



**MAINSTAYS OF TOWNSHIP GOVERNMENT**  
Hugh Allerston Jr., and Mrs. Adams.

## Acacia Park Result Of a Mason's Vision

By CLEO SYMONS  
Special Writer

Acacia Park Cemetery was brought into existence "because of the vision of a few Masons" who believed that there should be located near Detroit a final resting place for Masons and their families.

Founded in 1924 by a group of Detroit businessmen, it is the only exclusively Masonic cemetery in Michigan.

The group formed a corporation and acquired a 104-acre tract of land in Southfield Township, located at Southfield and Thirteen Mile Roads, Beverly Hills. The property included an 80-acre farm owned by John McKerchy. The remaining portion was mostly wooded land.

**ABOUT** A quarter of the property was developed at first. Sections were laid out, roads built and extensive landscaping undertaken.

Stone pillars, depicting symbolic Masonic figures, support the iron gates, which are flanked by trees, shrubbery and seasonal plantings.

The handsome Gothic administration building, finished about 1926, incorporates many Masonic symbols.

A tower, rising above the second floor, houses the Deagan chimes which play for funerals. It was dedicated to veterans of World War I, and an appropriate bronze plaque was provided by the cemetery management.

**IN 1926,** THE cemetery, now well established, was dedicated as a Masonic Memorial. Burial space could be sold only to Masons and their immediate families. However, beneficiaries could be buried there also.

A Masonic emblem done in foliage plants has become an interesting "trademark" at the entrance, along with the name "Acacia" similarly planted.

A lake in the central section has been an object of interest shared by visitors and countless generations of ducks since the cemetery's beginning.

**A SERIES OF** falls added later enhance the beauty of the lake, and at the same time symbolize certain steps in the Masonic ritual.

Today there are few reminders of the past in Acacia Park Cemetery's silent city of approximately 12,000. Gone is the farmhouse that once stood there, along with the meadows, the herds and the fields of grain.

Last to feel the ax of progress was the woods where children once gathered wild flowers and where coon dogs raised excited voices on moonlit nights.

# Only 'Islands' Left In S'field Township

By KAY SMITH  
Special Writer

In 1824, there was one family who were residents of this township. Today, 140 years later, there are eight families.

And between the two dates, there's a large parcel of Michigan history and thousands of families who have proudly used "Southfield Township" as their address.

Southfield Township has grown from a large area from 8 Mile Road to 15 and from Greenfield to Inkster, totally wild in 1824, to an area so populous that many portions of it have incorporated into cities and villages, leaving only tiny "islands" of land.

"OSSEWA TOWNSHIP" it was first called in July of 1830, but within the month the name was changed to Southfield. On April 4 of the following year the first annual meeting was held at the home of Benjamin Fuller.

A moderator and clerk named for the day, saw to it that a supervisor and township clerk were selected for the year.

These two offices are still the mainstay of the township government. Today, Hugh G. Aklerton, Jr., is supervisor, and Mrs. Fannie Adams is township clerk.

In May of 1821, 10 years before the first annual meeting, John Wetmore became the first person to purchase land. John Daniels, however, was the first actual settler. He arrived in 1823 and began to work his land which was northeast of 13 Mile and Bingham roads.

**IN THE** spring of 1824 he moved his family to the farm and they became the first family in resi-

dence. The first white child was born to Mr. and Mrs. George White in 1825 and three years later Benjamin Fuller, Jr., and Marietta Crawford were the first couple to record a marriage.

In 1824 also, Dillucena Stoughton and Elijah Bullock, bought, respectively, the east and west parts of what is now Franklin Village, and Niah Dodd in 1825 settled the place later called Southfield Center at 10 1/2 Mile and Berg roads.

Franklin Village grew more quickly than the rest of the township. It soon boasted the first physician in the person of Dr. Ebenzer Raynale.

It also had the first school, with its schoolmistress, Miss Sophie Gotie, in 1828, and the first brick house in 1829.

If the form of government hasn't changed much, the boundaries have. Today Southfield Township runs between Inkster and Evergreen roads from 12 to 14 Mile, and from 13 to 14 Mile between Evergreen and Greenfield.

**OF THIS** area, all but little patches have incorporated. Franklin, Bingham Farms and Beverly Hills are the three villages which now make up almost the total area.

The population of this area is some 13,000, but of this, the 1960 census shows only 30 people, or eight families, actually living in Southfield Township.

The big change began slowly, in 1953, when Franklin incorporated. Then Bingham Farms incorporated just before the rest of the township discovered, in 1955, that it was all part of a proposed Southfield City, with a commission elected to prepare a charter.

The northwest area of the town-

ship was largely responsible for defeating the first charter, calling for a 20-mill tax. The second charter, with a five-mill tax, almost shut the door, when it failed by only 43 votes.

The third charter commission had no charter ready for the election, so residents of the northwest area quickly prepared a petition to incorporate as a village—a bit too quickly, as the boundaries committee "missed" a few areas up in the corner by 14 Mile Road.

**ON FEBRUARY 17,** 1958, the village of Beverly Hills voted itself a village, and officially became one on April 28 of that year.

It was not, however, the end of the township. Under the law villages cannot spread school taxes nor conduct state, county and national elections. The township must perform these services and also make up the assessment roll for the villages within its confines.

As long as Franklin, Bingham Farms and Beverly Hills do not incorporate into a city, Southfield Township will continue to exist.

Meantime, its eight families pay the lowest tax rate in the area.

So, if Southfield Township hasn't quite come full circle, it has served, for 140 years, as the governmental unit for many Michiganders, from pioneer days to the present. For the eight families living there, paying somewhat lower taxes than their neighbors in the villages, and a dress "Southfield Township" couldn't be finer.

## John Hunter, Bingham Kin Still in Area

A family name very familiar to local residents is that of John Hunter, credited with being the founder of Birmingham. Two John Hunters were early settlers in the area. One is buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Birmingham and one in Franklin Cemetery.

Stanley Hunter, now living in Franklin, is a descendant of one John Hunter. Hunter hopes to locate a family diary which will help determine whether Birmingham's or Franklin's pioneer resident was his ancestor.

**THE VILLAGE OF** Bingham Farms, lying immediately to the east of Franklin Village, is named for David Bingham, who came to this area in 1862 from his native England. The family homestead still stands on Bingham Road.

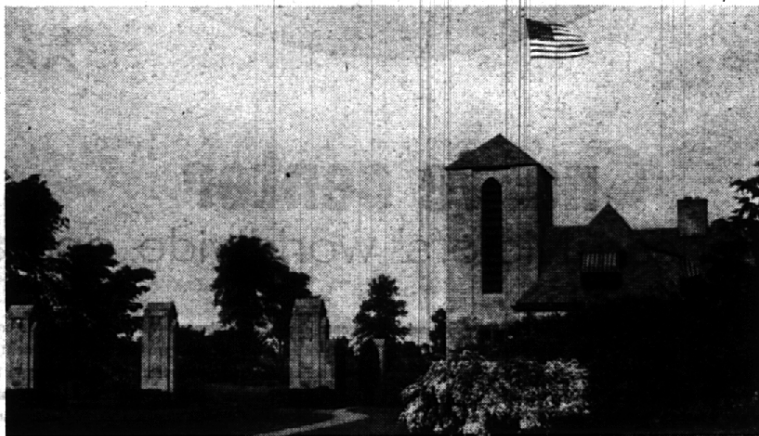
Carson Bingham, who lives today in a home near the original family home, is the grandson of David Bingham. The present Bingham home was built around the old schoolhouse, with three additions having been made to the dwelling.

Bingham has three children living today. They are Mrs. Nancy Harding, in Clarkston; Charles A., II, in business with his father in Birmingham; and David C., a student at DIT.

**ANOTHER BINGHAM** Farms family which goes back several generations is that of Delbert Adams, also of Bingham Road. His great-grandfather, Reuben Adams, came to this area from New York in the 1830's.

A son, William, was born in 1843, and he later built the family home where Delbert Adams' father, Ross, was born. In addition to Delbert, the children of Ross Adams were a daughter, Mrs. James Deneau of Franklin, and another son, Stuart, in Florida.

Many other family names in the Franklin area go well back into the 19th century. Some of these are Bowden, Currin, Bristol and Pickering. B. U.



**PICTURESQUE ENTRANCE TO ACACIA PARK IN BEVERLY HILLS**  
Founded in 1924, it is the only Masonic cemetery in state.

## What is Bingham Farms?

What and where is Bingham Farms?

It is a very nice piece of real estate that is scarcely recognized by the thousands of motorists who daily travel Telegraph Road, its western boundary.

Only a few modest homes divert the attention of the drivers as they travel through the village from 12 1/2 Mile to 14 Mile Roads. The eastern boundary pursues a wandering line about one-half mile east of Telegraph.

**THE MOST** cherished commodity of the village is privacy. The pursuit of this privacy binds Bingham Farms residents together against more gregarious neighbors. It is a community with homes

ranging from vintage cottages to great sweeping estates. The average home assessed valuation is about \$10,000.

In almost every case, Bingham Farms residents are holders of highly responsible jobs. Dealing with big problems through the day, the men seek relief from a complex society with a few hours at home.

The seat of government in Bingham is Outland's Riding Stable on 14 Mile. Although a stable is admittedly an unusual meeting place for a governmental body, Outland's is the only public building in the community.

**THE VILLAGE** president and six trustees are elected to two-

year terms. The clerk, treasurer and assessor are elected annually.

Since there are no schools, churches, or shops within the village limits, transportation is a problem for some and a factor in minimizing "extra-curricular" activities.

It is not unusual however to round a curve in the road and come upon a group of youngsters on horseback.

Bingham Farms people are generally happy with their way of life. Gracious, but reserved with newcomers, they gradually take them into the fold.

Once just a large farm, Bingham's physical characteristics have only subtly changed. It's just a nice place to live.