

Birmingham Background

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

Terrible Tasting Water Said to Be Benefit to Health

Birmingham might have become famous for her mineral wells. Throughout the years, several mineral springs were discovered in the valley of the Rouge river near the West Maple bridge.

The mineral waters were discovered accidentally about 1870, by George H. Odykne, then owner of Birmingham's grist mill which stood on the north side of Maple avenue, west of the present bridge.

Odykne, desiring of having a good well at his mill, put down a drive well. At a reasonable depth, he found one of the best flowing wells in the country.

One taste of the water, however, was enough to convince him or anyone else that this was no ordinary water.

Some of the practical men in the village sent a sample of the water to an eminent chemist, Prof. Kedzie of the University of Michigan, thinking that it contained medicinal properties. Their foolish hopes were realized.

Prof. Kedzie, who had analyzed most of the water of all the mineral springs with which Michigan is so abundantly supplied, gave the sample the regular analysis.

He announced, "I congratulate the people of Birmingham upon having one of the best mineral waters in Michigan."

The mineral water, he said, rated with that from such famed springs as were located at Mt. Clemens, St. Louis, Alpena and Grand Haven.

Of course, everyone in Birmingham was quite enthused over the discovery and Odykne built a bath house near the spring which at first was well patronized.

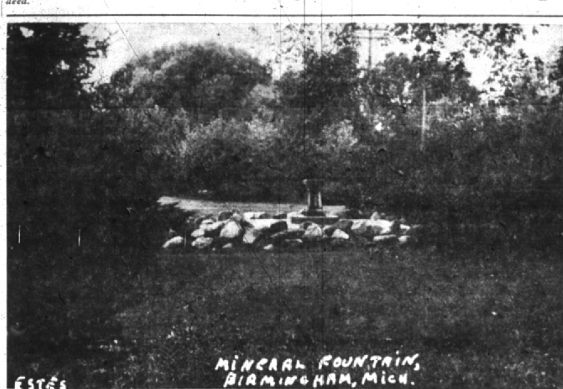
Wonderful cures were said to have been effected and everyone was loud in the praise of the mineral waters.

ONE YOUNG MAN from Illinois, who came to Birmingham on a visit, was one of the numerous cures reported. A victim of inflammatory rheumatism, his head was turned aside and drawn into a most uncomfortable position.

After a week's treatment it was said he returned to his home in perfect health.

Diseases of the kidneys and bladder were cured permanently, the newspaper recorded in 1878, and a marked degree of improvement manifested itself in almost every instance.

Glory may be that which springs from genuine self-sacrifice or achievement, or of the synthetic kind. Many publicly advertised so-called honors come to people who, if they are intelligent and honest, must find them empty, insubstantial.



MINERAL SPRING ON SOUTH SIDE OF WEST MAPLE NEAR BRIDGE. Folks for miles 'round filled jugs, pitchers, barrels with mineral water.

deferred to the village board, proposed that part of this money be used, along with whatever contributions were raised among the citizens, to bring the water up the hill and into the village.

"We have no doubt," reported The Eccentric, "that if the residents of Mill street alone could be satisfied, there would be no failure in the matter, for they would contribute largely and without hesitation."

Nothing was ever done about piping the medicinal waters into the village but W. C. Hoyt, the man on Mill street who meant what he said, never forgot the project.

IN MAY 1883, he caused to be printed in the local paper, the following information:

"The analysis of the mineral spring water now bubbling near the old mill is the same as when first analyzed by Prof. Kedzie. Bicarbonate of lime 1.982 gr. Bicarbonate of soda .960 Bicarbonate of mag. 515 Chloride of iodine .676 Potassium .676 Carbonate of iron 100 Soluble silica 219 Total 4.852 gr.

Residuum 1, sulphate of lime and organic matter each a trace, carbonic acid in a gallon, 22.

Residuum 1, sulphate of lime and organic matter each a trace, carbonic acid in a gallon, 22.

So here we have it, it is merely a bath, will cure some persons of their ailing and others it will not. I take no stock in the statement that it will cure every disease which affects man or beast.

"There is one thing certain about it: it will do no damage as a bath, for it has relaxing properties and cleanliness is next to godliness and health."

W. C. Hoyt

THE MINERAL SPRING according to those who said they knew, did contain valuable medicinal properties and in it was a larger proportion of iodine of potassium to the gallon than any other spring water in the state.

In 1887 on land belonging to Edwin Baldwin (now on the flats) another mineral spring was discovered. This water too was found to contain valuable properties.

When the village was trying to discover water for a village water supply, the whole area near the West Maple bridge was tested and the drilling produced several mineral wells. By 1915, only one mineral spring was in working condition.

SAID THE ECCENTRIC, "Down at the waterworks, out in the yard adjoining is a flowing well, free for all who call and

carry away immense quantities of it in jugs, pitchers and even barrels, for its medicinal properties. Many stores are told of its curative powers and the good it has done.

The waterworks building on the south side of Maple facing the Baldwin street intersection, was torn down in the 1920's but the mineral spring remained. Many residents will remember the mineral well near the site and people coming for miles around to fill their jugs and pails with the wonderful fluid.

As's Fire Chief Park Smith, a lifelong resident of Birmingham, reports that the mineral spring went out of commission about 1917 when the pipe rusted off about 100 feet below the surface.

"SULPHUR DIOXIDE," Smith said, "tends to attack metal. It's amazing to me that the pipe stayed together as long as it did."

Water from this mineral spring was saline in character, but Smith pushed the idea of its having miraculous healing properties.

"It was a mild laxative," Smith said, "and smelted like rotten eggs."

The fountain from which bubbled Birmingham's once-famous mineral water still stands and now is in the custody of the park and recreation department.

Insurance Group Elects Officers

The Birmingham Association of Insurance Agents' newly elected officers are: Harold T. Hagan, President; Otis C. Thompson, Vice-President and James H. Moore, Secretary and Treasurer. An active program is planned for the coming year to meet the insurance needs of the rapidly growing community.

Volunteer Worker On Smith Program

With many Smith College girls devoting from one to three hours weekly to volunteer community service, Patricia Hoyt, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harry D. Hoyt, Cranbrook is among the group. Miss Hoyt, a junior, is teaching English at the People's Institute, helping foreign-born residents learn the language of their new homeland.

Ritter's

297 E. Maple
ANNOUNCE

NEW STORE and DELIVERY HOURS
Mon. Through Thurs. 9 a.m. to 11 p.m.
Fri. & Sat. 9 a.m. till Midnight

FREE DELIVERY
Imported and Domestic
BEERS • WINES

Use Eccentric Classified Ads for Best Results!

We join in celebrating the

Grand Opening

of Ridley's newest store at
22061 Woodward, with this big

Celebration SPECIAL

(Limited Time Only!)

BUSINESS SHIRTS

beautifully laundered — cellophane wrapped

10¢

Each

"Cash & Carry" or "Call & Delivery"

with ANY cleaning order!

Yes, you can bring in, or send us, any cleaning order . . . from a necktie to a wedding gown — and with that cleaning order you can have business shirts beautifully laundered and cellophane wrapped for only 10c each!

Phone Lincoln 6-9500

or visit this Ridley Cash & Carry Store

361 EAST MAPLE

near Woodward

Ridley

CLEANERS

City To Start Dumping Refuse at Incinerator

The city's use of the South Oakland county garbage and rubbish incinerator will begin sometime this week, according to Robert Kenning, department of public works superintendent.

Although the city has sent a few trucks to the huge furnaces during the trial operations, most of Birmingham's garbage and rubbish has continued to be buried at the land fill dump on West Maple.

With some of the kinks taken out of the incinerator operations, the 12 member communities of the authority will start this week to use the means of refuse disposal first envisioned nearly five years ago.

AS THE FIRST real cooperative venture of area communities in the tightly-knit southern part of the county, the \$1,800,000 building is expected to solve disposal problems of the area for maximum population growth in the years to come.

With three furnaces in operation, the building is designed to burn some 450 tons of combined garbage and rubbish a day for the cities of Birmingham, Royal Oak, Ferndale, Oak Park, Hazel Park, Berkeley, Pleasant Ridge, Clawson, Huntington Woods and the townships of Royal Oak, Southfield and Troy.

Kenning states that no change in the collection schedule is contemplated by the city but stresses that not all refuse accepted as land-fill dump the past 18 months will be acceptable at the incinerator.

WHILE THE furnaces have been in operation during the past few weeks, employees at the plant have already been forced to take bed springs, car mufflers and other large non-combustible articles from refuse bins.

All non-combustibles that are too large for the city's trucks or of a nature that would create difficulties for the furnaces are to be picked up in a special collection by the city.

Kenning asks that residents call the DPW when they have items of this nature. He furthered that a regular collection of non-combustibles would be started if the demand was great enough.

OTHERWISE, all normal garbage and rubbish, including food cans will be collected at the same time as before.

Kenning also reminds residents that there is no charge for the collection when receptacles are placed at the curb. The service charge for the rear door pickup amounts to \$9.50 a year with an additional \$1.50 anticipated when the city makes two garbage collections weekly during the summer months.

REPAIRS also

LAMP ALTERATIONS, DESIGNING and BUILDING

Brass buffing and silver plating—
Shades of all descriptions in stock.

SEE THE LAMP MAN at the LAMP CORNER

2610 N. Woodward at 12 1/2 Mi. road LI 3-4493

NOW . . . an easier, faster way to get natural wood finishes

SPEE-D-DRY

Seals, protects and beautifies your walls, floors, furniture

Here's the easy, foolproof way to finish your plywood, knotty pine, fine interior paneling or any new wood surface. Use new Acme Spee-D-Dry. They give finishes that bring out the natural beauty of wood and protect that beauty for years! Easy to apply, quick to dry, too. Lets you obtain any effect from natural or modern light to traditional . . . in either high gloss or dull.

See D-Dry Finishes On Sealed and Pinned Wood Surfaces

DROP AROUND! See 73 on our large display board. Pick the exact finish you want. This free How-to-Drop-Around card helps you get that finish . . . fast, easy.

DON'T ARGUE When It's So Easy To Beautify Those Old Floors!

Send our easy-to-use equipment and re-finish dull, worn floors with Spee-D-Dry. Get a beautiful with our easy-to-use Rental Equipment and save! Dull, worn floors, old furniture, dull, worn surfaces are floors that are beautiful and lustrous.

OUR LOW COST RENTAL PLAN FURNISHES EVERYTHING YOU NEED Famous Clarke Speedy sandpaper, varnish, stain, oil, shellac, brushes and full instructions.

PHONE TODAY FOR ALL INFORMATION. "Color Is Our Business"

ACME QUALITY PAINT STORE

163 N. Woodward MI 4-8500