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for 100 years of outstanding service to the farmers of this state.  
Again We Look Forward To  
**FARMERS' WEEK**  
February 7-11, 1955

During that week thousands of Michigan's farmers will meet with the faculty and staff of the Extension Department of the College of Agriculture to learn about and discuss new developments, and improved methods in the production and marketing of agricultural products. In the field of dairying untold good has come to the milk producing farmers of the State as a result of the research, experimental and educational work of the College of Agriculture. This organization of 17,000 dairy farmers is happy to commend Michigan State College for its splendid contributions to the dairy industry throughout its entire 100 years of operation.

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**The Birmingham Eccentric**

Thursday, February 3, 1955

**Birmingham Background**

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



MAPLE AND SOUTHFIELD ROADS ABOUT 1900  
Stone at corner weighed three tons (Photo from Mrs. Harry Allen)

**Gravel Pit Converted Into City Beauty Spot**

In the 1870's, a little boy trudging along West Maple road west of town had to pass a gravel pit on his way to the village school. It was a desolate, forbidding spot and in his child's mind was peopled with evil spirits. A transformation of the site which most people considered an eyesore took place, and by 1898 it was a park. Now grown to marbletop, the boy came back to visit his boyhood home. Walking over the same ground, the transformation from a gravel pit and dumping grounds to a park was the one change in the old home town that most interested him. That park at the intersection of Southfield and Maple is now named Baldwin Park.

IN 1888 THE Village Improvement Society began a movement to remove what had been a blenish to the village for so long. Citizens of the town were approached and asked to donate toward a fund to buy the gravel pit property for park purposes.

Liberal subscriptions of citizens raised nearly the required sum, but not quite the whole of it. The Village Improvement Society then gave a lawn social, made in the difference and then deeded the property to the village. The gravel pit is no more, the West End Park to be reported The Eccentric in June 1889. "No more said is to be taken from the gravel pit as it is now owned by the village and is to be a park for ever and ever."

MINNIE HUNT SALTZER of Pontiac chronicles of early Birmingham writes, "Before 1900, the land which is now Baldwin Park was nothing but a gravel pit and

dumping ground for rubbish. I can still recall the glint of the sun as it shone on the pieces of tin from the rubbish pile."

The village of Birmingham did little toward improving the future park.

In August 1899 The Birmingham Eccentric reported, "The village board have had a much expense that they have not felt they could improve it and do not feel that they can bear the whole expense."

"They therefore asked for a map of not only the village but of every one in the surrounding country who has pride in its neatness and beauty to come at one o'clock Saturday with tools, plows, scrapers and shovels to fill up and grade the place. Dinner will be served at all come and bring the whole family."

ONE DAY'S WORK in this cooperative enterprise filled up those early holes in the gravel bed. The road at the top of the hill was lowered and it was said that property on both sides of the street enhanced in value.

The Village Improvement Society then began the process of beautifying the spot as it was evident that the village would do little, if anything.

They began planting trees, although some of the "crackers" of the town ridiculed the idea and said nothing would grow there.

"I remember one play," wrote Mrs. Saltzer, given by the Improvement Society, at the conclusion of which the members of the

**Cranbrook, Kingswood Plan Play**

An advertising poster in a small railway station in England was largely responsible for inspiring the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta, "Yeomen of the Guard," which will be presented jointly by Kingswood School Cranbrook and Cranbrook School on Feb. 25 and 26.

The poster, displayed by a London business firm, depicted one of the famous Beefeaters of the Tower of London. When composer Sir Arthur Sullivan, passing by on a train, saw the picture of the colorful Tower guard, he decided he had found a character theme with enough dramatic and human qualities to use in a new operetta. "Vacationing in Monte Carlo, shortly thereafter, Sullivan insisted on giving up comic opera in favor of composing a grand opera score. He was further encouraged in this new pursuit by Queen Victoria who expressed confidence in his ability to write good grand opera music.

Under the direction of Robert E. Bates, music instructor at Cranbrook School, the combined glee clubs of Kingswood and Cranbrook Schools are now rehearsing for the February performances. Approximately 150 students will participate in the operetta. Both performances are open to the public. Net proceeds from one performance are customarily donated to Children's Hospital in Detroit.

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**Scholarships Available At Cranbrook**

Scholarships for boarding and day students are now being offered to applicants from all parts of the country by Cranbrook School for boys, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. The grant is open to students in the seventh through eleventh grades and who last meet the following requirements: proven need for financial assistance; above average academic record; and recommendation as school citizens by all Cranbrook students and teachers.

While there is no fixed number or size of grants, to be made, one quarter of all Cranbrook students during the school's 27-year history have received scholarship aid. All applications must be filed by

March 15. Complete details of application procedure may be obtained from the Headmaster, Cranbrook School.

The scholarships, which may be renewed upon graduation, are financed by contributions from alumni and friends of Cranbrook School, one of six non-profit institutions founded by the late George G. Booth, newspaper publisher, to form a cultural community 20 miles north of Detroit.



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