

County Court House Plan Halted

Under Michigan's Constitution, governing bodies in various units of government are supposed to levy taxes annually for currently expected and anticipated needs. They are not supposed to pad any items in budgets. They are not allowed the easy extravagance of building up illegitimate surpluses.

This was the gist of an opinion recently handed down by Circuit Judge Herman C. Dehnke, brought into Oakland county several months ago to hear the case involving the plan of the county board of supervisors to transfer fees and surpluses to finance a new court house.

You may recall that on Aug. 14, 1954, Oakland county voters approved the idea of a four and a half million dollar court house—but failed by 500 votes to approve the tax millage to pay for it.

THREE MONTHS LATER the voters again voted against the millage, this time by a 23,000 majority.

Plaintiffs (opponents of the transfer of money plan) in this case declare that, over a period of six years, the defendants (board of supervisors) have transferred a total of \$3,585,143.88 from fees and created budget surpluses for new County buildings, including the proposed new court house.

Already from that fund they have spent \$2,192,716.70 for several new county buildings. On hand is an accumulated sum amounting to \$1,392,427.18 for further new construction, including part of the cost of the new court house.

During that six-year period (under the law limiting a county to 1/10 of a mill for new construction), Judge Dehnke states that Oakland county could have levied taxes totalling only up to \$528,303.18. He then points out that the board of supervisors' financing methods has wrongfully taken from the taxpayers more than \$3,000,000.

PLAINTIFFS ARGUE THAT, instead of obtaining this sum of money by the subterfuge of creating budget surpluses and transferring fees, it should have been gotten through a specific bond issue. This latter course apparently is looked upon negatively by the supervisors, since twice already the county's voters have turned down extra tax millage for a bond issue.

Under the State Constitution, said Judge Dehnke, "... Whether we think it was wise or unwise to do so, the people,

in adopting this provision of the Constitution, made it clear beyond cavil that the power of boards of supervisors to expend moneys raised by taxation for the construction or repair of county buildings in any one year was to be limited to 1/10th mill, and that authority to spend more must be sought from the voters."

In making these statements this newspaper does not for a moment question the need for a new and better court house. Certainly, the ancient, antiquated and woe-begone appearing edifice now used is no ornament in Michigan's second most populous, and reasonably well-off, county.

TOLERATION OF METHODS to obtain unreasonable funds over and above the fiscal year's need of a governmental unit is abhorrent to sound tax policy, the makers of Michigan's Constitution determined. They knew that the temptation to over-tax is often present and they realized the inherent dangers possible within any loose fiscal policy.

Every citizen is entitled to be advantaged by the lowest tax bills possible. This certainly has not been the condition in Oakland county for several years.

If our supervisors need extra money to construct a needed new court house, let them again present their case to all the voters, using every legitimate means available to convince Oakland taxpayers to support the extra millage.

DO THIS AGAIN, AND AGAIN, if need be. The only other method legally available to these supervisors is to persuade the legislature to amend the State Constitution, granting the power to do what Judge Dehnke has just declared there is no right to do. Such an amendment, we think, never will be approved by the taxpayers of Michigan.

To be sure, the supervisors have appealed this Dehnke ruling to the State Supreme Court. That is well and good; we are glad they have.

That judicial body, we also think, will support Judge Dehnke's evaluation of the whole problem. It will, we hope, again sound the ancient and wise conviction of a free people that those who support government have the divine right always to be told why certain tax levies are needed and for what they shall be spent.

He who levies and collects taxes shall be held accountable for his legitimate stewardship of such monies.



NATURE NOW
BY LYDIA KING FREHSE
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Ancient Holy City Combines Old, New

The lights went on like little twinkling stars as night fell on the old city of Jerusalem. From the veranda of our hotel on the Jordan side the ancient dwellings shone white like cracker boxes fitted into the steep hillsides.

In the strong light of morning, we explored a city stone, its houses, its walls and steps, its narrow twisted streets winding upward to the Mount of Olives.

AN ARAB MAN in flowing robes walked by the side of his heavily laden donkey, a barefooted woman swathed in a many colored garment moved gracefully through St. Stephens gate, carrying on her head a large basket of bread.

Through half - open doorways, in teeming market places, we saw a way of life which has changed very little for two thousand years.

On David street we made our way through a typical Jerusalem market place crowded with every kind of grain, fruit, vegetable, spice, cloth, jewelry, trinkets - all displayed in little stone stalls.

A barb-wire barricade divides the holy city between Arab and Jew. On the Jordan side the holy shrines, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Calvary.

THE TERRACED hillsides are as we imagined them. The olive trees are twisted and gnarled. Gullies, deep and narrow, stand impervious to heat and arid soil and the ravines of time.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher and its accompanying convent stands on the legendary site where Jesus was condemned, scourged and took up his cross to follow the Via Dolorosa to Calvary.

On the old Roman arch built in the present church is the inscription, "Pater dimitte illis non enim sciunt quid faciunt."

The present Garden of Gethsemane is a small walled garden on the west slope of the Mount of Olives. Inside the wall water under a tree was fragrant with old fashioned herbs which bordered the walks; rosemary, rue, lavender, verbena.

In the center stands a twisted olive tree which was already old at the time of Christ. Lantana and Hibiscus, oleander and cactus, pepper tree and acacia, these are as they were, indigenous to Bible times.

A purple bougainvillea spilled over the top of the old wall sharing the spaces with the heavenly blue of morning glories. Outside the garden the locusts were singing and an Arab rode by on his donkey, a small goat cradled in his arms.

The guards stood at attention. On either side of the barbed wire fence were the gaping windows of bombed houses. Our party changed guides and passports, and passed through the Mandelbaum Gate into the Israel side of Jerusalem.

Here the emphasis changes from the past to the future. Here is a nation in the making, its purposeful enthusiasm, its fabulous accomplishments, its evident belief in its destiny clearly demonstrated.

Here too we visited the holy shrines, the Mount of Transfiguration, the site of the feeding of the five thousand, Nazareth, Capernum, the sea of Galilee.

But nowhere were we accorded such a briefing on the actual program of people and their progress toward a well-defined goal.

We were taken to the Jordan side of the central and northern part of Israel. Here we saw how the outworn rocky hillsides were reclaimed into terraced orchards of olives, grapes and citrus fruits, how the swamps were drained to make rich fields for corn, tobacco, cotton and wheat.

The waters of the Jordan have been harnessed and now fruits and vegetables in great variety are flourishing in irrigated fields which were once a barren desert.

Thirty-five million trees have been planted, such unusual crops as sunflower and castor bean have been adapted to supply necessary oil. All this to feed a nation which increases each day to the tune of three hundred refugees.

But most evident of all is Israel's belief in its future destiny. Here is a united and enthusiastic effort which is also evidenced in its industrial progress in such cities as Tel Aviv, in the growing seaport of Haifa with its fine technical school and the great University of Jerusalem.

But most spectacular of all is its co-operative efforts toward a creative social order where people from every walk of life from all over the world are being united into one great nation.

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ONE THING OR ANOTHER By George Wm. Averill

It is difficult for me to be sympathetic toward those city folks who move into the suburbs and in five years or so start griping about all the problems that suburbia has emeshed them in.

That is, which they THINK suburbia has snarled them in. This kind of city dweller was thrilled by the prospect of fresh air, sunshine, green grass. It was his bowl of cherries which he took his family out to eat.

Now that he has encountered a few cherry pits, he hollars "Unfair!" He was eager for a large backyard. Now that he has to spend some hours watering the grass or mowing it, or spreading some fertilizer, or staging a running battle with crabgrass, he's ready to call it quits.

HE THOUGHT MOVING to the suburbs would get him out of the heavy traffic. Now he's sore that he still has to drive in it back and forth to his downtown job. The suburban magic wasn't magic after all.

He's discovered he wasn't the only one who moved his family to suburbia. Thousands and thousands of other families thought it a good idea, too. So now streets have to be paved to withstand the heavy traffic, new schools have to be built to educate his and the other thousands of children in his community.

That's fine, except the city and school officials are asking him and his many neighbors to foot the bill via the local tax method. That's unfair and unreasonable, he protests.

Suburbia is growing up—but he isn't. He just makes it hard on, and for, the rest of us.

It cost the state of Michigan more than \$31 per mile to clean up the litter we motorists tossed from our car windows. That all adds up to over \$300,000, reports State Highway Commissioner John C. Mackie.

Good news for us taxpayers is contained in the Birmingham school district's recently released census report.

The newest crop of "reportables"—the under one year of age—continues to show a decline in number from those of older age groups.

The pupil population, you will note in the following listing, increases by grades until the year 1971, when the 12th grade class that year will total 1,290 based on today's count of 5-year-olds. (This will be affected, naturally, by new students moving into the district, and those moving or dropping out of school.)

Here are the Birmingham census figures by grades at the start of the 1957-58 school year:

Boys and girls—birth thru 4 years:	Under 1—879	Age 2—1154	Age 4—1241
Age 1—954	Age 3—1171	Total—5399	
Boys and girls, school age, 5 thru 19:	Age 5—1290	Age 10—1214	Age 15—719
Age 6—1253	Age 11—879	Age 16—626	
Age 7—1174	Age 12—845	Age 17—539	
Age 8—1129	Age 13—839	Age 18—493	
Age 9—1113	Age 14—903	Age 19—393	
		Total—43,409	

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From the Eccentric's Point of View . . .

Welcome Home, Charlie! Now that President Ike has appointed your successor as Secretary of Defense, you have won the reward of knowing that most of your countrymen appreciate your self-sacrificing public service. Return to your loyal Jessie, your children and grandchildren . . . your local neighbors . . . and again go fishin' and huntin' in enjoyment of those still remaining personal freedoms which, while in Washington, you so ably endeavored to help preserve.

Southfield Township Justice of the Peace Allan M. Bulloch is going to sentence traffic violators to attend a school for auto drivers. For each day an offense requires to spend in jail, the justice will require the violator to go to the school for one hour a week. A good plan, Sir. More effective in many cases than going to jail or paying fines.

For every dollar taken from your wages for federal social security, you will get back very much less in value . . . due in no small part to the inflationary policies of government. If a private insurance company were to take your money and cheapen it by decreasing its value, its officers would go to jail.

Both major political parties are in the process of trying to groom one or more candidates to head their Presidential election tickets in 1960. That in so doing they may perform a variety of evils against the expected decency of self-government is beside the question. When mud is needed to smear an opponent (within or outside a single party) he who throws it is heedless of whom else it splatters.

The Birmingham Tickers

Published every Thursday, at Birmingham, Mich., in the Eccentric Building, 220-222 North Woodward Avenue Telephone Midwest 4-1100

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Happenings of Long Ago

Hits of News Gleaned From Old Files Of The Eccentric—The Items That Make Up The Historical Background Of The Birmingham Of Today.

50 YEARS AGO
August 23, 1907
"A word to you sonny—you little boy, twelve or thirteen-year-old boy, who is smoking cigarettes on the sky. What do you want to be when you grow up—a stalwart, healthy, vigorous, broad-shouldered man, or a little measly, weakened no 'count dude? If you want to be a thing pitted by your own folk, despised by the girls, and be held in contempt by the fellows, keep right on smoking and eat your days in the insane asylum near Pontiac."

"Water in the milk is causing Pontiac milk men, some of them, plenty of trouble. State Inspector Osman P. Howell has placed under arrest, charged with adulterating milk. It is said that one sample examined contained 87 1/2 percent water."

30 YEARS AGO
August 25, 1927
"Two of the oldest buildings in Birmingham will soon be no more, if the plans of the Detber Realty company of Detroit materialize. The building on the southeast corner of Woodward and Maple avenue, housing the L. J. Slusser Hobe Company, and the building at southeast corner of Maple and

Pierce street, housing the Kroger's store are almost 100 years old, according to John Hanna, who leased the block from Pierce to Woodward from the Detber company for 99 years.

"Fascination of the uniform is manifestly felt again, the policemen, firemen and postmen have held the limelight long enough. Hereafter the school janitors will also have uniforms, according to a resolution of the school board Monday night. They won't have brass buttons nor puttees, but they will be uniforms, nevertheless."

15 YEARS AGO
August 26, 1942
"A long line of khaki-hued sedan cars whizzed north through here Monday morning. It was the first Army sedan models we have seen which differs from the standard civilian sedans. These had blunt ends and seemed heavier throughout."

"The first German fighter plane to be shot down by the U. S. Air Force in Europe was met with a burst of fire from a Flying Fortress named by its men as the "Birmingham Blitzkrieg," no doubt meaning us."



"Sam insists on cream in his coffee!"