

# UNCOMMON AMERICANS

By Elmo Scott Watson  
Western Newspaper Union

## Man With Branded Hand

IN EVERGREEN cemetery in Muskegon, Mich., stands a monument which bears the inscription "Capt. Walker's Branded Hand" and below it a bas-relief of an open hand with the letters "S. S." on the heel of the thumb. This monument recalls one of the stirring incidents of pre-Civil war days and marks the grave of a man who played a part in bringing on that conflict.

Capt. Jonathan Walker was a Massachusetts sea captain and in 1844 was engaged in coastwise trade. Hating negro slavery, Walker tried to help seven blacks, who had fled from a Florida plantation, escape to the Bahamas. He was arrested, brought to Pensacola, tried as a thief in federal court and found guilty. He was sentenced to be branded on the right hand with the letters "S. S." (slave stealer), to stand in the pillory one hour, be imprisoned fifteen days and pay a fine of \$150.

After the first part of the sentence had been carried out, he was led again into the courthouse. Ordered to put his hand on the post of the railing in front of the judge's bench, Walker protested when the marshal bound it fast to the post. He declared that he could hold it firm during the ordeal, but his protest was ignored and the branding took place.

After his release from prison, Walker went back to his home in Massachusetts to find himself a hero and a martyr. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a poem in which he besought Walker to hold his branded right hand aloft for all the world to see. Abolitionist leaders recognized in the incident a potent argument for their cause. Accompanied by a fugitive slave he traveled through the North and lectured on the evils of slavery.

"The Man with the Branded Hand" became a famous figure and he did much to arouse the North and put it in a receptive frame of mind for Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" as a faithful picture of the horrors of slavery. In the '50's Walker and his family moved to Wisconsin and a few years later bought a small fruit farm in Michigan. There he lived during the remainder of his days and there he died in 1878, an almost forgotten figure who had played no little part in bringing on the greatest civil war in history.

## Cap'n Streeter, Squatter King

FIFTY years ago it was only a sandbar on the shore of Lake Michigan opposite Chicago's famous "Gold Coast." Today towering skyscrapers, huge office buildings, a famous hotel and a great university stand on land valued at half a billion dollars. But Chicagoans still call it "Streeterville," thereby honoring the memory of Cap'n George Wellington Streeter, who battled valiantly against "them dern capitalists" and held out for 30 years before they finally dethroned this famous "squatter king" from his "Deestrick of Lake Michigan."

Streeter was a Civil war veteran who became a boatman on the Great Lakes. In 1884 he built a 100-ton ship in which he started for Honduras to take part in a revolution then in progress. But his ship went aground on a sandbar and the skipper found himself marooned several hundred yards out in Lake Michigan from the Chicago shoreline. So he decided he might as well stay right there. Out of the timbers of his ship he and his wife, Maria, built a little shack on their sandy island and settled down.

But the rich owners of property in that part of Chicago were extending their riparian rights out into the lake. As the little peninsulas of filled-in land reached out toward the captain's island, which had been enlarged by drifting sand, they decided that his shack was an eyesore and should be removed. They called on the law to evict these squatters and five husky constables started out to do it. Cap'n Streeter put on his fighting costume—a high silk hat and a frock coat—he and Maria took their muskets in hand and the constables retreated hastily. Streeter found an old map of the city on which the boundary of Lake Michigan was plainly marked. He contended that the "made land" was outside that boundary, therefore it was under federal jurisdiction and he claimed it by right of discovery. But the courts refused to recognize his claim to this "Deestrick of Lake Michigan." He and Maria were evicted time and again but they always came back. So the struggle went on year after year, in court and out of court.

"Cap'n" Streeter died in 1921. But his second wife, "Ma" Streeter, true to her promise to him, carried it on for several years more. Finally she had to give up the fight and Chicago's "Thirty Years' war" with the "squatter king" came to end when she died last year.

# THE SUNNY SIDE OF LIFE

Clean Comics That Will Amuse Both Old and Young

## THE FEATHERHEADS

By Osborne



## S'MATTER POP— No Trouble to Start Trouble With This Fellow!

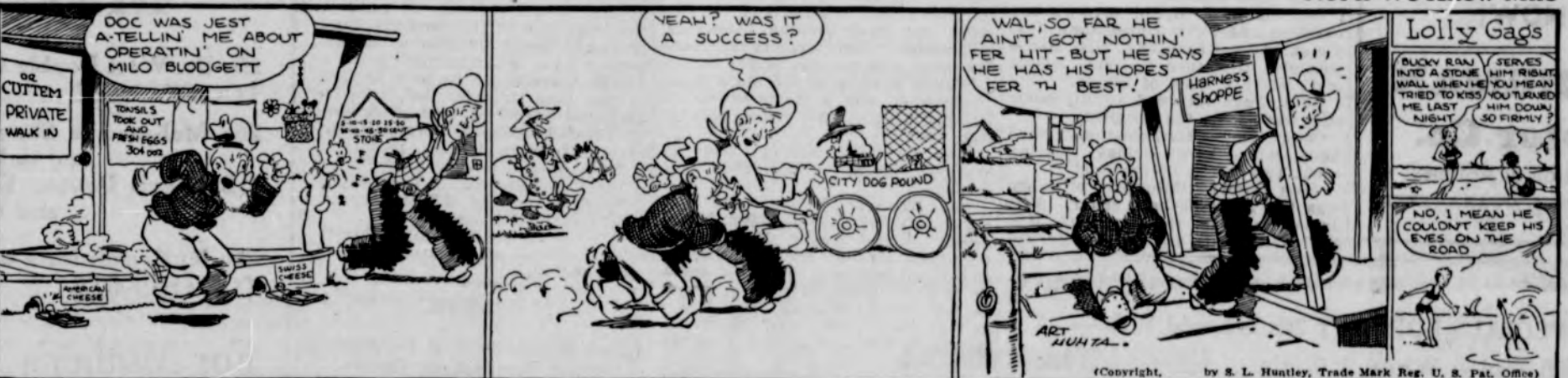
By C. M. PAYNE



## MESCAL IKE

By S. L. HUNTLEY

Not if We Know Milo



## FINNEY OF THE FORCE

By Ted O'Loughlin

Baker's Dozen



## BRONC PEELER— Pete Makes a Discovery

By FRED HARMAN



## The Curse of Progress



## That's Art!

Son—Daddy dear, what is an actor?  
Daddy—An actor? My son, an actor is a man who can walk to the side of a stage, peer into the wings filled with theatrical props, dirt and dust, other actors, stage-hands, old clothes and other clap-trap, and say: "What a lovely view there is from this window." — Sheboygan Press.

## Chit-Chat

Officer (to colored driver who has been whipping his horse)—Don't whip him, man—talk to him.  
Driver (to horse by way of opening conversation)—Ah comes from N'Awleans. Wheah does you-all come from?—Southern Lumberman.

## Horrible Thought

She (gushing)—Will you love me when I'm old?  
He—Love you? I shall idolize you; I shall worship the ground under your little feet I shall—er—you're not going to look like your mother, are you?—Stray Stories Magazine.

## INTERFERENCE

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

