

# BIRMINGHAM BUSINESS BRIEFS



OFFICERS OF THE SOUTH Birmingham branch of the Birmingham National bank have an unobstructed view of the new lobby from their desks at the front of the building. Here Bank President Herbert H. Gardner, right foreground, and Raymond Woolfenden, bank officer behind Gardner, discuss operations of the new branch at 1951 S. Woodward with visitors at the recent open house. (Eccentric Photo)

### ★ Smile a Minute...

Hobby: "The bank has returned that check."  
Wife: "Splendid! What can we buy with it this time?"

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### Local Contractors Win Safety Awards

Forty-nine highway and bridge contractors of Michigan received awards for outstanding safety records compiled during 1954, from President Harold J. Taber of Grand Rapids, at the season-end meeting of the Michigan Road Builders' Association at the Hotel Statler, Detroit, last week.

Local firms receiving this award were the A. & A. Asphalt Paving Co., 1045 Haynes, and Taylor Brothers Co., Inc., 985 Haynes.

### Top Salesmen

B. A. Fisher, D. Wilson and M. Davis, all of Suburban Motors, Inc., 165 S. Woodward, recently were selected as three of the country's top automobile salesmen in a nation-wide contest sponsored by the Oldsmobile division of General Motors corporation. They will be guests of the division's annual Frolic in Florida Dec. 12.

Household goods of every description are offered for sale in the Classified Columns of The Birmingham Eccentric.

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MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS often are at the top of toy lists for children. This baby grand piano with mirrored front and 15 keys has been selected among outstanding American toys this year. Complete with instructions to play six popular songs, it retails at about six dollars.

## As Materials Change So Does Toy Industry

As styles in toys have changed, so have the materials from which they are made. Not so many years ago there were wooden toys, metal toys, a combination of the two, and cloth toys. Today's market includes them, of course, but actually they are in the minority.

With the development of plastics, a whole new field has been opened, and in the case of the very small child, a greatly improved one. Little folks used to have a few cloth toys, rattles, rattle dummies and dummies for the tub, and a "baby doll" or two. Now rattling, for the most part, they were fragile and short-lived.

BABIES, trying to cut teeth, often received painful cuts on tongue and gums as the brittle substances broke under their earnest chewing.

From the wooden toys which found their way into eager little mouths, the toys were subjected to toxic poisoning from paints, slivers of wood, and scratches from the nails which held the toys together.

Nearly all of these hazards have been removed with plastics.

THE ODD odor is gone. Plastic is light enough that rings can be fashioned from solid material. It is strong enough that baby can chew the rattle with little danger of a cracking and catching a tender tongue or lip with a vice-like hold.

For the real little guy, plastic toys can be kept clean with warm water washing. Their coloring is a part of the material itself, and is not being sucked off causing illness and distress. There are no slivers.

Plastic, like any other material, will break if banged around enough, but it does have a greater strength than the celluloid of years gone by. Another comparative newcomer to the field of toy material is aluminum.

MUCH LIGHTER than iron, it has made a number of toys easier and safer for children to handle. In some toys it has replaced the

sheet metal which would crack and cause deep gashes on hands and faces.

Like the plastic, aluminum can be stained in the manufacturing, providing a permanent color with none of the hazards of seasoning. Many a little girl has been injured when the china head, arms or legs of her doll were broken or when the wire which was used in joints wore through the surrounding padding and covering.

THE MODERN use of plastics and rubber to replace china has greatly reduced this danger.

Not only are the dolls safer, but the newer materials make them more of a pleasure to play with.

Youngsters with expensive dolls played with them after being warned that they must be careful not to break those heads, legs and arms.

They could not get them wet or the features would wash off. Many had parts made of wax which was ruined by long periods in the sun.

The cloth dolls torn, threads wore out and seams came apart, spilling the contents and ruining the doll.

THIS IS taken care of today by plastic-treated fabrics or flexible plastic coverings. Some of the dolls are made of rubber and can stand all manner of bumps and bangs.

The doll that today's youngsters hug to bed is soft and huggable, rather than the stiff, unyielding "hunk" little folks played with a generation or two ago.

With the efforts of science turned to the field of toys, children are being supplied with safer, prettier, stronger and much more pleasing toys than ever before—and what good is a toy if one can't have fun with it?

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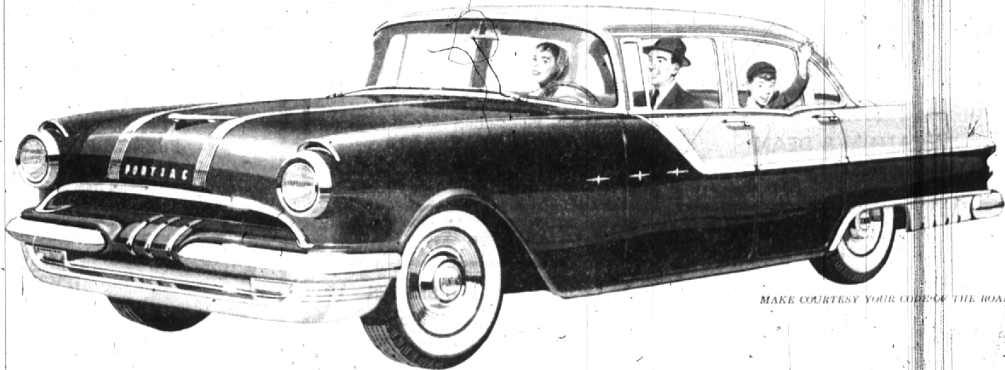
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