

City Dispensed Justice From A Chicken Coop

With a district court firmly established with two judges and an appeal for more space because of the over-crowded conditions, it is rather difficult to believe that the first courtroom in the City of Livonia was an extension of a chicken coop.

During the old township days justice was served by the justice of peace. He had very little power and more than one man or woman—held the title simultaneously.

It was in that role that the late Leo P. Nye was serving when he was elected to the Charter Commission in 1949.

Of all the justices he had been the most active and had developed a following.

WHEN the city was incorporated in 1950 it became necessary to establish a municipal court and Leo—a good politician as well as a stern justice—was named to the post.

"What about an office", he asked council. "We are going to have more business now that we are a city and I no longer can conduct court in my home."

While council was studying the matter Leo got an idea.

Residing at the corner of Six Mile and Farmington Road, where he raised chickens as a hobby, Leo concocted a plan for a courtroom that could be built as an annex to the chicken coop.

While it was make-shift, council approved the plan and Leo set up shop while the hens cackled and the roosters crowed.

Even Leo admitted that the plan was unusual—

court in a chicken coop—and he soon clamored for more space.

It so happened that one of the churches (denomination lost in the mist of years) decided to abandon its building at the corner on Seven Mile and Shady Side.

It wasn't much of a structure, being built of concrete block and painted a hideous pink, but it was better than a chicken coop.

SO A DEAL was made for the property. For a mere \$7,000 the city acquired the property and Leo had himself a new courtroom. It is the same court that is being used today.

In those days it was more than a courtroom. It also served as the main meeting place in the city. City council held its sessions there. The Chamber of Commerce held its meetings in the room. And other organizations made it their meeting place.

When the new city hall was built, council moved to the new site. But the court remained.

As the city grew, more and more demands were made on the judge and Leo finally gave way at the polls to Robert Lorain, who later was deposed by present Judge James McCann. And Judge James Mies came on the scene when the district court was established.

Now there is a hue and cry for a new court building.

When, and if, it is built it will stand as a monument to the distribution of justice that had its beginnings in Leo Nye's chicken coop.



CHARTER COMMISSION AT WORK — Next to a pot-bellied stove in the old City Hall on Five Mile Rd. the Charter Commission went to work in 1950. Shown here, left, (front row) are W. W. Edgar, vice chairman;

William Brashear, Carl Wagenschutz, Chairman Harry S. Wolfe, Daniel McKinney and Raymond E. Grimm. Standing, left — Fred W. Weinert, Rudolph R. Keimert and Leo P. Nye.

*"Livonia
is a
tremendous
area"*



Charles Allen, Sr.

Among the best of Livonia's home grown products is the family firm of C. W. ALLEN REAL ESTATE, INC. on Farmington Road.

Conceived by Charles Sr., who recalls the days when the Livonia area was mostly farm land, the firm was established in 1948 as a father and son combination with an energetic mother in the background, and it has been a thriving activity.

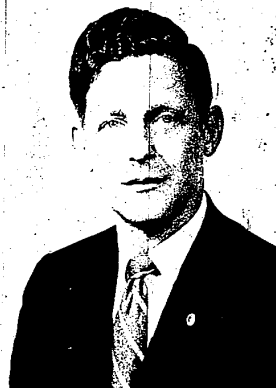
Long before entering the real estate business, the elder Allen was one of the most active of the civic leaders being one of the charter members of the Chamber of Commerce and later its president.

Following in his dad's footsteps, Charles Jr. is helping to serve the community well, through such organizations as the Rotary Club, the Livonia Chamber of Commerce, the Family Y, The Goodfellows, and is now president of the United Northwestern Multilisting Service.

From the very beginning the Allens, all three of them, have stressed personal service in the selection of homes and has a trained staff of 16 concerned sales people to carry on the tradition, and all are Livonia residents. The Allen families have resided in Livonia for over 25 years.

"We always have believed that Livonia is a tremendous area," Charles Jr. confides, "and the business generated through our office furnishes ample proof."

C. W. Allen Real Estate, Inc.



Charles Allen, Jr.

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