Buried Treasure by Pinkney Gage

Owner Dazed at Offer for Stamp on Torn Envelope

"Is this worth anything—torn like that?"

As he spoke, the man laid the torn end of an old envelope on the counter and looked up at us with just a trace of belligerence in his eyes.

The piece had been torn in such a way that a corner of the three-cent stamp was missing but the adjacent stamp, a seven-cent item, was still intact.

"Yes," said Fred, the owner of the stamp shop. "It's worth something, though not so much as it would be if the three-cent stamp hadn't been torn."

"The most I can give you is $75," he said.

The man looked as if he hadn't heard correctly.

"It isn't the tear on the three-cent stamp that makes it so bad," Fred explained. "That wouldn't be worth more than a dollar or two anyway. But it's how close the tear comes to this California Penny Post item. Though the tear missed it, it came so close that it won't have a good quarter-inch margin all around when we trim it."

The owner looked somewhat dazed, and Fred went on to explain about the oval-shaped stamp with the words "PAID SEVEN CENTS" in the center, surrounded by the legend "CALIFORNIA PENNY POST COMPANY."

The firm was one that operated in San Francisco, Marysville and other central California cities back in the mid-1850s. It picked up and delivered local mail for the U. S. Post Office and sold U. S. stamped envelopes on which it impressed its own stamps.

"If this were a perfect cut-square stamp, with generous margins, I'd be able to get $200 for it," Fred went on. "But as it is, I won't get over $125. So $75 is the best I can offer."

"I'll take it," the man said, "but what would the whole original envelope be worth—untorn?"

"I'd give you at least $200," said Fred.

FIVE-MILL PIECE WITHOUT CAP WORTH FIVE-HUNDRED

"A five-mill piece! There's no such thing," said the man standing next to me.

"I can show you one," replied the fellow just beyond him. "That is, I will if you make it worth my while."

"Okay," said the doubter. "But let's understand our terms. A mill is a thousandth of a dollar. So a five-mill piece would be five-thousandths of a dollar. Right?"

"Right you are. Five thousandths or two hundredths of a dollar."

"Right."

There was the snap of metal on the mahogany, and presently I saw a copper coin lying about two feet away. The man next to me picked it up.

"Liberty, 1796," he said, reading the legend on the face of the coin. The lettering was clear, surrounding the Liberty head with a cap resting behind it. "It says nothing about any mills here."

He turned the coin over.

"See," said his companion, pointing to the wording on the reverse. "It says—'HALF CENT' — right in the middle of the wreath. Am I right or wrong?"

"But that isn't mills. It doesn't say mills."

"All right," replied the owner of the coin. "But it says 1/200th just below the wreath. And we've agreed that five mills and 1/200ths are the same."

"Okay, okay," said the first man. "I'll buy the drinks. But how about the coin, too? How much for that?"

"Sure," said the other. "You can have it for $350, but not a cent less."

No money changed hands, though the price was not out of line. There was a cap behind the Liberty head on the face of the coin, and I had noticed that no pole connected the cap and the head. Such a coin is worth $250 to $500 as against $150 to $300 for those on which there is a pole.

DICKENS WAS PLAYWRIGHT-COPIES OF PLAYS VALUABLE

Most people don't think of Charles Dickens as other than a famous novelist or the author of that hardy perennial among short stories, A Christmas Carol.

But it is well to think of him as a playwright, too. And for the excellent reason that it may prove highly profitable to do so.

It proved to be so early this year for a man I know who sold a copy of The Strange Gentleman which he had bought five years before in a box of books for which he paid $5.

The play is a good one, interesting even if one did not know it was written by Dickens. But the chief reason for its being among the more valuable pieces of Dickensiana is not that it played to packed houses throughout the London season of 1836. On the contrary, its because it is the first published play by the author who is listed on the title page simply as "Boz."

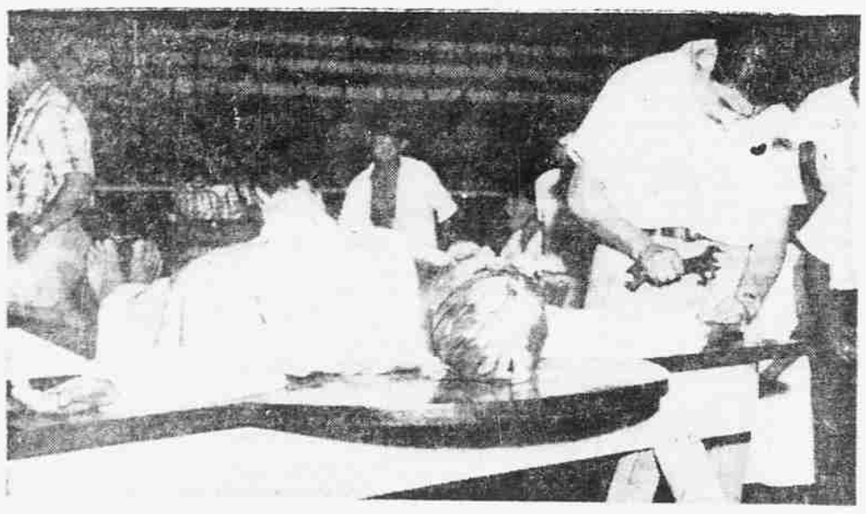
Publisher of the 46-page pamphlet is given as Chapman and Hall, and the date is 1837, in Roman numerals at the bottom of the title page. Another date is given on the same page, that of the first performance of the play, Thursday, Sept. 29, 1836.

Some copies were published with a frontispiece, but if you happen to come across one without the picture by the then popular artist "Phiz," don't worry. The piece will still be valuable.

So far, copies have been found in three different sizes. In height they vary from a trifle over 7½ inches to just under seven. In width, each of the three is 4½ inches, or slightly more.

The copy my friend found was in a lavendar colored wrapper. The price he got for it—he offered it to some 20 different collectors, dealing with them directly by mail—was $2,250.

(Released by McClure Newspaper Syndicate)



HOW ABOUT A PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO HUMANS SOCIETY?—Tagore, 27-year-old Mexican Indian, is nailed to a cross as a spectacle before a crowd in bullfight ring at Reynosa, Mexico. He was later placed on downtown Reynosa street, where he remained for 46 hours without food or water. When removed he was weak but otherwise in good shape. Tagore said he felt little pain but writhed as nails were driven into his hands and feet. He claims his only competition in the act bled to death on cross some months ago.

TINY VICTIM OF SHIP COLLISION—Police officers tenderly lift an unidentified five-year-old girl from a rescue helicopter after transfer from the Swedish liner Stockholm following a collision with the Italian liner Andrea Doria. The Italian ship sank 45 miles south of Nantucket Island.

The Family Council

Editor's Note: The Family Council consists of a judge, a psychiatrist, a newspaper editor, a women's page editor and two newspaper writers. They consult with clergymen of all faiths and denominations. All letters are held in complete confidence.

Neill — Our girl wants to "discuss" forever.

Fay—The strain's too much for me.

• • •

Neill—Our 14-year-old daughter, Pat, is giving us a very hard time with interminable discussion of her favorite subject—men. My wife has evidently gotten the idea from some new book that we owe it to her as good parents to give all our time to her favorite subject and answer all her questions in infinite detail and endless repetition.

I feel that we are asking for big trouble if we do not assert ourselves now and make Pat understand that she cannot dominate the household by holding forth at her pleasure and putting us through the third degree again and again. When I suggest that one of Pat's outbursts is out of order, my wife overrules me and encourages Pat to go on, only to reach the point of loud desperation later on in the proceedings, when I must assume the role of peacemaker.

If we could have a little united or at least well-timed firmness, I think we could bring Pat around to rational conduct, but my wife swings from revolt to surrender, without being able to make up her mind about a resolute stand.

• • •

Fay—If Neill would meet Pat halfway, and if I did not have to carry the strain alone, I would not blow up when she presses me too far. Pat is like a lot of other girls who are frightened at growing up and want to have all the answers guaranteed to be in their favor. I don't think Pat would be so tedious and unrelenting about it if Neill did not make it plain to her that he considered her too young for that kind of discussion.

Pat wants to know just what kind of man we will let her marry. That may seem childish, but it does seem to show that Pat feels very insecure about her relations with her parents, something I feel we should correct without delay.

• • •

The Council: A girl's emotional age can be quite different from her calendar age. Various social factors in recent years have combined to make growing girls feel much more competitive and less secure about their prospects for marriage and love. It is not at all impossible that Pat is actually in earnest about avoiding pitfalls and is seeking her parents' help.

The terms in which she states her problem may seem bizarre and mock-adult in this age of "romantic love," but her questions make a great deal of sense. Pat obviously does not want to spend her adolescent years mooning about a Prince Charming, but wants practical pointers on how to recognize a young man who would meet her parents' standards. Perhaps her approach would seem less grotesque if her father were not himself a romanticist.

It is quite possible that Pat would cease being interminable and become less repetitive if her parents were to engage in some down-to-earth discussions with her. No doubt, such discussions would entail much argument and misunderstanding, but we think Pat's parents are better off, in the long run, than the parents of delightfully quiet girls who reach conclusions on the basis of their own uninfluenced ignorance and romanticism.

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Airplane Propeller Thought Here To Stay

Buffalo, N.Y.—U.P.—Research at the Cornell Aeronautical Laboratory indicates that despite the increasing trend toward jet engines the airplane propellor may not go out of style.

Perfection of a propeller blade that can drive a plane at supersonic speeds is the aim of experiments currently under way at the lab.

According to an article in the institution's quarterly publication, Research Trends, the new type of blade will be as flexible as that of a carving knife. One of the difficulties to be overcome in research work is the tendency possessed by thin blades to set up high amplitude vibrations that cause severe stress. This, in turn, might cause failure from blade fatigue.

The blade also must be able to stand the strain of rotating at some 8,000 revolutions per minutes.

Under testing conditions, the blades are rotated in a steel chamber that contains a partial vacuum—similar to the pressure at 100,000 feet altitude.

Thin propellor blades have demonstrated in wind tunnel tests efficiency at trasonic and supersonic speeds. Powered by turbojet engines, they may provide high-speed, long-range flight with considerable fuel economy over jets.

Long Chess Games Won by Californian

Oakland, Calif. — U.P. — Talk about long chess games! Nick Preo recently won one that began in 1951 and is currently in another that isn't expected to end until 1960.

Preo, an Owens-Illinois Glass Co. employe, recently took the honors in the 19th Grand National Correspondence Chess Tournament. The tournament began in 1951, and he won eight matches in the first, state round.

Then he took nine games and drew the 10th in the second regional round to qualify for the seven-game championship round with eight chess masters out of a starting field of 1,000.

The games are necessarily long because they are played by mail and each move is made by letter. Both players keep records of the moves and since there are 30 to 50 moves in a single game, it usually takes a month to complete one.

With the 19th championship under his belt, Preo is currently entered in the 20th Grand National, scheduled to conclude in 1957, and the 21st and 23rd. The 23rd began last year and probably will require four years.

Evans, divorce decree.
Mary Jane Lambert vs. John Laughlin Lambert, divorce decree.
Kenneth L. McKenzie vs. Bobbie Sue McKenzie, divorce decree.
Margaret R. Pratt vs. Willis V. Pratt, divorce decree.

MARRIAGE LICENSE APPLICATIONS
Frank Richard Baize, Williams, Ore., and Deanna Jean Lee, Applegate.
Dale Edward Jeffers, 76 Lincoln st., Ashland, and Shelley Jean Anderson, 1046 East Main st., Ashland.

Court Records

POLICE COURT
Kenneth Lyle Tucker, violation of basic rule, $7.50.
Gerald Edward Hall, excessive noise, $10; failure to stop at stop light, $5.
Mary Ethel McIntyre, violation of basic rule, $10.
Richard Alvin Myrick, violation of basic rule, $10.
Ruby Jean Cole, violation of basic rule, $15.

DISTRICT COURT
Stanley Eloy Rumble, failure to operate on right side of highway, $15.
Augustine Fred Lewis, inadequate muffler, $20, bail forfeited.
Douglas Neal Butts, overload, $165.
Jack Webster Baker, no PUC plates displayed, $5.
Grant Rising Day, overload, $55.
Vernon Emerson Rush, overload, $65.
W. E. Roberts, depositing injurious substance on highway, $25.

CIRCUIT COURT
Rowene M. Evans vs. Robert L. Evans, divorce decree.

Is That So?

By EUGENE BURNS
Ranger-Naturalist

Next time you see a hummingbird dart in and out of the trumpets of flowers seeking food, remember this: smallest of all warm-blooded animals, this little fellow eats more food and consumes more oxygen to produce more energy than any other animal living! Proportionately, that is. After all, he weighs no more than a shopworn dime.

Should an elephant's cells, for example, burn up their fuel at the same rate, the ponderous packyderm would collapse and die within minutes from overheating — his system simply couldn't begin to throw off the heat generated fast enough.

Having the highest rate of metabolism among warm-blooded animals, each gram of the hummingbird's tissue metabolizes 15 times as fast as that of a pigeon, and more than 100 times as fast as that of an elephant.

This ultra-high speed of metabolism—better said, this high rate of living, is at a tremendous cost: the little fellow's food consumption must be enormous. As a result, he it is destined to devote most of each day to getliering food—nectar and insects, mainly. Deprived of his rich food for only a day, he would starve.

What then happens to this supercharged bird during the night? How then does it prevent starvation?

As with all creatures, a most curious and wonderful adjustment takes place. To avoid overnight starvation, the bird hibernates. That is, it becomes completely torpid—at midnight you could walk up to the tree on which it was perched and pick it off its branch like a fruit, practically inert and insensible, scarcely able to move, and when it does stir, it moves as though frozen.

Temperature Drops

Taking its body temperature, Dr. Oliver P. Pearson of the University of California, has found that it dropped almost 30 degrees—from around the daytime temperature of 105 degrees Fahrenheit to 75. Thus, by the simple expedient of slowing down all body processes—to almost one fifteenth of its late afternoon activity—the hummer is able to stretch its food stores from dusk to dawn. And remain alive.

Then, just before daylight, the bird's body automatically returns to its normal temperature and its former high metabolic rate is restored. By early morning, it is again warm, awake, and ready to dart off in search of its life-saving food. And, in a hurry.

Because of its tremendous energy demands, most hummingbirds live in the tropics where nights remain warm. A few however are found in the high Andes where night temperatures are frequently well below freezing. How do they manage to live during their overnight hibernation there and not freeze? By the simple expedient of retreating at night into caves.

As far as I know, no other bird hibernates overnight like the hummingbird. A mammal, the bat, does it however in reverse; it forages by night and slows to torpor by day.

The hummingbird's greatest consumption of energy, it is believed, occurs when it is hovering — around 55 completed strokes per second—about six times that while resting. And, as anyone who has watched the hummingbird can tell you it sits for only short intervals. It must be off eating, and that entirely on the wing.

When flying, it is believed the rate of energy consumption drops a little—like an airplane, once the bird is in forward motion it does not have to expend so much energy to stay aloft.

Mystery Remains

But even so, the mystery which has puzzled birdmen remains: how does the tiny ruby-throated hummingbird which spends its summers in the eastern U.S. and winters in Central America, get across the Gulf of Mexico during its annual migrations—a distance, at the shortest point of more than 500 miles!

Some ornithologists contend it can't be done; the bird must fly around the shoreline because it could not carry fuel to make such a nonstop flight across the Gulf.

Others say, nonsense. And many people have repeatedly seen flights of hummers head out over the Gulf. Surely, they contend, these birds were not heading out for a flight which was sure to be fatal!

There is a possibility however. Carrying fuel reserves in the shape of body fat—say a gram at most, would yield nine calories. On this, it is estimated that the bird could fly seven hours and 42 minutes. At 71 miles an hour—as timed by Charles L. Whittle, who observed one male ruby-throated chasing another—this would carry them 556.7 miles. But surely, they could never maintain this break-neck speed. . .

Well, you figure it out.

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Last Union Army Vet Unconscious

Duluth, Minn. — (U.P.) — Civil War veteran Albert Woolson lay unconscious at St. Luke's hospital in Duluth Saturday, while two daughters maintained a bedside vigil.

The 109-year-old soldier, last survivor of the Union army, was reported in poor condition. He had lapsed into unconsciousness about 2 a.m.

Woolson has been a patient at the hospital since last Memorial day. For the past few days he had been in an oxygen tent, but hospital attendants said this morning he had been removed from the oxygen tent.

He was reported "resting quietly" but "not responding" to stimuli. His daughters, Mrs. John Kobus and Mrs. Edward Johnson, had been at his bedside since the early-morning hours.

GALLANT SKIPPER—Captain Piero Calamai (above), skipper of the Italian luxury liner Andrea Doria that went to the bottom of the Atlantic after collision with the Swedish liner Stockholm, remained aboard with a skeleton crew to keep pumps going until all passengers could be rescued.

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