William Henry Diggs Was 97 Years 'Young,' Thurs.

Erect, Six-Footer Observed Anniversary by Making Rounds of Pennsylvania Ave. Clubs

By RUFUS WELLS

William Henry Diggs observed his 97th birthday anniversary on Thursday by making the rounds of Pennsylvania Ave. clubs which he visits almost every day.

WILLIAM H. DIGGS

Mr. Diggs, or "Pops," as he is affectionately called, didn't accept any drinks, however, because he thinks today's whisky lacks the "kick" found in booze shortly after the Civil War.

Old Liquors Better

Pops, who walks without a cane and is more active than many persons half his age, put it this way.

"We used to buy whisky for a dollar and a half a gallon and it was lots stronger than the stuff they sell today. Why, two fellows could easily get tight on a half-pint which sold for 20 cents."

The dapper retired farmer is a walking history book. He vividly recalls the election and assassination of Abraham Lincoln and gets great pleasure of telling of these historic events.

Colored Man's Role Told

Interviewed this week, Pops gave a first hand account of what people were talking about when John Brown made his famous raid on the Harpers Ferry Arsenal, when President McKinley was assassinated in New York and when peanuts were sold here as property.

Of the McKinley assassination he said:

"Few people today know that a colored man caught the assasin and had him down beating him. The history books don't tell about that.

Pops remembers hearing cannons of the Civil War and re describes these sounds so graphically the listener thinks he hears cannons.

Keenly Aware of Present

Though he recalls the past, Pops definitely lives in the present. He was nattily attired in a blue suit, white shirt, with grey sox and new black shoes as he talked at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Charlotte Mendoza, at 1510 Argyle Ave.

Incidentally Mrs. Mendoza also had a birthday anniversary on Thursday. (She didn't say which one and we didn't ask her.)

Pops, though 97, is still quite a hunk of man. He stands six feet tall and wears a handle-bar shaped mustache that is the same color of his snow white hair.

Born in County

He was born in 1852 in Baltimore County on a farm near Arcadia, on the Carroll County line, and worked on a farm in Baltimore County until he was 94 years old.

Of today's high cost of living he said:

"Today's prices and wages are outrageous. I worked hard many a day for 25 cents and could support my family from Christmas to Spring for only $25. But you just try that today."

Ham Cost 8 Cents a Pound

"Of course, things were cheaper then. You could by ham for eight cents a pound, shoulder for six cents and hog-on-the-hoof for two cents a pound."

Pops interrupted his story here to use a spitoon on the far side of the room. He fingered his long white goatee a while, then continued.

"People haven't changed much, though. But they don't want to work as hard as ye used to. I didn't even think of retiring until I fell and broke my arm while loading muskrat traps two years ago."

Admires Today's Youth

Pops is one elderly person who does not think the younger generation is 'going to the dogs.' He said:

"Young people today don't have as much fun as we had. They don't kick their heels as high."

Pops says he feels fine, but doesn't expect to live to be 100. He explained:

"When I was young I didn't expect to live to be 60. Now, though I think I am in good health for my age, I am living from day to day and not making any long term agreements."

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Commencement a Terrific Strain on Family Budget

By LOUISE K. HINES

Commencement time can be a terrific strain on the family pocketbook. In such cases both the graduates and their parents are to blame.

When officials of Dunbar and Douglass High Schools were asked what special clothing was required for graduates for the events leading up to and including commencement they all answered:

"None."

So when certain parents talk of "all those clothes that Johnny and Sally MUST have for commencement" they are wrong in blaming the school. A talk with class advisors and the respective principals will prove this.

Economy Tried

In the interest of economy, school officials have long sought to cut down the mounting expenses entailed with graduation only to be met with howls of disdain from graduates and the indignant remarks of some parents.

Graduates say, "We KNOW what we want."

Parents, traditionally inform the officials who have often called them in consultation, "Well, they only graduate once. If I can afford to give my child the clothes he wants for commencement, I see no basis for your objection."

The result is that class advisors make appropriate inexpensive suggestions but in their enthusiasm to acquire "real gone outfits," graduates invariably select clothes that run into considerable money.

"Sunday Best" Overruled

Boys at Douglass were quick to protest when advisors suggested that their "Sunday suits," cleaned and pressed, might be appropriate for graduation. THEY are going to wear gray suits. Boys at Dunbar, seemingly more conservative, selected (new) dark blue suits.

This year the Douglass girls have selected for Class Day, shirtwaist type dresses. This simple frock can prove expensive, depending on both girls and their parents. Cream-colored suits which may be used in the spring, were elected by Dunbar High School girl graduates.

Girls at both schools will wear long white dresses, and the boys tuxedos for commencement.

Rings, Pins Price Up

The increase cost of gold, plus taxes, has made class rings and pins more expensive than ever, with some styles costing as much as $15. Installment plan payments facilitate this purchase at Dunbar.

Although rings and pins are not required, it is only natural that graduates should want them, and that their parents should approve of their purchase. The same holds true of class dues. Elaborate "fixings," dances and the traditional gift to the school can hike this item, too.

Vehicles Claimed 80 Lives in '48

Eighty person died as a result of motor vehicle accidents in Baltimore during 1948, the president of the Baltimore Safety Council announced this week.

This is the lowest motor vehicle toll for the city since the council began its accident reduction program in 1923. The figure is 22.5% below the average year of each of the preceding five years and is 11.1% below the previous low record of fatalities of 90 in 1947.

Of the 18 persons killed in 1948, Burton Metzger, president of the Safety Council, announced that 14 were pedestrians and the other two were in automobiles at the time of the occurrences.

3-Month-Long Campaign

One phase of the safety program believed responsible for the overall reduction in fatalities was the special three-month long campaign on vehicular accidents spearheaded at the end of the year by the council.

This campaign, in co-operation with the Co-Ordinating Council of the P-TA's, the Women's Civic League, the churches and the Maryland Federation of Women's Clubs, reached its climax during December, ordinarily the worst accident month of the year.

SMOKE INHALATION FATAL TO ROXBURY WOMAN, 68

ROXBURY, Mass.—Miss Victoria Johnson, 58, of 969 Columbus Ave., died last week of smoke inhalation when a spark from a portable oil stove ignited the mattress of her bed.

7.3 Million Md. Taxpayers' Share of Federal Budget

Maryland taxpayers will be called upon to pay $712,300,000 in direct and hidden taxes as their share of the cost of the $41,858,000,000 Federal Budget proposed by President Truman for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1949, the Maryland Public Expenditure Council.

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Robbery Suspect Faces 12 Counts

Charged in 12 cases, including seven armed robberies and one sex attempt, James O. Brooks, 24, is scheduled to stand trial on Monday before Judge Robert France in the Criminal Court.

When arraigned last week, Brooks pleaded guilty to three of the holdup charges. He pleaded innocent to all other charges which also included two cases of attempted robbery, one of larceny and one of assault.

Caught in Police Trap

Brooks was arrested by Officer Lewis Hammersly who had been stationed in the rear of a twice-robbed grocery story in the 1100 block N. Carrollton Ave.

The officer was said to have given chase when the alleged bandit entered the stage and fled amidst a hail of bullets but failed to get away in a stolen car which crashed into another car parked nearby.

Youth Wounded by Gun He Carried in Pocket

ANNAPOLIS.—Wounded when an automatic pistol in his pocket accidentally discharged, Leonard Matthews, 18, of Skidmore, Md., was admitted to Emergency Hospital this week.

His condition has been described as satisfactory. The bullet entered Matthews's right pelvis.

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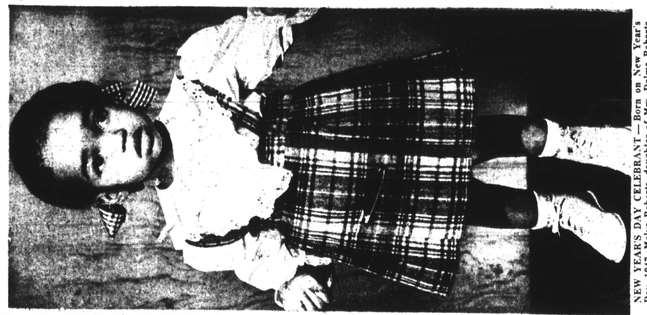
IN MAMA'S FINGERPRINTS—Little Rebecca Jackson is trying out for size the typewriter for mother, Mrs. Lucinda Jackson, used as secretary in the city department of the AFRO-American Newspapers. Mrs. Jackson is spending the holidays with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Rebecca to visit her grandmother, Mrs. Julia Jackson, in Overlea, Md., during the holidays.



NEW YEAR'S DAY CELEBRANT—Born on New Year's Day, 1949, Miss Roberta Prima Roberta of 1209 W. Mulberry St., is a young celebrant indeed.

THREE OF A KIND—Celebrating their birthday anniversary on Jan. 4, the Scriven triplets of 2618 Llewellyn Ave. were honored at a party by their parents. They are, left to right, Marian, Mildred and Muriel.

—Photos by I. Henry Phillips Jr.

CUTE AND CUDDLY—Patricia Jeffers of 1924 Rutland Ave. was born on New Year's Day, 1946.

TWO YEARS OLD.—Another New Year's Day celebrant is Gilbert McLean of 767 W. Mulberry St. On him, the years are appealing.

Playing with *Fire* is *Dangerous*

By this time tomorrow, 1500 fires will have broken out in the United States. The same number will be recorded the next day and the next.

Fire experts have calculated that "the amount which might be saved if people really took proper precautions would be large enough to build the Panama Canal every year."

Thirty out of every 100 fires are caused by matches and over a third of the total are traceable to an electrical origin, one in four by sparks, flues and chimneys, and another in 8 by the result of careless smoking in bed or in chairs.

A writer has noted that carelessness with matches is still the dominant factor behind causes of fires and more needless deaths and more wrecked miles homes than the mightiest surge of flame.

And this heavy toll of lives and property is $450,000,000 a year. Unless the rate is reduced, it will continue until caution becomes a habit instead of an occasional habit.

Here are a few simple rules that everyone can follow and children could take to save their own lives:

Keep matches out of reach from young so that if it breaks or is dropped, the child will be less likely to get fire to your clothing.

If matches are spilled, stop to pick them up and be careful not to step upon and ignited, or it may be ignited by a passer under-the-floor by a rat or mouse.

Do not carry matches loose keep them in a metal box and keep it away from the heat of stoves and ovens and out of the reach of children.

Never pour kerosene into a pail or other container unless the funnel is out and never pile ashes in the stove or in wooden boxes or barrels.

Do not burn wood chopping too near a stove; thaw frozen pipes and do not use gasoline to clean clothes. Never leave the stove while half full of ashes and never fill out to save polish on a hot stove; purchase stove polish marked "non-inflammable" and be sure the stove is cool; use a tin or metal box or a can with a tight cover to carry ashes; place them keep oil cans outside of the house if possible, and never start a fire with gasoline.

Never pour gasoline down a sink because the fumes may pass through the sewer and come up in some other house; keep gasoline in tightly labelled cans, never in a bottle or jug; use it only for spot cleaning.

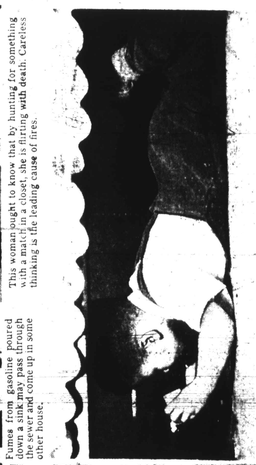
Warning: smoke in bed or strike matches in closets, gardens and other places where inflammable materials are stored; if clothes are ignited, don't string wires under rugs or tacks them to floors; keep place for wear may make them dangerous.

Follow these but a few of the safety measures which can be adopted to "Prevent Fire" and "Stop Fire Fire." As one group of fire officials PHRASE it, the child dreads the "Fire." If you want to stay alive don't be burned.

If you want to stay alive don't be burned to a crisp. Ask Mrs. Jones and this woman could be burned to a crisp.

This woman ought to know that by hunting for something with a match in a closet, she is flirting with death. Careless thinking is the leading cause of fires.

Fumes from gasoline poured down a sink may pass through the sewer and come up in some other house.



Warning to all parents and other adults—keep matches out of reach of children. Youngsters are inflammable.

Matches in the hands of a child can be as dangerous as a burning torch set to a hay wagon. Nearly all fires can be prevented in some way back to matches.