

**WEEKLY VISIT**

**Offbeat Butcher Digs Pumper**

By NADINE JAKOBOWSKI  
Special Writer

"Come on into my office—I'm just doing the dishes," said Merritt Olsen to the Special Writer in his casual manner. A white butcher's apron completely covered his trousers and he left in view a few lip-ops to his personality—a polka dotted tie and silvering sideburns that women call "distinguished."

In his "office," the butcher's workshop, Olsen did the dishes and talked about his personal interests and "my life, the store."

"The store" with its white Colonial facade, at 407 Brown, is nestled among Birmingham homes, just as Olsen's life is firmly entrenched in Birmingham tradition. Olsen's Market first was run by the senior Olsen on Woodside where Mrs. Wilson's now is located. Eleven years ago the store was moved to Brown street.

"I USED to know pretty nearly everybody," but Birmingham has grown so much that I can't keep track." Like Olsen's manner, the country-like store is comfortable and unburied. Woven baskets are strung overhead. Frequently strains of a hitting melody greet shoppers. Behind the meat counter Olsen and his assistant, Harold Root, combine musical talents on the violin and dulcimer (a musical instrument with wires stretched over a brass soundboard).

"We never miss an opportunity to play," Olsen said as he strummed his eye crinkling tunic. "It's a poor day when we don't play a tune."

play a tune.

"CUSTOMERS would like to kill us sometimes. I'll bet, when we break into a tune." He opened his violin case and Root took the instrument down from its place on the hook next to the meat saw.

Prices frequently are heard outside of the grocery store. Olsen explained the formal bands to play in church affairs, at the Oakland County Infirmary and for senior citizens' programs.

An admitted antiquer, Olsen says he has not kept his car in his garage at home, 500 Townsend, Birmingham, for years.

In its spot he has a 1924 American LaFrance pumper. He bought the fire truck last fall for sentimental reasons—and because of his antiquing weakness.

"DAD was Birmingham fire chief when the truck was purchased. I was eight or nine years old and the department's mascot. "I had to make the garage larger for the pumper and I hunted parts to repair the truck, but the effort has been worth it. My 9-year-old boy, Billy, is crazy about the truck." Olsen's garage resembles a blacksmith shop, by his own description, with an old heating stove in the corner, five or six ducimeters and years-old trinkets placed about. Antiques have crowded the garage, where Olsen reinforced the attic to accommodate his collection. Olsen's wife, Marie, and his two daughters, Nancy, 21 and Carol, 18, dust two tin can organ and a melodeon in the house.

By CLEO SYMONS  
Special Writer

So you think boys are tough little savages, hard of heart and devoid of emotion, the check-out clerk.

"The other day in a local supermarket a mother and three children were about to be checked out. The mother said, 'Anyways, I wouldn't want to go through this all over again,' she commented, indicating wide gaps in the youngsters' engaging grins.

"These first teeth are something of an ordeal," I agreed.

"Here son (nine-ish), wearing a red corduroy jacket and one of those black knitted caps hung rathlessly over one eye, leaped idly through a magazine from the rack in front of him."

MOTHER'S HAIR was generally spotted with gray, but she had a youthful face and a twinkle in her brown eyes.

"OH NO, not for me!" protested Olsen, holding up her hair with a laugh and a vigorous shake of the head. "I'm afraid I'm a little too old for that sort of thing." Fully expecting to see a do-it-yourself rocket kit, a mountain-climbing outfit or some such thing, I glanced over the boy's shoulder. To my amazement, his longing gaze was fixed on a picture of an adorable little baby.

**It All Happened In a Supermarket**

By CLEO SYMONS  
Special Writer

"BIT DAD and I would help take care of it," reassured the boy, ignoring the check-out clerk.

"The lady and I exchanged smiles and she raised a knowing eyebrow. "No, thank you, I know all about this," she checked. "Anyways, I wouldn't want to go through this all over again," she commented, indicating wide gaps in the youngsters' engaging grins.

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**100 YEARS AGO**  
**Rebels Rout Yankees At Big Bethel Battle**

By LON K. SAVAGE

The front line of the Civil War's eastern campaigns began to emerge 100 years ago this week as Yankee and Confederate generals began pairing off at various strategic points.

First, Confederate Colonel John Bankhead Magruder had taken a command on Virginia's peninsula between the York and James rivers, where he came face to face with Union General Ben Butler.

From Ohio, General George McClellan's troops had begun moving into Western Virginia where they already had tangled with Confederate Colonel George Porterfield.

AT WASHINGTON, Major Irvin McDowell had suddenly been elevated to brigadier general commanding Union troops around the nation's capital, and before a week had passed, General G. T. Beauregard, the hero of Sumter, took command at Manassas, 30 miles to the south.

At Harpers Ferry, 50 miles northwest of Washington, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston had taken command, replacing Thomas J. Jackson who was to become the immortal "Stonewall."

THE FEDERAL advance, meanwhile, ran into trouble. One of Butler's regiments mistook other of its regiments for Confederates and opened fire with musketry and artillery. The second advanced the fire.

It vacated, then attacked Big Bethel.

The Confederates were too well prepared. The first attack, on June 19, was repulsed, and a second, on June 20, was also repulsed.

THAT ENDED the Yankee withdrawal and headed back for

**NATURE NOW**  
By Lydia King Frehse  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Enterprise

**Meadows Important Plant Communities**

Now, as the sun approaches its summer solstice, the daylight hours are at their longest and brightest. Ephemeral springtime flowers in shady woodlands and meadows and roadside. Here they reach their seasonal climax of color and abundance.

Meadows are a prominent plant communities. Many succeed each other in various associations from the most primitive aquatic types to our climax forests.

SO IT IS that wet meadows support a diversity of plant life. Sometimes only 15 or 20 species, but each one is present in one such area.

Occurring more rarely and sundew, wild iris, fringed and golden gentian, grass of Parnassus, blueberry and such orchids as the yellow and showy lady's slipper.

By LYDIA KING FRESHE  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Enterprise

**DOWN TO EARTH**  
**Customers Present Challenge to Stores**

By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Enterprise

Most home gardeners have their backs to the earth at this time and are awaiting their first rose crop as well as a bountiful display of annuals and a break-breaking job of planting them.

Demery's-Birmingham are to be congratulated upon their prompt attention to the customer's needs.

Plants in a tub on a dolly which could be moved in each night would be an answer. They might have to be changed about every three weeks to be fresh, but this is a good problem to solve.

**Michigan Facts**

Trenwood, in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, is farther west than any other city in Michigan.

Michigan's land area alone is larger than England or Austria.

Michigan's population is nearly five times as large as Switzerland.

**The Birmingham Eccentric**

**Features**

June 8, 1961 Page 7

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