

Early Deadlines For Next Week's Issue of The Birmingham Eccentric

Because of the Thanksgiving Holiday, next week's Birmingham Eccentric will be published on Wednesday, November 25.

This necessitates moving all news, classified and display advertising deadlines up one full day . . . to Monday afternoon, Nov. 23, at 5 p.m.

**So for Next Week's Issue,
Early Copy Will Be Appreciated**

BITS OF BIRMINGHAM

THERE'S A LITTLE BOY in Birmingham who had quite a time understanding his donation to the Torch Drive. When it came time for him to go to school, the mother found herself without change, and gave the bill she had to the older son, who made both contributions and got the change. Now, little brother is very worried because he had no dime to give and is afraid the "people" will think he doesn't care.

A FORMER BIRMINGHAM resident, who has been in the Tawas City, Michigan, hospital, for the past month, would appreciate hearing from her friends back here. She is Mrs. Rena O'Kelly. This suggestion was forwarded to The Eccentric by Mrs. R. D. Mead of Osceola, Mich.

NATURE & NOW

Capitol Gardens Entrance Visitor

By LYDIA KING FREHSE
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

We came into the nation's capital on the eve of an early and unexpected snow storm. Yesterday, driving in from Mt. Vernon, we discovered a gay salute to this unseasonable weather. Along the highway someone had made a snow-man which stood facing the Potomac. He was crowned with a red-berried holly wreath and a generous bouquet of the same shrub was thrust into his arms.

Today we spent an interesting morning taking note of the plantings on the White House grounds. The 18 acres of tree-shaded lawn which are enclosed by a simple wrought iron fence, make a fitting picture for the gracious Georgian house.

The north lawn of the mansion, whose portico of Ionic columns faces famous Pennsylvania avenue, is really the front of the house. The semi-circular portico with its colonnaded balcony overlooks the most spacious south grounds where the egg-rolling ceremonies are held at Easter. On this lawn one of the lovely spruces is lighted each year to serve as the National Community Christmas tree.

Flower bordered fountains center both these open and sloping lawns while the larger trees are grouped at the edge and around the east and west ends of the grounds.

Visitors entering by the east entrance pass between an ancient white oak and a heavy-branched magnolia. At this time of year the red seedpods of the latter contrast sharply with its shiny and deep-green leaves. The steep terrace which slopes to the fence is completely covered with a mat of baby'suckle.

The First Lady's garden outside the east wing is informal, featuring annuals and many kinds of flowering shrubs. It is used for summer-time tea parties. At the west entrance is the executive wing which houses the President's office and the cabinet room. This overlooks a formal rose garden where the last late blooms were covered with snow. To the north the main entrance of the White House overlooks a beautiful small park named for Lafayette. Here at the close of every war the people of Washington have stood under the venerable sycamores to await news of the surrender of the enemy.

MUCH OF THE original plan for the White House landscaping was made by George Washington who laid the cornerstones of the mansion in 1792. He was the only president never to occupy it. However it was not until Jefferson's administration that the grounds were planted and fenced in. A few of the original trees survive, among them the great white oaks, which have extended their mighty branches above the generations of distinguished men. Many of these trees have been repaired by tree surgeons who

gave them expert care. Over the years as the need arose, careful replacements have been made.

During the administration of Franklin Roosevelt, the President's wife planted a seedling of the "Charter Oak" on the Northeast lawn in honor of the National Girl Scout organization. We counted 27 varieties of native trees and there were many others especially evergreens, which were imported nursery stock and unfamiliar to this correspondent.

IN ADDITION to such familiar names as the oak, ash, maple, elm, birch and beech, there are many unusual trees. One of these is the gingko which is especially interesting because of its ancient lineage. In the mild climate of Palaeozoic times some 150 millions of years ago it was wide-spread over most of the earth's surface. When the cold of later periods erased it, it

was nurtured in the monastery gardens of China from whence it has been returned to us to decorate our lawns and gardens.

Its primitive leaf and its rudimentary seed proclaim it as a link between the ancient cycads and the later broad-leaf trees. The tulip and the sycamore are also early broad-leaf trees which flourish in the milder climates of this tide water region.

Among the evergreens surrounding the mansion there are magnolia, holly, hemlock, spruce, yew, tamarac and cypress. Contrasting sharply with their snowy background the deep green and shining magnolias and hollies with their red berries are the most beautiful of all.

AS ONE LOOKS out over the White House grounds there is a fine contrast between the deciduous and the evergreen trees and much artistic balance of size, shape, texture and color of foliage in the plantings. Here, as at the famous Mt. Vernon gardens, George Washington proved his good taste as well as his knowledge of plants.

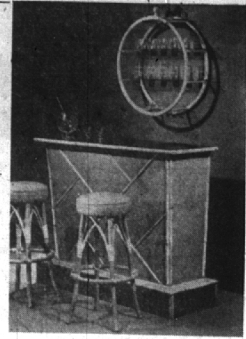
This afternoon we walked under the big magnolia and on through the visitors' entrance to have tea at the White House. As we stood in line we had time to take note of the newly refurbished rooms. There were flowers everywhere. The portraits of the nation's great looked down on us as we slowly made our way through the elegant East Room, through the Blue Room and on into the State Dining Room.

The table was set with a bouquet of tallian roses and baby's breath. What did we have for tea? Very much what we would serve at our house and mine. The hostess? A gracious and charming lady. Her dress? Purple taffeta.

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