

Every July 4 Americans celebrate at Independence Day. It was on this day in 1776 that the Thirteen Colonies shouted to England's King George III that they wanted freedom. They got it... can we keep it?

Lions Secretary In New Office; Install June 29

For once the president of an organization takes "second place" to one of his staff.

When 1955-56 Lions club officers are installed June 29, Donald Cummings will, for the first time, be seated as a line officer, when he becomes second vice president of the club.

Cummings has served the Lions as secretary-treasurer for 14 years. Just to be sure the office is filled, Cummings will personally install his successor, Dominie S. Caputo.

NEWLY elected president Robert Gougen will be installed by Otto Coraault, Jr.; Harold P. Buerge, first vice president by William

Gardner; Cummings by Joseph B. Moery.

Brad Springer, Lion tamer, will be installed by Emerson Brown; Eugene Farmer, tail twister, by Russell McBride; James J. Kelly will seat directors Hugo Cloutier, Dr. Ralph Fox, Wilbur Mason and Richard Young.

Perfect attendance pins for the past year will be presented to 28 members by Richard Young.

The program and installation banquet will be held at Northwood Inn, beginning at 7 p.m.

CHM Honor Cadet

Just finishing 10th grade work at Castle Heights Military academy, Lebanon, Pa., is James R. Walter, cadet. Named to the National Honor society, Cadet Walter is listed among the top three in his class. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. George W. Walter, 1671 Yosemite.



JENNIE KEYES, A TONIE
MRS. GEORGE H. MITCHELL
GEORGE H. MITCHELL, AN ECCENTRIC

Five Tonies Drove Single

(Editor's note: This is the concluding article in the series, Birmingham Background. The series began exactly two years ago following publication of the Birmingham Eccentric's 25th Anniversary edition, when researcher Ruth Silbar had uncovered material that could be used in the special edition. Historical interest in old-time Birmingham warranted running the stories in a special column.)

Two youthful gangs found fun and excitement in quiet Birmingham in the 1870's. A group of nine young men banded together in 1874, calling themselves the Eccentrics. From this club this newspaper got its name, its founders, George H. Mitchell and Almoner Whitehead, being members.

The Eccentrics were a friendly, not to be outdone, organized opposition club and called themselves Washingtonians, or Tonies for short. It was a secret organization with pass word, signs, grime and badger.

Members met at their headquarters in the Keyes home, southeast corner of West Maple and Baker, for ruddy pulls, dinners and meetings where the club's dream book was frequently and avidly consulted.

THE DREAM book was purchased in 1878 prior to a wedding to which all the Tonies must be invited. Anticipating their pool, the Tonies purchased an authoritative source in order to accurately designate all the dreams that were to come from a beautiful slip of wedding cake.

The purchase caused a new floor to be elected, the KOTDR had sole responsibility, was to keep the dream book, to study its contents and in short order explain its prognostications.

On a New Year's eve in 1879, a solemn council gathered, the most

one occasion by one member having the same terrible dream for three succeeding nights.

AS MEMBERS sat in silence, listening to the terrible dream as related by the afflicted one, the KOTDR, coughed the dream book rapidly and with intensity, each sign of the dream.

When the dreamer finished with snip and fidget, a hot sock on his nose prevailed, but the member loudly recovered after a generous dose of ginger tea and free use of camphor.

By this time the KOTDR had her report ready for the club and in grave tones pronounced the prediction, "Before the sun shall set 352 times, one man of the surrounding circle shall wed!"

Great secrecy was maintained as to time and date of the Tonie meetings. It was reported that the girls pinned slawls together at the windows for blinds and put up the key hole to keep the Eccentrics from knowing what went on. But the boys always

managed to be close at hand, much to the girls' distress.

MARRIAGE and maturity began to have an effect on both groups. All the Eccentrics, sooner or later, married, but only one, John Alger, married a Tonie, Kittie Simpson.

Ella Webster was the second of the Tonies to marry and moved away. One by one, the group drifted apart to new homes, new places, new jobs and by September 1881, only two Tonies were left in town.

In September 1880, the Eccentric reported a grand re-union of most of the Tonie members.

"WHEN THE Washingtonians were in full blast," reported The Eccentric, "and running in full membership, all were Birmingham girls at that time: Mary Simpson, Ella Webster, Della McKinstry, Kittie Simpson, Emma Chaffield, Jennie Keyes, Flora Keyes, Mary Uter, Hattie Drake and Maggie Brown."

"After 25 years have passed see what has happened to this group of girls who now are becoming highly gray, ready all growing a tube stout, but every one as light hearted as they ever were in their Tontine days."

Della McKinstry became Mrs. Rowell and lived near Marble. She had five children in ages from 6-17.

KITTIE SIMPSON married John F. Alger, one of Birmingham's brightest and best boys, but soon she and her mother and sister traveled a few years after his marriage.

She then made her home with her father, Lewis Simpson, a building contractor. Kittie always enjoyed having held the office of the Grand Tontine Wives in the Birmingham Club.

Mary Simpson was Mrs. James McManis and lived at Houston, Texas. Her husband was one of Houston's foremost business men. She had four children and all were prominent and happy.

Ella Webster was teaching school here and heading with Mary Uter when she became moved up in the

society. She was a sure-enough Tonie and always kept up her dues and friendship with the club. She was then Mrs. Springer and had a daughter who was an accomplished violinist.

EMMA CHAFFIELD became an expert school teacher, teaching in Birmingham and at East Texas when Joseph Robinson claimed her for his wife. They lived at East Texas until his death. Then Mrs. Robinson came back to Birmingham with her three children and lived in her own home on Woodward avenue.

"The rest all drive single!" The Eccentric reported, "still not the fault of the men either, for every man of them fine luddies have turned down many a moon and perhaps are happier for it."

Jenny Keyes, popular saleslady for F. Blakelock dry goods store, lived with her mother on Maple avenue. Her sister, Flora, known also as Novey, was a bright and shining light in the school system in Louisiana.

MARY UTTER, Hattie Drake and Maggie Brown were all teachers in Detroit, Mary, more often called Mamie, came home on Friday nights to her mother on Maple avenue.

She rides her bicycle when she chooses and spans her fingers at all the lords of creation." The Eccentric said, "Miss Mamie has invested her earnings in Detroit city property and is always up-to-date on a land sale."

Hattie Drake was still Hattie Drake with the "grace and dignity of a queen," living with her mother and sister in Detroit. Mrs. Hattie enjoyed life too, The Eccentric said, and when vacation time came, she with her mother and sister traveled all over the U. S.

"NOW THERE are the Tonies," concluded The Eccentric. "Three wives, two widows and five unclaimed blessings. Look at the start and see the finish. Keep this in mind, you Tonies, and in 25 years more you shall have another writing on the wall."

But that write-up never came. For 25 years later, in 1924, no one knew, or cared less, about the club when she became moved up in the

Paving Projects Get City Action

Four street paving projects have been approved, three turned down by Birmingham city council.

Approved were Edgewood (Lincoln to Catalina), Grant at Catalina (14 Miles, Bird, Thruway to Edgewood), and Edgewood (Bird to 14 Miles).

Projects probably will be done next year, City Manager D. C. Egerton said because of property owners' protests were Southlawn (Thruway to Edgewood), Edgewood (Catalina to Southlawn), and Cedar (Lincoln to Catalina).

Agreements were spread in three annual payments on Grant paving, and four each on Bird and Edgewood streets.

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People's Column

Express Thanks For Publicity

To the Editor:

The members of the Birmingham Branch of the Woman's National Farm and Garden Association wish to express their thanks and appreciation for the publicity you have given us this year.

It has been a pleasure dealing with Mr. Mace and your other staff.

Not only have you reported news about meetings of interest to our many members, but also you expressed so willingly in writing about our projects that were of interest to all Birmingham residents.

We will be looking forward to another year's work, full when the Garden club celebrates its 25th anniversary.

ELIZABETH R. PAULETTE
Corresponding Secretary
Birmingham Branch WNFGA

Mrs. Gaflil Leads UN Day Planning

Mayor Charles Belfrage has initiated plans for the celebration of the path anniversary of the United Nations on October 24, the appointment of Mrs. Eleanor Wilson Gaflil as general chairman.

A representative of the League of Women Voters, she will head a community-wide committee from religious, civic and educational organizations. They will plan events and encourage other groups to present similar programs for their members.

Mrs. Gaflil attended a June 9 workshop in Grand Rapids for such committee heads. David Popper of the secretary of state's office and Theodore Smith, executive director of the UN committee for the UN, outlined activities.

Mrs. Gaflil will call a meeting shortly.

Warns Bicyclists Of Danger Period

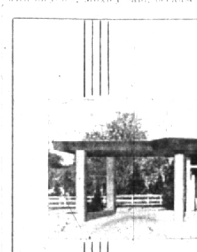
Birmingham Police Chief Ralph W. Moxley this week warned parents that, with school out, it is the most dangerous period for children who ride bicycles on or near the streets.

A word of caution is being leveled to all parents of children with bicycles, Moxley said, because during June the bicycle accident skyrocket.

"This is due to school vacation, and more daylight hours, when children are riding bicycles," Moxley said. "They should be warned to obey all traffic signs and make a complete cessation of movement at all stop signs."

"Two years ago," according to Moxley, "we had three serious bicycle accidents within one week after the closing of school, in which the bicyclist rode past stop signs into the path of an oncoming car. These three bicyclists spent their vacation in a cast. Don't let it happen to you this summer."

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