

# against backdrop of Depression

person. But the calls came, too, and were handled by a corps of volunteer city editors who answered phone queries throughout the night. One volunteer, Harold Ellerby, said he answered about 2,500 phone calls between 10 p.m. and 3:30 a.m.

The wait for the results was a long one: Polls were scheduled to close at 8 p.m., but at that time there were still 100 people lined around the walls of the Municipal Building.

The last vote was not cast until 9:30, indicating that the returns would be late — perhaps very late because of the record-breaking voter turnout predicted.

First reports finally began trickling in from Precinct 4, Wylie Bell's Garage, at about 11 p.m., but the others were not ready for another hour or more.

**REPORTERS HURRIED** back to the Eccentric office with the results from the five precincts as they were counted, and the level of excitement soared as each made his announcement.

Anticipation of this election was piqued the night before when about 300 people and nearly all of the candidates attended a mass meeting sponsored by the League of Women Voters at the Birmingham Community House.

But the seed of the idea for turning

Birmingham into a city had really been planted long before.

The actors who played starring roles in the cityhood drama took the stage in the mid 1920s and began the action that would not culminate in success until that spring night in 1933.

It all began when a group of committees investigated the various aspects of cityhood in 1926.

Those committees reported unfavorably on the issue. The basic reason being fear that incorporation as a city would mean contraction of the Birmingham School District boundaries, making them different from those of the city.

**AN ELECTION** was finally held in 1928 to decide whether the village should incorporate, but the result was a landslide vote against cityhood.

Then, in 1932, the issue was again discussed, primarily as a method to save the village and taxpayers money, which was very scarce due to the Depression.

Birmingham was not the only village considering cityhood at that time. In 1932, the village of Bloomfield Hills voted to adopt the city form of government.

A committee was appointed by the Property Owners Division of the Birmingham Real Estate Board to investigate the cityhood question in light of

new circumstances and legislation that had occurred since the 1928 vote.

Ralph I. Coryell was chairman of this committee. He was joined by Walter L. Connelly, who was then a member of the village commission, Edward L. Bryant, an attorney, and George R. Averill, who had long been an active supporter of the cityhood movement.

But the man who from the beginning was one of the most important leaders of the movement was Charles J. Shain. He had been involved in organizing the vote four years earlier and was then chairman of the Property Owners Division.

**AFTER MANY** weeks of hard work, the report concerning the advantages and disadvantages of a city form of government was completed on April 13, 1932.

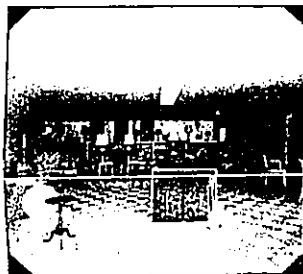
"From the data appended, this committee visualizes a marked savings in expense in a proposed change to a city form of government. There are certain dangers inherent to a change, but these can be taken care of in forming the charter. For the most part, the factors which prevented a change several years ago are either nonexistent now or have been altered and are not serious.

"We feel that the economies and sim-

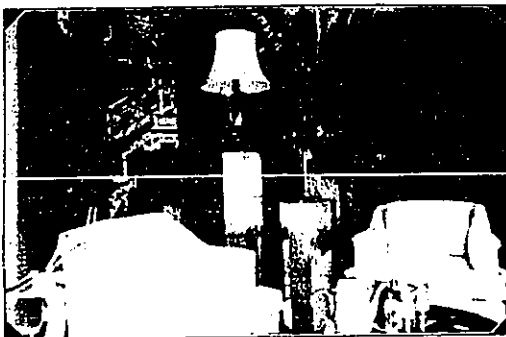


**George R. Averill** (above) had long been an active supporter of the cityhood drive.

Please turn to Page 14

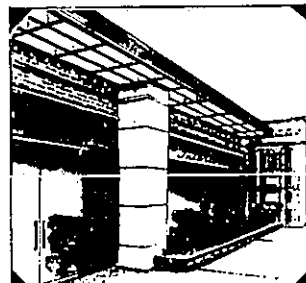


Pierson Interiors opened with a staff of one in 1949... that was Edward S. Pierson. His store hours were M, T & W 9-5 PM and Th, F & Sat 9-9 PM.



Pierson Interiors 1983

Pierson is still dedicated to offering the very best in fine furniture accessories and designing. The staff of six designers will help you with everything from candlesticks to your total interior.



Exterior of the original store on Grand River Avenue.

A tradition of excellence in fine furniture and accessories had begun.

35 years of growing with...

*Interior design for the discriminating*



Residential and Commercial Designers 328 N. Woodward Birmingham, MI • 642-1740