

# The Birmingham Eccentric

1878

Section  
May 1953

Miscellaneous articles and pictures  
related to history of this area

1953

## Greenwood Cemetery Is Well Over 100 Years Old

Greenwood cemetery came into existence as a burial ground for residents of Birmingham and vicinity because of a gift of land from the original land owner and the zealous and conscientious effort by a group of Birmingham citizens.

The cemetery consists of approximately 7.9 acres and is a part of the original tract of land entered and settled on by Dr. Ziba Swan in 1819.

It was he, who before 1825, donated a spot to be used as a burial place, this being a half acre in extent and now embraced within the present cemetery inclosure.

First interments were those of Mrs. Polly Utter and her daughter Cynthia Ann, both of whom met violent death. Their story is told in an old Detroit newspaper, dated April 6, 1825:

"On the evening of last Monday, a man by the name of Imri Fish in a state of derangement of mind, killed with an axe the wife and daughter of John Utter who reside about five miles from Pontiac. Mrs. Utter's age was 44 years and the daughter was 13 years old."

The insane murderer, who was a brother of Deacon Elijah S. Fish, was confined in the Oakland County jail at Pontiac immediately after the tragedy and remained there until his death about 1830.

IN DUE TIME Dr. Swan, the donor of the ground, and many of the oldest as well as the younger inhabitants of Bloomfield and Birmingham were laid away in the cemetery. As the small space became crowded with graves, efforts were made to obtain more land.

About 15 citizens of the vicinity joined together, though not as a legally constituted association or company, and by subscription, purchased an additional acre and a half of ground which they inclosed with the old half-acre.

Dr. Ebenezer Raynale was one of the early workers of this association who did so much for the care and preservation of the cemetery.

After Dr. Ebenezer Raynale's death, Miss Martha Baldwin and a friend were strolling through the village cemetery on a September day in 1881. The cemetery was quite unkempt by this time and Martha Baldwin could not help but notice the overgrown graves and the air of neglect.

WITHIN A WEEK she called a dozen women together and a cemetery association was formed. The yearly dues were placed at 50c and the grass was mowed and the grounds cleaned.

In 1885 the society was incorporated under the laws of the state and more land adjoining the cemetery grounds was purchased at the cost of \$500. This was platted according to the landscape gardening plan. Dues were raised to \$1 per year.

In 1901 and 1904 further additions were made; a new tool house was built, water pipes laid and a

gasoline engine was installed which pumped water from the creek.

WITH THE PAYMENT of \$25, perpetual care was insured for the grave and in 1912 there was \$2500 in the perpetual care fund. Since 1903 no grave lot had been sold except with perpetual care. In 1910 a vault holding nine bodies was built.

Martha Baldwin held the office of secretary and superintendent from 1881 when the cemetery association was formed until her death in 1913. The association in her time was officered entirely by women and the business was done by them.

By 1922, however, the association had men working within the organization and Frank Schlaack was president—an office he held until 1938.

PROBLEMS OF the Greenwood cemetery association during the period of 1922 to 1945 seem to center around those of upkeep and maintenance.

Memorial Day services at the cemetery were permitted by the association but children were to be restrained from molesting plants and flowers and from playing about the grounds.

Each year the sexton asked for a few more trash baskets, for people left "unsightly little heaps" of trash around anywhere.

In 1922 is the notation in the old association records that there were "rose bugs on the peonies. The sexton must spray and burn them until they are conquered."

PRICES FOR cemetery lots in 1922 were from \$5 to \$20. These prices were raised during the succeeding years until 1945 when the price for a single burial was \$35.

Rules and regulations of the association forbid the erection of trellises for roses and no stone wall was to be built on the hillside. Bronze markers and urns were permitted.

In 1925, the association purchased a power mower which the sexton reported as "working fine." An iron picket fence with picket gates was erected on one side of the cemetery grounds in 1926 with a chain link fence on the other three sides.

The old pumphouse was taken



CEMETERY'S OLDEST PORTION—SOUTHEAST CORNER NEAR MAIN GATE  
Includes graves of Martha Baldwin and Cemetery's original donor, Dr. Ziba Swan

down and in 1929 a new tool house was built on the northeast corner. The old one in the middle of the cemetery grounds was taken out.

THE SEXTON'S PAY in 1935 was \$20 per week during the summer months, but 35c an hour, the association thought, was enough to pay for extra labor to help the sexton.

In 1938 Mr. Schlaack requested that he not be re-elected as president of the association because of ill health and Edgar Parks took the office. In recognition of the many years of service as president, the association voted to give the lot of Frank, Schlaack perpetual care.

It was during this year that the association decided to sell the half lot (enough for two burials) near the grave of Martha Baldwin. These had been marked "reserved" by her on the books many years ago but no one knew, in 1938, why Martha Baldwin had them reserved.

BECAUSE THE cemetery was last incorporated in 1915 and the incorporation had to be renewed every 30 years according to state law, board members of the Greenwood cemetery association began to think about re-incorporation as the year 1945 neared.

After much discussion and deliberation, it was decided to give the cemetery to the city. At the important June 10 meeting in 1945, all ten members of the board were present.

Mrs. Blanche Navin moved and was supported by Miss Mary Satterlee that the president and secretary of the association be vested with authority to execute all necessary documents for the transfer of all assets of the association to the city of Birmingham. It was carried unanimously.

THE LAST OFFICERS of the Greenwood cemetery association were Edgar Parks, president; Mrs.

Thomas Navin, vice president; Miss Mabel Keyser, secretary; Mrs. Harry Barton, treasurer.

Trustees of the association were Miss Mary Satterlee, Mrs. William Blumberg, R. A. Palmer, Dr. F. G. Crawford, Luther Heacock and Clyde Peabody.

On July 11, 1946 the final step was taken.

At a special meeting in the Birmingham city commission room, board members of the association "offered to convey and assign to the city of Birmingham the burial ground owned and operated by Greenwood cemetery association, together with all cash securities, contracts and other personal property" and the city of Birmingham took over the responsibilities formerly held by the association.

Irene Hanley, city clerk, reports that a few lots are left in Greenwood cemetery, the price being \$30 for single burial space.

## Ladies' Band Had Discordant Ending

Birmingham could boast of a Ladies' Cornet Band in 1902!

In August of that year, the annual Supervisors picnic was to be held in Birmingham and the Ladies Cornet Band was "expected to be present and discourse sweet music all day long," so said editors Whitehead and Mitchell of The Birmingham Eccentric in announcing the picnic plans, "that is, if the band instruments can be found in time."

In The Eccentric issue a week prior to the announcement, the fol-

lowing public notice had been inserted and signed by J. F. Rundell, mayor of the village of Birmingham:

"Notice: August 8, 1902. Anyone having in his possession any band instrument belonging to the town will please bring it in at once and avoid further trouble. There's music in the air and the instruments are wanted."

However, it is extremely doubtful whether the gentle ladies did "discourse their sweet music all

day long."

For editors Whitehead and Mitchell, while reporting on the picnic which came off according to schedule, told about the crowds of country folk with their picnic hampers, the baseball game, an ossified man entertaining the visitors with a "hootchie-ma-kootchie", but nary a word did they say about the Ladies' Cornet Band.

"Could it be that those who had the town's instruments in their possession had not returned them so the ladies could play?"

## 1856 Magazine Article Cited Birmingham's 'Enterprise'

From the pages of the Michigan Farmer of 1856, a picture of Birmingham of that early day is obtained.

"Birmingham," the Michigan Farmer article stated, "has two churches, several stores and a flouring mill and a saw mill in the immediate vicinity.

"Farming land around the village is rich and fertile and under a high state of cultivation. Its citizens do not attempt to outdo Pontiac and are too modest to aspire to a city charter but they certainly deserve much credit for their enterprise and activity in several branches of the mechanic arts. Like its namesake in England, much is done in the manufacture of iron.

"The Novelty Works of Aaron Smith and Sons are on quite an extensive scale and at their foundry are manufactured large num-

bers of various kinds of agricultural implements, among which is the well known Jointer or sub-soil plow better known as 'Uncle Aaron's' or the 'Michigan Plow.'

"MR SMITH, the inventor of this, should be awarded great praise and his name handed down to posterity as a benefactor. The firm also manufacture various other plows, corn planters, cast iron rollers, stump screws, cider presses, apple grinder and corn shellers

combined. This is a desirable article.

"Their cross-cut sawing machines are something worthy of being brought into general use. With these saws, 20-30 cords of wood can be sawed per day with reasonable powers.

"The Messrs. Jenks are now erecting a foundry and machine shop which with the Novelty Works will be able to manufacture all the agricultural implements required by Oakland county and adjoining counties. There is at Birmingham the usual variety of machine shops and the place is growing and will soon be one of considerable importance."

AARON SMITH came to Michigan in 1824 from Westfield, New

York He was preceded by his father, Ebenezer Smith, who had purchased the milling property at Auburn which is near the city of Pontiac. Auburn was then called "Smith's Mills" and retained that name for several years.

After his father's death, Aaron Smith repaired and improved the grist and saw mills and added a mill for carding wool. At this early period, there were few mills and carding machines in the country and inhabitants from distances 40-50 miles away came with their wheat and wool to Smith's Mills.

Smith later sold the milling property and moved to Birmingham, where with his two sons began the foundry and machine business which he continued until his death in February, 1857.

THE NOVELTY Works of A. Smith and Sons was located approximately where the east end of the present Briggs building is now situated.

During his 15 years in business in Birmingham, Smith manufactured not only the Michigan common plow and the sub-soil plow of which he was the inventor, but also developed a revolving rake, grain separator and threshing machine which was said to be unequalled by any then in use.

Mr. Smith's mechanical ability and ingenuity became known throughout Michigan. He died of consumption at the age of 61 and is buried in Greenwood cemetery here.



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### Men Were Cagey— So They Skirted The Question

Public opinion polls are nothing new.

The Birmingham Eccentric in 1912 conducted one on the leading question of the day: "Is the tube skirt or 'banana' style tight dress worn by the women folks today improper?"

Because of this style of women's dress, it was said, "terrible agitation was going on throughout the country."

The poll was conducted with immense care and expense. The Eccentric claimed, and with a great amount of valuable time.

Interviews were secured with some of Birmingham's foremost and best citizens. Their views on this subject were presented.

George H. Mitchell: "I believe in tight dresses. My wife can make five dresses out of the same amount of material that it used to take for one."

ED LAMB: "I am a married man and my wife wears one. I refuse to be interviewed."

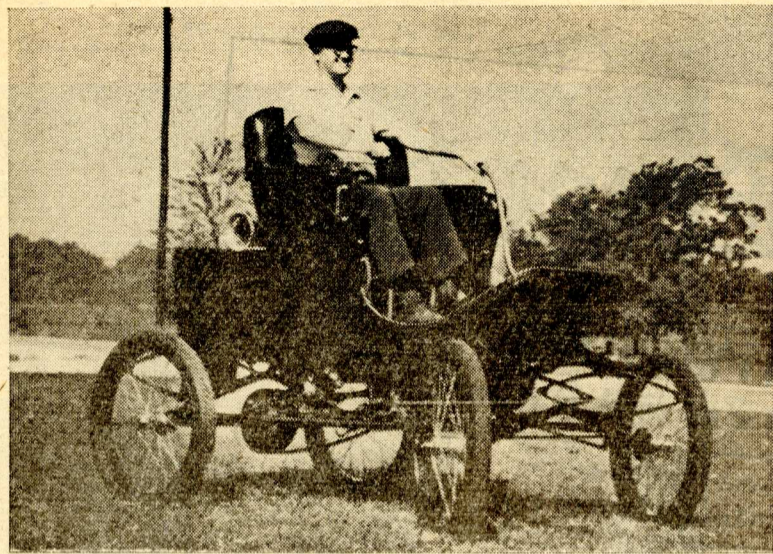
T. P. Foote: "I am not in favor of changing the present style of women's dresses. What I am in favor of is putting blinders on the men who stand around the cigar stores and corners and rubber."

Postmaster Hanna: "They ain't hard to look at."

John N. Heth: "If wimmen want to take a chance, we'd better let them, because they will anyway."

Capt. J. Allen Bigelow: "I am positive that they always add considerable to our village beautiful and besides, a woman can't throw straight when she has one of those dresses on."

Village Marshal Ira Reed: "There ain't no use trying to stop the village salomes from wearing what they like, but By Heck!, I'll arrest the first woman that asks me to pick up her poodle dog and put it in her arms!"



THIS WHITE STEAMER WAS GOING TOO FAST  
Now owned by C. E. Hulse of Flint (at controls)

## There Were Speed Laws In Those Days, Too!

S. J. Serrell, of Pontiac, was fined \$10 for speeding on Saginaw street (now Woodward avenue)! The speed—eight miles an hour. The date—1905. The auto—a White Steamer car.

This White Steamer was the first car in Birmingham to be ticketed for speeding and is believed to be the first auto in Oakland county.

Built in 1900, it was made in Cleveland, Ohio, by the White Sewing Machine Company and was purchased by Serrell in 1901. The auto cost \$1,200, according to records produced by its present owner, Charles Hulse of Flint, an antique auto enthusiast, who bought the car in 1948 and completely restored it.

WHEN HULSE purchased the Steamer, he inherited a history of it kept by the Serrell family. Records show that S. J. Serrell drove the car to New York five times between 1901-06. He gave the car

to his son, Harry J., in 1906 who drove it for three years and then stored it in a barn until 1928.

The Serrell family steam car was inherited by grandson Donald J. Serrell who got it out of the barn in 1928 and drove it around the village of Rochester a few times. It was stored again and neglected until Hulse purchased it in 1948.

Hulse says the top speed of the car is between 25-30 miles an hour. Its tanks hold eight gallons of gas (stove gas with no lead content) and 20 gallons of water. It gets about 10 miles to a gallon of gas and one mile to a gallon of water.

Ordinarily, Hulse said, it takes from 5-10 minutes to get up enough steam to move.

## Only One Experience Kneaded

In the effervescent year of 1885, a yeastly little tale appeared in The Birmingham Eccentric that should get a rise out of today's readers.

Moses Taber, at the earnest supplication of his patient wife, purchased of John Hanna, one little yeast cake.

Moses Taber lived in a big, white, square house on Saginaw (Woodward avenue) approximately where the A & P store now stands. Merrill street at that time was not cut through.

John Hanna was in business with Alex Parks in the meat market at the northeast corner of Woodward and Maple where Thorne and Converse had held forth for so many years.

Moses paid John Hanna for the yeast cake and, placing it in his vest pocket, then and there forgot about it. Now, so the story goes, if you ever got a sniff of one of those little insignificant two-cent cakes of compressed yeast when it has outlived its usefulness by several days, you can understand this tale.

IF ALL the horrible, abominable smells you ever smelt were multiplied by 13, it was declared, you would have a faint intimation of the smell of a compressed yeast cake in its last stages.

In about four days, the yeast began to get in its little work and at dinner, Moses began to eye his son Willie keenly, while Willie blushed and whispered, "Taint me, Dad."

After dinner, so the story continues, Mose looked all over the house, under the tables, chairs, rugs, behind the organ, piano and bookcase for the source of the awful "perfume."

The next day being Sunday, the vest was changed, and the whole household congratulated themselves on being rid of the mind-harrowing stench.

BUT THE NEXT morning the smell came again in all its strength. The clock stopped, it was said, just from the strength of the smell and Mose burnt rags and feathers all over his place.

It was of no use. Wherever he went, there went the smell. His old and true friend, Alanson Partidge, passed him by without speaking and with nose high in the air.

Mothers grabbed their babes and fled for the woods when Taber was seen coming. Stores closed, the story goes, and everybody mourned Moses as dead, some even being wicked enough to say that all he needed was pushing over.

LIFE AT THE Taber household became a burden to Murilla, the housemaid, the two Taber children, Willie and Mammie, and to Mrs. Taber. The thought of suicide flashed athwart the heated brain of the long-tried Moses.

Days dragged by and all the time that little wicked frothy working yeast cake was getting in its work and growing stronger and stronger every day.

In sheer desperation, it is said, Moses started on foot for one last look at his beautiful estate, called Fountain Farm, after bidding farewell to his family and friends by telephone. They would not come near enough to bid him farewell by word of mouth.

AS HE ARRIVED at the railroad the accursed smell seemed stronger and stronger and Mose thought that soon it would be all over. After his departure his friends could visit the family once more, he thought, and neighbors could come to call. Suddenly he

remembered the dollar he owed The Eccentric for the year's subscription.

Running his hand into his vest pocket to get a lead pencil to notify his executor to pay for his paper, he was horrified to feel his fingers go down into a mushy mass for about four inches.

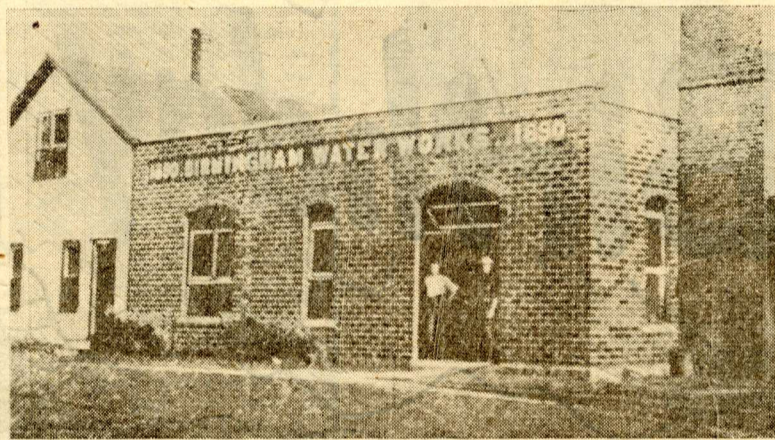
Hastily pulling it back, the aroma that followed his finger knocked him flat, so the story goes, but not before it all occurred to him how and why for a week he had smelt so.

HE THEN SANK into unconsciousness and was found in that state two hours later, but no one dared to approach him for fear of Asiatic cholera or something worse.

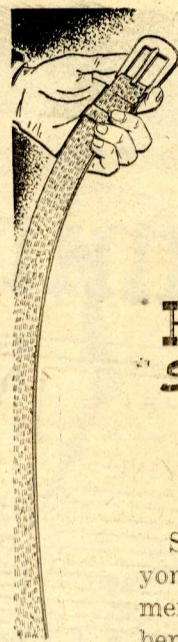
When Moses did come to, he grabbed a spade and dug a hole in the ground, ten feet deep and planted that frothy yeast cake, vest and all, deep down into the earth.

After a satisfactory explanation of the cause of the trouble, he was welcomed home to the bosom of his family. Joy and happiness reigned supreme in the Taber household and Mose acted natural once more.

But Mrs. Taber, from thenceforth on, purchased the insignificant little two cent yeast cakes.



TWO UNIDENTIFIED village employees stand inside the door of Birmingham's first waterworks. It was located on the south side of W. Maple, opposite the end of Baldwin street in the Rouge valley. The white house next door was the residence of the engineer-operator of the water works. A steam boiler supplied the power for the pump. The building was torn down shortly after the village in 1922 put in its first electrically-driven pump at the Baldwin well, just across the street from the steam plant.



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FROM THE  
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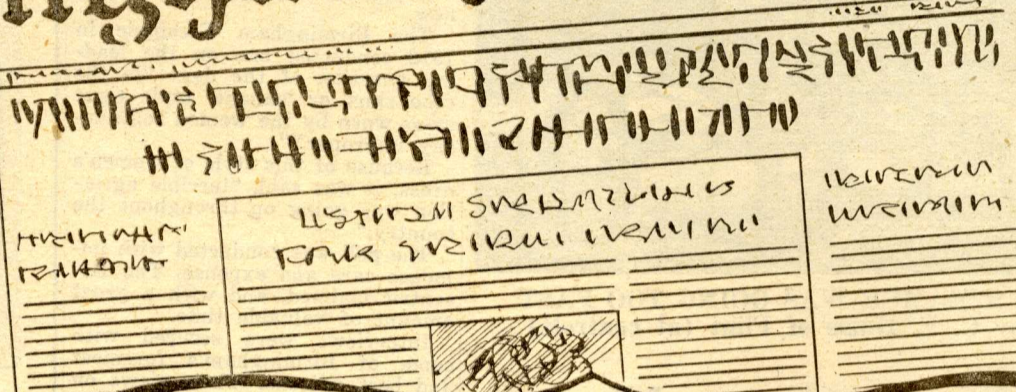
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# The Birmingham Eccentric



## CONGRATULATIONS...

The folks at A&P are happy to extend "Happy Birthday" wishes to the staff of the Birmingham Eccentric as the paper enters into its 76th year of uninterrupted publication.

Quite a record to be proud of . . . three-quarters of a century of outstanding social, civic and economic contributions to a fast-growing community . . . 75 years of meeting deadlines . . . of disseminating knowledge and reporting local and world news in the best journalistic tradition.

So, Happy Birthday to all the folks at the Eccentric from

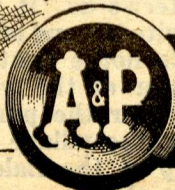
*Joe N. Zwick*

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# 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday

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## Super Markets

THE GREAT ATLANTIC & PACIFIC TEA COMPANY

# 'I Remember—'

Says Minnie Hunt Saltzer, an old time resident of Birmingham now living in Pontiac, "The distribution of milk in Birmingham in the 1880's. Of course, many of the residents at that time owned cows and had neighbors who dropped in after milking time, bringing pails for their next day's supply, but to most of the townspeople, the milk man made a regular call.

"Calvin Ellenwood, Sr., was one of Birmingham's first milk men. He had an open buggy and carried two milk cans. He carried a pint measure with a long handle with which he stirred and measured the milk. When the housewife heard his bell, she would come out with her milk pail or basin and he would measure up the desired quantity.

"Some of the customers who took a regular supply of milk each day had wires fastened to trees, from which their milk pails were suspended. There were no such articles as standard milk bottles in those days.

"A QUART fruit jar was the nearest thing to that sort of container. Old-fashioned "two quart" cans with sloping sides also were used, but they lacked nearly a glassful of holding a full two quarts.

"Other early day milk men were William Hunt and David Rainey. They both followed the same method of distribution used by Mr. Ellenwood.

"It was to John Heth that Birmingham is indebted for the first aerated milk sold here.

"Mr. Heth sold his milk in bottles and was assisted in the delivery by his sons and daughter. His wagon, drawn by one horse, was the first up-to-date milk wagon in town. He took great pride in the sanitary method by which the milk was aerated and bottled."

"I REMEMBER Old Andrew Wallace who lived on the northwest corner of West Maple and Chester streets. He owned a cow and in the spring and summer he pastured his cow on property he owned at the corner of Lincoln and Bates street.

"Always carrying a staff, he would come down Bates street each morning on his way to take his cow to pasture. In the evening, he would be seen coming back again to get the animal.

"In the early days, there was a pound on Willets street. It was owned and operated by William Reynolds. If a cow strayed away from its regular pasture or broke loose from the place where it was staked along the roadside, it was put into the pound, which was a yard surrounded by a high tight fence. The owner was required to pay 50 cents or \$1 for the cow's release.

"THE CHILDREN of those days thought it a dire misfortune if their fathers' cows were shut in the pound, for at 5 cents a quart, it took several milkings to pay the fine."

"I Remember that the first house east of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Allen's home on West Maple, was for many years, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Baldwin and their only child Martha.

"Martha was known to everyone as "Mattie". She was a woman of brilliant mind and had a wonderful vision of the future importance and possibilities of Birmingham.

"SHE HAD many friends and few enemies. If she believed a certain thing should not be done, she had the courage to stand by her convictions and fight against it. If, on the other hand, she believed that certain things should be done, she almost would move heaven and earth in the fulfillment of her purpose.

"In her daily round of duties, Mattie often drove a horse hitched to a one-seated surrey. The edge of the surrey's top was surrounded with a light colored fringe.

"There was a space behind the seat where she carried garden tools or whatever implements she needed for the furtherance of her pet projects in the town or at the cemetery.

"MATTIE WAS a woman of short stature and rather stout. I can still see her coming down Maple avenue. It is summer time and she is wearing a dark skirt and a pongee jacket, with three-quarter length sleeves trimmed with lace and she is wearing a wide brimmed hat. Her glasses are fastened to a black ribbon worn around her neck.

"When Mattie was directing rehearsals for a play or other entertainment, she would hold her manuscript in her left hand and

with her right hand keep her glasses to her eyes while she looked to see what came next.

"If the young folks were noisy, she would clap her hands sharply and quiet would reign again. She knew how to manage us.

"IF FUNDS were to be raised for the Village Improvement, Library or Cemetery Association, every one with talent came under the direction of Miss Mattie Baldwin. Plays, minstrel shows and concerts always drew a full house.

"I remember one play given by the Improvement Society, at the conclusion of which the members of the cast stood in a half circle at the front of the stage and Miss Baldwin asked each of them to name his or her favorite tree.

"When the trees in what is now Baldwin Park were planted, she caused to be placed in a semi-circle all the trees named, and in the order in which the players had stood on the stage.

"They were planted from east to west along the south side of Maple avenue. Miss Baldwin herself told me this incident and pointed out the trees to me.

## Down to Only One Bank

Of outstanding importance in Birmingham's business and financial circles in the year 1931 was the closing of the First State Savings Bank in June and the purchase of the Birmingham Savings Bank by the First National Bank of Birmingham in December of that year. The village of Birmingham, then, was left with but one banking institution.

## 743 in 1880

Census taker Blair reported in June 1880 that there were 743 people in Birmingham.

**Congratulations  
on your  
75th Anniversary**

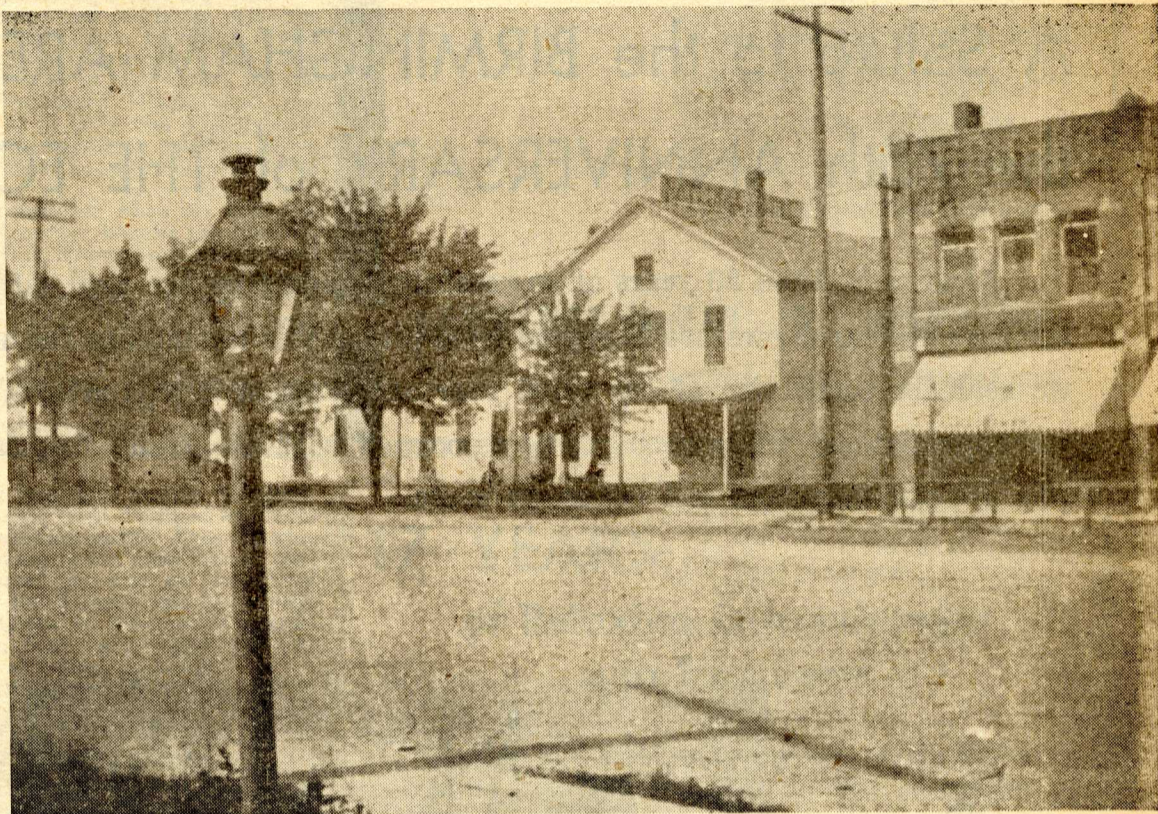
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THE WHITE BUILDING in the center of the picture, the National Hotel on the southeast corner of Woodward and Hamilton used to be a gathering point for local residents. People in the area who came into Birmingham for annual community and civic celebrations and events used to wind up the day with a dance or party at the National Hotel. Hamilton avenue (then called Middle street) enters Woodward just to the left of the lamp post. The Birmingham National Bank is on that site today.



Today  
as  
Always

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**MINTS ICE CREAM COMPANY**

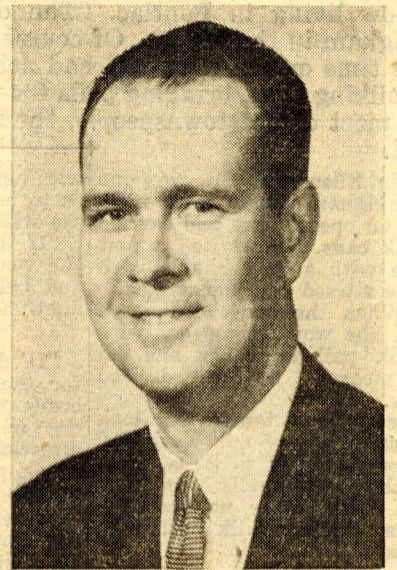
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# A Salute to the BIRMINGHAM AREA on the 75th ANNIVERSARY of THE ECCENTRIC

After more than 20 years of successfully conducting our real estate and insurance business in Detroit, we are happy to have picked this community for our new home. As we near the completion of our third year of operation in this area, we wish to express our appreciation. We're proud to be associated with the many fine families and firms who are our neighbors and whom we serve.

Allen A. Strom



## The STROM Co.

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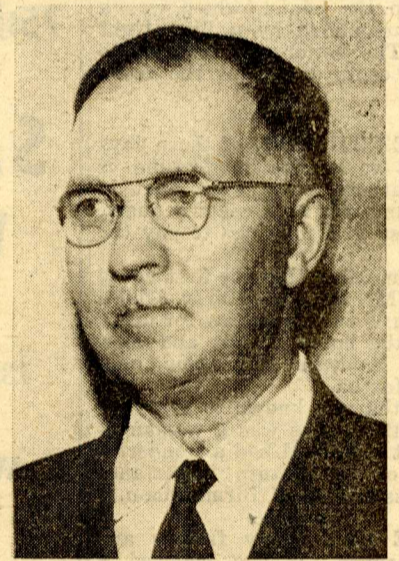
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ETHEL L. KUHLMAN

# Scout Troop B-1 Is 37 Years Old

Celebrating its 37th anniversary this year, Troop B-1 takes its place as the original organized Boy Scout group in Birmingham.

Although 1913 issues of The Eccentric carried items regarding scouting in Birmingham and the organization of a troop here, no troop records are available concerning such activities. Thus it stands that Troop B-1, organized in 1916, is the oldest active unit in the city.

Now under the leadership of Scoutmaster Robert Doyle, this troop carries on its rolls the names of several who are active and well known businessmen in the community today.

Among the "boys" who were enrolled in its early years were Russell McBride who worked his way through the ranks from tenderfoot scout to assistant scoutmaster and had the honor of being the first to attain the coveted Eagle Scout award.

**OTHERS LISTED** are well known sportsman and speaker, Mort Neff, Victor Peck, Foster Toothacker, Roy Olsen, Stuart Cobb, Ward Baley, Clyde Peabody, Art Hartwell, Leroy Weir, Mark Smith, John Gaffill, Fred Fisher, Ed Coryell, Erving Greene and Manley Bailey.

Troop B-1, already organized and growing, helped World War I efforts by distributing Liberty Bond literature. It carried on the tradition in World War II with numerous wastepaper and scrap metal drives.

From this troop, scouting has grown rapidly in Birmingham until today there are five additional troops, 10 Cub Packs, Explorer Troops and Sea Scouts, involving more than 1,000 Scouts and adult leaders and supervisors.

**TROOP B-4** is the second oldest in the city, having been organized in 1925. During that time only six scoutmasters have headed the organization.

This troop has been one of the most progressive in obtaining its own equipment. Members have built and outfitted a trailer used to haul equipment for campouts and kept available to serve the community in any way possible should disaster strike.

The Explorers of B-1 have three canoes and have covered most of the "white water" rivers of the lower peninsula. They also have pup tents enough to house more than 50 campers on a trip.

Troop B-4 is currently headed by Scoutmaster Stanley R. Mattson. Other troops and leaders are B-5, Philip T. Austin; B-7, E. B. Palmeter, B-11, Robert Q. Bedor and B-17, Donald J. Walter.

**CUB PACKS** and their leaders are B-2, Tom Ward; B-3, Donald S. Hutton; B-6, F. P. Warrick, B-7, E. W. Jacobson; B-8, Donald J. Parry, B-9, R. E. Mahr; B-11, Caleb P. Moore; B-16, Robert Rhein; B-18, Irving Warnick and B-19, W. L. Yeager.

Birmingham scouts, until the formation of Kirk-in-the-Hills Presbyterian church on the Col. Edwin S. George estate in Bloomfield Hills, maintained their campsite there.

"Camp George" became one of the best loved and best known phrases in local scouting circles and year after year the troops enjoyed its facilities.

**BIRMINGHAM'S** scouts have not confined themselves only to camping trips and "learning to tie knots". They have made themselves available on several city projects and each year are called on as "emergency police", helping keep the line of march clear for the annual Halloween parade.

They also have prepared themselves to work as emergency crews in life saving, rescue and other means should disaster strike their community.

They have worked as plane spotters for the Ground Observers Corps and have aided in the non-partisan distribution of election information materials and literature for civic groups.

**THE EMERGENCY** Service Explorers organized a team of 35 which took instructions in fire and police work, personal and public health and general first aid. These boys—all 14 or older and all First Class Scouts—were entrusted with the job of passing on their special training to some 200 others in the various troops.

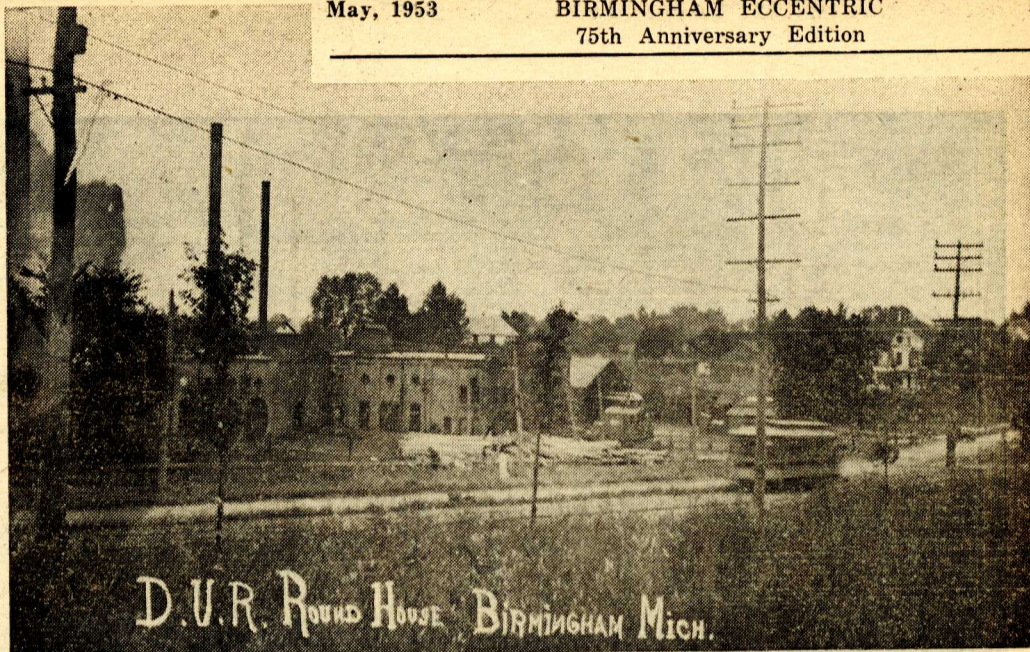
Through the years members of the Birmingham troops have earned a higher than average share of Eagle rankings, about 75 receiving this honor since 1940.

In other fields honors have been bestowed upon them. Several troops have won awards in inter-troop competition ranging from camping to first aid and other public services. Individuals have been granted the coveted God and Country award for service to their churches.

**THE SMALLER** brothers of the scouts, the cubs, are a lusty lot, outgrowing dens and packs almost as fast as they are organized. A common cry throughout the schools which sponsor these groups is a plea for additional den mothers.

These women, like the fathers of boy scouts, devote long hours to weekly sessions. Handcrafts, basic principles of scouting, trips and tours are a regular part of their programs.

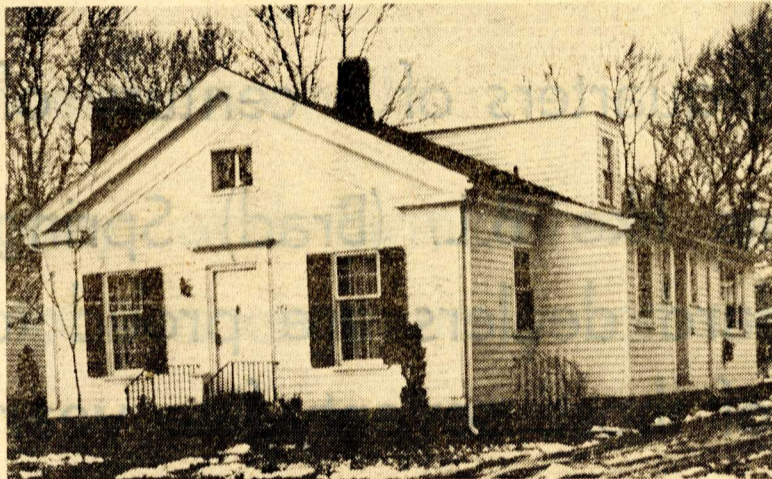
Entertainments are staged for individual dens and for pack meetings, the youngsters providing a great deal of their own props and costumes as a part of their regular work sessions.



**ANOTHER VIEW** of the old DUR carbarn which once stood at the southwest corner of Harmon and Woodward avenues. It was torn down in the early 1930's and now the area is a city park.

### Placed in Cornerstone

When the Frank Ford home on Woodward avenue was being built in 1878, a copy of The Birmingham Eccentric (Sept. 27 issue), the Pontiac Bill Poster, The Free Press and the Pontiac Gazette, along with a written paper, were deposited in the cornerstone of the house. The Ford home of that day now is the Masonic Temple.



**WAS JOHN HUNTER'S HOME** ORIGINALLY. Rear portion is an addition after it was moved.

## City's First Frame House Still in Use

This home, now located at 264 W. Brown and owned by Mrs. Kirby B. White, originally was the home of John West Hunter, Birmingham's first settler.

It was built in 1822 by George Taylor, a carpenter, the first of his trade in the township. The house was the first frame house built in Birmingham.

It stood on a rise of ground on the west side of the Saginaw trail (where 160 S. Woodward is now) on John Hunter's land.

Mary Ann Beardslee, a teacher in the early days of Birmingham, boarded and roomed with the Hunter family. Her room was on the second floor at the front of the house. She would lean from her window to watch for her sweetheart, Marcus Culver, (later her husband) coming along the road from Detroit after a long and tedious trip.

Marcus Culver, a fanning mill operator, made many business trips to Detroit by way of the early Saginaw-Detroit road. When Mary Ann would see him come into view on his return trip, she would run down the trail to meet him.

**ABOUT 1870**, the house became the property of Ira Toms. The

house, set well back from the road, had a gravel walk in the rear which led to a lovely garden. Large shade trees framed the house.

Alex Parks came into possession of the property and sold the house to Henry Randall who had it moved to its present site on West Brown street in 1893.

The front of the house is original, but the side door and the rear are later additions.

The house contains the original hand hewn beams of black walnut and oak a foot thick. The old doors of the house all are of solid walnut, paneled in such a way that a certain cross is formed which, in the days of superstition, was reputed to keep out witches.

The inner wall construction of the house is almost of solid wood. Two-inch thick uprights, standing side by side, are enclosed within the walls of the original building.

## Congratulations

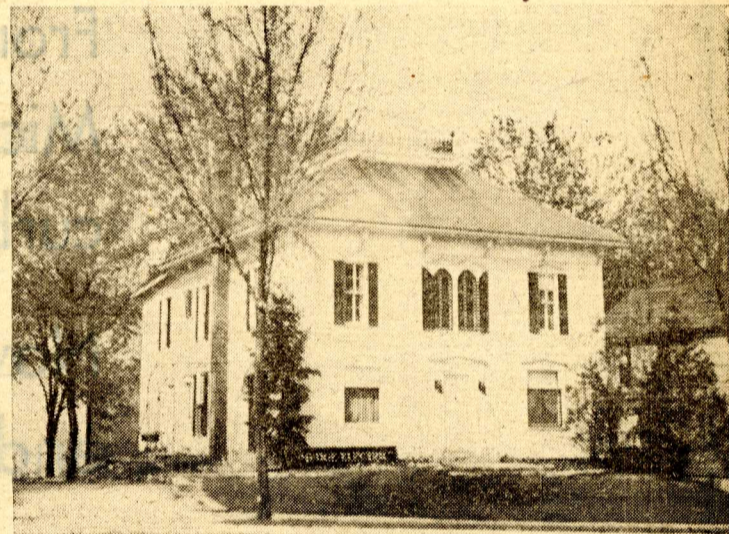
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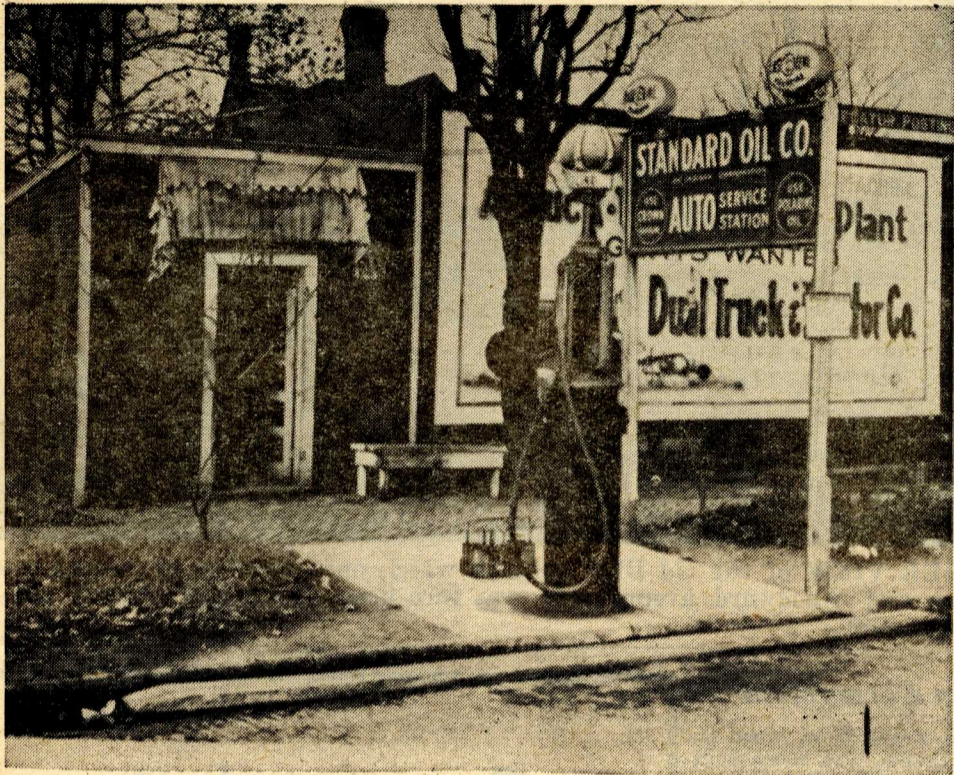
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# Progress through t

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# Progress the years



## Standard Oil Company on its 75th Anniversary

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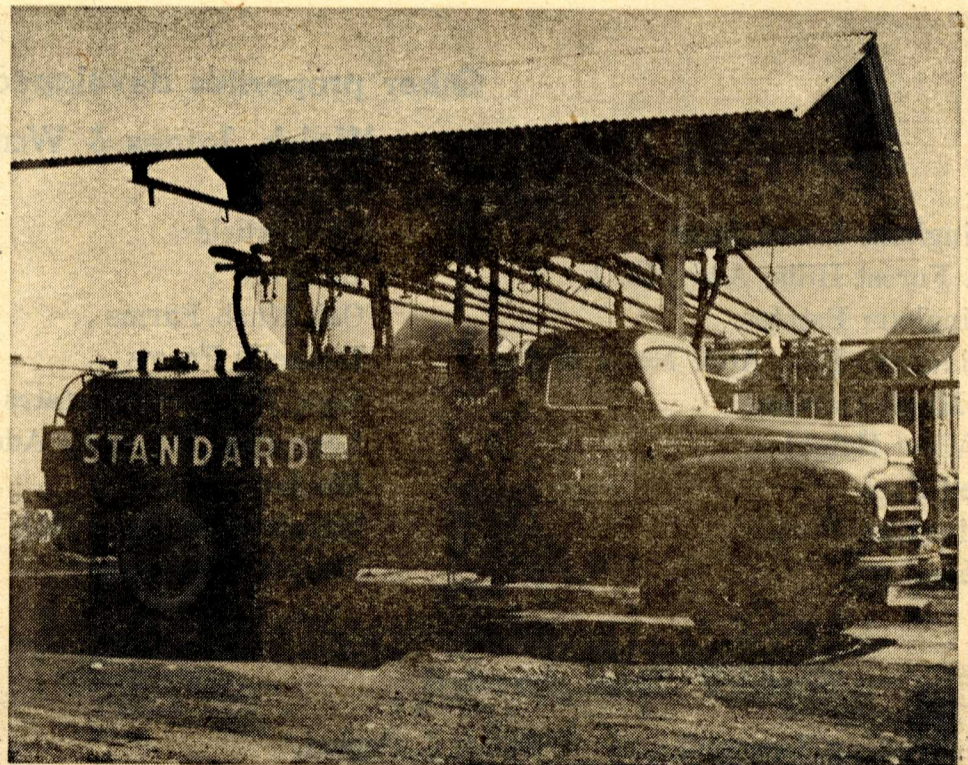
TELEGRAPH AT MAPLE RD.

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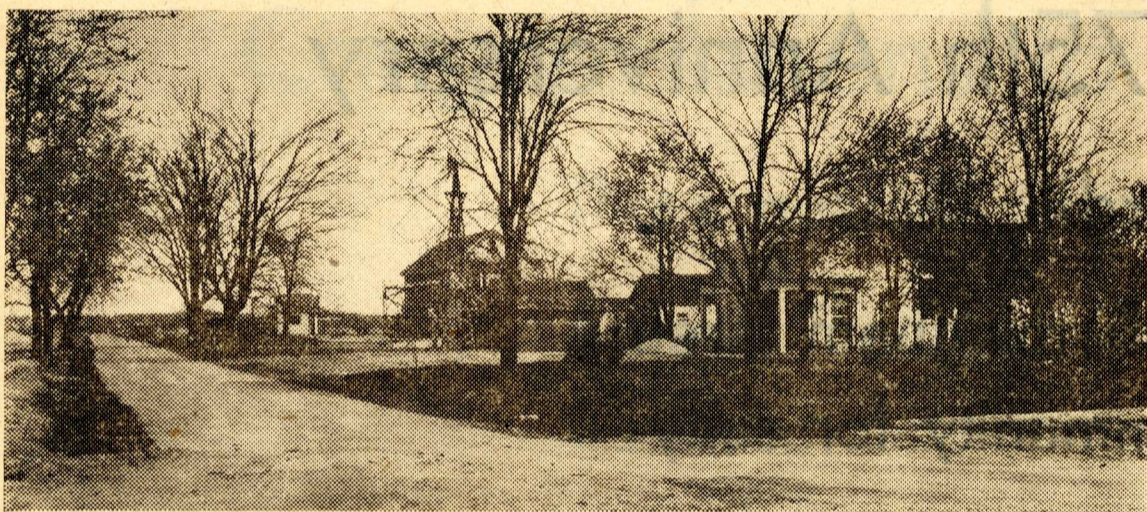
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CONGRATULATIONS to the BIRMINGHAM ECCENTRIC  
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FROM

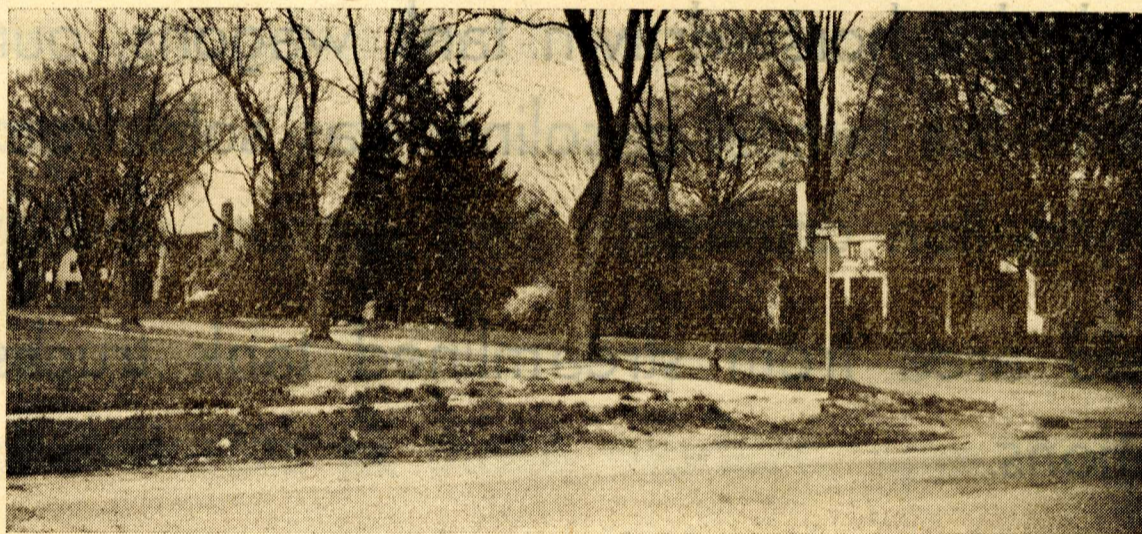
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A picture taken in 1923 at the corner of Puritan Road and West Maple, the former Quarton farm house and windmill and the first building in QUARTON LAKE ESTATES.

A view taken in 1953 from the same corner showing the remodeled farm house and the solidly built street of QUARTON LAKE ESTATES after being developed by Walsh, James & Wasey Co.



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# 'I Remember --'

Mrs. Fred V. Quarton, 1158 W. Maple recalls:

"My grandfather, George Blakeslee, who with Tom Hanna, ran the general store facing Woodward on the northwest corner of Woodward and Maple.

"This store was the only place in town where we children could get penny candy—long licorice sticks or small candies measured out by a little cup. The penny candy showcase was at the front of the store.

"The store was quite a place for the older men in town to congregate. They sat around an iron stove in the back of the store with a spittoon nearby. They would talk over politics and happenings in the village and would play checkers or dominoes or card games like euchre. They played from morning till night by the old stove.

"George Blakeslee was really an architect. He planned the Methodist church at the southwest corner of Henrietta and Maple, the old schoolhouse that stood on the north side of West Maple where Southfield road comes in, the Hill school and the old water works by the bridge.

"George was the son of Scriba Blakeslee, who came here from New York state in 1831 and bought 80 acres of land from the government.

"I HAVE HEARD my family speak of my great-grandfather, Scriba. They said they thought he had some Indian blood in him because his hair was black and straight and he was of dark complexion. He rode a beautiful stall-wart black horse and sat up so straight that he made a perfect figure on the horse. He was one of the charter members of the Masons in Birmingham.

"My father, Frank Blakeslee, worked for a while for Mr. L. B. Peabody. He and Volney Nixon went in business together about 1884 and then my grandfather (on my mother's side), Frank Durkee, thought my father should have a store of his own so built for my father the brick building which is now the Smith and Erwin market.

"FRANK BLAKESLEE was a member of the school board for many years. He also served on the library board and the cemetery association board and was a Mason in Birmingham.

"My grandfather, Frank Durkee, was a son of William Durkee who came to Oakland county from Cayuga county, New York in 1823. Frank Durkee planted those tall pine trees for a wind break on his farm out West Maple road near Telegraph.

"I remember how we children sat on the wooden rail fence and watched for the first electric car to come down the track. The cars did not go all the way to Detroit then, only to Palmer Park where there was a turn around.

"PEOPLE WOULD pack a lunch, eat it on the way down and then ride back. They made an excursion out of it. The cars were very popular and would be loaded with people by the time they came to Birmingham from Pontiac."

"I remember Billy Manser, the cobbler, who lived across the street from us on West Maple. He had so many whiskers and I was frightened of him. But my father would make me go to him to get my shoes fixed anyway.

"Billy Manser sang in the Methodist church choir for years. He liked to sing. He sang in the choir for so long they couldn't get him out.

"I remember the house that stood on the southwest corner of West Maple and Bates which became the first community house. The Drakes lived there first that I can remember and then Frank Randall with his mother, Mrs. Esther Randall.

"FRANK WAS a salesman for a company in Detroit, and Horace, Lucius and McAllister Randall were his brothers.

"When the Drakes lived there, there was a plank board walk on the Bates side of the house. Two of the boards were loose and my brother Roy was having a fine time jumping up and down on them like a springboard. The Drakes didn't like it and reported him to my father and Roy caught it later from him.

"I remember when the Park's slaughter house which was about a quarter mile south of W. Maple road near the bridge, would give away livers, hearts and tongues to anyone who would ask for them.

"PEOPLE NEVER bought those things then. I suppose they would have given away kidneys, too, if anybody wanted them, but I don't

think any one ever cooked them in those days.

"I remember the molasses candy that Mrs. Ed Lamb made and which she was known for. Ours always got sticky, but Mrs. Lamb's was always brittle and she pulled it real thin.

"She and Mr. Lamb, who was a harness maker, always took off for Detroit on a Saturday with five dollars to spend.

"They would go to see a show and have dinner and have a good time. People would ask her how she could afford it and she'd tell them that there always was the poor house to go to when they didn't have anything.

"THE LAMBS lived up over their store on Woodward avenue, but in later years lived on Willits street.

"All the stores on Woodward were set way back from the street and it was a very wide street. When Daines and Bell built their store on Woodward avenue about where the dime store is now, they set it forward.

"When the other store buildings in that block were rebuilt, they all followed suit. That narrowed the street.

"I remember Mrs. Noble who lived on the north side of West Maple, the next house west of us. Mrs. Noble was a daughter of R. T. Merrill, who did so much for early Birmingham.

SHE MARRIED a man named Brown and lived in Battle Creek for some time, but after the death of her husband, she married Mr. Noble and came back to Birmingham to live.

"I remember John Baldwin, the blacksmith, who smoked all the time. When the doctor told him he had to stop smoking, Mr. Baldwin carried raisins in his pocket

and was always chewing them. "I remember the horse races the men would have on West Maple avenue on Saturday. The race would start at the square (Maple and Woodward intersection) and the men in their two wheeled racing carts would go past our place. They could go and the dust would fly!

"I remember when my husband, Fred Quarton, bought the shetland pony farm from the Watkins family. We let Dr. C. M. Raynale pasture his horses on this land and he never sent us a bill when he took care of our children.

"WHEN WE WOULD ask him about it, he would say, 'I don't know whether I owe you or you owe me.' He got his potatoes from us, too.

"My husband's family, the Quartons came from England and were hard-working people. Fred Quarton held many civic positions in Birmingham. He was on the school board for 9 years, on the village commission, on the cemetery association board and served for two years as village assessor."

### Only 4 Families In B'tam in 1821

Captain Hervey Parke, who visited this area in 1821, wrote in his "Recollections": "Reaching what is now the village of Birmingham, we found four families: Elisha Hunter, his son, John W. Hunter, John Hamilton and Elijah Willets—the latter an innkeeper.

"Three-fourths of a mile this side of Hunter's lived Dr. Ziba Swan and his son-in-law, Sidney Dole, who was justice of the peace, register of deeds and county clerk.

"The next house was that of Deacon Elijah Fish and on the hill just south of where now is Bloomfield Center, resided Amasa Bagley and his son-in-law, William Morris, the latter being sheriff of the county."

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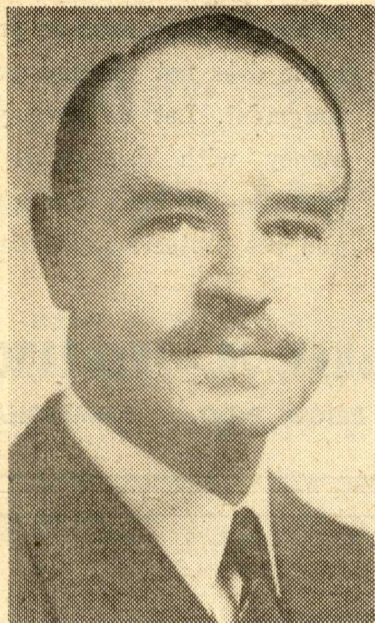
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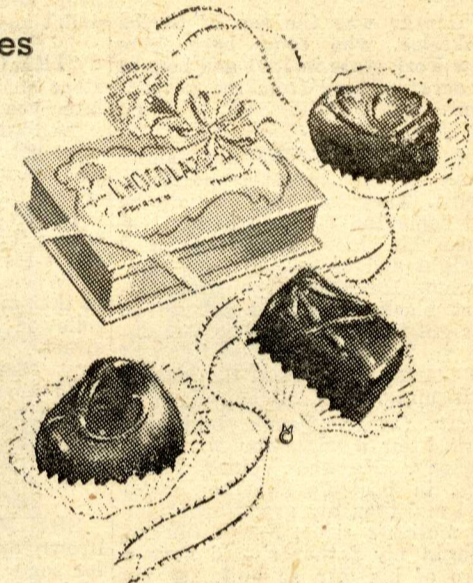
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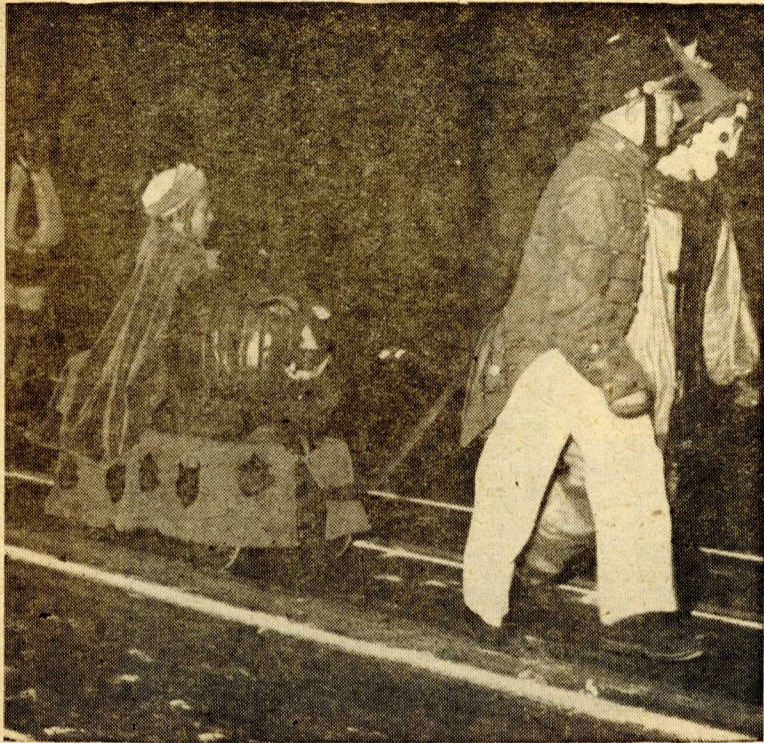
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**COSTUMED YOUNGSTERS PARADE PAST JUDGES**  
Thousands take part in annual civic program

## Halloween Celebration Important City Event

Every fall several thousand Birmingham boys and girls celebrate Halloween as guests of local businessmen, the city itself and area clubs.

Started nearly 20 years ago (the first recorded date was 1935), this affair is constant evidence of the growth and expansion of the community. It's evidence, too, that in this growth, the city has not lost track of its youngsters nor the fact that they like to have fun.

Originally, the idea grew out of the concern which businessmen and city officials felt about the increasing property damages that seemed to be a part of Halloween.

Veteran police officers recall the crowds of young boys who were picked up every year and brought to headquarters to be claimed by irate parents. "Halloween" was becoming a dread word here.

While everyone complained about conditions, it was left to a small group of businessmen to do something about it.

**HEADED BY S. O. Wylie** Bell of the Bell funeral home; Joseph Stroup of Stroup's market and Charles J. Shain of Shain's drugstore, a few meetings were scheduled for interested parties and the idea of the Halloween parade was born.

Then, as now, the idea was to give the kids a good time and keep them so busy they couldn't get into trouble.

The instigators of this first event therefore scheduled a parade, with everyone wearing costumes. Prizes would be offered to pep up the competitive spirit of the youngsters.

The idea of refreshments and entertainment were naturals to keep the kids occupied until bedtime and cut the mischief hazard to a minimum.

**THAT FIRST** affair was most successful and the idea immediately became "a part of Birmingham".

Each succeeding year has seen the program grow, although today's parties are basically the same.

Early parties saw a couple of hundred boys and girls marching with only a few parents to watch. Today several thousand entrants parade past thousands of watchers.

Actually, the affair has outgrown the barbecued steer which made up the welcome snack for hungry young marchers. No longer is the traditional beef sandwich a part of the scene, having given way to the ever-popular hotdog.

**TO COPE** with the growing crowd, today's party consists of movies for the real little ones, games and a dance for the middle-sized folks and a dance at the high school for the older students.

Recent committees have been composed of representatives from every club and service organization in the city.

The Birmingham board of education, churches, student council, boy and girl scouts have their roles to play, too. Compared with the details of those earlier parties, the modern celebration looks like a major Hollywood production!

Has it worked?

Well, in 1952 the Birmingham

police received less than a dozen calls at Halloween—mainly complaints about noise.

### Throng Turned Out To Welcome Two Carloads of Coal

The winter of 1901-02 was Birmingham's year of the "Long Cold", for cold weather started early that year and continued for about three months.

The zero weather and the coal question was the absorbing local topic for many weeks, for the shortage of coal made matters very much worse.

The day after Christmas 1902, Ed Smith and company, local coal dealers down by the railroad depot, received two car loads of real coal—anthracite. People were so excited that they thronged the streets. The Birmingham Eccentric at the time stated that the excited populace outdid the Davis picnic the fall before.

**BY THE MIDDLE** of January, the situation was much worse. The weather was down to zero and some folks, including the editor of The Eccentric, had used up his last shovel full of coal.

Smith and company reported that they had received all the coal they were able to get and didn't expect any more anthracite before the next July. In the opinion of the editor of The Eccentric, Smith and Company had treated the public fine as they had kept their coal prices as low as any dealer in the United States and had divided their supply fairly to all.

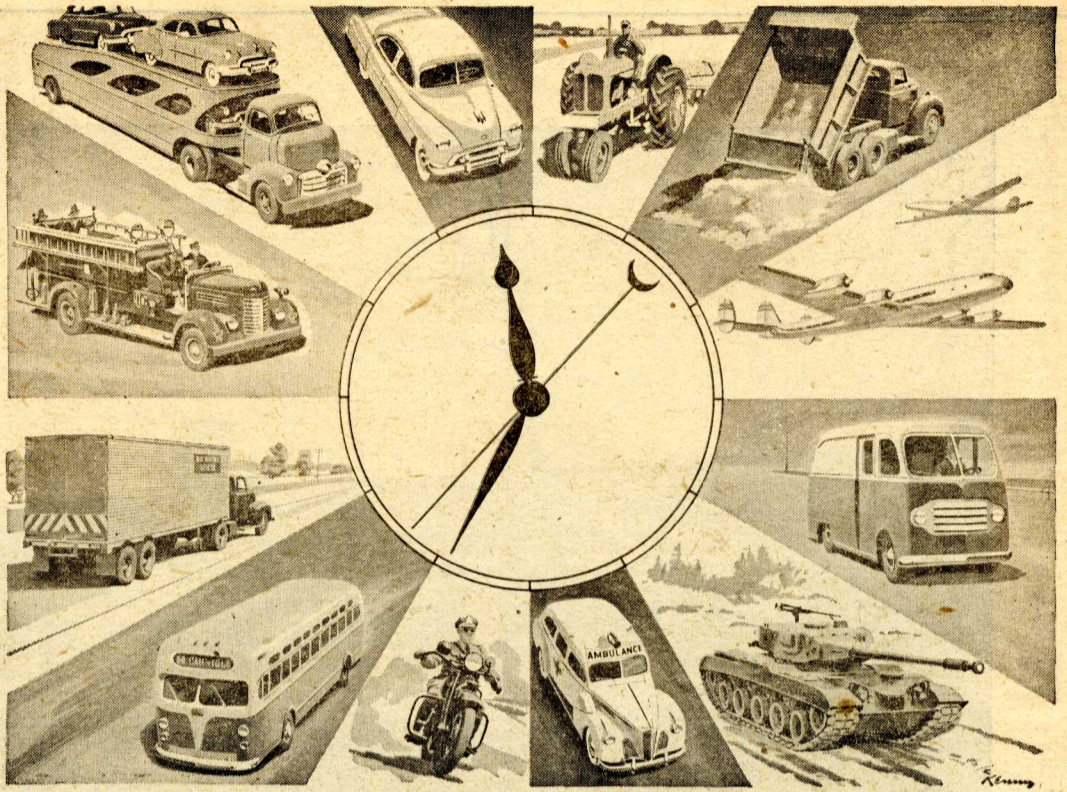
The janitor at Hill school, Ed Lamb, who was called "Foxy Grandpa", was at his wit's end to get up enough steam in the old school boiler to warm the school building.

**HE FINALLY** had to give it up and the school children were allowed to go home with "blue noses and cold toeses."

Soon a movement was started by Birmingham parents to buy a "booming big boiler with a big B" for Hill school. That is how Hill school got the badly needed new boiler but it took the parents and the "Long Cold" to get it.

### It Was No Nutty Gift

The Eccentrics (the club, not the newspaper) surprised their newest papa, Will C. Jenks, with a new walnut cradle in 1884.



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Our representatives constantly travel through the state encouraging advancement in the techniques of sales and service to agriculture and industry by the Ford Tractor Dealers of Michigan.

As citizens of Birmingham, we have considered it a privilege to share in actively sponsoring the United Foundation Program in this area. We have enjoyed taking part in the community youth program by sponsoring a baseball team in the "Little Bigger League" and in joining other business men of the city in promoting community interest in these functions.

We extend our heartiest congratulations to the Birmingham Eccentric on the occasion of its 75th anniversary, and join The Eccentric in expressing that it is indeed a pleasure to be located in, and affiliated with such an alert community.

*W. H. BREECH, President*



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## The Deep Appreciation

of The Birmingham Eccentric must be extended to the dozens of individuals and organizations which have so generously assisted us in accumulating a goodly share of the countless facts and many pictures which are contained in this special 75th Anniversary Edition of The Eccentric.

Also to The Eccentric's editorial, advertising and mechanical departments, which have given generously of their time and talents to the publication of this special edition.

The success of this edition is founded on the wholehearted cooperation of everyone involved, however remotely. The Eccentric is sincerely appreciative of this support.



CANILE JENKS

GEORGE SHAIN

Canile Jenks and Paddy Wilson were hand in hand in business. While Paddy was the sexton, Canile furnished the coffin, after careful investigations.

No sooner had a resident's death been announced than Jenks was promptly on the scene with a tape measure. In due time a substantial casket, of exquisite tailoring, was brought around, the deceased placed therein, and submitted to Paddy for interment.

George Shain, shown at Canile's left in the above photograph, was a carpenter.

## Left Written Impression of Visit to B'ham

Captain Hervey Parke, who lived to a ripe old age, wrote his interesting paper "Recollections of My First Tour in Michigan in 1821" for the Oakland County Pioneer Society in 1874.

Capt. Parke's memories of early Oakland county give glimpses of the past to the readers of the present.

Calling the dwelling of John W. Hunter his "temporary home", he said, "Here I made my acquaintance with Horatio Ball, son of Daniel Ball who lived three-fourths of a mile southwest of Hunter's."

"He had received a contract for subdividing 10 townships of land between the Flint and Cass rivers. I arranged to accompany him as assistant to carry the compass half of the time. I returned to my home in New York state in February, having been absent 11 months."

IN 1822 Capt. Parke returned to Michigan "leaving Camden, New York with my wife and child traveling to Michigan via the Erie Canal and lake steamer."

"Arriving at Detroit I met John Hamilton, with whom I formed an acquaintance the previous year. He was provided with an ox team and being in pursuit of a load, I engaged him to take me to my journey's end."

"It was late before we left the city; we did not reach the angle of the road (six miles) until nearly sunset. Arriving at White's tavern, their beds were occupied, but Mrs. White spread a few blankets on the floor where we slept as soundly as the swarming mosquitoes would permit."

"In the morning Hamilton came up and we again mounted the wagon, going smoothly along over the plains to the angle of the Paint Creek road (now Rochester road) where then stood the famous oak tree."

"THE NUMEROUS pitchholes made riding so uncomfortable we were glad to get out and walk the remaining five miles to Mr. J. W. Hunter's residence."

"Here we received such a welcome as only himself and family could give and we were invited to remain several weeks with them. During this time Mr. and Mrs. Hunter visited their eastern home, leaving us in charge of their family of young daughters."

"On their return home he offered me the use of the shop, as he called it, an unfinished log house, built but not used for blacksmithing purposes, which he said I would be quite welcome to occupy."

"Doors, windows and floors were soon put in and we moved into our first home in the west. There, in 1823, my only son, John H. Parke, was born."

### Champion Rabbit Hunter

Phill Durkee, his breech loader and ferret were three terrors the rabbits in this vicinity had to face in the days of 1878. Durkee hunted rabbits by gently dropping his ferret in the rabbit hole, and when Mr. Rabbit jumped out, Durkee dropped him. He got from 15-40 rabbits per day hunting by this method.

## Once Upon a Time They Really Celebrated 4th

Fourth of July in 1882 was a momentous day in Birmingham. Not that this glorious Fourth in this particular year was anything unusual, for Birmingham celebrated many July Fourths in like manner. It was a typical celebration that was enjoyed by many small towns and villages throughout the country.

The evening of July 3 presented a gloomy picture to the committeemen in charge of the celebration and it rained all night. But the sun presented its smiling face on the morning of the momentous Fourth and the weather that day was all that could be desired.

The celebration started early. At nine o'clock in the morning a parade led by Lew Simpson (a builder and contractor) as Marshal, went down the village's main street.

Three townsmen, appropriately costumed, started off the parade as the "Spirit of 76". They were followed by 50 or more villagers, all "en masque", riding on horses or in wagons and carts.

WES FAINT, (the local house painter and interior decorator) and his friend, Dick Hatch, draped as Greek Gods, rode in their chariot "Olympus", (a donkey cart).

The town dentist, Dan Johnston and Tom Hanna, the boot and shoe dealer, were dressed as Uncle Sam and Mrs. Columbia and rode on John Howland's platform wagon. Fred Golden and his gang represented the industry of Frog Hollow.

After the parade, the races began—held right down the middle of Saginaw street, now Woodward avenue. In the free-for-all foot race, A. C. Baldwin won the \$5 first prize.

Only those men weighing over 200 pounds were eligible for the fat man's race which Till Trowbridge won amid such wheezing and blowing as would shame a blacksmith's bellows.

FOR THE SACK race, the competitors were placed in a large sack used for shipping wool, their arms placed inside the bag and the whole business tied tightly around the neck. John Sprague wiggled and rolled over the finishing line to win.

The greased pig was then brought out, but becoming impatient, broke away from its keeper before it was time for its part of the program to begin. It was captured by Sam Hawthorne but was subsequently let loose again and James McKay gathered it in for the prize.

On top of the greased pole was a shiny, new \$5 gold piece. Will Smith successfully climbed the pole to get it.

THIS CONCLUDED the forenoon of sports and the crowd made a rush to every and any place where food and drink could be secured.

Since Birmingham was a small village, there were plenty of picnic places nearby. Many folks planned a picnic lunch as a part of the day's events and after spreading a cloth upon the ground, opened their bulging food hampers for a grand repast.

Over 300 people took dinner at that well known holstery, the National Hotel which stood at the southeast corner of Middle street and Saginaw (now Hamilton and Woodward). Mine host, George E. Daines, was sorry to have to turn so many away, but there were limits to the accommodations of the old National Hotel.

AFTER DINNER, the Fourth of July celebrants betook themselves to the Birmingham Driving Park for the horse races. This race track was in Troy township but only two miles north of Birmingham and east of Adams road on the Davenport farm.

Oakland county horses as well as those owned by local men were racing that day for purses ranging from \$5 to \$60. There were running races, a free-for-all, green races and pacing races.

Only one horse, Bay Dick, was protested for being in the racing events. It was claimed that he was not a horse owned in the county and was not entered under his true name.

FIREWORKS IN the evening were exhibited to the largest crowd ever seen in Birmingham up to that time. It was estimated that over 3,000 people were on the streets enjoying the immense fireworks display.

To top off the celebration, the usual Fourth of July dance was held in the evening at the National Hotel and 215 couples jammed into the ballroom on the second floor.

The committeemen responsible for the celebration of this glorious Fourth were Ed Lamb, local harnessmaker, J. R. Corson, Jr., who was in business with his father in a general store, and D. E. Wilber, another general store owner whose place of business on Saginaw street was in later years taken over by Volney Nixon.

The Eccentric of 1882 reported that "It was a good celebration. There wasn't such a thing as a drunken man seen on the streets all day."

There was only one accident. A lady from Royal Oak was seriously hurt when she was thrown from her carriage near the Methodist church.

Her horse became frightened by a piece of flying paper but accidents such as these were not unusual in the horse and buggy days.



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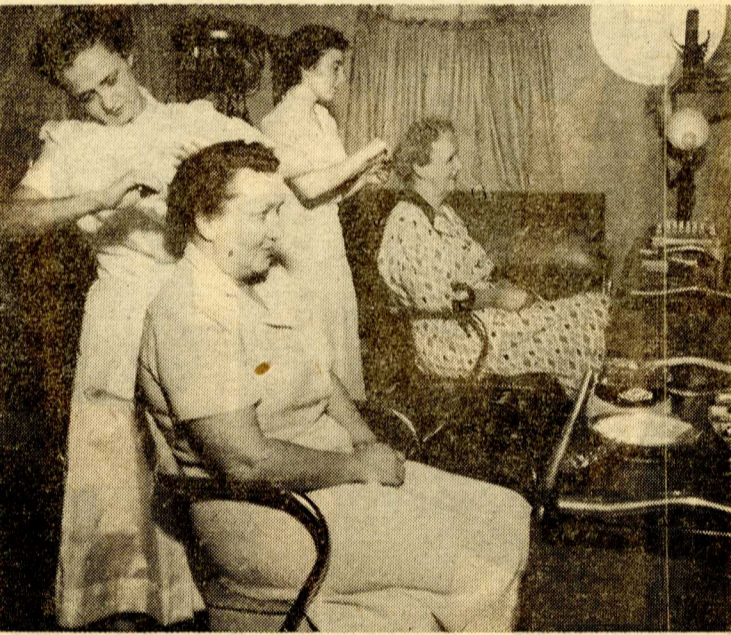
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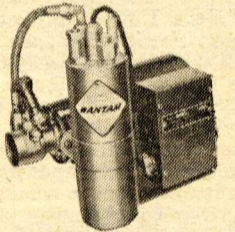
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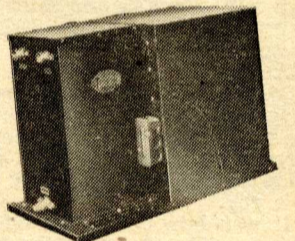
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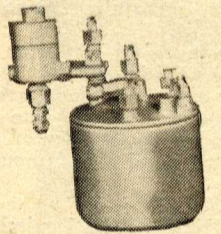
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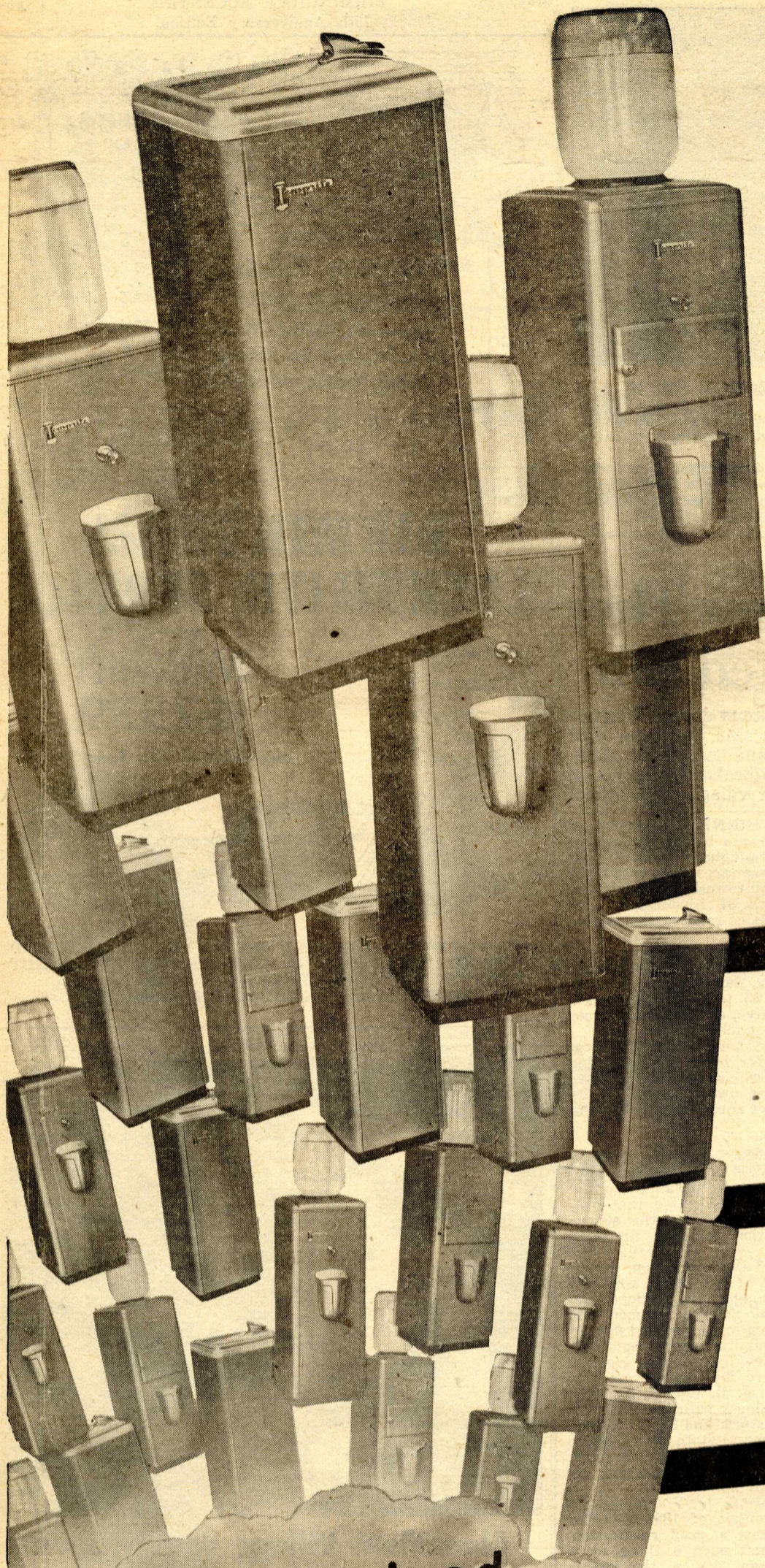
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