

# Mrs. LaBelle Reminisces As Store Changes Owners

By ETHEL SIMMONS  
Business Editor

Mrs. Alfred LaBelle was busy ordering greeting cards ("I never order one without reading the verse") when visited in the book, stationery and gift shop that she and her husband have made a Birmingham institution.

This was prior to the June 1 tea at which the LaBelles introduced Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Jackson, Jr., of Austin, Tex., who have become the new owners.

Our purpose in talking to Mrs. LaBelle was to gather the nostalgic, as well as some "hard" business tips, of nearly 39 years in owning and operating the shop.

MRS. LABELLE said when she was just a little girl she had an aunt who lived in Birmingham. "I used to come here on the trolley,

I had my first soda at Mr. Shain's drug store."

She met Mr. LaBelle as a co-worker at the old Macaulay's book shop in the King Building, Detroit. The couple were married and opened their Birmingham book store in what had once been a plumber's shop.

"For 16 years we were the only bookstore here," said Mrs. LaBelle. "We used to have book teas for all the authors."

"... We always tried to buy for quality. We bought the first Norcross cards ever sold in Detroit, 27 cards in World War I."

"... We always wanted a friendly store. And we have been friendly and kind to children. They're your future customers. We're now waiting on the third generation."

WHEN THE LaBelles' lease was due to expire on the store re-

cently, they decided it was time to close out and retire. "We were going to have a walk-to-wall sale," she said, "but we discovered the landlord was going to put in a discount house, and we couldn't let that happen to Birmingham, so we renewed."

Then Mr. and Mrs. LaBelle decided to sell the book shop to new owners. "We were very careful," she said. "We wanted someone who would carry on the integrity of the store."

The Ernest Jacksons were looking for a place to operate in the area and were sent over to LaBelle's. Jackson once had been in business in Detroit and had lived in Birmingham.

"They will carry on the store exactly as it is," Mrs. LaBelle said. The LaBelles plan to travel a bit but will continue to make their home in Birmingham at 22860 13 Mile Road.

## NEWS OF BUSINESS

### Trip to Alaska Thrills B'ham Travel Agent



ROBERT S. MARKER

A Birmingham resident is enjoying the gold nuggets she picked up recently in Alaska and telling her friends the virtues of reindeer stew served in an Eskimo village. Mrs. Grace Reilly, president of Birmingham Travel Service, made

a 10-day tour of Alaska with a group of travel agents. The group visited the major cities of Alaska as well as wilderness and skiing resorts, military sites and tourist attractions.

"I DIDN'T KNOW if I'd enjoy the trip, but it was wonderful," Mrs. Reilly said on her return. She was thrilled by visits to the Mendenhall Glacier, a flight past Mt. McKinley, and a view of the Valdez ski lift used for Olympic trials.

Her taste of reindeer stew and moose steak came during a Sunday stop at the Eskimo village of Kotzebue, north of the Arctic Circle. There the group was entertained by Eskimo dances and dog sled races.

At Juneau, the first stop on the tour, Mrs. Reilly visited an abandoned gold mine, but picked up nuggets and gold dust while panning at Nome.

"MOST OF the group's travel was by air, including flights over the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line, a string of radar bases across Alaska and Canada. Part of the tour was made by bus, from Fairbanks to Whitehorse on the Alaska Highway.

Mrs. Reilly found that tourist accommodations were up to the level found in Minneapolis. June 16 to 19th. The conference will provide instruction in specialized insurance subjects.

### GM Promotes Specialist in Transmissions

Oliver K. Kelley, 286 Woodberry Drive, Birmingham 4, has been named director of engineering development departments of General Motors engineering staff.

He will coordinate activities of such departments as power development, transmission development, structures and suspension development, vehicle development and product development.

Kelley joined Cadillac Motor Car Division in 1927. Later he was a designer and special project engineer for GMC Truck and Coach Division and in 1937 joined GM's engineering staff.

HE BECAME engineer-in-charge of transmission development in 1940 and became one of the automotive industry's leading specialists in automatic transmission design and development.

The Michigan Patent Law Association recently honored him as one of the 60 outstanding living inventors in Michigan, with 80 automatic transmission patents, either in his own name or in collaboration with others.

The National Association of Manufacturers honored him with its Modern Pioneer Award for contributions to the automotive transmission.

Since December, 1961, he has been engineer-in-charge of program development.

Attend Conference

Robert E. Bevier and George S. Gran, Birmingham area representatives of the Prudential Insurance Co.'s Pontiac district, will attend the company's regional business conference at Minneapolis, June 16 to 19th. The conference will provide instruction in specialized insurance subjects.



Now operating LaBelle's, which has been 38 years in Birmingham at 137 W. Maple, are Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Jackson, Jr. The couple arrived from Austin, Tex., but he is a former Birmingham resident.

### Mower Cuts Weeds From Bottom of Lake

A mower that cuts underwater growth vertically as well as horizontally has been developed by Jari Products Inc. to keep boating and swimming areas free of weeds.

The three blades arranged in a U-shaped conformation can cut an underwater swath 42 inch wide to a depth of 42 inches below the surface.

It is designed to operate on a standard outboard-motored speed boat at moderate trolling speed and is powered by its own 2 1/2 horsepower, two-cycle engine.

THE ADVANTAGE of its unusual design, Jari says, is that by cutting both vertically and horizontally at the same time, weeds cannot hang up on underwater parts of the mower and clog its operation.

In Birmingham Jari Products are distributed by W. F. Miller Lawn Equipment, 1593 S. Woodward.

### Webster Is VP Of Weirton Steel

The appointment of William H. C. Webster as vice president of Weirton Steel Corp. has been announced by C. G. Tournay, president.

Webster, who resides at 5712 Tall Oaks, Birmingham, will move with his family to Weirton, West Va.

Webster was formerly vice president of Great Lakes Steel Corp., Detroit division of National Steel Corp.

### Cadillac Executive Wins Promotion

Cadillac Motor Car Division of General Motors has appointed a Bloomfield Township man as national commercial and fleet manager. He is Ray L. Newton, 750 Hupp Cross Road.

He succeeds Robert C. Longhurst who will retire July 1. The appointment, effective June 1, coincides with an extension of the commercial department to include fleet sales.

NEWTON WILL manage Cadillac's commercial chassis business, overseas and Canadian sales liaison and fleet sales.

Newton has been assistant national business manager for the past year.

### Ad Firm Adds to Staff

Meldrum and Fensmith, Inc. has added five new staff members to the creative department of its Birmingham office, it was announced today by Herbert W. Cooper, president.

The five, all with broad advertising backgrounds, are Reginald C. Erb, Howard M. Green, Daniel A. Kitchin, Fred A. Lyman and Gilbert D. McConnell.

In announcing the new additions Mr. Cooper said, "Our Detroit operations have been expanding steadily in recent years. With the transfer of production, traffic and field service functions for our Michigan accounts from Cleveland to our Birmingham office, it has become necessary to enlarge our operating personnel."

### Attends Conference

L. H. Beck, 246 Hamilton, area sales representative for the Wide-Lite Corp., manufacturer of mercury vapor lighting fixtures, has attended the company's 1962 international industrial conference in Houston, Tex., and Mexico City.



### Berry Employees Feted

Fifty-five employes of Berry Industries Inc. received service pins at the Birmingham firm's recent employee open house. Fred Hamilton, left, 2216 Eastman, West Bloomfield Township, receives an award from Glenn Berry, firm president. Hamilton was one of the firm's original employes when it opened in 1948. Among those also honored were Francis Mills, 1898 Pine, vice president and treasurer of the firm, and Berry himself. Mrs. Berry received a pin as "a wife backing up and inspiring the successful man." The company makes garage doors and radio-controlled garage door openers.

### American Motors Promotes Bothe

Harry W. Bothe Jr., 3639 Bradford Drive, has been appointed manager of the administrative and commercial expense department of American Motors Corp.

Bothe joined Nash-Kelvinator Corp., American Motors' predecessor, in 1950, after receiving a bachelor of science degree from Carthage College, Carthage, Ill. Previously he had attended the University of Chicago and Yale University.

He joined the company as disbursement auditor in the accounts payable department. He spent three years in cost accounting and, two years on expense control assignments before being named administrative assistant to the vice president and controller in 1956.

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