

Baldwin Legacy Lives On...

EDITOR'S NOTE — Miss Verona L. Post, who wrote the following article April 19, 1917, was a good friend of Martha Baldwin, having been a classmate of hers at the "Old Academy." Miss Post, born in Vermont, came to Birmingham with her parents when she was 16 and lived here for 70 years until her death in 1927. During her lifetime here, she was active in many civic affairs including the Cemetery Association and the Ladies Library Association, for which Birmingham Association, for which Birmingham served as secretary for 20 years.

Among those who came to this part of the country in an early day was Edwin Baldwin. He came from Vergennes, Vt., arriving in Detroit in 1817. For a time he was a ferryman on the river, using a rowboat.

Later, coming to Bloomfield Township, he bought a farm about one mile north of Birmingham on what is now Cooper Road. It was here that Martha Baldwin was born in 1840, and here she spent her childhood and attended the district school.

THE WRITER of this article became acquainted with Martha Baldwin in 1926 attending school with her two years in the "Old Academy" which stood on the present site of the First National Bank of Birmingham. Here was formed an intimacy that lasted to the end of her life, over 50 years. This school was organized and superintended by Rev. S. N. Hill, familiarly known as "Sam Hill," then pastor of the Birmingham Presbyterian Church. It was for him Hill School was named at the request of Miss Baldwin, seconded by others of his old pupils and friends of the village.

MISS BALDWIN finished her school education at Kalamazoo College. About that time her parents moved to the village of Birmingham where she made her home the remainder of her life.

She began her work as teacher in the "Old Academy" and in district schools in the vicinity, later teaching in the Birmingham High School. In 1872 she accepted the position of assistant principal of the Everett School in Detroit.

RETURNING TO HER HOME in Birmingham after serving some 25 years in the schools of Detroit, she engaged in other public activities, many of which she had started years before. While in Detroit, she aided in forming the Detroit Teachers' Mutual Aid Society and in getting the Detroit Teachers' Pension Law passed.

Miss Baldwin represented Michigan in two or more of the meetings of the National Federation of Women's Clubs, once in Washington and again in Minneapolis.

She was an extensive worker in the State Federation of Women's Clubs, the Michigan Women's Press Club and the State Equal Suffrage Club and a member of the Twentieth Century Club. Thus she became well-known throughout the state.

BUT SHE WAS ever loyal to "Old Oakland" and especially so to "Beautiful Birmingham the Pride of Old Oakland." She was one of the foremost workers in the County Federation of Women's Clubs, initiating annual visit by the Women's Clubs to the County Home including collecting reading matter for the inmates with other articles for their pleasure and comfort. She arranged for a committee to visit the county jail to learn its condition.

It is said "Miss Baldwin was pointed to as doing more for her town than any other woman in Michigan." She founded the Village Improvement Society to keep the streets clean and to plant flower beds along the highway.

Many of the beautiful shade trees along the streets and in the parks, the drinking fountains and various other improvements in the town are monuments to her work.

MISS BALDWIN SAW that no signs were tacked or put up on waiting room sheds and telephone or telegraph poles inside the corporation.

She was instrumental in getting passed an anti-spit ordinance, in having seats placed at corners where street cars stopped and waste baskets at the corner of down town streets.

She used her efforts in getting the first lights on the streets — kerosene lamps, also in having a waiting room built at the Grand Trunk Station in the village, where for many years people had had to cross the track to board the train.

WITH THE AID of the Improvement Society she improved the ground around the station with a fountain, plants and shrubs; and she was one of the first to conceive a water works system for the village, about which she agitated till it was brought to a successful vote.

Miss Baldwin was elected a member of the school board, something unusual at the time, and she was made president of it. She was, for many years a member of the Birmingham Women's Literary Club and was rarely absent from its meetings.

NOV. 1 1869 is the date of the first meeting called for the formation of the Library Society of Birmingham. The old lodge of Good Templars had disbanded, sold their property and about \$2.50 came to each member. Some 38 of these joined together to form the Library Association investing the money received.

At the time the first annual meeting was held, there had been paid into the treasury \$68.47. Of this \$49.75 was spent for books, 48 volumes, the beginning of the present Public Library.

The library was kept for some time in Mrs. Edwin Baldwin's house; from there it was removed to the house of Mrs. John Baldwin, and thence was removed to the old Methodist Church which was purchased by the society. This building was fixed, turned and added to till it became Library Hall.

THE SOCIETY was known as the Ladies' Library Association and as such incorporated. But, in the meantime, many of its members how we washed, painted, scrubbed floors, made rag carpets and worked to increase the number of books on our shelves.

We gave parties, socials, fairs, minstrel shows, plays, baby shows and lawn parties. Then came the sale of the old house, the purchase of the corner lot, the clearing off of the rubbish, the talk of the new building, the plans, the cost and how to raise the money.

The modest building that was first planned soon doubled itself, so did the money we sought to raise till the present building rose before us. Citizens had given its outside covering of bricks and mortar, but it carried a debt of several thousand dollars.

IN 1907 the Ladies' Library Association gave the village its interest in this building and the library consisting of 2400 volumes and 800 pamphlets — total valuation \$5,000. This is provided the building is used for a library and for municipal purposes, and provided that the village vote an annual tax of one-half mill on a dollar of the assessed valuation of its maintainance.

Later Miss Baldwin, who had a mortgage of \$2,500 on the building, gave the amount also.

AT AN EARLY DATE in the settlement of Birmingham, Ziba Swan, who owned a farm just north of the village, donated a half acre for a cemetery. As was usual at that time, everyone being too busy to care for it, like most country burial places it was sadly neglected.

In the latter years of his life, Dr. Ebenezer Raynale took upon himself the task of caring for these grounds, which now covered two acres. He had a fence built around them and otherwise improved them, receiving little if any remuneration for the same.

Again they were neglected after the doctor's death, except as a few people looked after their own lots, till the organization of the Greenwood Cemetery Association about 1880.

SOON AFTER it was incorporated, and an annual tax of one dollar was collected from each lot owner; at least the attempt was made to collect from all, with which sum the women of the village cared for the cemetery.

It was called by some people "The Ladies' Cemetery Association, supervised by Miss Baldwin". All lots are now sold with perpetual care, and many have paid perpetual care on old lots. This Perpetual Care Fund is kept as a separate trust fund and deposited, the interest only being used in the care of the lots.

MISS BALDWIN made a donation of land to the village, which the village authorities utilized by widening an adjoining street.

She also gave a piece of land for a park, besides adding to a park given by the business men of the village. In her will she gave \$1,000 to the Cemetery Perpetual Care Fund, two parcels of land for park purposes and, after a few bequests to friends, gave the residue of her estate, estimated at \$15,000, towards a school building to be erected in the village.

IN SUMMING UP the life work of Martha Baldwin, one is convinced she had wonderful executive ability and much literary appreciation, added to indomitable will power and perseverance.

It is true she was ably assisted in the work accomplished and in planning much of it, but she seldom failed to see her plans carried out. Her interest in matters pertaining to her home town friends, gave the residue of her estate, estimated at \$15,000, towards a school building to be erected in the village.

She now rests in the Baldwin lot in Greenwood Cemetery, her head toward the north by her request. A granite head stone marks her grave as she preferred "a monument of good work" rather than one of marble.

Civil Service Jobs Available In Work-Study

The U. S. Civil Service Commission has announced it is receiving applications from college students for jobs in Washington, D.C., in connection with cooperative work-study programs. Under these programs, academic study is combined with practical work experience and alternate attendance at college with periods of employment.

The federal agencies which participate in cooperative programs have positions in the fields of mathematics, engineering and physical sciences at grades GS-3 and GS-4 (\$3,880 and \$4,215 a year).

NO WRITTEN test is required, but applicants must have completed one full academic year (for GS-3) or two and one-half academic years of study (for GS-4) in a cooperative curriculum in an accredited college leading to a bachelor's degree in mathematics, engineering or the physical sciences.

Applications will be accepted until Dec. 1, 1964, by the U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C. 20415. Announcements and application forms may be obtained from many post offices throughout the country or from the U.S. Civil Service Commission, Washington, D.C. 20415.

Among the big-name stars at the free music shell programs at the Michigan State Fair, Aug. 28 through Sept. 7, will be Count Basie and his band, Nancy Wilson, the New Christy Minstrels and the Jimmy Wilkins band.

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