

Much History To Be Learned In Pawnshops Of The World

None Would Stay In It If They Knew Any Other, Are Regarded As Social Pariahs.

Avery Strakosch in Century Magazine.

Years ago, I had known "Uncle Moe" when he owned a pawnshop on Eighth Avenue in New York city. Last spring, while making a walking tour of the Riviera, I found him living, under an assumed name, in a beautiful villa in an enchanting town just over the Italian border.

"You must never divulge my secret in San Remo, that I was once a pawnbroker!" he began. "It is an honorable business, but alas, it will always have a dishonorable name! I have known many pawnbrokers who were fine men. There was my grandfather and my father—both honest to a fault. I, myself? My career is an open book! And yet—well, my own children have no idea their father was a pawnbroker! For years, on the side, I traded in real estate—and as far as they know, my father and grandfather did likewise. I wouldn't have them know the truth. I sent them abroad to school. I refused to see them become social pariahs!

Hate Their Business. "Pawnbrokers all hate their business. There isn't one of them who would stay in the business if he knew how to do anything else that would bring him the same income. As the pawnbrokerage business is almost always inherited it's hard to get away from it. It goes from father to son, and more often from uncle to nephew—that's where the pawnbroker got his title 'Uncle.' Originated in Italy.

"Do you know how the business started? Here in Italy two Franciscan monks were the first to start the modern pawnshop. They believed the poor needed material help first and spiritual comfort afterward. All the grateful borrowers flocked to them, and hence arranged their journeys to Paradise through the Franciscan order! Their competitors for souls, the Dominicans, were enraged at what the Franciscans had put over on them! What a picture! One order considering the pawnshop a device of the devil, while the other gave it full benefit of clergy! Savonarola himself finally opened the first Florentine pawnshop, surrounded by Dominican brothers, horror-stricken at the proceedings! Imagine! And best of all the Pope in Rome, an extravagant old fellow, agreeing to it all. What a borrower he was. Nothing of value remained stationary in the Vatican in his day. Papal plate, furniture and jewels, anything he could raise money on—there is even a record of his pawnshop status of the Twelve Apostles!

Not Originated by Jews. "My people did not originate the business, as popularly supposed. But the Jews were as bad as the Christians! Many of them were usurers. People tried to borrow first at the pawnshop because the interest rates were low, but if their collateral was insufficient, they had to go to the usurers. It became easy for the public to associate the pawnbroker and the usurer.

"Few persons realize that a pawnbroker, more than any other person, has to live by the letter of the law. In New York, or in any other American city, before a pawnbroker can get a license, he must furnish the best character references. He must also be a man of established means, for he has to pay a high price for his license, and post a bond of at least \$10,000. He must always have several hundred thousand dollars cash at his disposal so he can lend large or small amounts at a moment's notice.

Prohibition Changes Things. "Before the war, and especially before prohibition, most of our steady customers were among the poor. Those were the days when you could tell it was Monday without looking at the calendar. I can remember when I was a child, the fear I had of the regiments of roistering Irish, soaked in whisky, who crashed my father's pawnshop at the beginning of the week. Saturday, pay day, they returned for their belongings. This performance was repeated week in, week out. They borrowed at the rate of three per cent a week. Yet, if you had refused them money your shop would have been wrecked. I am against prohibition, but I'm glad it did away with the men and women who would have taken the clothes from their children's backs if they could have found a pawnbroker heartless enough to lend to them on such collateral.

"And who will ever forget the panic of 1894! Thousands out of work and hungry. What a friendly place the pawnshop grew to be then. We nearly killed ourselves working on double shift, to keep open night and day. We often advanced money on utterly worthless things so the people could buy food. **Saving Became Feish.** "War, prohibition, and fake jewelry were the blows that killed the pawnshop business. The war developed those entreaties to buy Liberty bonds on the installment plan. People who had never saved, suddenly began. Saving became a fetish. They kept away from the

pawnshop. It was no longer necessary.

"On the other hand, the war brought us new customers. Middle-class business men who went overseas with the premonition they wouldn't return. Before they left they pawned everything they had. Thousands didn't come back and the pawnbroker lost both his loan and interest. Of course, he could sell all unredeemed things at the end of 13 months, but one very seldom breaks even on such forced sales.

Diamonds A Portable Security. "The final blow came when the French dressmakers decreed that women should pay large sums for imitation jewels that are worth less than their settings. Fortunately, however, there will always be a certain class of persons who invest in diamonds—the best portable security in the world, quickly negotiable from Cape Town to Shanghai.

"The big diamond owners are in a class by themselves. They are the secret borrowers. A rich woman will seldom admit to her banker that she is so hard up for cash she needs to borrow on her jewelry. She'd rather go to a pawnshop where she is not known, where no questions are asked.

"A prominent woman once brought me a long necklace of blue white square-cut diamonds. I loaned her \$56,000 on it. She confided to me that she was borrowing this money to help her husband, whose reputation would have been endangered, his business lost, if his associates had known his financial embarrassment. You'd be surprised at the well-known names on many a pawnbroker's book of records.

"I know you think I've painted the pawnbroker as an angel. Well, if he is, it's very often because he has to be. Pawnbrokers have less chance to be dishonest than other men. They are all under municipal supervision. They are under oath to make a written report, on special cards furnished by the police, of every loan they make. A pawnshop inspector arrives when least expected, checks up the pawnbroker's books and looks over every item he has taken in. The police have to have confidence in pawnbrokers. They depend upon them to help locate lost or stolen property to the tune, in large cities, of about two hundred thousand dollars a year.

"There are over 5,000 watches and 6,000 pieces of jewelry pawned every day of the week in New York city! In the business districts the average daily loans are 15 to 16 thousand dollars.

"There are 191 registered pawnbrokers in New York, but the number is growing less each year. You see the game is no longer worth the name!

The wind came stronger from the sea. It grew chilly. Uncle Moe called for a wrap. The servant placed one over his shoulders. Uncle Moe sat lost in thought, the old Eighth Avenue look of weariness had returned to his eyes.

BAILEY PREFERS LIVING AT HOME

Raleigh.—You would have only two blocks to move, if you should be elected governor of North Carolina, the "inquiring reporter" remarked to Josiah William Bailey, one-time candidate for that high office and possible candidate for the Mansion Sunday.

"I would be inclined to rent the governor's mansion out and continue to live here, if I should ever become eligible to live in that edifice," Mr. Bailey responded.

He remarked that he had lived in this same house at 531 North Blount street for 50 years, indicating that he'd "done a heap o' livin' in the house that he calls home," with apologies to Edgar Guest.

"Pull up from this place and leave it to go to the United States senate," he exclaimed, indicating that the tentacles which held his heart had worked their way many feet into the soil under and surrounding his home, and that it would be like pulling a huge oak up by the roots.

Whether this remark should be taken too seriously, as indicating that he will or will not oppose Senator Simmons in the Democratic primary less than a year away, or whether the other remarks about the governor's mansion should be considered as indicating his state of mind, remains to be seen. They were uttered in the privacy of his own front porch and there was no evidence to indicate that they were for publication.

Mr. Bailey was found with a child on each knee, and others playing around. He had just made a talk at Raleigh, urging law observance. He is more of a settled man now than he was during the days when he served as secretary of the North Carolina anti-Saloon League, or when he managed Senator Simmons' campaign in 1912, and he may or may not be as fiery and colorful as he was eight years ago when he opposed Angus W. McLean for the Democratic nomination for the governorship.

Topics About Town

The sole topic of conversation about the court house square during the past few days has dealt with the celebrated Raft King case. Many of the Shelby and Cleveland county people appear to entertain the idea that the South Carolina authorities have attempted to "frame" the defendant and one speaker yesterday remarked that he was of the opinion that the evidence presented, in some instances, had been bought and paid for. However, this opinion is not shared by those local people who have been to Chester since the trial began. For the most part they are convinced that the South Carolina court is endeavoring to give the defendant an absolutely fair trial.

"I STARTED IN THE WRONG direction solely because it has been 15 years since I was back in Shelby," remarked a former citizen as he got off the Charlotte bus here yesterday. The visitor said he was born and reared in Shelby, but had been in other sections of the country for a number of years and that so many changes had taken place since he left he did not know his own street home.

THE WEATHER FOR THE glorious fourth was ideal, with just enough breeze to prevent the public from suffering. Old man thermometer managed to mount to 90 degrees shortly after noon yesterday but the cooling breeze materially aided in keeping the heat from being oppressive.

AMERICAN FLAGS WAVED ON every street during yesterday and while there was no formal observance of Independence Day in the city or county, there was a general holiday and many of the store windows were fittingly bedecked. Noteworthy among these was a display in the show windows at Stevenson's drug store. It included trophies from many wars, dating back to the American colonies fight for independence and coming on through the War Between the States and the World War. Included in the exhibit was a replica of the Liberty Bell and this attracted considerable notice and attention.

"ALL NORTH CAROLINA AND especially this immediate section is progressing at a rapid clip now," said J. W. McComb, formerly of Shelby but who is now residing at Patterson Springs and who was among the visitors spending yesterday in Shelby. "I can very clearly remember the time when Charlotte was a village of about 2,500 people," said Mr. McComb, "and now I feel almost lost when I visit that metropolis."

"THERE IS NO REST FOR THE wicked" remarked one Shelby druggist yesterday as he languidly concocted a favorite beverage. "The other stores, the banks and business houses all get frequent holidays but we never do. About the only time we close at all is for a funeral and then we hardly keep the doors shut until the procession can get by." A visitor remarked that possibly the rest for the druggists is being reserved for the next world, but this idea did not appear to meet with very common credence and another gentleman present was so kind as to express open disbelief of this theory.

Cleveland Cloth Personal Items

(Special To The Star.) Mr. Russell Hull, a cousin of Miss Maggie Gladden's of Newton visited her during the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Williams of Chesnee called on Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Littlejohn, Mr. and Mrs. Laurens Frances and Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Walker who are old Greenville friends for a little while Wednesday afternoon.

Mrs. Johnnie Padgett of Lowell is spending a few days with hers on Mr. Clarence Padgett.

Mrs. Maggie Lay of Gastonia is spending a few days with her son, Mr. Nealy Addy.

Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Scott are visitors in Greenville at present. They will return this week-end.

Miss Beulah Littlejohn had visitors from Greenville and Chester for the fourth.

Mrs. Nealy Addy and Miss Loree Walker and Mrs. Addy's little grandchildren motored over to Gastonia Wednesday night.

Miss Mary Nicholson has purchased an attractive little car.

Bishop A Sunday Trader

It seems to get a little bit worse as it goes along, for they are now charging that Bishop Cannon not only speculated through the bucket shop, but that he did business on Sunday. The records submitted of transactions with the firm of Kable & Company indicate that the bishop put through four stock transactions on three separate Sundays—and yet the bishop is given the benefit of a doubt. Goldhurst, head of the firm and a friend of the bishop, developed perplexity. But that the readers may have the straight of the testimony, came over the wires. It runs this way:

S. Edward Benoit, attorney for the Federal bankruptcy trustee appointed to take charge of the firm's meagre assets, had handed Goldhurst photostatic copies of the Kable & Company ledger sheets showing the various transactions in Bishop Cannon's account. "I understand that one of the transactions set down as of October 16, 1927, fell on a Sunday. Is that correct?" Benoit asked. Goldhurst studied the records with a puzzled expression on his face. He hazarded comparatively a long time without replying, his eyes fastened on the photostat. "If Bishop Cannon did business on Sunday that must be a mistake—he certainly wouldn't do business on Sunday," Benoit suggested to the silent

witness. A round smile enveloped Goldhurst's face for the first time during the proceedings. "Of course he wouldn't," replied the witness. No further questions were directed along this line, which had specific reference to an entry recording Bishop Cannon as having sold 300 shares of Lehigh Valley Railroad stock for \$31,878. But later it was developed by the attorney that the photostatic ledger sheets contained two other Sunday transactions. These included a purchase by Bishop Cannon of 100 shares of Lehigh Valley on "November 2, as of August 14, 1927."

On Sunday, April 15, 1928, the records hold the bishop to have purchased 200 shares of American Can stock, and 1,000 shares of Marconi, of England. Kable & Company were not members of the Stock Exchange, but did a partial payment stock business, in addition to accepting deals known in the street as "put and call, considered a purely speculative proposition. No shares can be bought or sold legitimately on Sunday.

Attorney Benoit also drew from Goldhurst the statement that throughout the extensive trading recorded on Bishop Cannon's account that the churchman never owned a single share outright, but that all the bishop's deals were speculative.

NOTES CARRIED BY QUEER BALLOONS

Tiny Oil-Paper Carriers Sent Up By Intelligence Officers To Teach Masses.

(By Roscoe Brabazon Eiland, Lexington, Va.)

Lexington, Va.—Eleven years ago this week Lieut. Matthew Volm, Imperial German infantry, stood watching a group of queer little balloons, made apparently of colored paper, float to the ground behind his lines. To each was attached a six-foot thread at the end of which dangled a packet of paper. A German soldier ran up with two of them and reported:

"Millions of these are floating behind our lines. They stick in trees and come even into the trenches. Lies are printed in German on the papers. See!"

And back of the allied defense, French and British intelligence officers were sending up two and one-half millions of these tiny oil-paper carriers each week. They were released to travel with dominant air currents and timed to drop at specific distances on Teutonic territory, bearing messages to teach the German masses that the war was fought for world freedom, not for allied conquest.

Idea Of An American. It was the idea of an American teacher, whose contribution to allied victory came to light this week in connection with the retirement of Dr. Henry Louis Smith, president of Washington and Lee university. President Smith, physicist and meteorologist, who devised the plan in 1918 for the American National Defense council, will retire at the close of this year to writing and lecturing, after half a century as an educator, the last 29 years of which have been spent as a university president.

Today, Lieutenant Volm, now Professor Volm of the German and French languages at the Virginia Military Institute, the campus of which adjoins that of Washington and Lee university, and President Smith, who are neighbors in the academic calm of this little college town, sat many thousands of kilometers from the French battlefield and recalled for a newspaper man the planning and effect of the "balloon device" which furnished the chief means of distributing the publicity which, George Creel, director of public information during the war, declared broke the German moral in the summer of 1918.

Spiritual Collapse. "No credit is to be taken from the courage of the allies of the heroic decisive charges of the Americans at Chateau Thierry, St. Mihiel, or Belleau Wood," Mr. Creel explained. "But the fact remains that the end came unexpectedly, dramatically because of a spiritual collapse in Germany."

"In 1870 France fought on without army, food or munitions. It was nothing but the truth that split the foundations of German militarism and brought about the surrender when the German army was well equipped with supplies and munitions."

Prof. Volm Neighbor. How complete this collapse was how effective the stories about America dropped from the air, was suggested when Professor Volm remarked: "I did not dream that some day I would live a neighbor of the man who invented those balloons; that some day our joint purpose would be the training of young American minds."

In the closing weeks of 1917, booming howitzers echoed from France until they reached the quiet, orderly desk of President Smith at Lexington. A mailed list threaten-

Plump Wives Desired By Boys Of Today, Dorothy Dix Learns

Dorothy Dix, the well known newspaper syndicate writer, has received the following, and it shows that most young men in seeking wives, want those with a good deal of flesh on 'em:

"Dear Miss Dix:—Why do girls starve themselves in order to get thin? I belong to a club of boys who have vowed to be old bachelors unless girls fatten up. We have pledged ourselves not to marry until we can get girls who are an armful.—Bub."

She answered: "You tell 'em Bub. They won't listen to me, but the only reason girls are living skeletons is because they think boys like them that way. 'Let them find out that the young men are going in for the Oriental standards where fat is considered an evidence of beauty instead of a disgrace, and where the more there is of a girl the better they like her, and we will have feminine form in the place of angles, you can hang your hat on. 'More power to your organization. May its numbers increase. It will save a lot of the young women

from T. B.—Dorothy Dix." So girls, if you are "on the carpet" and want to "get off," go to pill' in the rations and takin' on meat.

FINE 1,019 TRAFFIC OFFENDERS THIS YEAR

Convictions for traffic violations in North Carolina during the first six months of the year totaled 1,019, according to the report issued by the state highway commission. Driving while drunk led all other causes by a wide margin, 340 having been convicted of this offense. Speeding was next in line with 199 convictions, while reckless driving was responsible for 195 convictions.

January led in the number of convictions with 227, while other months were reported as follows: February 173, March 170, April 64, May 223, and June 169.

Miss Dorothy Clifton of London was awarded \$500 in a suit against a hairdresser who injured her head while giving a permanent wave.

A Wedding Map.

Orange, N. J.—The latest wrinkle in wedding invitations is an engraved road map showing guests how to motor to the church, there was no trouble for friends in finding out where to see Robert T. Kane and Ruth White married.

TRY STAR WANT ADS

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