



Birmingham Fire Department Marks 50th Anniversary

By ANGUS MCKELLAR
Special Writer

The 13th of August marks a significant milestone in the history of the Birmingham Fire Dept. For it was just 50 years ago (Aug. 13, 1913—on a Friday), that a group of dedicated men decided that a formal organization was necessary.

A semblance of a fire department existed back in the 1800's, when the village waterworks were installed and the combination hose and bell tower was built on W. Maple, where Danby's store now stands.

But in 1910, the only fire department the town had was an unincorporated, volunteer group. Their department building was the tower, at the bottom of which was a place to push in the hand-drawn hose cart.

THIS WAS THE DEPARTMENT

until after the severe National Hotel fire, at North Woodward and Hamilton (now the site of a Detroit Bank & Trust Co. branch).

The hotel fire sharply focused the dire need for an organized volunteer group: to establish a chain of command and to pinpoint competent responsibility for directing fire fighting, a direction which hitherto had been lacking.

The first fire chief of the new volunteer department was James Cobb, a local pharmacist, whose drug store was located on the present site of Gwynn's Custom Tailors.

ORGANIZING the fire department did not change the group much except to define authority and to spread responsibility.

It was still a voluntary department, and the meager equipment remained the same: one chemical cart and one ladder cart, all hand operated, except when someone came along with a team of horses.

Occasionally, the splendid Bell Funeral Home horses were made available to pull the equipment, or that rarity, an automobile, would come along.

The department's location was moved to Maple and Woodward, where the Cunningham Drug store now stands.

Mr. Cobb served as chief for more than a year. One day he died to William G. Olsen, who owned an ice business at the time and later a meat market.

RECENTLY, when four of the five surviving members of the original volunteer department were guests at a luncheon at the Merritt Olsen home, Dave Bell's name came up.

It seems that when the Armistice was declared back in 1918, Mr. Bell drove the Republic truck around town celebrating the end of the war. So many excited people jumped on the truck that the rear springs broke. They never were fixed properly, and for the duration of the truck's life the back sagged like a hound dog slinking away.

The department was able to get by with chemicals until 1923. (See ANNIVERSARY, 2-A)

Both pointed out that developers' plans to encroach Klingensmith Road would force some residents taking children to school to use Telegraph Road.

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OWNERS HAVE petitioned Bloomfield Township Planning Commission to rezone the property to multiple dwelling.

They propose to erect 105 apartment units at an estimated cost of two million dollars. Telegraph frontage of the land is presently zoned commercial and Square Lake frontage is zoned residential.

Two other presidents of local lake associations joined Square Lake association members in protesting apartment developments on lakeside property.

THE PUBLIC hearing was followed by a regular meeting of the planning commission.

With three of the seven commission members absent at both meetings, the commission delayed decision on the Square Lake property and on other zoning requests on the regular agenda until after a study meeting to be held later this month.

Only the firm kavel of chairman Chad Richie kept of hand at times.

Residents were vociferous that, should the planning commission rezone the property, there would be no guarantee that the proposed layout of the apartment site—a parklike arrangement complete with swimming pool—would be followed.

PARTICULARLY upsetting to the audience was a claim that the apartments would rent for \$300 a month.

"With a Pontiac mailing address" came an unauthorized voice from the audience.

"The highest rental price we could find in Bloomfield Hills was \$225 a month," another spoke out.

"Remember this is in the Pontiac School District," said another.

Real estate developer Ferd Brock, testifying that the project would enhance the value of adjoining property, in his opinion,

Five youths came running, tumbling down the embankment and on a hot pursuit. A betting man who had given odds on the escape of the fleeing victim.

Then, until police arrived, where—came little Ken Heft, who gave barefoot chase to the frontrunner.

When the bridge was set up, traffic on the bridge for several blocks.

Tired, but happy about the action and the hot pursuit that had passed, the players and coaches began the 80-mile trek back to Birmingham.

MEANTIME, Heft's teammates and coach a Star PEARN, Andy Anderson and Fred Kirchner had corralled the other fugitives and held them until police arrived.

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THESE FOUR men, plus one who was not available for the picture, are the only surviving members of the volunteer fire department which was formed in 1913.

Police Start Crackdown

Romney Calls Attention To Traffic Conference

Gov. George Romney has invited Birmingham officials to take part in a special regional traffic conference.

Urge Early Registration Of Students

Students enrolling in the Birmingham Public Schools for the first time are being urged by school officials today to register at their respective schools as soon as possible.

OFFICES of all elementary and secondary schools are open daily, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

B'hams Rejects Six Rezoning

By LARRY EVOR
City Editor

A package of six rezoning petitions requested by the Lincoln Construction Co. was denied by Birmingham city commissioners Monday night.

The company had sought a series of rezonings of property in the area of Eton, Yosemite, Maple and Villa that would have allowed it to build a group of multiple-family dwellings.

The petitioners were seeking a rezoning of the property to the R-7 classification, which is the highest the City allows under the present zoning ordinance.

Two PARCELS of the land the petitioners wanted rezoned at the corner of Eton and Yosemite are presently zoned B-2, neighborhood business.

ALTHOUGH THE petitioners wanted the rezoning considered in one package, the plan board held the rezoning in two parts.

THE SPREADING of the assessment roll for three sewer construction projects in Birmingham was postponed for two weeks by city commissioners Monday night.

ONE OF THE RESIDENTS of the Yosemite area protests a proposed change in zoning classification on property in the area from its present R-4 classification to R-7 multiple-family.

Lathrup Kills Proposed Law For Multiples

By DAVE PHILPO
Staff Writer

LATHRUP—The council Monday night bowed to "the will of the people" and rejected a multiple-dwelling rezoning ordinance which it had labored since last November.

THIS IS the fire hose tower of the Birmingham volunteer fire department as it appeared in 1910.

ONE OF the persons who spotted the red car said he saw a young man cleaning out the trunk of the car as it was marked on the bridge at a spot about 50 feet from where the girl's body was found.

Piel Selected For Honor At State Fair

By DAVE PHILPO
Staff Writer

A Birmingham school administrator will be among 33 educators and teachers honored on Teachers Day at the Michigan State Fair, which opens Aug. 23 and runs through Labor Day.

PIEL was educated at the University of Toledo, the University of Michigan and Harvard University.

3 Sewer Project Hearings Delayed

By DAVE PHILPO
Staff Writer

The spreading of the assessment roll for three sewer construction projects in Birmingham was postponed for two weeks by city commissioners Monday night.

OFFICIALS of St. Columban had wanted an opportunity to re-evaluate the value of adjoining property, in his opinion,

Residents Protest Plan for Lakeside Apartment House

By SAVILLA SLOAN
Special Writer

More than 75 residents in the neighborhood of Square Lake attended a public hearing at Bloomfield Township Hall Monday night to voice objections to a rezoning request which would permit an apartment house development on land with frontage on the lake.

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