

We're Growing With Birmingham!

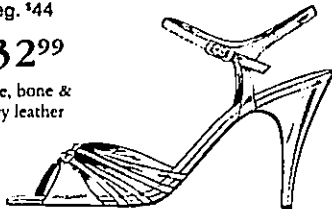
Come celebrate Birmingham's 50th Birthday with us during our annual
SUPER SANDAL SALE
PICTURED BELOW ARE JUST A FEW. SHOP
EARLY FOR BEST SELECTION.

SPARKLE

reg. \$44

\$32⁹⁹

white, bone &
navy leather

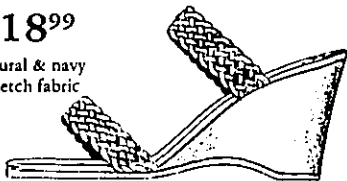


BETH

reg. \$26

\$18⁹⁹

natural & navy
stretch fabric

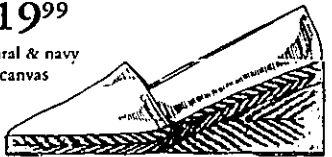


BEA

reg. \$28

\$19⁹⁹

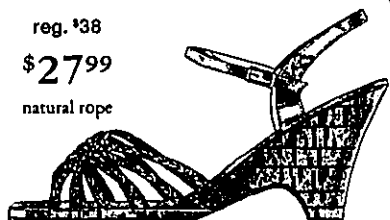
natural & navy
canvas



reg. \$38

\$27⁹⁹

natural rope



**Roberta
Shoes**

142 W. Maple
Birmingham

77-year love He was there when

MILTON F. MALLENDER was there when the vote was cast on April 3, 1933 that finally brought cityhood to Birmingham. The young lawyer was also a candidate for the first city commission.

He has grown with the city from the time of dirt roads and sewers that ran uphill to the completion of its tallest building — a 15-story high-rise.

Now he too sits in an office above the street, tucked away on the third floor amongst those of the Dahlberg, Maller and Gawn law firm in the Great American Insurance Co. Building. But even there, suspended above the place that he has served and loved for 77 years, the memories he shares with the city are only a thought away.

"THE IMPORTANT thing is that you have to remember what the devil was going on, on April 3, 1933."

The act of approving cityhood for Birmingham cannot be properly interpreted without knowing the historical context in which it happened, Maller said. Unfortunately, a large part of that context is the Great Depression.

"It was immaterial how much you had in the bank; it was immaterial how much real estate you owned; it was immaterial because you had nothing to hand to the grocer."

"There were a few families that needed help; they got it without publicity and without stamps or anything else. We had a different attitude then, the world didn't owe us a living, the government didn't have to take care of everything. The local people took care of local needs."

THE DEPRESSION began with the stock market crash in October 1929, and continued to cause financial upheaval in Birmingham until the beginning of World War II in 1941. Its effects were felt in several ways, but few were as acute as the closing of local and state banks in the middle of 1931. It surprised almost everyone.

"I was caught, I had five dollars on me and had just gotten back from a fishing trip. My poor wife had \$7.50, I think it was, in the house."

But the idea of turning Birmingham into a city started in the mid-20s during a time of growth and prosperity, before the banks were closed or script had to be issued to pay employees.

"People started trying to make Birmingham a suburb of Detroit, instead of a self-sustaining independent village. Something had to be done. So a number of people — George Averill is the fellow that in my opinion got things started —

Harry Allen, Charles Shain and several other fellows who were heavily involved in local politics, started thinking of a home rule charter."

CITYHOOD was finally approved in a 1932 election, and nine men were chosen to serve on the charter commission.

"The charter commission did a lot of investigating and did it pretty much on their own. At that time the leading city in the United States that had a commission form of government with a city manager was Cincinnati. Another was Milwaukee."

Maller's involvement with the charter commission, and his later candidacy for the first city commission in 1933, came about initially through his friendship with Harry Allen.

"I used to ride out occasionally from Detroit with Harry Allen, who was a lawyer in Detroit and who I had known all of my life. I would occasionally ride with him and chew the fat on the way out. He got me interested in this movement. The result was that George Averill found a young guy who would do a lot of footwork for them (the charter commission), like running to Lansing on occasion to look something up, and I was it."

"So our charter commission built on the private corporation theory . . . in other words, the citizens are the share holders and the commission would be the board of directors. The commission, also like a private corporation board of directors, would elect officers and they would employ a president, who is like the city manager, who would run the corporation . . . it has worked out beautifully."

"FOR THE first 10 years of the city commission's existence, these fellows' time was devoted very largely to getting the city on a sound financial basis. Then the next big problem that came up was to get rid of a lot of junk, like all-dirt roads and sewers that ran uphill."

Maller ran again for the commission in 1943 and 1946 and won easily both times. He served Birmingham as mayor from 1946-49.

A first-hand witness to the events that helped shape Birmingham, Maller will never forget the strength of grip the Great Depression had on the throat of his city or the satisfaction in finally seeing that grip weaken and wither.

"It was really a very interesting time . . . how the city refinanced and paid every bond in full, paid every bit of delinquent interest — the school did the same thing — and in the meantime continued to expand the services and turn Birmingham into a city of 22,000 people."

'The important thing is that you have to remember what the devil was going on on April 3, 1933.'