned and sprayed before they can be harvested in about eight years.

Then too, Mr. Kerley views the swamp and the pond and thinks he would like to construct a pond to raise fish. It seems as if "Kerley Headacres" will be a long, long time project.

Keep trespassers off your property by posting NO HUNTING—NO TRESPASSING signs for sale at The Eccentric office. (27-30)



MEMBERS OF THE ROBERT KERLEY FAMILY DISPLAY FARM FINDINGS
Tom, Joyce, Mrs. Kerley, John and Linda shared the work and fun
(Eccentric Staff Photo)

SPEAKING BEFORE two Birmingham clubs next Monday will be George A. Bowie, of the public relations department of the Firestone Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron, Ohio. An author and lecturer, he will appear Monday noon at the Birmingham Rotary club luncheon, then at the 7 p.m. meeting of the St. James Men's club. Bowie has been associated with the stage and radio as actor, writer and director, has three academic degrees, and during World War II served with the U. S. Navy personally counselling problem counselling problem cases among Marines and Seebees on Pacific islands of combat.

Guest Week Celebrated At Y Branch

This week is guest week at the Birmingham YMCA House at 400 East Lincoln Avenue. All boys and girls are invited to visit the "Y" and get acquainted with its program and facilities. Tables for checkers, chess, carroms, and ping pong will be available. A slight maintenance charge is made for use of the shuffleboard table.

On Friday, September 26, the Western feature "Phantom Stage" and a cartoon program will be shown at 4 p.m. The regular Saturday program featuring crafts, games and supervised television programs will hold forth this weekend.

THE CHARTER BUS to the Michigan-Michigan State football game will leave at 11:30 p.m. with a capacity group. Those making the trip include: Mr. and Mrs. Edwin F. Kirbert, Elaine Jones, Betty Perkins, Mr. and Mrs. Percy M. Nelson, Clarence Vilet, Mr. James Washburne, Peter Washburne, Mr. and Mrs. I. A. Taylor, Mr. and Mrs. Allwart, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Allen, James Culley, Margaret Seyferth, Gerald Haines, Albert Haines, Mr. and Mrs. H. B. George, Harriette Pierson and party, Helen Cudini, Mr. and Mrs. Ziegelbaur and guest, Walter Morgan and party, Mrs. H. B. George, Mr. and Mrs. Fries, Mr. and Mrs. Emmet Delaney, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Barton, Mr. and Mrs. Boyd Simmons, Dr. Edwin Deer, Bill Deer, Mr. and Mrs. Charles R. Black, Mr. Frank Mosher, Peter Mosher, Bob Pope.

Committee Head Cites Increased Voting of Women

Michigan women are participating in politics to a greater degree this year than ever before, Adelaide Hart, vice chairman of the Democratic state central committee and Birmingham resident declared this week.

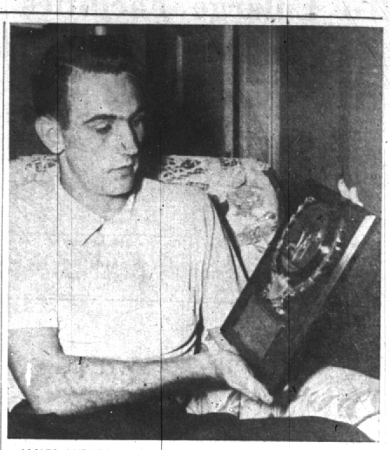
"The great increase of women who voted in the primary and the enthusiasm among women in doing precinct work is due to their awareness of the great issues before the country in the election," the Detroit school teacher declared.

"We believe that the Democratic record appeals to women," she continued. "In Michigan, for example, more families own their own homes and their own farms today than ever before in our history.

"Women are interested in good schools, adequate hospitals, firm control of sex deviates and narcotics peddlers," Miss Hart said. "That is why the Build Michigan program of Governor G. Mennen Williams appeals to them so directly."

THE DEMOCRATIC vice chairman said her Party would compare records and candidates with the Republican Party at any level of government.

She urged all women to demand definite policies from candidates before voting. "We feel women will agree that Governor Adlai E. Stevenson is eminently qualified for the job he seeks, that Senator Blair Moody has far more knowledge of Washington than his opponent, that Governor Williams has accomplished great things in spite of opposition from a small clique of Republican leadership in Lansing, and that the program of the Democratic Party is designed to serve the best interests of all our people."



JAMES ANDERSON, son of Mr. and Mrs. James M. Anderson, 789 Southfield, holds the coveted Balfour Award plaque, which cites Anderson for outstanding contributions in track during his eligibility at the University of Indiana. Anderson, a miler and member of the relay team, is a senior at the university.
(Eccentric Staff Photo)

Transporters Pick Carey and Parnie

Elected to the board of directors of the National Automobile Transporters Assn. at its 18th annual convention in Detroit Saturday were Walter F. Carey, 6125 Middlebelt, W. Bloomfield twp., and A. D. Parnie, 269 Wimbleton.

Another Birmingham man, Richard E. Beiser, 1348 N. Glenhurst, was re-elected general manager of the association.

President of Automobile Transporters Co. of Flint, Carey is president of the Michigan Trucking Assn., and as 1st vice president of the American Trucking Assn., will become its new president next month at a convention in New York City.

Parnie is vice president in charge of sales of Commercial Carriers, Inc., of Detroit.

Matthew's
MEN'S FURNISHINGS
ALTERATIONS DONE ON ALL LADIES' AND MEN'S CLOTHING
288 E. Maple
Open Daily from 8 to 6
Friday 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Certified Cold Storage
BRIGGS BLDG. FREE PARKING
MI 4-1777

the shoes you wish you were in

aptitudes
fashioned for flex, flatter and fit
Awarded the 1952 Fashion Academy Gold Medal
"STEP 'N LIVELY"... feet fashion-first into Spring in the prettiest moccasin-wall walk-abouts afoot! To live in 'n love your 'round for strolling, for dancing, for dashing about! In a bevy of bright colors in soft as silk polished leather; red, brown, caramel, green, navy.
Sizes 3½ to 10; AA to B widths.
$7.95
CAMBIUM tanned
miller's SHOES

LUMBER-TERIA
? ? ? ?
OPENING NEXT WEEK!

WINDOW SHADES
Guaranteed Washable
Selection of Colors
$2.39
Up to 36 Inch
Cleaning & Reversing
• VENETIAN BLINDS
• BAMBOO DRAPES
• BASSWOOD SHADES
PHONE LINCOLN 1-4936
BESSENGER'S
23535 Woodward Between 9 and 10 Mile Rds.
PICKUP AND DELIVERY

Why Pay More?
Your Ford Dealer has the best used car and used truck buys in town!
Your Ford Dealer is in business to STAY. You can rely on his reputation for fair dealing.
Your Ford Dealer (and only your Ford Dealer) sells A-1 used cars and used trucks. A-1 means they have been checked 10 ways for QUALITY and are in A-1 shape for your driving enjoyment.
Your Ford Dealer does not depend upon his used car and used truck profits to stay in business . . . that means he can offer the lowest prices in town!
Your Ford Dealer now has the finest selection of used cars—all makes and all models—that private owners have traded in on '52 FORDS
Your Ford Dealer (who operates on a budget, too) offers the lowest possible terms. Makes it easy for you to buy the used car or truck you need RIGHT NOW!
A-1
HAROLD TURNER, Inc.
Used Cars ★ Used Trucks
464 So. Woodward Avenue
Phones MIdwest 4-7500 or JOrdan 4-6266

BIRMINGHAM FRUIT CO.
124 N. Woodward
MIdwest 4-4030
S.D.M. LICENSE
S.D.D. LICENSE
FREE DELIVERY
FREE PARKING at Rear of Store

TRULY... THE TOPPER OF THE YEAR

Varsity Town Clothes

BIG SWEEP
Raglan Styling
TWEED, CHECKS and PLAIN COLORS
KING'S CROSS SAXONY
It has color, glamour, authentic British flavor and top style favor.
Dickinson's
IN THE WABEEK BUILDING
Fine Apparel For Gentlemen