

Desperate Killer Returns

QUEBEC CITY (UP)—Condemned murderer Wilbert Coffin fled to freedom from his death cell early today by threatening his guards with a "gun" made of soap but returned meekly less than two hours later on the advice of his lawyer.

The 44-year-old prospector, scheduled to be hanged at Montreal, Sept. 23 for slaying one of three Americans whose bodies were found in the wilds of Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula, locked three guards in his cell after luring them there and walked out shortly after 1 a.m. EDT.

He returned before 3 a.m., still carrying a bundle of clothing he grabbed hurriedly from a cell locker after menacing two guards and the sergeant of the guard with a piece of soap cunningly carved and blackened to resemble a pistol.

Coffin's lawyer, Raymond Maher, was not available for comment early today.

Embarrassed Quebec Provincial Police, responsible for Coffin's security while he awaited transfer to Montreal's Bordeaux Jail, had refused comment early today other than to confirm that he had escaped and returned.

Coffin is scheduled to be hanged at the Montreal jail, where all Quebec executions take place, for the robbery-slaying in July, 1953 of Richard Lindsey, 17, of Hollidaysburg, Pa.

The mutilated bodies of young Lindsey, his father, Eugene, 43, and friend, Fred Claar, 19, of East Freedom, Pa., were found in the wilderness of the Gaspé Peninsula where they had gone to hunt bear. Coffin, who denied committing the crime, was charged on the single count of killing Richard Lindsey.

Townsend Led Astray By Blonde

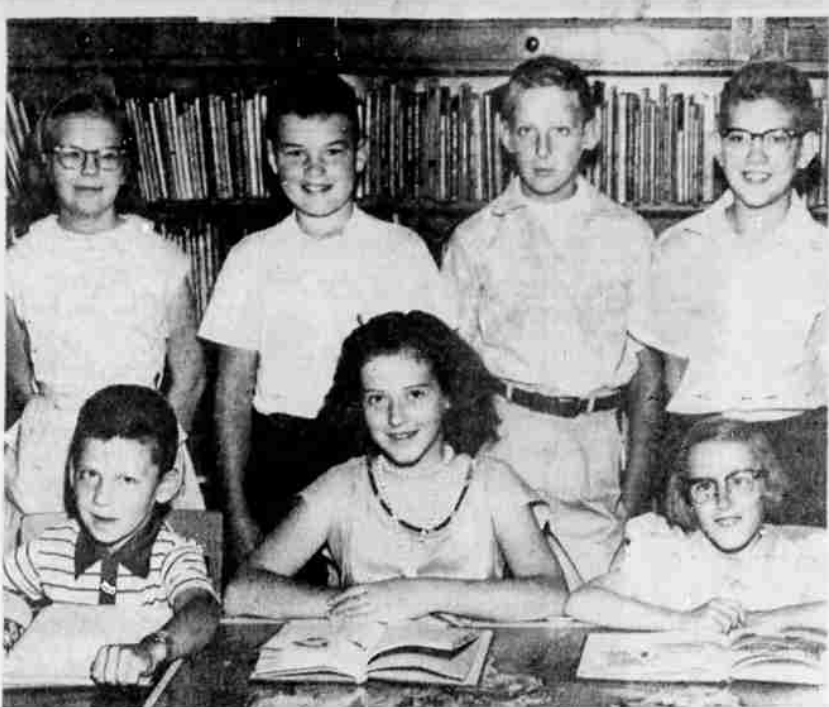
LONDON (UP)—Group Capt. Peter Townsend, whose rumored romance with brunette Princess Margaret brought dozens of photographers and newsmen to the airport to see him arrive from Belgium, almost followed a blonde woman autograph seeker by mistake.

Officials redirected him toward the proper exit and he said, "I'm awfully sorry. Blondes always lead me astray."

Star Player To Rejoin Team

NEW YORK (UP)—Police said the arrest of Albert Owens, 31, Monday probably is good news for baseball fans at Sing Sing Prison. Owens was arrested on burglary charges by two patrolmen who found about \$10,000 worth of jewelry, furs and clothing in his automobile.

Owens was a star first baseman on the Sing Sing baseball team from 1946 until 1953, when he was paroled. Police said it looks as though he may rejoin the lineup.



YOUNG SUMMER READERS were honored recently by the city library staff for their completion of a summer reading program. All boys and girls who read and reported on 10 or more books were given a certificate. Those who read 15 or more received a rocket pin also. These readers, who all read 30 or more books are: (back row, left to right) Ella Calhoun, 64 books; Donald Buckingham, 60; Gerald Amerling, 67 books; Joe Bispham, 45; (front row, left to right) Gary Wallin, 30; Joann Barnett, 41; and Nancy Freeman, 31.

Church Membership Rolls Show Big Increase In U.S.

NEW YORK (UP)—Six out of every 10 Americans are church members today, compared to less than two out of 10 a century ago when the United States supposedly was at its peak of Victorian devoutness.

These statistics are drawn from the wealth of data on church membership in the continental United States compiled by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and soon to be published in its annual church yearbook for 1955.

The yearbook's figures are drawn from the official reports of more than 250 religious bodies including Protestant, Roman and Old Catholic, Jewish, Eastern Orthodox and Buddhist congregations. They cover, in most cases, the year 1954 and even greater totals exist at the present time.

Whatever legends linger concerning America's religious fervor in the Colonial and Victorian periods, the yearbook's statistics apparently show that this country is today engaged in the greatest religious revival in its history.

The yearbook says that Protestant congregations gained 1,286,817 members in 1954 for a total of 37,124,142. The Roman Catholic

Church gained 927,071 for a total of 32,403,332 and Jewish congregations increased by 500,000 for a total of 5,300,000.

Percentage increases for the three major faiths were: Protestants, 1.2; Roman Catholics, 2.9; Jewish, 10.0.

Some 97,483,611 Americans were on the 1954 church rolls of all faiths, an increase of 2.8 per cent over 1953 figures. Sunday schools overflowed with 37,623,530 students and teachers, a 6.3 per cent increase over last year.

The religious groundswell necessitated 5,597 new congregations, 5,549 additional clergymen, and new church construction costing \$88 million dollars, up 25 per cent over the previous high in 1953. Some 250,000 new church school teachers and officers were recruited last year.

Dr. Benson Y. Landis, editor of the yearbook, said it is difficult

to assess the reasons for America's religious renaissance "beyond ascribing membership increases to such known factors as unusually high birthrates, accelerated evangelism on the part of the churches, and shifting population trends from city to suburbs."

"The awesome destructive powers of atomic energy may have something to do with it," he said.

Religious Sect Racket Exposed

TOKYO (UP)—Police in atom-jittery Japan investigated today an alleged racket run by a newly-organized religious sect which guarantees its followers survival in an atomic war by selling them "world bank notes."

Police said the sect's leaders tell converts the 100,000 yen notes (about \$280) protect their holders from harm in nuclear warfare and will be the only currency in circulation after the world is destroyed.

Dr. R. T. Lindley, OPTOMETRIST, 510 Med. Dent. Bldg. Ph. 4215, Eye Examination, Visual Training.

Russians Free Mysterious Man Posing As American

BERLIN (UP)—American authorities today questioned a mustachioed mystery man with piercing eyes who tricked the Russians into releasing him from prison because they thought he was an American.

They were trying to determine the true identity of a man posing as Frederick C. Hopkins of New York City who pulled off the international hoax to get out of Russia.

Hopkins and two U.S. soldiers, both listed as absent without leave were under observation at a U.S.

Army hospital in Berlin following their release to American authorities Monday by the Soviets.

The Americans questioned Hopkins for five hours.

He fooled the Soviets but he could not fool us," an American spokesman said. "We do not know who he is. All we know is that he is not an American. Perhaps he is a German. He is an enigma."

American authorities said Hopkins, who speaks fluent English, German and "several other languages," insisted he was an American citizen and refused to give them any help in determining his true identity.

The two U.S. soldiers released were Pvt. Michael Feingersch, 36, also known as Murray Fields, of New York City, and Wilfred Cumish, 39, of Newburyport, Mass.

Both complained they needed medical attention although they were tanned and appeared in good health. An Army spokesman said

their cases would be investigated to determine whether they would be tried by courtmartial.

Cumish disappeared from his intelligence unit in Vienna March 24, 1948. Feingersch disappeared from his constabulary unit in Nurnberg, West Germany, June 2, 1948. They had been in Soviet prisons more than seven years.

The Soviets also released 24 other prisoners Monday. They included two Frenchmen, six Dutch-

men, two Danes, two Swiss, eight Belgians and four Germans, three of whom posed as citizens of other nations.

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Controversy Splits Church

HONOLULU, T. H. (UP)—A controversy over the powers of the presiding bishop split the general convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church today into two camps.

Southern bishops moved to check the power of Rev. Henry Knox Sherrill because he moved the convention from Houston, Tex., to Honolulu because of racial discrimination in Houston.

The triennial hardly started before several resolutions were introduced to curb Sherrill's right to change the meeting's location.

The Rev. C. Gresham Marmion, Bishop of Kentucky, submitted a resolution to keep future conventions on the mainland of the United States.

The Rev. Charles E. Berger, Bishop of Maryland, proposed an amendment to the church's constitution requiring the presiding bishop to get approval of a majority of bishops in the United States before changing the convention site.

Delegates immediately demanded that adequate notice of a committee meeting to consider Bishop Berger's resolution be posted and that the meeting be open to the public.

In the opening session Monday 180 bishops and 654 deputies were seated as the official delegates to the 12-day convention. The women's auxiliary totaled 511 members.

REGRET EXPRESSED

NEW DELHI, India (UP)—Opposition members of parliament today expressed "deep regret" over a decision of the ruling Congress Party against entry of Indian nationalists into the Portuguese colony of Goa.

The Communists and Praja Socialists issued a joint statement calling the decision a "betrayal of the national united front on Goa," from which India seeks to oust the Portuguese.

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Peace Group Scores Egypt

JERUSALEM, Israel (UP)—The Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission censured Egypt for violating the armistice Aug. 22 with an artillery attack on the village of Naron Oz. It was announced today.

No new incidents were reported along the tense border where a cease-fire has been in effect since Sunday, and Egypt announced that Israel had accepted the blame and apologized for an accidental border clash Sunday night.

A Cairo dispatch said the Arab League Political Committee adopted a draft resolution at end of a three-day meeting there expressing solidarity with Egypt "against Israeli aggressions." It also supported the nationalist struggle in French North Africa.

The members of the Arab League are Egypt, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Iraq.

The MAC censure of Egypt came during a 14-hour meeting Monday. The group adopted an Israeli resolution demanding that Egypt halt such aggression in the future.

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