

Hung Jury Dismissed As Driver Is Fined

A six-man jury was dismissed Wednesday, May 26, when it failed to reach a verdict in the trial of Frank L. Uhas, 295 Glenngary, Bloomfield township, on a charge of driving under the influence of liquor. The defendant elected to plead guilty to a second count of reckless driving and was fined \$50 by Birmingham Justice John J. Gaffill.

In the Percy Williams home for retired actors hangs this sign: "Keep smiling. Imagine how disappointed it would be if we were born old and had to look forward to growing young and still of food for swilling in this statement."

The Birmingham Eccentric

Thursday, June 3, 1954

Birmingham Background

• Local History in Story and Picture •
As Compiled and Written by RUTH ANNE SILBAR



GEORGE MITCHELL

Who as a young man in his early 20's, began publishing the Birmingham Eccentric. In 1920, Mitchell sold the paper to George R. Averill, present owner.



CLAIRE ALDRICH

Picture taken some time in the 1920's, shortly before Aldrich left Birmingham, his home town. He learned the printing trade more than 60 years ago.

'I Remember' — Says Claire Aldrich, Ex-Eccentric Printer

EDITOR'S NOTE—One of the printers for The Birmingham Eccentric during its early years of publication, was W. Claire Aldrich, son of George F. Aldrich, local ticket agent of the Grand Trunk railway. (Now retired and living in Tampa, Fla., W. Claire Aldrich has written of his boyhood days in Birmingham and his youthful experiences in becoming a printer. (At the time of Mr. Aldrich's employment, The Birmingham Eccentric was printed in the building (third floor rear) now occupied by Shaub's drug in Birmingham and it housed the store of (Almeron) Whitehead & (George) Mitchell. (The explanatory information enclosed within parentheses is supplied by the editor and is not a part of Mr. Aldrich's original letter.)

"In June, 1892, I had left school and was at the depot thinking I would learn telegraphy from father, (George Aldrich through the years taught telegraphy to many young men in Birmingham and vicinity), when George Mitchell (publisher of The Eccentric) happened to be at the depot.

"He asked me, 'Claire, how would you like to learn the printing trade?'

"I said, 'Never been in a print shop.'

"So I WENT with him to the Whitehead & Mitchell store, up two flights of dark stairs to the printing shop which was located on the third floor at the back.

"Mr. Mitchell introduced me to the printer, Ernest Tibball, and then showed me the four racks with cases of type, running over the letters and figures.

"After he was finished, I ran over them and only mistaked finding the lower case 'z'. It being before z when I started right to work. Mr. Tibball, being a tramp printer, left me flat after three weeks.

"I MANAGED to get out that week's edition and it was some job. A hurried word was sent to Ed P. Jarvis in Detroit, who had worked on The Eccentric before, to come out and relieve me—which he did.

"In the shop was an 8 x 12 Gordon press, foot power; an imposing stone (a table-like affair on which printers make up pages or printed forms); cupboard with a bank on top (the "bank" is a tilted working space on which the printer arranges his type); a foot lever address machine; a proof press and a large round stove.

"I had to haul wood up those two long stairs in winter. I was truly a 'printer's devil'."

"AFTER I had been there about a week, Mr. Mitchell sent me out to find a 'left-handed' shooting stick."

"Of course, I didn't find one. In those days all our forms were locked with a side stick and tapered wooden blocks, using a shooting stick and mallet.

"The shooting stick was of metal and was hit by the mallet to wedge the tapered blocks tightly together, making the type in the forms very compact."

"Our lighting consisted of lamps with paper shades, set in brackets on the cases. Our press days was Thursday so closing was Wednesday night, usually about 9:30."

"THE TYPE was tied up in 12-inch lengths, wrapped in newspaper and put on a flat board, then wrapped with handles. There were always two packages and they were taken by a two-wheeled cart to the depot in the morning to catch the 7 o'clock train."

"Ed Jarvis was doing that after he came back. In Detroit he was met at the train by an expressman with horse and wagon, the same one every week, and taken to the Ready-Print, which was Western Newspaper Union, on Clinton Street."

"He made up the paper, locked

the forms and while the paper was being printed, he went out to lunch. When he came back, he tied and wrapped the type and put the packages out at the alley-door where he found two packages of The Eccentric all ready for the expressman to take to the train.

"THEN JARVIS had the afternoon to spend as he wished. When he arrived at the depot to get the 4 o'clock train (back to Birmingham), he found the type and the papers on the train, usually in the front part of the 'smoker'."

"While Jarvis was in Detroit, I was busy at the office, making changes in the address list. Type for this was set in narrow wooden galley which ran through the machine and the names were stamped on papers.

"I was doing job work on foot press. I might add here that Mr. Mitchell paid me \$1 a week, some times \$1.50 when he felt liberal. I was 16 years old and living at home with father. My mother had died but my father had a woman come in to do the housework and get the meals."

"AFTER I had been at The Eccentric almost two years, I was offered a job with the Pontiac Gazette in the winter of 1894. I stayed there until October 1897 and then went back to take charge of The Eccentric at \$7.50 per week.

"I think about 1898 Mr. Mitchell hired Maudie Gates, of Holly, who came to work on The Eccentric, more as a correspondent. Her duties were to go out and get news and new subscribers from the small towns, like Southfield, Franklin, Royal Oak, Big Beaver.

"Whitehead and Mitchell had a very gentle horse named 'Brownie' and buggy in the barn back of the store. Miss Gates used them Monday and Tuesday of each week and sometimes on Saturday to go out for the news."

"SHE HELPED me set type on Wednesdays until it was all done. She got plenty of news and, did the type and Tuesday of each week. We had to get larger cloth covers.

"At that time I was taking the type to Detroit—Jarvis had gone back to his Detroit job. I think about 1900 Miss Gates went to another job in Detroit and another woman was hired to help me.

"About 1901, I left The Eccentric and went to Howarth & Co., Tampa, Fla.

"Next week Mr. Aldrich continues his reminiscences, telling of his school experiences, the teachers in old Hill school and some of the people in the village of Birmingham."

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A WIRE MAY fall in a puddle of water in the street or alley, in which case that pool of water becomes something to avoid.

Occasionally a wire may fall on an automobile, imperiling the person who tries to get in or out of the car. A person inside is usually safe if he drives the car away from the contacting wire without getting out.

Children should know these facts about electric wires as well as adults.

A SURPRISING number of persons still attempt to wrap dangling wires around a pole or move them out of the way by practicing are unsafe.

The wise thing to do is to keep away from the wires entirely, just stand guard at a safe distance to keep others away. Send someone to telephone the electric company. In a short time one of their line crews will appear on the scene to repair the trouble. Play It Safe!

Prepared as a public service by members of the BIRMINGHAM FIRE DEPT.

City Mechanic Suffers Cut Foot When Casting Falls

A 39 year-old Birmingham DPW mechanic nearly lost a big toe when a 500-pound casting fell on his right foot at the city's sewage plant, Cranbrook at 14 Mile. The mechanic, Don Gould, 424 Bennaville, had cut the casting away from a control box with an acetylene torch and was helping lower it to the floor when it slipped. He was taken to St. Joseph Mercy hospital, Pontiac, where a severe cut at the base of the toe was stitched shut. News copy submitted early is necessarily given preference, so the "early bird" usually gets the space.



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