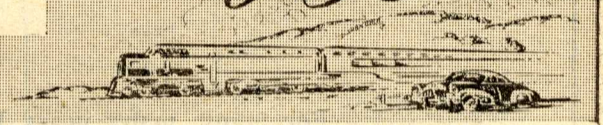


The Birmingham Eccentric

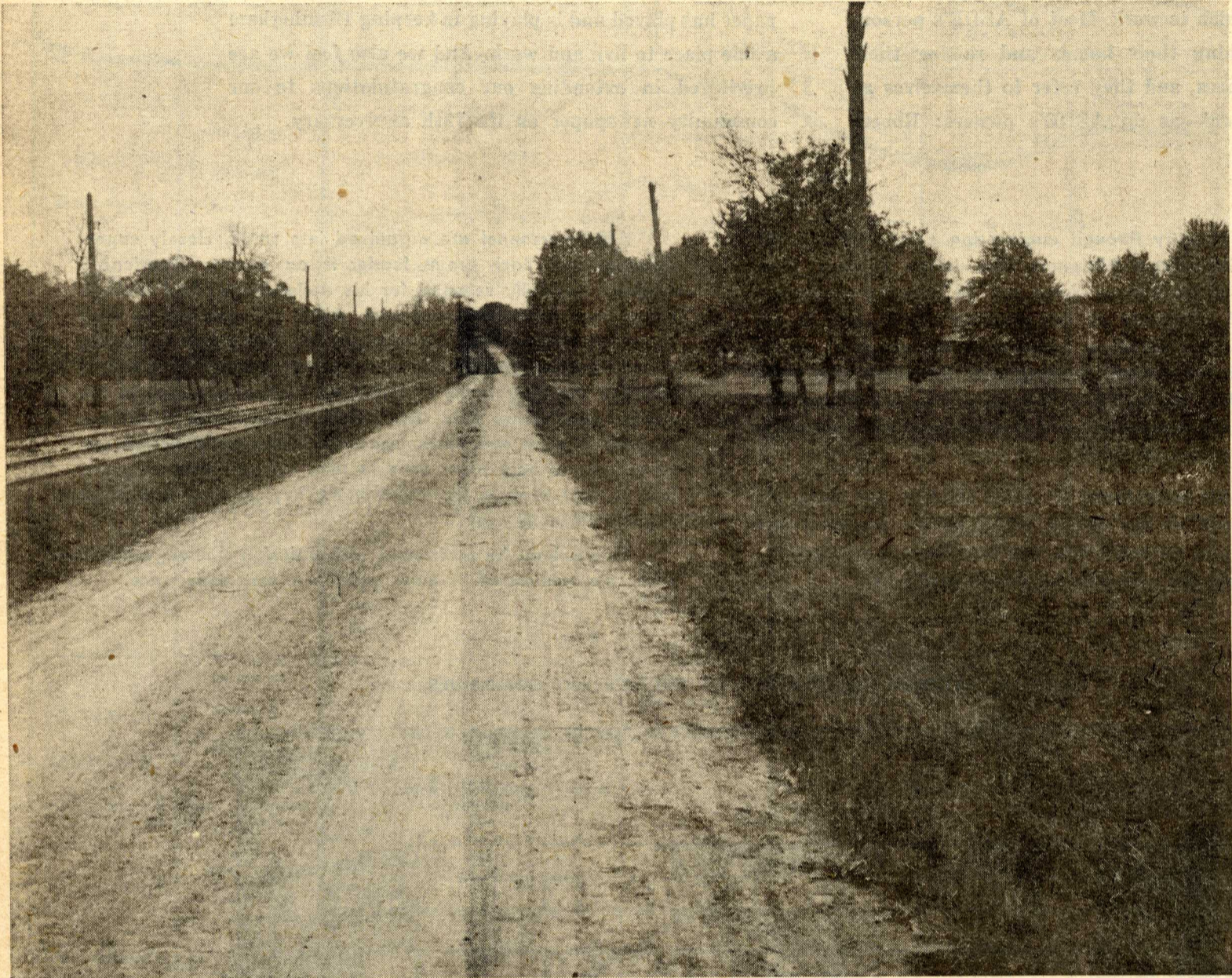
1878

Section **K** Miscellaneous articles and pictures related to history of this area
May 1953

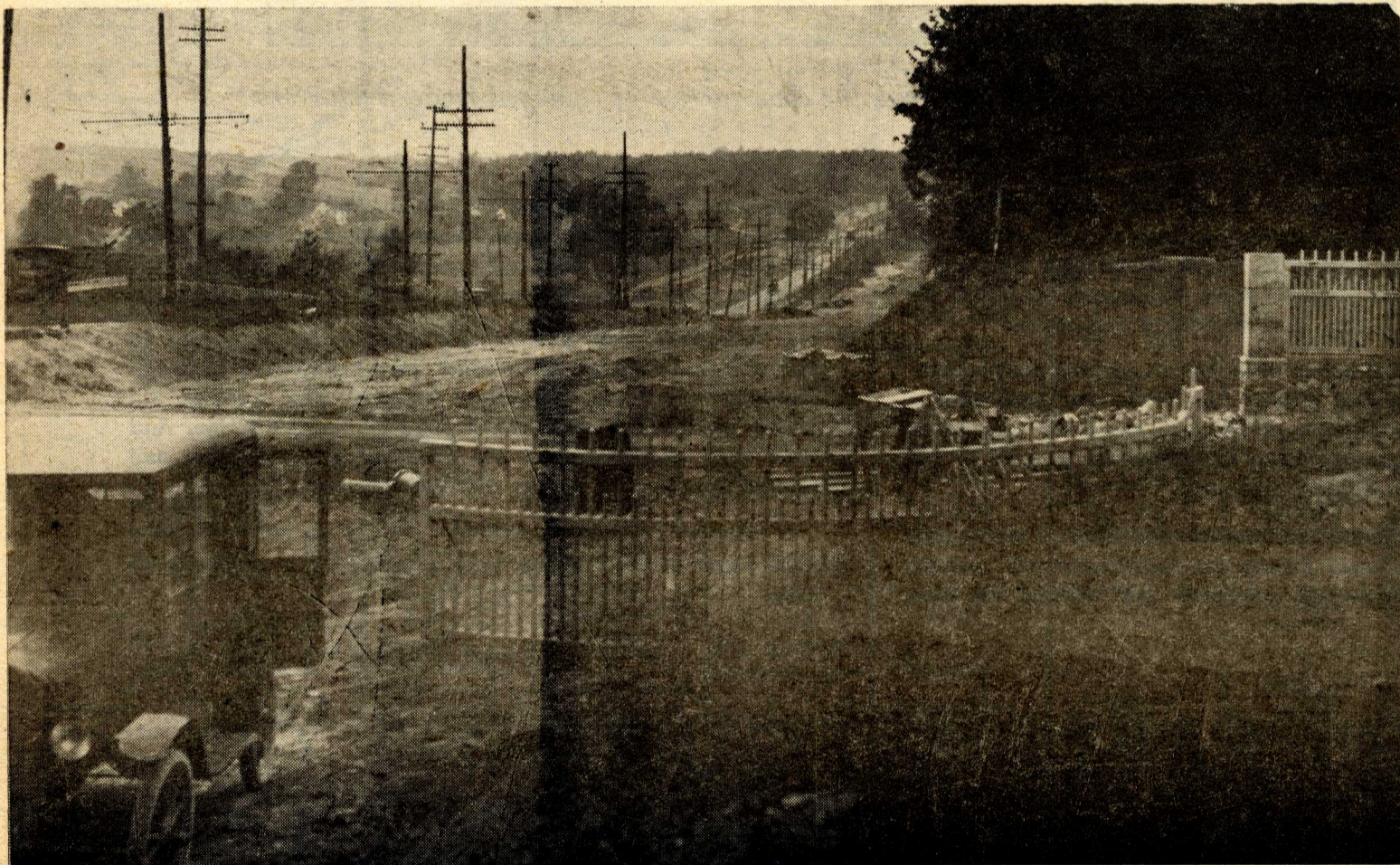
1953



Chief Pontiac's Trail Has Become Superhighway



LOOKING SOUTH ON WOODWARD AVENUE FROM NEAR OAK STREET IN ABOUT 1907
Center of town was just beyond the trees in the distance



TWO OF WIDER WOODWARD'S WESTERLY LANES IN BLOOMFIELD HILLS WERE IN USE BY 1924
Eastern half of right-of-way already graded (this view looks north down the hill to E. Long Lake road)

White Man Preferred Rivers in Early Days

For unrecorded years before the white man came to Michigan, the Indian made his home and traversed the wilderness. His village sites are now covered by our cities, his trails are our highways.

Such a trail existed when the government surveyors surveyed Michigan in 1815. It was called the Saginaw Trail and led from Detroit to the Indian settlement at Saginaw.

Most of the earliest settlers and explorers of Oakland county, including John W. Hunter, Birmingham's first settler, did not use the Saginaw Trail however, because of the difficulties of transporting persons and goods over the trail.

These pioneers preferred the easier route to this area by way of Mt. Clemens and the Clinton river, naturally turning to the waterways which connected the "interior" to the lake regions.

THE SAGINAW Trail, just an Indian footpath, was often impassable to settlers and "even in the driest season was only practical for foot men and ponies."

Captain Hervey Parke, an old time surveyor, told about the Saginaw Trail in a paper, "Recollections of My First Tour in Michigan in 1821", read before the Oakland County Pioneer Society in 1874.

He and Elisha Beach, a future citizen of Pontiac, left Detroit in 1821 and traveled on the Indian trail which led into the interior toward the northwest and Oakland county.

The last of three small houses which they passed before "fairly striking the wilderness" was about nine miles from Detroit and was occupied by Mrs. Chappel, more familiarly known as Mother Handsome. Here they found shelter for the night.

ABOUT HALF a mile beyond, when they resumed their journey in the morning, they reached the causeway built by the American troops under Colonel Leavenworth in 1818.

This was a little less than a mile in length and pronounced by Captain Parke as "the worst ever built as no regard was paid to equalizing the size of the logs, the largest and the smallest lying side by side."

John M. Norton, who came to Oakland county in 1824 at the age of 4 with his pioneering parents, reminisced about the Saginaw Trail in an address delivered at a "supervisors picnic" held August 1892:

"Until about 1830 the roads between Detroit and Pontiac and especially between Detroit and Royal Oak (Mother Handsome's) were indescribably bad, often absolutely impassable for anything except ox sleds, mud carts and similar conveyances.

"FOR THIS reason the settlers of Avon and Troy made their journeys to and from Detroit quite as often as otherwise via Mt. Clemens, that is, by team to Mt. Clemens."
Continued on Page 13

ASSOCIATED DESIGNERS

BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

For many, many years Birmingham has been acknowledged as a fine place in which to live. Since 1943, when ASSociated DEsigners moved its office to this area, we have also known Birmingham as a fine community in which to work. Most of ASDE's personnel are establishing their homes and raising their families in this area, and they refer to themselves as 'strictly local men'—as do ASDE's owners: Robert

Branda, Roy Coyle and Duane Carlington, registered professional engineer.

And so we like to feel we are doubly indebted to the important contributions our community newspaper has played and is playing in keeping Birmingham a fine place to live and work. And we also feel we are privileged in extending our congratulations to our community newspaper on its 75th anniversary.

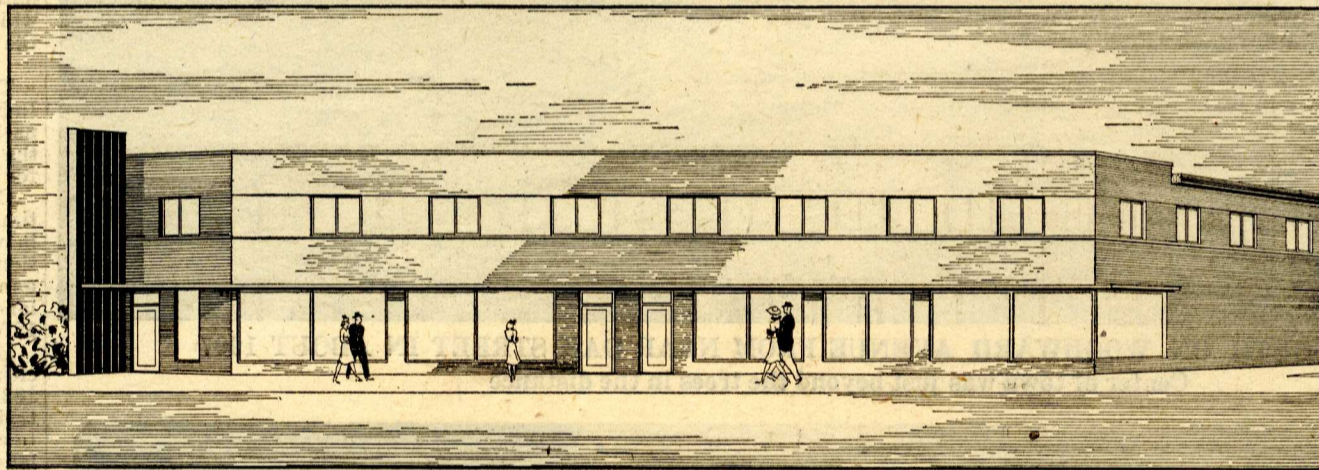
Serving industry through engineering design—this is the function of ASSociated DEsigners. The design of tools, dies, gages, special machinery—these are engineering operations being solved constantly on our drawing boards and in our offices. Production planning, augmenting the efforts of an industry's engineering staff, working with the shops that build tools, providing prints, answering questions, expediting deliveries, making suggestions and recommendations—these are customary programs at ASDE.

Nationwide acceptance of ASDE services has been the gratifying result of our efforts. ASDE liaison engineers are qualified to carry our know-how and experience to any point—to help an industry overcome its design problems.

ASDE personnel are organized into small, closely supervised groups. Each group leader is an expert, experienced engineer carefully selected for his assignments. And through every level to top management, ASDE is organized to lend complete, personal support to every job. Whether a specialist, a semi-professional or a novice, every member of ASDE is afforded the opportunity to attain his highest potential in the design engineering field. And ASDE management is always pleased to meet and encourage men interested in design engineering—to help them develop their talents—and, if qualified, to add them to the ASDE staff. They, in turn, find ASDE a good place to work.

To any industry confronted with a design challenge, ASDE offers the services of its men, equipment and experience.

MEMBER: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES



Traditionally efficient service has required the construction of enlarged modern quarters

Dealers, garages, service shops have long found Auto Parts & Equipment Company the ideal place for securing automotive replacement and repair parts. Thousands of items—huge and small—for virtually every replacement or repair job are in constant inventory at Auto Parts & Equipment.

As jobbers, distributors and retailers of nationally recommended and advertised makes, Auto Parts and Equipment is privileged to serve the entire Birmingham area. The acceptance of our services has resulted in an expansion parallel to the remarkable growth of our community.

Courteous personnel, prompt delivery service, helpful consultations are prominent among the reasons for this success. Auto Parts and Equipment personnel are selected for their

experience, background and know-how. And their daily duties includes training which keeps them up-to-date on the latest developments in the parts and equipment field—which, in turn, qualifies them to answer inquiries and to help with problems.

Auto Parts and Equipment's shop service is geared to accommodate special or unusual jobs. Expensive precision equipment—such as a recently installed Van Norman Pin Boring Machine—is often required on a complicated job. And Auto Parts and Equipment has available the equipment and trained personnel to handle these assignments.

Whether it's a small, standard part or an involved, technical repair problem—Auto Parts & Equipment is organized to help.

AUTO PARTS & EQUIPMENT CO.

1600 South Woodward

Advertising Provides Clue to Business Area

When The Birmingham Eccentric was first published in May, 1878, there were a score of merchants in the peaceful but busy little village.

Like the stores of today, they believed in advertising and gave the embryo newspaper their support. From these ads which appeared in the pages of The Eccentric, a fairly clear picture can be painted of the Birmingham business section of that day.

Hugh Irving, who had a hardware store on the west side of N. Woodward where the Huston Hardware is now, started his business in that location in 1849 with a tin shop.

About 1855 he expanded his enterprise and added stoves and hardware, and in 1864 took his son John in partnership with him. In 1878 he added the celebrated (?) Weed sewing machine to his stock of merchandise and dealt extensively in a new (for that day) bone fertilizer called the Homestead.

Frank Hagerman, the druggist, purchased the stock of drugs and groceries of George L. Lee in the spring of 1870. Business was transacted in the south end of the National Hotel building about the place where Hawthorne Electric is now located on N. Woodward.

IN THE FALL of 1870, John Daines, who owned the property, built a fine and comfortable two-story brick store, next door south, and Hagerman moved into it in the spring of 1871.

Besides his stock of drugs and groceries, Hagerman also represented the Home Fire Insurance Company and was manager of the Western Union Telegraph company's office in town.

The store of Bigelow and Whitehead, which stood on the southwest corner of West Maple and Pierce streets, dealt in groceries, canned goods, books and stationery, flour, crockery and glassware, hams and salt pork.

BIGELOW RETURNED home from the Civil War in 1865 with the rank of captain and with an amputated arm. He bought the old building called "The Academy" at the corner of West Maple, then called Mill street, and Pierce streets.

Being appointed postmaster in 1870, the post office was kept in his store. Shortly after he bought the Academy building, he was burned out and almost immediately built the brick store which he occupied. Whitehead was taken in partnership in April 1877, having been in Bigelow's employ for three years.

Thorne and Converse were the proprietors of a meat market and were dealers in butter, eggs, hides, pelts and other items. Their store was located on the northeast corner of Woodward and Maple streets, and for many years was the only meat market in Birmingham.

THEY HELD the reputation of carrying only the best of meats, and the finest roast pork with all outside fat removed could be obtained at their store for 8c a pound.

Thorne moved into Birmingham in 1866 and with a man named Woodburn bought a meat market from James McLaughlin in 1867. Converse bought out the interest of Woodburn in 1868.

In 1878 J. J. Toms and Company had the exclusive management of the Old Reliable Mill, which was the first grist mill in Bloomfield township put in operation by William Morris in 1828.

Years later, George Morris, who owned the mill, stepped out and John J. Toms stepped in and purchased the mill and property from Morris.

THE NATIONAL Hotel which stood on the southeast corner of Hamilton and Woodward avenue, was the scene of most of the village dances and merrymakings. The hotel faced Woodward avenue and was under the management of George E. Daines, who by 1878 already had controlled the house for over five years.

Opdyke and Miller were the proprietors of the Birmingham Flour Mill, which stood by the River Rouge just west of the present W. Maple bridge.

In 1878 they put in a new corn sheller with a capacity of 150 bushels per hour and it was said at that time that "it can grind feed so quick that it makes you dizzy." Their flour was the pride of every Birmingham housekeeper.

IN 1878, Mrs. L. T. (Libbie) Furman already had been in the millinery and dressmaking business for 10 years. She had the largest and most complete stock of millinery and fancy goods in the village.

She also carried the thousand

and one things which go to contribute to the good looks and general attire of a well dressed lady.

Hair switches could be purchased from Mrs. Furman for \$1.50 up and combings were made up at 50c per ounce. Her store was located on the west side of Woodward, the fifth establishment north of the corner of Maple and Woodward avenue.

Mrs. Furman had previously been in business in the Old Academy building which burned down in 1871.

JOHN BALDWIN was the village blacksmith and a veteran horseshoer. His establishment was on Troy street (now East Maple) on the north side of the street about 4 doors east of the Woodward corner.

One day Baldwin set 50 horse shoes and according to reports, it was not a good day for setting, either. This attests to the superior skill of blacksmith Baldwin, because setting 30 horse shoes was called a good day's work.

Lyman B. Peabody's general store stood on the southwest corner of Woodward and Maple. It faced Woodward avenue, as did all corner buildings on the main street at that time, and a high wooden side of the property.

JUST ABOUT everything was sold in the Peabody store, including washboards at 30c a piece. For a long time, Mr. Peabody inserted an ad in the issues of The Eccentric of 1878: "For Sale: Large Telescope. Has been used in Light houses near Detroit. Cost \$25. Will sell for 1/2 price."

It has never been determined whether or not Mr. Peabody found any takers for that telescope.

John Bodine was a tailor, but in 1878 he also was the Justice of the Peace. His office and tailor shop was on the west side of Woodward, first floor, and first door north of the Maple corner.

J. R. Corson, whose store was situated on the southeast corner of Pierce and Maple, started business in 1859 with a capital of less than \$100.

HE SPECIALIZED in fresh fruits and vegetables but also dealt in groceries, feed, flour, hardware, crockery, hats, books, notions, lime, plaster, cement, hair bricks and salt.

He was a huckster of those days, too, since he was the only merchant in town to keep a horse and wagon on the road, selling to customers in the outlying districts of the village.

Orrin Poppleton, one of the oldest established merchants in the village, opened his first store in 1840. It was located on the west side of Woodward, about in the middle of the block between Maple and Willets' street.

IN 1841, he moved his store to the northwest corner of Maple and Woodward and in the fall of 1843, moved to the northeast corner of Hamilton and Woodward where he still was in business in 1878.

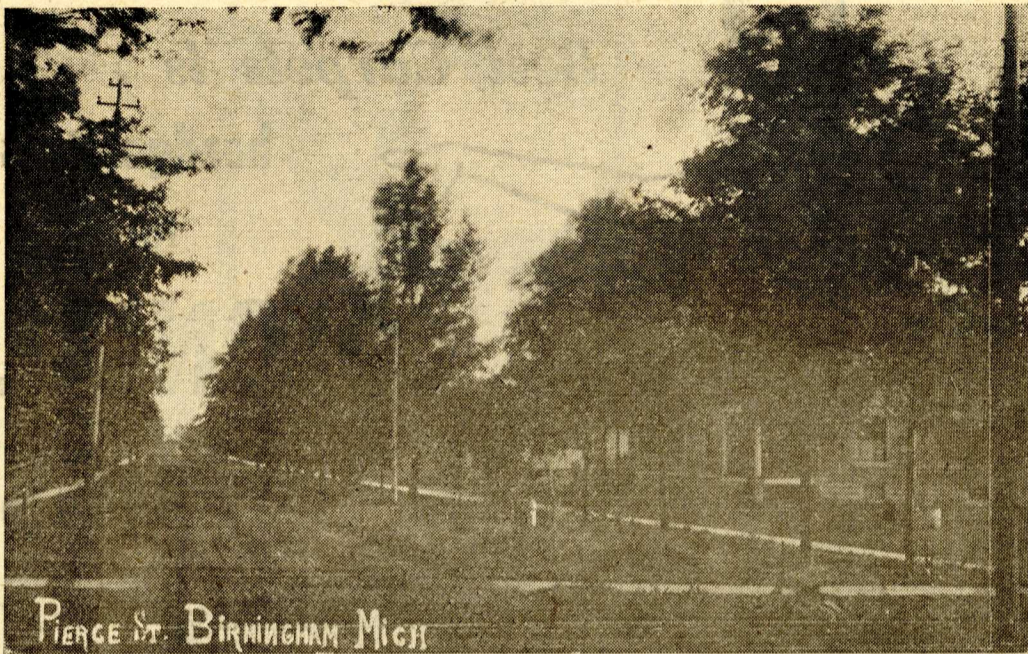
He specialized in dry goods but he also carried groceries, and crockery as well as boots, shoes, caps and hats.

Poppleton, it was said, had the advantage of a very large capital so he was able to pay cash for his goods, thereby getting a discount. These savings he passed on to his customers by offering his goods at less cost than his competitors.

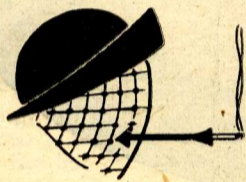
The J. S. Stockwell store in 1878 was to be found in the J. M. Hunt building where Stockwell carried a full line of dry goods, boots and shoes, groceries and gents' furnishings.

THE HUNT BUILDING was on the west side of Woodward about half way in the block between Merrill and Maple avenues.

Before starting in business for himself, Joseph Stockwell clerked in the O. W. Peck store for 5 years. He then went to Highland, Mich. where he was in business with his father, A. Stockwell, for a year and a half. In 1876, he embarked on his own enterprise in Birmingham.



THIS IS PIERCE STREET looking south from just below Brown street some time prior to 1924, the year it was first paved between Brown and Lincoln avenues. Pierce street, from Maple to Brown, had been paved in 1919. The house at extreme right in this picture today is No. 628 Pierce.



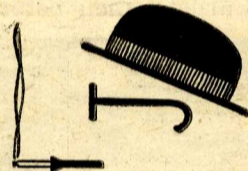
**Exclusive Custom Tailoring
for Ladies and Gentlemen
by Gwynn**

The Finest of imported Fabrics are now available to be Designed and Created for individuality in Your Wardrobe and can be obtained by Consulting Mr. Robert Gwynn

CAMPBELL'S VILLAGE STORE

205 PIERCE ST.

BIRMINGHAM, MICH.



"I say 'Small Fry', we could be much better dressed if mom would visit the LITTLE FOLKS SHOP oftener and buy all of our needs there."

"... and what's more, we could grow to be as old and impressive as The ECCENTRIC in its 75th year, but we'll never find a smarter place to buy our clothes. And that goes for every tot in town!"

**LITTLE FOLKS
SHOP**

175 WEST MAPLE



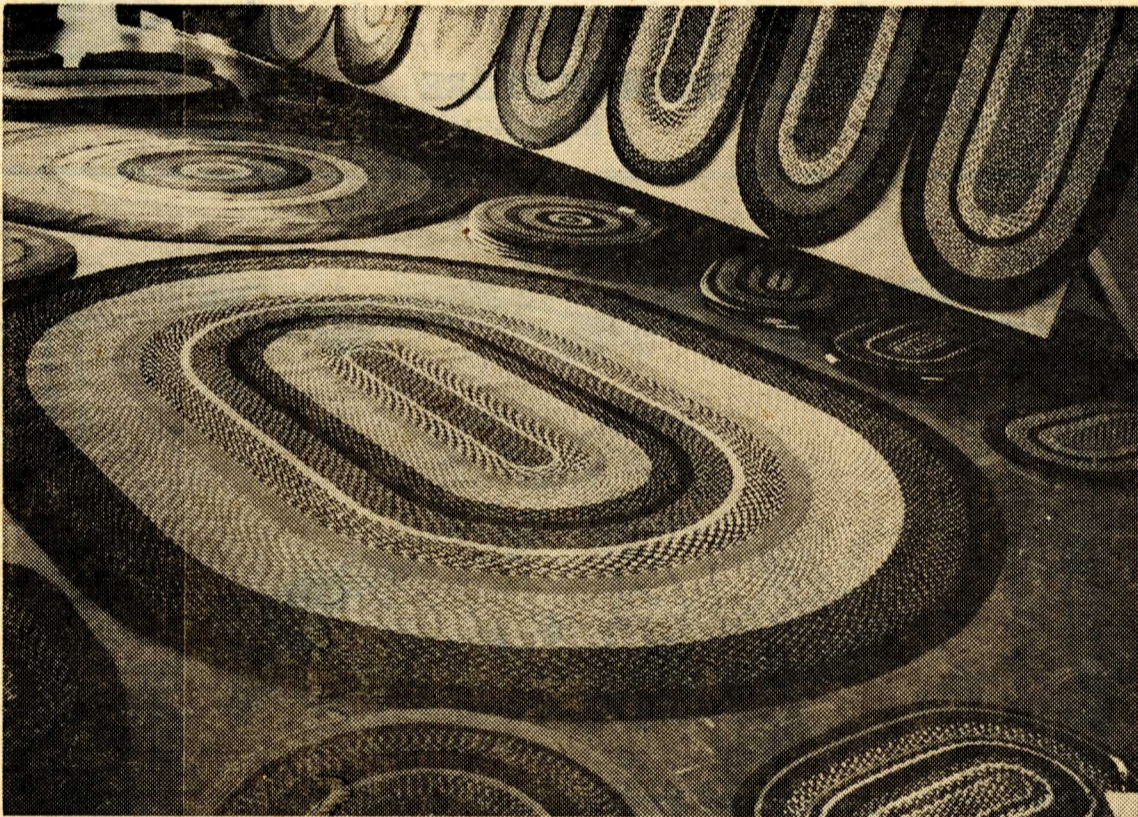
Best Carpets is . . .
headquarters

for

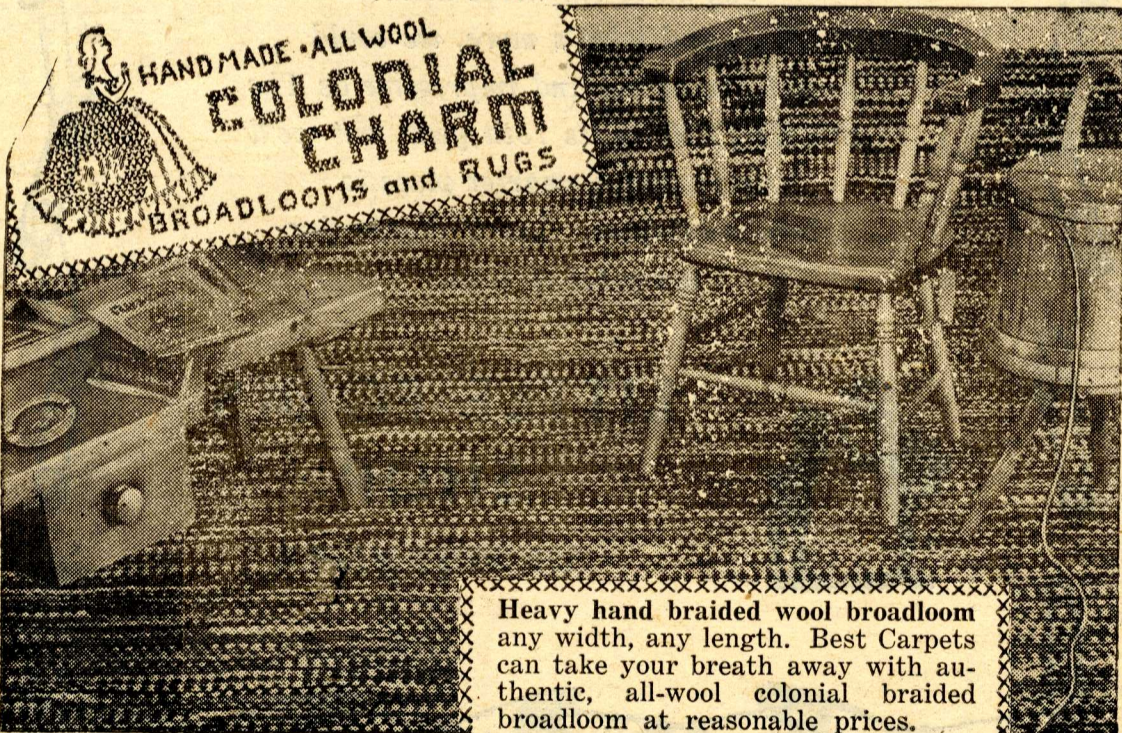
**COLONIAL
RUGS**



The gorgeous rug pictured above is pure linen. That means it's extra resistant to soil, extra durable, extra easy to clean. Linen colors are fast. Most of all, the Best Carpet linens are beautiful . . . their design is pleasing, the colors lovely. See Best Carpets linen before you buy any colonial braid rug.



The biggest selection in Michigan for oval braid rugs is right in your own neighborhood at Best Carpets store on Woodward Ave. at 11½ Mile Road. SEE the rug you buy before you buy it. Choose from stocks of more than 15 colors. Best Carpets is open evenings . . . any evening . . . until 9 p.m.



HAND MADE • ALL WOOL
**COLONIAL
CHARM**
BROADLOOMS and RUGS

Heavy hand braided wool broadloom any width, any length. Best Carpets can take your breath away with authentic, all-wool colonial braided broadloom at reasonable prices.

*Our Compliments
and Best Wishes to
The Birmingham Eccentric*

1924 * **Architect Opens An
Office Near Village**

Residents of Birmingham or the Hills who expect to build a home or business place now need not import someone from some other city or town to do their architectural work. Added to its lists of "specialists", Birmingham now has its own architect.

J. Robert F. Swanson has opened an architectural office at the corner of Lone Pine and Cranbrook Roads in the continuation of the Bloomfield Hills group of buildings. He specializes in any type of residential work.

After completing an architectural course at the University of Michigan two years ago, Mr. Swanson spent a year abroad in the study of different forms of architecture. Last year he took a graduate course at the University. Previous to Mr. Swanson's location here he was with Prof. Saarinen on the Memorial Hall and Civic Center project in Detroit. At present he is doing architectural work on several Bloomfield Estates.

1953

SWANSON ASSOCIATES
BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICHIGAN

(*Reprint from Birmingham Eccentric, July 18, 1924)

The
Birmingham
Chamber of Commerce
CONGRATULATES
The
Birmingham Eccentric

FOR 75 YEARS
OF
CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNITY
SERVICE

Best Wishes for
Continued Success
in The Active
Years to Come



POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION of this photograph has not been made, but it probably is of the River Rouge in the vicinity of Oak street early in the century. Quarton Lake would be in the distant background just right of center.

'I Remember —'

Says J. Bert Peabody
272 Oakland Ave.

The morning when the Old Academy burned down. I was a very small boy then. Nobody knew how the fire started, but the building, a wooden one, burned down completely."

(Editor's Note: The Old Academy stood where the Shain Drug store is now but at the time the place burned down, the academy (a private school) wasn't held there any more. The school rooms had been on the second floor. Mrs. Peabody's mother, Elizabeth Stanley Ford, went to school at the Old Academy.)

"At the time of the fire I remember that on the first floor of the building there lived a family by the name of Roach and then came the shop of Mrs. Furman who was a milliner and then a cobbler by the name of William Manser.

"I REMEMBER Mrs. Roach handing big bundles of bedding out of the window to some of the men who were helping to get things out of the burning building and she filled baskets full of other household goods to take out.

"There were a lot of people around and they put wet blankets on the roofs of nearby buildings so that they wouldn't catch on fire.

"At that time I lived with my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lyman Peabody, on the second floor of a frame store building that stood on the northwest corner of Woodward and Maple, then called Saginaw and Mill streets.

"My father had a country store on the first floor and sold just about everything. I particularly remember his selling hats, boots and cartridges for guns. My mother wouldn't allow me to go near the place where the gun cartridges were kept.

"THERE IS A picture of this corner building, but it shows it with a tower in the back. When I lived there, the tower hadn't been built yet—that came later. It was used to summon the volunteer fire department and was on West Maple street.

Was One of County's Early Commissioners

Under territorial law, three county commissioners were appointed by the governor to transact necessary county business.

This law continued until 1825 when the office of county commissioner became elective.

It remained an elective office until 1827 when it was abolished and a board of supervisors from Oakland county's townships were established in place of the county commissioners board.

Names of men familiar to this section who served on these boards were Dr. Ziba Swan who was appointed in 1820 to serve on the first board of county commissioners, and John W. Hunter who served on the board of supervisors in 1840.

Should've Tried Cigars

Henry Bloomberg was smoking hams in a barrel in 1879 and came very near burning up his house.

ELIZABETH LAKE was named in honor of Elizabeth Cass, wife of Governor Lewis Cass, who with a party of men explored Oakland county in the fall of 1819 on their way to Saginaw to make a treaty with the Indians.

"I was born, so I was told, in a house on the corner where the (St. James) Episcopal Church stands now, but when I was about a year old, we moved over to the store building.

"My father, Lyman Peabody, came to Birmingham from Pennsylvania about 1865. His brother, James H. Peabody came with him. James settled on a farm out by Gilbert Lake. He had a son Stanley and it is Stanley's sons who are now in the Peabody store on Hunter boulevard.

"MY FATHER was the owner of a general store. The first store was the one on the northwest corner of Maple and Woodward. After a while he moved and was located in a building on the west side of Woodward about a half block south from the corner of Woodward and Maple streets.

"Later he bought the store on the southwest corner of Woodward and Maple and was in business there for many years. The store faced Woodward and there was a high board fence all along the Maple street side. John Hanna took the business over about 1900.

"I remember the night when the burglar got in Mr. Edgar Poppleton's dry goods store. It was Saturday night and I was sleeping in the back of our store. Willis Carter and his family lived upstairs over our store.

"CHARLIE HOFFMAN was sleeping on the west side of Woodward across from the National Hotel, but he woke up when he heard the dogs barking. He saw a light in Mr. Poppleton's store which was on the northeast corner of Woodward and Hamilton streets.

"He realized it was a burglar so he got up and went over to Mr. Poppleton's house which was the next building north of the Poppleton store.

"He woke Mr. Poppleton up and Mr. Poppleton got his gun and just as he was coming to his store, the burglar was getting out of the north window.

"The burglar shot off his gun and the bullet went into the side of Mr. Poppleton's head near his ear. Mr. Poppleton shot the burglar through the stomach.

"MY UNCLE, J. W. Foster, went in to see the burglar afterwards to find out if he had anything he wanted to say, but the man said, 'I guess not.' He died about 5 o'clock in the morning.

"Mr. Poppleton was all right, but after that he never could hear a thing. He learned to read lips though, and if he looked right at you he could tell what you were saying. Edgar Poppleton was the son of Orrin Poppleton and the brother of Herbert.

"I was a young man about 18 years old when this happened and was working in my father's store.

"One of my jobs in the store was to clean the lamps. We had two chandeliers in the store with six lights in them. Kerosene lamps they were. Every other day I had to clean these lamps and put in more fuel.

"BY THIS TIME Birmingham had some street lights. One lamp post stood at the corner by our store. Every night the lamp lighter, Al Hutton, would come and

light the lamps. He carried a little ladder with him to light them. But at midnight he came around again and put the lights out.

"The railroad ran through the center of town and the old railroad station was on the east side of the tracks. That meant that you had to cross the tracks whenever you got on or off the train.

"In front of the station was a high wooden platform with steps, like a porch. A man by the name of Cranch ran the ticket window.

"ON THE NORTH side of the station, right up against it, Ira Slade had a produce building where the farmers would bring their produce and it would be freighted to Detroit. Ira had a son, Sam Slade, who was quite a famous singer in Detroit.

"Finally a new railroad station on the west side of the tracks was built around 1880.

"When I was a boy I went to Hill school. I was secretary of the school board in 1901-05 when the west side addition was put on the Hill school.

"Hugh Irving had a hardware store where Mulholland's store is now. He lived in a fine home on the northwest corner of Maple and Chester streets. John Irving was his son.

"I REMEMBER Andrew Wallace. He was a good old man who had a farm northwest of the village. Since there was no bank and my father had the only safe in the village at that time, Mr. Wallace would come in whenever he got any cash and put his money in our safe. But then he would come in every Saturday and take out 10c for the church—he was a Presbyterian—and 2.50 to pay the hired girl.

"I will be 86 years old on my net birthday and have lived in Birmingham all my life.

Birmingham Churches

and those in its
environs

CONGRATULATE THE ECCENTRIC ON ITS 75th ANNIVERSARY

St. James Episcopal Church
355 West Maple, Birmingham

Church of the Nazarine
280 East Lincoln, Birmingham

Townsite Community Congregational Church
111½ Mile and Southfield, Lathrup Townsite

First Baptist Church
300 Willets, Birmingham

English Lutheran Church of the Redeemer
1800 West Maple, Birmingham

Embury Methodist Church
14 Mile at Croft, Birmingham

First Presbyterian Church
North Woodward at Euclid, Birmingham

Kirk-In-The-Hills Church - Presbyterian
1340 West Long Lake, Bloomfield Hills

Church of the Ascension - Lutheran
16945 West 14 Mile at Henrietta, Birmingham

Franklin Community Church - Methodist
German Mill Rd., Franklin

First Methodist Church
West Maple and Pleasant, Birmingham

Christ Church Cranbrook
Lone Pine Road, Bloomfield Hills

Our Shepherd Lutheran Church
14 Mile, East of Woodward, Birmingham

And invite You and the Members of your Family to worship, Work and have Fellowship with Them. The Pastors, Clergy and Leaders of the Churches listed in this Advertisement, together with their Congregations are ready to serve you.

TO THE BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC

Congratulations on your seventy-fifth anniversary. Best wishes to you and the community you serve for a safe and prosperous future.

L. C. HOWE

Safety Services

NATIONAL BANK BUILDING
BIRMINGHAM, MICHIGAN

HAVING LAUNDRY TROUBLE?

switch to palace model

YOUR
LAUNDRY BUNDLE
FREE
IF IT FAILS TO SATISFY

val-u-pak ALL FLAT PIECES ARE
BEAUTIFULLY IRONED

BATH TOWELS AND WEARING
APPAREL ARE FLUFFED DRY

30 lbs. \$4³⁹
ADDITIONAL POUNDS 12c EACH

No extra charge for cotton blankets, wash-
able rugs or chenille spreads. Service Mon-
day—Tuesday—Wednesday, 15c per bundle
additional.

shirts 12c ea.

Weighed with this bundle.
Custom Pressed. Full Dress and
Synthetic Shirts, Extra Charge.

3 day service



palace model

laundry / dry cleaning

PHONE MI 4-6930 TODAY

Enjoy the convenience of sending your dry cleaning with your laundry.



Brown Street, Birmingham, Mich.

HERE IS BROWN STREET some years before it was paved between Pierce and Southfield in 1926. The section from Woodward to Pierce was paved in 1919 widened along with the 1926 paving to the west. The picture above was taken toward the east (and Pierce street way in the distance) from a point somewhere around Bates street.

'The Family Theatre' Was Name Of Village's First Movie House

Birmingham did not have a "movin' pitcher show" until 1913.

For a time, it almost looked as though there might be two movie houses in the town.

L. J. Levanseler and a Mr. Miller, both from Royal Oak, announced that they would build a movie house on the old Orrin Poppleton store property just one week prior to the announcement made by Homer Leonard of the Leonard Electrical company and Harry Smith of Royal Oak that they would have a first class show running in a new building to be erected by James F. Wooster between Cobb's drug store and the National Hotel on Woodward.

L. J. Levanseler bought the old Orrin Poppleton store which stood near the corner of Hamilton street (then called Middle street) and Woodward avenue from Messrs. Hagerman and Cobb. A modern building suitable for the exhibition of high grade moving pictures was to be erected within 30 days.

However, it turned out that there was to be only one picture show in the village after all.

James F. Wooster, the owner of the Birmingham Inn (the remodeled and renamed National Hotel) bought out Levanseler and Miller and all the rest of the Poppleton property which extended south to the corner of Hamilton. Wooster then went ahead with the "moving pictures" building that Mr. Levanseler had planned.

STOCK IN the new theater and property was sold at par for \$10 a share.

A contest was held to decide the name of the new movie house and the name "The Family Theater" was selected.

On February 12, 1913, the Family Theater opened in Birmingham. It was modern in every respect for its day and the safety of the patrons was well looked after, as the ceiling was made "strictly fire-proof, having an asbestos roof."

The theater stood on the site now occupied by the business office of The Birmingham Eccentric.

THERE WERE two fire escapes back of the stage and two exits in front marked with red lights. The "moving picture machine", the latest 1913 model, operated by Homer Leonard, was located in a booth in the rear of the building. The booth was "absolutely fire proof" and was composed of a steel frame with 3/4 inches of asbestos.

The vestibule was finished in birch wood with tile floor and sides. The woodwork and posts in the interior were of black walnut said

Completed Courthouse

In March 1831, the job of completing the first county court house, which had been started several years previously, was let to John W. Hunter, Birmingham's first settler, and G. O. Whittemore. In 1833 the contractors were paid and the work accepted.

Village Flower Garden

E. L. Jennings had quite an extensive flower garden in front of his brick business establishment on Saginaw street (now Woodward) in 1880.

of the time. "At great expense" the play house showed the inauguration ceremonies of President Wilson.

"These pictures", it was claimed, "are perfect and can only be had by the best grade of picture houses. You can see the President and his inaugural doings here a great deal better than if you had been in Washington at the time."

1818 Survey Made By 5 Detroit Men

In the fall of 1818, a most careful and complete tour of exploration of Oakland county was made by the following Detroit men: David C. McKinstry, a business promoter; Austin E. Wing, U. S. Marshall and Wayne county sheriff; Benjamin Stead, tailor and merchant; John Montieth, Presbyterian minister, and A. G. Whitney, a lawyer.

The men made a semi-official 12-day tour of the proposed county of Oakland. They traveled far and wide over much new territory, located mill and town sites and brought back most valuable information for the farmer, the miller, the trader and the lumberman.

THE REPORT published by these explorers upon their return to Detroit was most minute as to turn, direction and location.

Their route took them up the old Saginaw trail from Detroit in a northwesterly direction, then turning off, they covered points which are now known as Wing Lake, Long Lake, Orchard Lake, Union Lake, Elizabeth Lake, Pontiac and Rochester.

Early leaders in the activities of the Democratic party in Birmingham were Frank O. Day and Lee Truax, "fathers" of today's organization.

First major activity in which the group took an active part was the promotion in 1933 of Birmingham resident Murray D. VanWagoner for state highway commissioner.

For the next three years they had no particular program as a group, but in 1936 met to form a more closely knit organization which was named the Birmingham Democratic club. David H. Thompson became chairman of the group which met in the American Legion hall on South Woodward.

Active members at that time included Mr. and Mrs. Henry M. Foley, Donald Thurber, Mrs. J. Rowland Quinn, Ellery Brownell, Mark Hardin, Mrs. H. H. Corson and Joseph A. Byrne.

THE CLUB dropped most of its activities during World War II and remained inactive until the spring of 1948, when Thomas G. Kavanagh, James G. Allen and William G. Loud revived it. Their purpose was to bring the Democrats in Birmingham together into a forceful, well-integrated group.

Loud, a Detroit attorney, was the first chairman of the reorganized group, followed by Harry J. McGowan and the current chairman, Mrs. Dorothy K. Roosevelt.

About eight members made up the new group which met monthly in private homes or the Legion hall. Today the organization has a membership of 65.

THEY BECAME active in political affairs at once and in the first election following the reorganization, sent delegates to three of the existing six precincts. Delegates included Mrs. Quinn, second precinct; Allen, fourth and Loud, sixth.

By 1950 all precincts were filled, the delegates being Allen, Mrs. William Malarney, VanWagoner, Mrs. Elizabeth Robinson, Harold R. Melin, Kavanagh, Michael F. Feighan and Harry J. McGowan.

Mrs. Philip A. Hart and McGowan now are assistant county chairmen.

Several members have been appointed to state offices by the governor, including Edgar Pugh, state accounting board; Allen, deputy corporation and security commission; Philip A. Hart, corporation and security commission, OPS director, United States district attorney and legal advisor to the governor; VanWagoner, University of Michigan regent, and Mrs. Anne Garrison, member of the Michigan crippled children's commission.

MEMBERS WHO have south public office include former Gov. VanWagoner and Philip Hart.

During the last presidential election, the club sent delegates to county and state conventions, the city's eight precincts, had election workers at the polls of all eight precincts, held meetings in which

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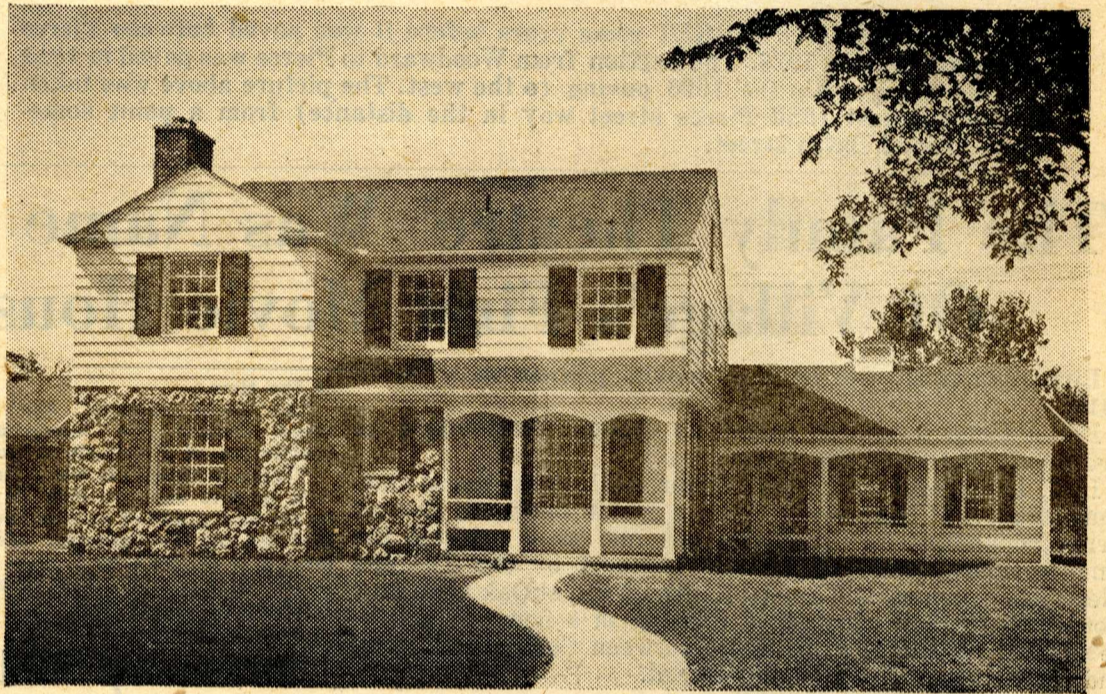
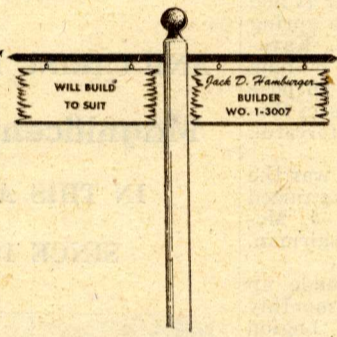
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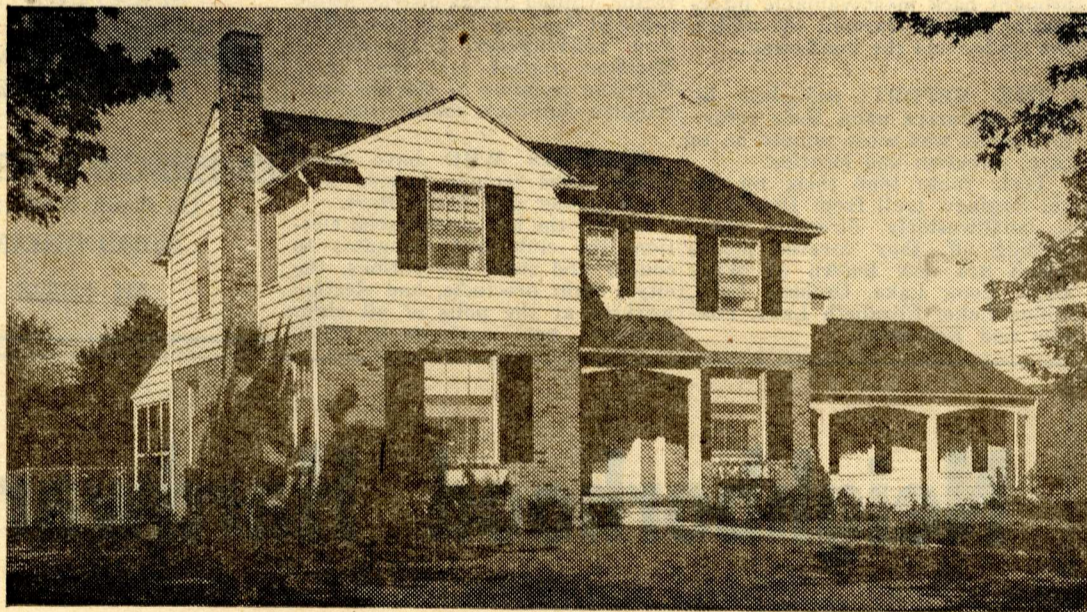
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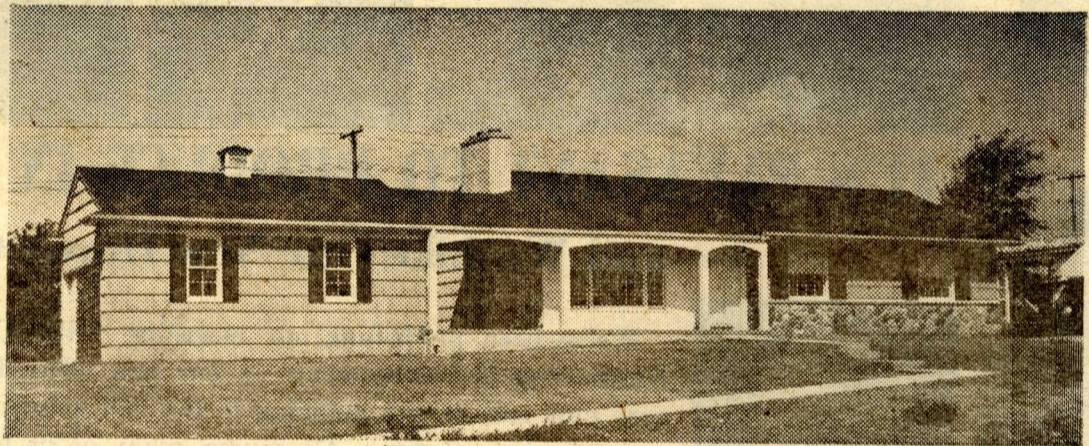
The new home of Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Basford, 205 Lake Park



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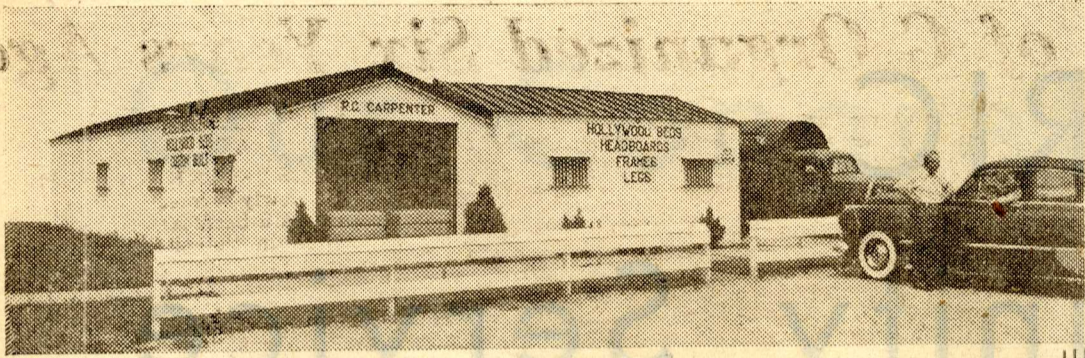
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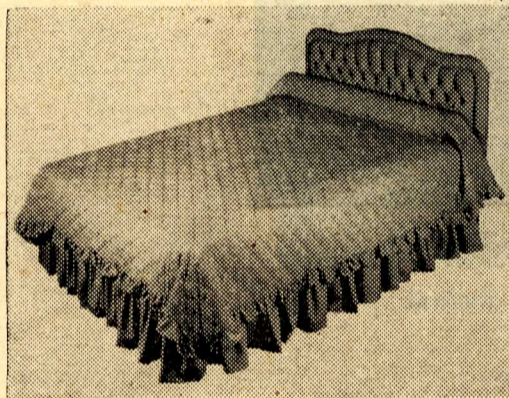
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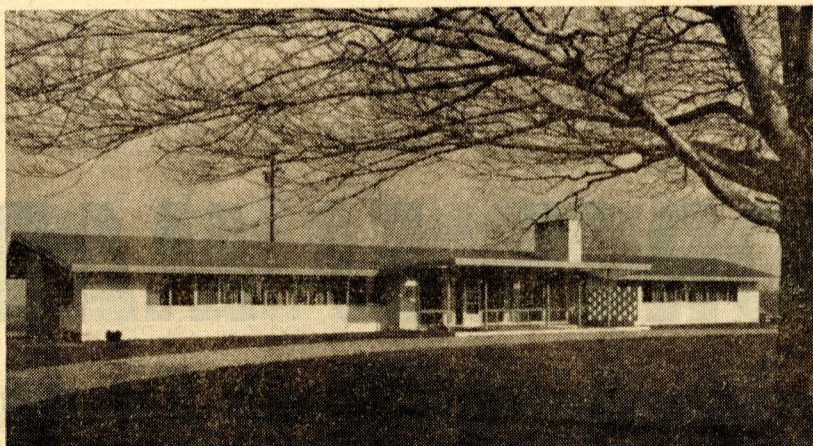
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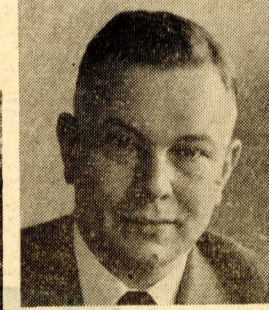
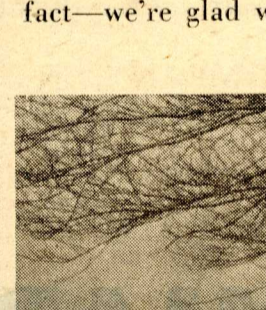
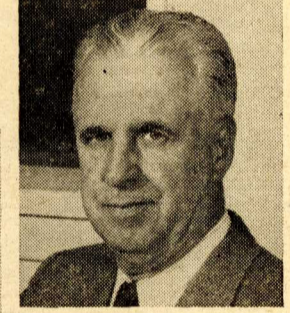
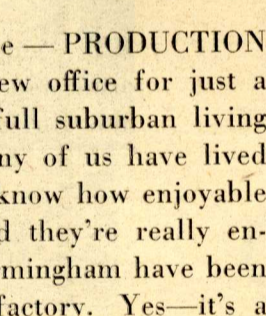
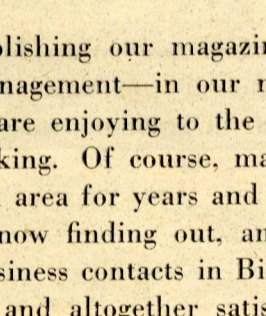
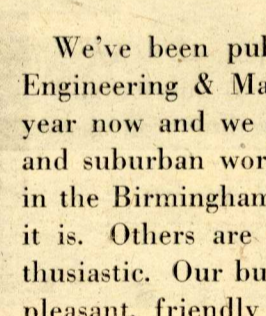
IT'S PLEASANT TO PRODUCE IN BIRMINGHAM

--- and We Like Our New Home On Axtell

We've been publishing our magazine — PRODUCTION Engineering & Management—in our new office for just a year now and we are enjoying to the full suburban living and suburban working. Of course, many of us have lived in the Birmingham area for years and know how enjoyable it is. Others are now finding out, and they're really enthusiastic. Our business contacts in Birmingham have been pleasant, friendly and altogether satisfactory. Yes—it's a fact—we're glad we came to Birmingham.



Bramson Publishing Company



'I Remember —'

Says Mrs. Thomas R. Navin, 452 Southfield, "Going the rounds with my father, John N. Heth, helping him deliver milk as a child. That way I got to know just about everybody in town and where they lived.

"We used to deliver milk in the evening because it was cooler then and people would have fresh milk and cream for their breakfast in the morning. Milk was kept in a cool place in the house for no one had refrigeration in those days.

"My father always carried a revolver in the milk wagon when he made his collections. I remember the time he had collected about \$50—quite a sum of money in those days.

"We were going down the hill on north Woodward avenue when a man stepped out along side of the wagon and asked my father what time it was. My father pulled his big old-fashioned watch out of his pocket and told him and the man said, 'Give me your money! This is a hold-up!'

"I was sitting on the further side away from the robber and he couldn't see me when I reached down and got the revolver from its hiding place. I shoved it under my father's arm and said, 'Yes, this is a hold up!' The man ran away and my father saved his money.

"I REMEMBER the white painted house of George Mitchell on South Woodward. This house still is standing and now is the home of the American Legion.

"The big square house of Moses Taber was a little north of the Mitchell home and its site was about where the A & P store now stands on the southwest corner of Merrill and Woodward—but at that time Merrill street was not cut through.

"Almeron Whitehead's house was across the street on Woodward.

"I remember the big frame house of Frank Blakeslee which was the next building west of his store on West Maple. The site of Blakeslee's store was just on the west side of the alley, right where the Smith and Erwin store is today. In fact, it is the same store.

"THE BLAKESLEE home later was moved down on the east side of north Bates near the Baptist church where it still is standing.

"I remember the home of Dr. C. M. Raynale which stood on West Maple where the Wabeek building is today. It also was moved down on North Bates on the west side of the street in back of the Baptist church where it is still standing today.

"I remember the big beautiful home of Mrs. Sterns that was the show place of the county and stood

on the southwest corner of Woodward and Willets. The outside of the house was of pink marble.

"Mrs. Sterns was quite a wealthy woman and was a very energetic worker in the Presbyterian church. Some time after she died, her big home was used as a tea room, run by Mr. and Mrs. H. Wales Price.

"I REMEMBER the funeral of Mattie Baldwin. My father and Thomas Navin went over to her house the day before the funeral and mowed the lawn and got the yard looking neat.

"Her funeral was held at her home on West Maple near Baldwin school. All the members of the Ladies Literary Club of which Mattie Baldwin was a long time member, attended the funeral and wore small bouquets of flowers tied in ribbons of the club colors.

"I made arrangements with Miss Rhoda Starr, then the superintendent of schools, to let the children out of school in commemoration of Miss Baldwin. They all came to the house, each carrying a bouquet of flowers which they banked in front of the house. My father put the flowers on a platform wagon to carry them to the cemetery.

"AT THE funeral procession, the children lined both sides of the road all the way to the Methodist church. They were not allowed to go to the cemetery.

"The funeral services were conducted by a Unitarian minister from Detroit. Martha Baldwin is buried in Greenwood cemetery under two large trees. She loved trees and planted many of them during her lifetime. Many times have I painted the iron bench by her grave.

"I remember the time the First State Bank closed about 1931. I met a prominent Birmingham man who still is living, on the street that day and who at that time was quite wealthy.

"All his money had been banked in the First State Bank and all he had left, he told me, was what he had in his pocket—\$2.47. He eventually got some of it back, but nowhere near the amount he had deposited."

C of C Organized Six Years Ago

The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, actually an outgrowth of the Retail Merchants Association, had its beginning on November 20, 1947, when nine interim board members signed the Chamber's articles of incorporation.

The idea of establishing a chamber in the city was discussed for several years prior to the creation of the organization. Finally the Retail Merchants Association, seeking a better coordinating organization to recommend on the city's development, fostered the meetings in the fall of 1947 that were to give birth to the new group.

With Genaro Florez as first interim president, the organizing board included Foster Toothacker, president of the Retail Merchants; Clarence Vliet, John M. Ball, Frank Rising, Larry Nelson, Walter Moreland, Robert Mason and George J. Thomas.

FIRST PERMANENT board was named in late January of 1948. Florez was elected president and other officers were Ralph A. Wilson, vice-president; Dr. Robert J. Mason, secretary; and Foster Toothacker, treasurer. Directors were Paul N. Averill, Dr. George E. Marin, John E. Martz, John K. Stevenson, and George J. Thomas.

When the first board was elected, the Chamber already had listed 199 residential, professional, business and industrial members. Temporary quarters of the Chamber were at 772 South Woodward.

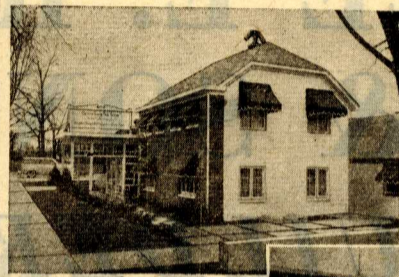
Clarence Vliet accepted appointment as acting executive secretary for the Chamber until a full time man would be retained. On April 5, 1948, Charles Mortenson was appointed executive secretary. Mortenson resigned from the War Assets Administration to take the

Birmingham position.

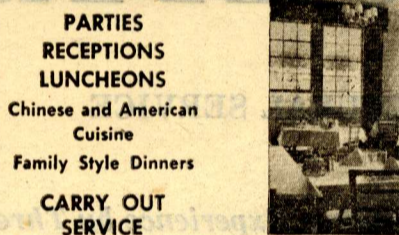
ONE OF THE earliest actions of the newly-formed Chamber was to secure a Secretary of State branch office in the city. License plates went up for sale from the Birmingham Chamber hardly a month after the organization was established.

The group quickly moved to other city problems. Parking facilities, better city-public relations, better business practices, post office service and many public services were studied and reported on by Chamber committees.

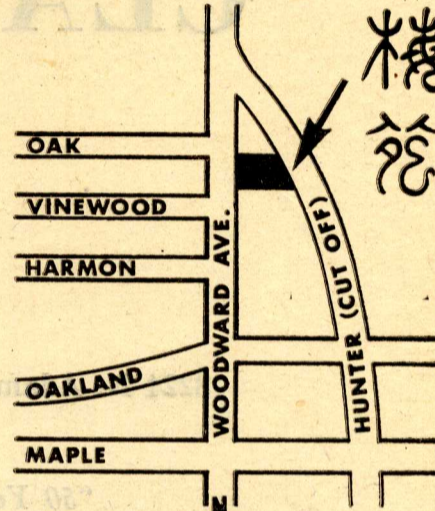
Present directors of the Chamber are J. M. Ball, president; Rolie Reese, vice-president; Henry L. Selters, treasurer; Dr. W. Lloyd Kemp, Bruce G. Booth, Paul Neal Averill, Dr. Thomas Y. Watson, Paul L. Penfield and William H. Breech.



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Bloomfield Village Forms Unique Group

Chartered April 16, 1942, for the purpose of bettering the character and condition of Bloomfield Village as a residential area, the Bloomfield Village Protective association lost no time in starting to fulfill its mission.

Before the end of that year, the association had been the primary factor in the establishment of proper fire protection for Village residents. A 350-gallon pumper was purchased and 20 volunteer firemen, trained by the Office of Civil Defense, were ready to man it.

With the department thus established and through the efforts of William C. Howe, it was possible to create a special fire district, affording considerable savings in fire insurance rates.

THESE SAVINGS have not only offset the cost of the original equipment, but have made other advancements possible.

In 1950 the Village saw its own fire hall constructed and the following year a 500-gallon pumper was designed and built. There have been many other incidental improvements in the fire fighting section made possible through the efforts of the association.

In the past the volunteer fire department has been headed by W. C. Scott, W. C. Howe, J. S. Osler and H. G. Corbett. The current staff is composed of Chief Charles W. Wiggins, Assistant Chiefs Paul N. Averill and John S. Osler; Captains Joseph P. Baldez and George O. Cutter; Engineer M. S. Rosenberger and Secretary George H. Webb.

THE PRESENT force of 25 men has responded to 48 alarms within the fiscal year and have performed in cooperation with the Birmingham department in fighting the February 14 fire at the Lawson Lumber yard. There also have been

52 training or business meetings.

In addition to the volunteer firemen, there are six fire police and two Village officers, Mel Auten and Claude Hollister, working with the department.

While fire fighting has been one of the major issues undertaken by the association, it has not been its sole activity for the improvement of the Village.

Last year, working as a group, it secured petitions necessary for the blacktopping of village streets.

Shortly after their organization, members secured a fully equipped police car so the area today has full day and night police coverage.

THE ORIGINAL board of directors was made up of Paul N. Averill, Lee E. Joslyn, Jr., Elmer L. Sylvester and Wayne D. Brenkert.

Current officers are Dr. Edson K. Pool, president; D. L. VanDusen, vice president; William H. Cartwright, secretary; C. B. Hartman, treasurer and John Palmer, Gardner C. Vose, Charles Wiggins and M. S. Rosenberger.

Only resident property owners in the 600-acre Village may join the association.

Lawyer-Legislator

Ezra P. Baldwin, an original settler of this area, was admitted to the Oakland county bar in December 11, 1843 and located at Birmingham. He was elected a member of the state legislature in 1847

In the 75 years of service by The Birmingham Eccentric, we are proud of our own 15 years participation in the growth of Birmingham. Starting with three employees to our present staff of 47, we have increased our services and facilities to keep pace with the building and construction.

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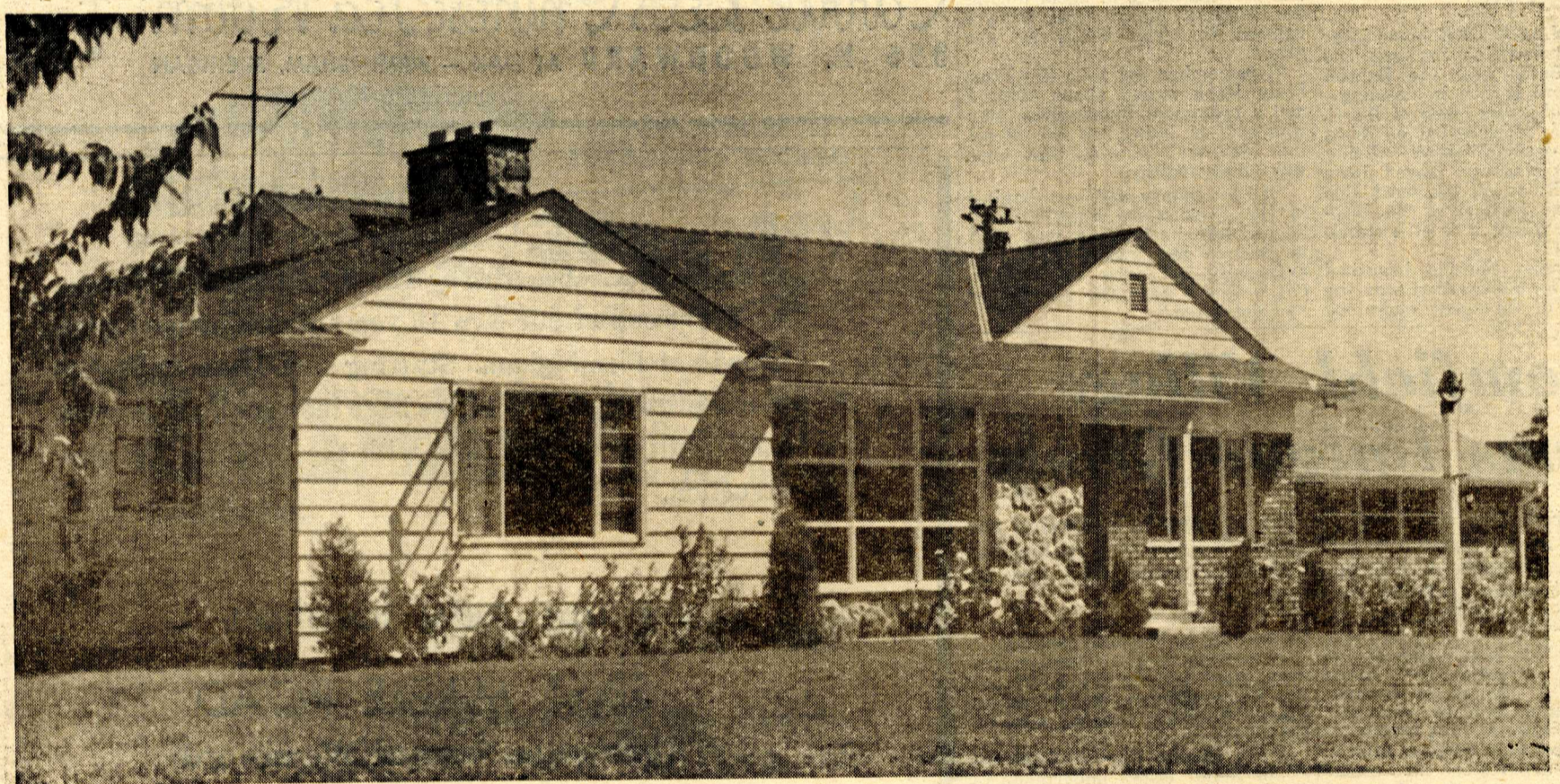
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ens, and thence by boat down the Clinton river to Lake St. Clair, thence through that lake and Detroit river to Detroit."

From an old Oakland County history (1877), the same story can be told concerning the condition of the Saginaw Trail. "The first 12 miles from Detroit on the Saginaw Trail was nearly an impenetrable swamp, covered with heavy timber and so level that the water stood upon the surface a greater part of the year.

"MANY A venturesome pioneer, who had perhaps found his way from New York or New England, has had the last atom of faith in the new country taken from him in this indescribable morass."

Miss Fannie E. Fish presented a paper to the Oakland County Pioneer Society in 1888, describing the Saginaw Trail as she remembered it. She was the daughter of one of the prominent citizens of Piety Hill, Deacon Elijah S. Fish, who did much to stamp the community as a religious one.

"And the old road, too, the Indian trail that led from I know not where, possibly Saginaw, to Detroit. Detached fragments of it remained intact for many years. Doubtless it grew in loveliness after it was disused as a highway, for nature has a fashion of taking the discarded things of man, whether it be a deserted house and garden or a forsaken highway, and clothing them with a peculiar beauty; so here the turf grew thick and soft, clumps of hazel brush sprang up, now at one side now in the middle of the green road.

"BIRDS FOUND here plenty of safe resting places; robin and bluebird, thrush and catbird were all at home. With one such remnant of the old road I was especially familiar, that between Doctor Parke's house and the sawmill road, so near the turnpike that the rumbling of the wagons and crack of the driver's whip could be heard, and yet it had an air of perfect seclusion."

It was not until the late 1820's that the roads which brought immigrants to Oakland county from north and south were sufficiently established to encourage settlement.

The military road begun by Colonel Leavenworth in 1817 started from Detroit and followed the old Indian trail to Saginaw. Previous to 1819 this highway had been completed about three miles, besides being "corduroyed" several additional miles.

AN ACT to establish this road along the Detroit-Saginaw route was passed December 7, 1819 and signed by Lewis Cass, governor of the territory.

This road originally begun by Colonel Leavenworth started at the "center of the military square in Woodward avenue in the city of Detroit, and ran in a north westerly direction to the road which was opened and cut by the troops of the United States, to the termination thereof; then westwardly to a large oak tree standing on the right of the Saginaw Trail "so-called" and within a short distance of the same, the said tree being marked with the letter H; thence westwardly in a direct line as surveyed and marked by Horatio Ball, to the main street in the village of Pontiac."

THE LEGISLATIVE records show, however, that the act of 1819 ordering the Detroit and Pontiac turnpike was not fully carried out, for in June, 1822, another act was passed by the council authorizing the governor to appoint three commissioners to establish a road from Detroit via Pontiac, to Saginaw, or the Saginaw river.

Again, an act approved in 1824, incorporated the Pontiac and Paint Creek Turnpike Company which was to extend a turnpike from a point three miles from the Detroit river on the present road, by the most practicable route via Royal Oak to the courthouse in Pontiac.

At this point in its history, the Saginaw Trail was transformed into a plank road between Detroit and Pontiac. Where the plank road became impassable by wear and tear, it was solidly graded with gravel. This was a toll-road, with two gates, one near Detroit and the other near Royal Oak.

THE ROAD was extended from time to time under various acts of legislation by the territorial government, until it reached a point

some six miles beyond the present city of Flint in 1834. It was cut out of the width of one hundred feet through its whole course and graded to a width of 80 feet.

As the years passed, improvements on the highly traveled Saginaw Trail, now Woodward avenue, continued to be made.

It was not until 1923, however, that a great change was planned for the Woodward avenue stretch from the 8 Mile road (Detroit's northerly limits) to the southern limits of Pontiac.

THE OAKLAND County Road Commission, realizing the inadequate condition of Woodward avenue at that time (it was only a single concrete strip 16-18 feet in width) had worked for three years to the end that the state should widen this important roadway.

This was called the "Wider Woodward Avenue" project. Plans were made and steps were taken for the construction of a proposed 200-foot superhighway, with two parallel 40-foot pavements on either side of the existing interurban railway lines.

The state legislature passed a bill in 1923, "The Wider Woodward Avenue Bill", which provided for the necessary widening and a method of financing.

THAT YEAR (1923) steam shovels were at work in the vicinity of Bloomfield Hills, busy on some of the heaviest cuts to be made on this road.

By 1924, three miles of the westerly side of the Wider Woodward project was completed, from the 8 Mile road to the 11 Mile road. Construction crews had started pouring the concrete at the Bloomfield Center vicinity and were working north toward Pontiac.

Sufficient additional pavement between 11 Mile road and Pontiac was completed in 1925 so as to provide two-way traffic on the westerly 44 feet of road throughout its entire length from the 8 Mile road to Pontiac.

The other half—the east side of the Wider Woodward avenue project, was nearly ready for traffic.

ONLY IN THE village of Birmingham, where Woodward avenue was already a wide pavement, was the broader highway not completed, due to right-of-way problems.

Preliminary operations on the western half of the parallel road were completed except in that portion where the Grand Trunk Railway blocked development by its right-of-way.

By 1928, all work had been completed except for this small stretch occupied by the Grand Trunk from the 11 Mile road to a quarter mile north of Lone Pine road in Bloomfield Hills.

WHEN THE Grand Trunk began using its new right-of-way in August, 1931, work was rushed on the completion of the eastern portion of Wider Woodward between Lincoln avenue and 11 Mile. This section was finished by the first part of that winter.

The 1.4-mile section from Oak street north to just beyond Lone Pine road was finished in the summer of 1932.

Wider Woodward, between Lincoln and Oak streets (which now is Hunter Blvd.), was not paved and opened until November 1939, due to additional right-of-way the state had to acquire.

At that time the first steps for the construction of the 204 foot super-highway were begun, although it was not until 1927 that actual construction was started.

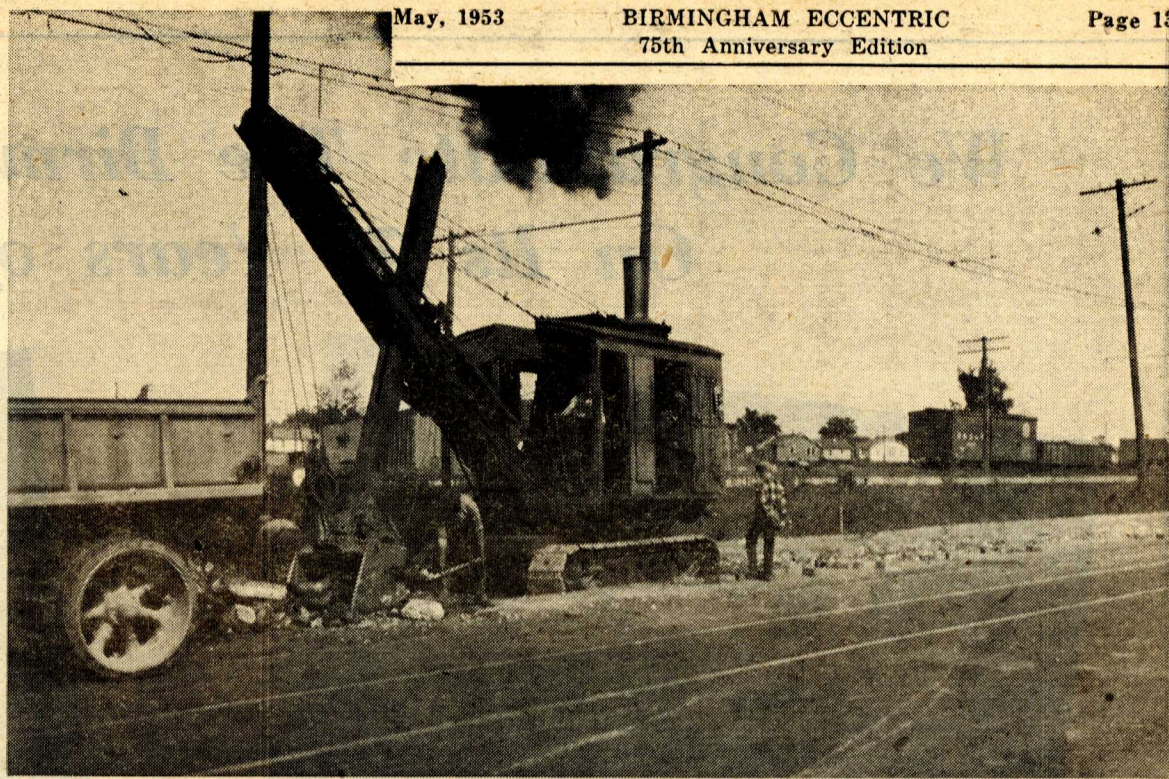
THE WIDER Woodward project was completed in the fall of 1931 only a year behind schedule in spite of delays in the project brought about by the depression.

Present residents of Birmingham who lived in the city during this period will remember the confusion, dissension and mixed feelings of the community toward the project—especially when it came to the cutting down of the trees that lined our main thoroughfare.

Not only the cutting down of the trees caused a great to-do in the community, but also the ultimate width of Woodward avenue in the city. Three proposals on the width were made: 200 feet, 150 feet and 100 feet.

Birmingham opposed the 200 foot width highway, declaring that it would "divide the village into two sections." The 150-foot width was a very controversial issue with supporters on either side.

TO COMPLICATE matters even



WOODWARD SOUTH OF LINCOLN TORN UP PRIOR TO REPAVING
This was in connection with widening of the street through center of town

more, the Birmingham theater was in the process of construction on the 100-foot line, as first proposed by the state.

Work on the building had progressed to the point that \$100,000 had already been invested and the entire amount of work then done on the building would have had to be torn up to comply with a building line of 150-foot width.

It was not until the road committee of the state administrative board paid a visit to the city that the controversial issue was settled. A decision was made on the 100-foot width.

At that time the Grand Trunk railway went through the center of town and with the removal of the Grand Trunk's right of way to the present location, plans were made for the Hunter cut-off, which would follow the railway's old right-of-way through the city and which eventually completed the Wider Woodward avenue project.

'I Remember.'

Says Philip J. Williams, 708 Larchlea: "'Shorty' Parks, who owned the building on the northeast corner of Woodward and Maple about 30 years ago. At one time he had a meat market there. A lot of people in town were given funny nicknames that not always fit them. 'Shorty' Parks was a tall, slender man."

Recalls Edwin O'Neal, 583 Madison: "The stores near me when I had my harness shop about 65 years ago in the place where Peck's store is now. Lyman Peabody's general store was on the north side of me at the southwest corner of Woodward and Maple. My neighbor south of me was a shoe repair man in a little shop. It wasn't much of a store, but it did have a glass front."

"The next store south was another little store where I really first got started in business. After I got out, some man tried to run a meat market there but wasn't successful. Herb Baxter went in after him and Herb had a jewelry store and repaired watches."

"The next store down the line was a millinery shop run by three girls and next to them was a baker—Kennison, his name was. Then came a brick store which was the hardware store of Art Blakeslee, a brother of my wife, Mrs. O'Neal."

The lake, now known as ORCHARD LAKE, embraces an island, which an early exploring party of 1818 found to be "an island of about 40 acres, on which there are a number of productive apple trees." It is supposed that the seeds for the apple trees came from Detroit, carried from there and planted on the island by the Indians.



Do You Remember When?

You'll no doubt smile at this heroic formality. But . . . fashion decreed a picture should reflect the fashions and formality of the day. The purpose of recalling the moment or loved ones is the only thing unchanged. A tremendous advance in equipment, technique and attitude has taken place. Today the demand is for a picture that captures the real person, his personality, the one YOU know. As photographers for fifty years, we've seen and been active in this desired change. Into each of our photographs goes the use of the finest cameras and equipment, and years of conscious endeavor to get an honest and flattering picture. Our pictures speak for themselves. Won't you let us take a picture of you for those who'd love to have one? Call for complimentary sitting in your home.

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*We Congratulate The Birmingham Eccentric
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Bell Chapel — then
Saginaw St. (now Woodward) near Maple

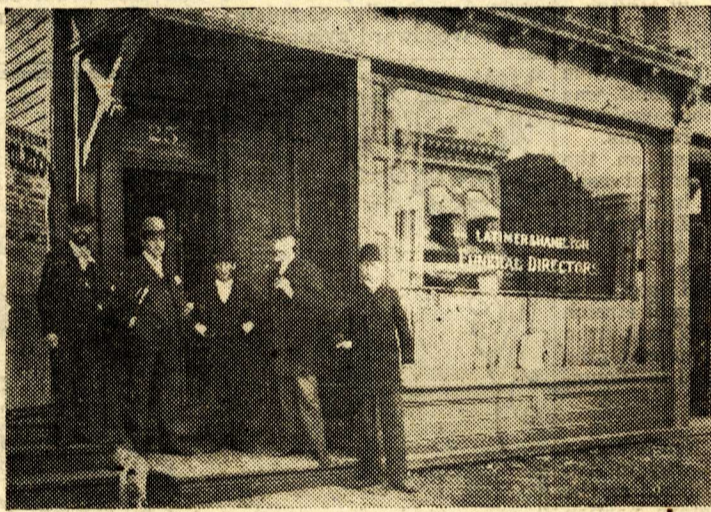


Bell Chapel — now
820 E. Maple Ave.

SINCE 1855

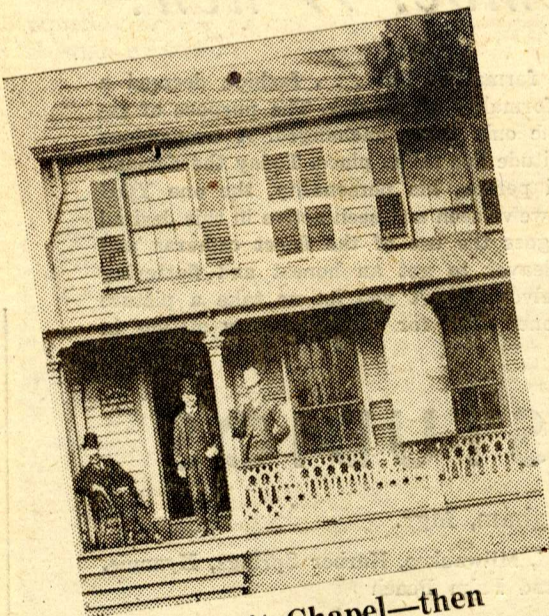
The Wm. R. HAMILTON Co.

has served this community



Wm. J. Otter, Col. Latimer, Jr., Wm. R. Hamilton, Sr. and staff—the first generation—taken at 25 W. Lafayette, Detroit, in the 1880's.

**YES . . . "The old order
changeth, yielding place
to new . . ."**



Detroit Chapel—then
taken approximately in 1875 at 21 W. Lafayette, near the City Hall



Detroit Chapel—now
3975 Cass Ave.

BELL CHAPEL

of

The Wm. R. HAMILTON Co.

820 E. Maple Ave., Birmingham
DETROIT CHAPEL, 3975 Cass Ave.

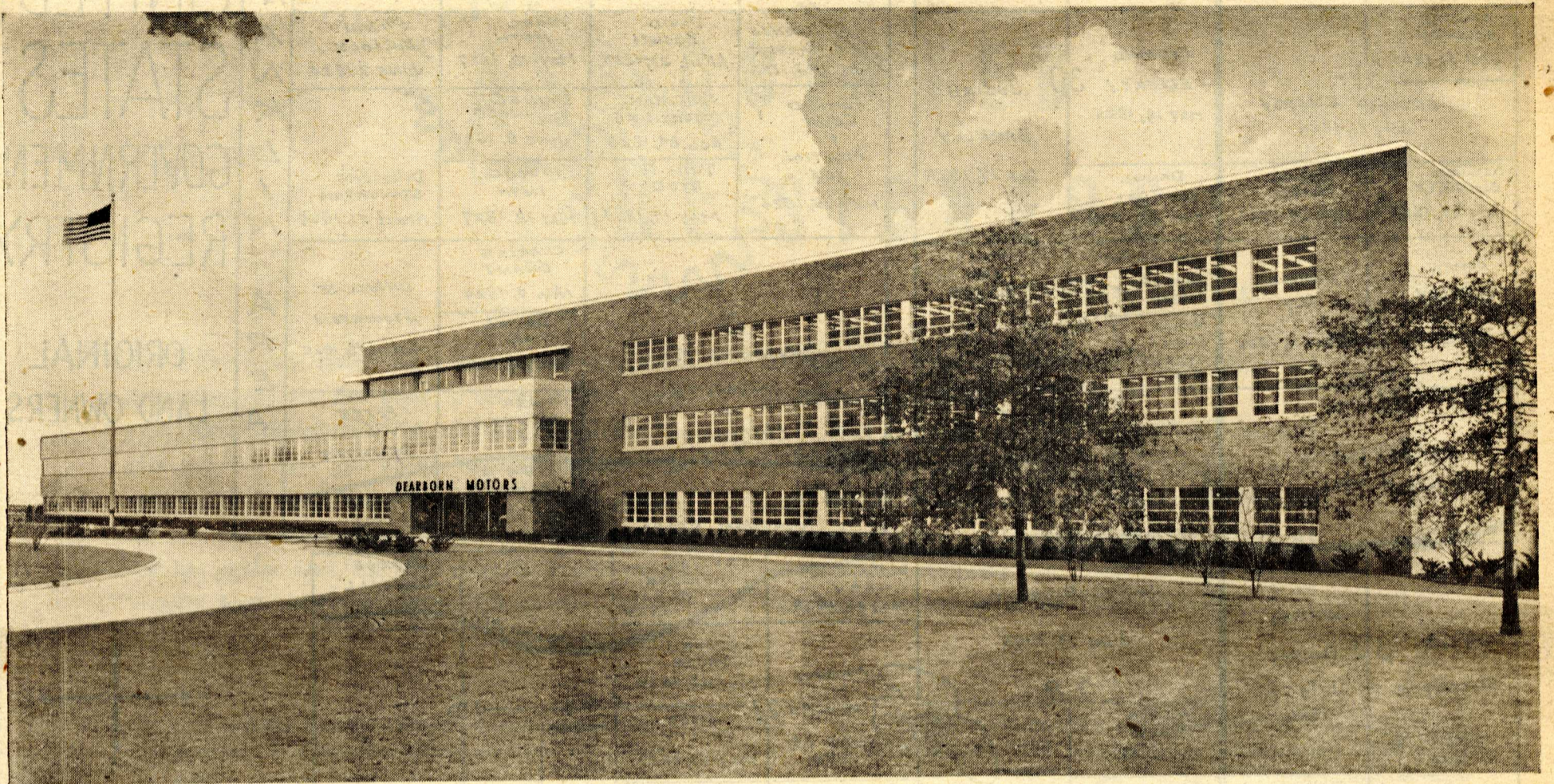
Clarence E. Otter
Wm. R. Hamilton
N. Frank Hamilton
Dwight C. Baldwin

BIRMINGHAM-BLOOMFIELD-FRANKLIN AREA . . . As Recorded in the

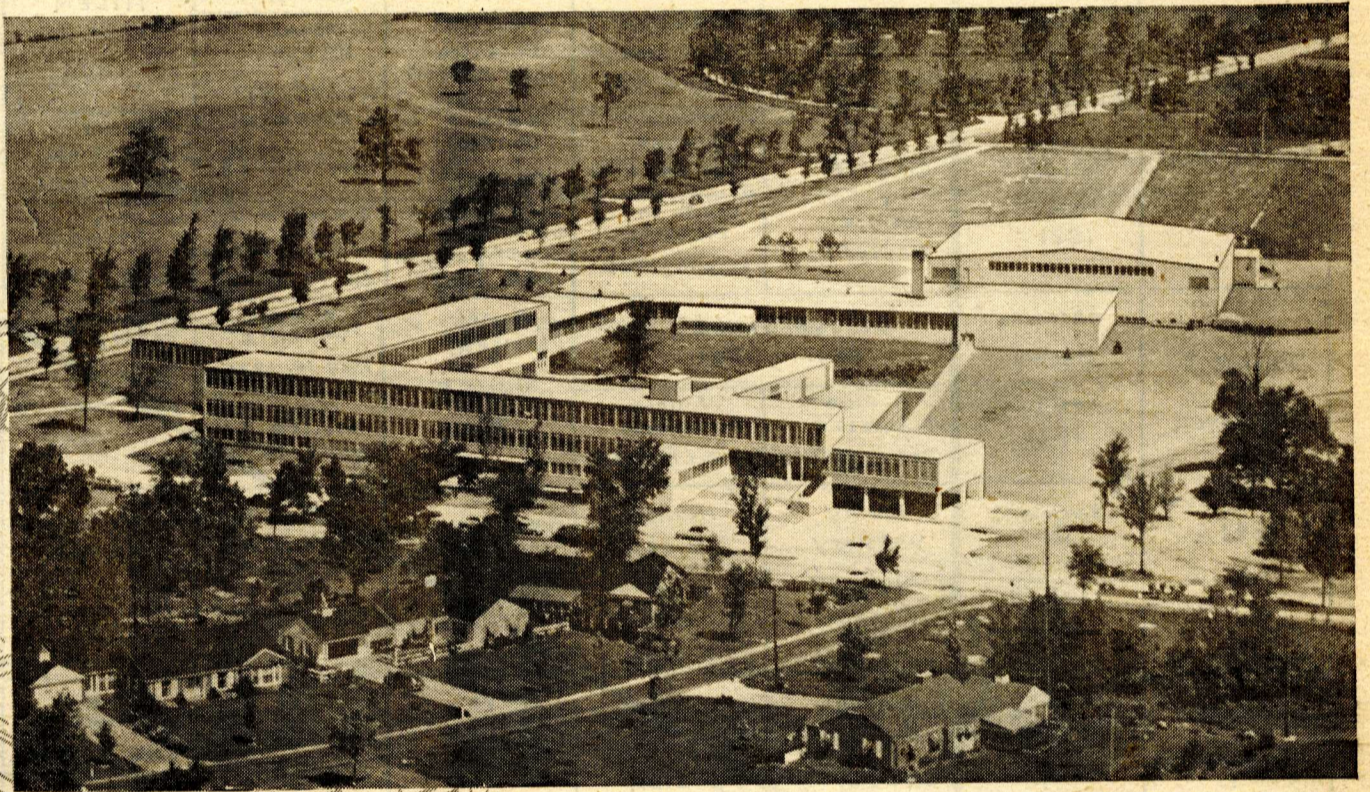
FRANKLIN
AREAS
UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT REGISTRY

ORIGINAL LAND OWNERS

Table of land ownership records for the Birmingham-Bloomfield-Franklin Area, listing names, dates, and acreage. Includes handwritten annotations like 'WING LAKE', 'GILBERT LAKE', and 'RESERVED FOR UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN TELEGRAPH ROAD'. Includes a compass rose on the right side.



DEARBORN MOTORS
Architects: Giffles & Vallet, Inc., L. Rossetti



BIRMINGHAM HIGH SCHOOL
Architects: Swanson Associates

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