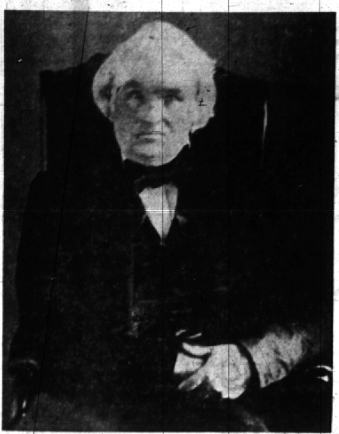


Birmingham Background

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



ELIJAH WILLITS CAME TO AREA IN 1819
Photo received from great-grandson, Harold Lee

128 Years Ago, \$320 Bought 160 Acres of Birmingham

Birmingham was founded in the spring of 1819 by three young men from the east, John Hunter, John Hamilton and Elijah Willits. In the Birmingham Eccentric's 75th Anniversary edition (May 1953) two of the founding fathers were pictured, but Elijah Willits was not because no picture of him then was available and there was considerable doubt that any were in existence.

Recently, however, the Eccentric received the likeness of Elijah Willits from Harold W. Lee, a banker in St. Paul, Minn., and a great-grandson of Willits.

When Elijah Willits bought 160 acres of government land, the southwest quarter of section 25 registered May 31, 1827, he paid \$2 an acre for it.

HIS HOLDINGS now would include roughly all the land encompassed by Oak street on the north, Maple on the south and from the Maple street bridge on the east to Pierce street on the west.

His first home, a log cabin, was on the west side of the Saginaw trail, now Woodward avenue, near the Willits street intersection. Later he built a bigger and more substantial dwelling across the street where the Mobilgas station now stands.

During the latter part of his life Elijah Willits was a helpless cripple, paralyzed and unable to move.

George H. Mitchell, one of The Birmingham Eccentric's founders, recalled in his memoirs of going to the Willits home for milk in the early 1890's.

"AT THAT TIME, under 10 years of age," Mitchell wrote, "I had to go after the day's milk, three cents a pint and five cents a quart. Some mornings, being a little early, I would arrive before the good lady had done the milking."

"Taking up her pail to go and milk the cow, she would say to me, 'Now George, don't light his pipe while I am gone, will you? No, Ma'am, I would promptly reply, but as soon as she closed the door came a voice from the full, round florid face, surmounted by a shock of heavy, snow-white hair, a heavy bass voice, commanding: 'Boy, light my pipe!'"

"I was scared to death—afraid

Passage of a billion years by the legislative bodies of this earth's nations, of itself, will never bring law and order, harmony and peace. What is needed above all else is the development of ethics and morality within every people.

COMMUTER'S WIFE

Homemaking Hazards Beset Housewives In Our Modern Age

By HELEN BRUNSON
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Is homemaking a hazardous occupation? Life insurance companies have rated it so, and truly, mother does face a myriad of perils in her daily life.

True, she doesn't face the dangers that her pioneering great-grandmother did—such as starting to death before her next crop came in, freezing from lack of fuel during a blizzard, or being snared by marauding Indians.

Civilization has changed the nature of dangers in the home but not reduced the number.

TODAY'S HOUSEKEEPER has a whole flock of gadgets in her home that can cause serious trouble if not handled properly.

She has a TV set that can catch fire, a vacuum cleaner that might give her a shock and a bathroom shower that can scald.

CHILDREN'S playthings present a threat to safety too. She may get a choking lungfull of chalk-dust from junior's eraser, or she may get a shock from a hair curler.

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The Birmingham Eccentric

er indicating that the youngest is raising hob at school—when all the time mother thought he was doing well.

THERE'S THAT SHOCK that comes from being out of oil on the coldest day of winter, let-down she gets when husband discovers just minutes before training time there's a button off the last white shirt in the house.

Not to mention the jolt she gets when she suddenly discovers that the basement's full of water, the baby's running a high fever or the check-book's fouled up.

Design is Topic Of Artist-Guest For Camera Club

An artist with an interest in photography, will speak at 8 p.m. this evening to members of the Bloomfield Hills Camera club at the Cranbrook institute of science.

Clifford E. West, currently on the Cranbrook boys' school faculty, will discuss the artist's conception of design and how it can be used to advantage by the amateur photographer.

A number of his paintings are in mural form, including two at the Fox and Hounds in Bloomfield Hills and the Stockholm, Detroit.

Eisenhower Urges "Goodwill Week" Observance in May

Commending Goodwill Industries for "exemplifying a spirit of helpfulness and a belief in the rights and the dignity of the individual," President Dwight D. Eisenhower had this week urged citizens to observe "Goodwill Week" during the first week in May.

The President said, "In more than one hundred cities in this country and Canada, the Goodwill Industries provides places of gainful employment for those who cannot work in competitive industry. For many of these people, this employment serves as a stepping-stone to better jobs and a more satisfying life. Some 250,000 handicapped persons currently benefit from this program."

Reminding Americans that approximately two million of our people suffer severely disabling physical conditions, the President said that "Goodwill Week" should emphasize our responsibility to help such citizens.

HERE, where Detroit Goodwill Industries employs nearly 400 handicapped people, plans have been laid to select the handicapped person of the year. The employees themselves will make the selection by ballot.

An award plus an extra week's vacation will be the prize, and the Detroit Industry will celebrate the occasion with a dinner and entertainment for all employees on Wednesday, May 4.

A dinner for out-of-town friends

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Four Guide High Schoolers at U-M

Four local students at University of Michigan will be among the 100 who will guide high school students about the U-M campus for the 15th annual university day, on Saturday.

They are Alan E. Brown, 1268 Cedar; Willie Harty, 1018 U. Bancroft; Dorothy Ojala, 947 Ann; and Bill VanderKloot, of Lone Pine in Bloomfield Hills.

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