

Floyd Gibbons

Adventurers' Club

Hello Everybody!



"Hand-Made Inferno"

By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

GATHER 'round the soda fountain, boys and girls. Mike Foley is standing treat. Mike lives at Jackson Heights, N. Y., and he's going to treat us to a swell yarn.

Mike's an old hand at this treating business. He was doing it professionally as far back as June, 1884—the month and year in which he had his big adventure.

But don't get the idea that Mike went around handing out ten-cent cigars like a guy that's trying to be elected alderman. Not on your life. Mike was an oil treater—one of the lads who processed kerosene so it could be burned in lamps. And a mighty dangerous job that was, too.

Mike worked for the Standard Oil company at a big refinery and storage yard that was then located in Long Island City.

Lightning Strikes Huge Oil Tank!

The tanks in which the oil was treated, and on which Mike worked, were huge affairs twenty feet in diameter and thirty or more feet high. You got to the top of them by wooden stairways. And up the side of each tank ran a pair of six-inch pipes that carried the chemicals with which the oil was treated.

Well sir, to get down to the story, Mike Foley was up on the top of one of the big tanks giving its contents a good, thorough treating. Part of that job consisted of blowing compressed air through the oil, and that was often a messy procedure. Oil would slop over the side of the tank and saturate the wooden staircase. That was not only messy, but dangerous—as subsequent events amply demonstrated.

A thunderstorm was brewing while Mike was inside, under cover of the tank's sheltering top. The storm broke, about quarter after two in the afternoon, and about two-thirty he heard a loud crack. Lightning! It had struck the tank.

Mike Moves Swiftly to Close Trap Doors.

Mike's two bosses had gone to the office to give in their reports. Mike was all alone in the tank, so it was up to him. He ran out from under the shelter-roof to see what had happened. The lightning had struck



The Whole Stair Was a Raging Inferno of Fire.

all right. The oil-soaked, wooden stairs were on fire. The blaze, starting apparently from the top, had spread down four or five steps by the time Mike got there.

There was one thing that had to be done, then—done mighty quickly, too. Around the top of the tank were five trap doors, wide open to let out the gases that formed in the tank during treatments. Those doors had to be closed before the fire got through them and the whole tank went up in flames.

Mike dashed for the doors. He got one closed—then another. At that point he turned and took a look at the burning stairway. The flames had spread down four or five more steps. The fire was blazing with even greater fury.

Casabianca Really Had Nothing on Mike

And that wasn't all that was worrying Mike, either. Any minute now—doors or no doors—the tank might take fire and go up with a big WHOOSH! And where would that leave Mike? Not much of anywhere, to tell the truth about it. Just let that tank get going good, and Mike would be trapped. There wouldn't be much left of him but a few cinders when it was all over.

The thought put new energy into him. He got the next three doors closed in jig time. And then he went back to the stairway that was his only avenue of escape. But when Mike got to the stairway, he stopped. No use trying to get down there. Not only the whole stair, but likewise the platform leading to it, was a raging inferno of flame. The timbers that supported it had been eaten through by the blaze. If Mike wasn't burned to death on the way down, he'd be killed in a fall when the weakened supports broke and sent him crashing to earth.

"So there I stood," says Mike, "forty-five feet from the ground, like young Casabianca—the boy who stood on the burning deck. A crowd had gathered down below, and about eight hundred men who worked in the loading sheds near the dock were yelling to me to jump. I didn't want to do that—it would have been almost as bad as burning to death. Still, I couldn't stay up there, either. Most any minute that tank might go up with a roar—and take me along with it."

Mike Was a Good Hand on the Flying Rings.

It looked pretty bad for Mike—but he still had a trick or two up his sleeve. "At that time," he says, "I was a member of the Star Athletic

68 Years a Pilot; Quits Post at 80

Gallipolis, Ohio.—Beginning as a "cub" pilot at the age of twelve years, Capt. George Hamilton, eighty, has just "gone to the bank," which is river parlance for retirement, after 68 years as an Ohio river pilot.

Captain Hamilton is the dean of Pittsburgh and Cincinnati steamboat pilots, and most of his years of service were with the White Collar line, operating sidewheel passenger steamers that were the last word in splendor of equipment.

Current Kills Rattlers

Dillon, Mont.—Electric "prod poles" which get their kick from batteries are now being used in hunting rattlesnakes. The last organized hunt here reaped a harvest of 65 rattlesnakes.

San Sebastian Feeling Effect of War in Spain

Seaside Resort Has Some Undesired Publicity.

Washington.—Castles in Spain cannot resist air raids, it seems, even in the enchanted atmosphere of a fashionable summer resort. In San Sebastian, the serenity of sun-drenched swimming and siestas has been disturbed by sharp battle and capture by belligerent rebels.

"Spain's most fashionable summer resort, San Sebastian, has provided some excitement not advertised in hotel publicity—a share in the country's revolt," says the National Geographic society. "Vacationists had almost forgotten the city's importance as capital of the ancient Basque Province of Guipuzco and summer headquarters of most of the diplomatic corps.

A Europeanized Newport

"A graceful scallop of beach, constant cooling breezes from the Bay of Biscay, regattas, yacht racing, tennis tournaments, horse racing, bull fights, roulette, and formerly royal patronage made San Sebastian the Newport of Spain. Wealthy Spaniards from other sections, diplomats, and foreigners, however few in the city's 60,000 people, have given San Sebastian a European veneer over its native aspect.

"In the midst of the summer frivolities of Spain's fashionable world, local Basques impassively continue their fishing, speaking their strange language unintelligible even to many Spanish visitors. Their name for their city is Iruchulo.

"The city stands near the eastern end of Spain's northern coast, 10 miles from the French border where the numerous visitors change trains on the overnight trip from Paris.

"Here the Pyrenees meet the sea, and both unite to create unique qualifications for a summer resort. The Bay of Biscay rolls into San Sebastian's semi-circular harbor in a half-moon of blue-green, the same regular curve repeated in the beach's yellow crescent. Because its shape resembles the scallop shell's, the harbor is called La Concha (the shell).

"At the opposite ends of its mile diameter rise rocky headlands which have offered for centuries

club of Long Island City, and I was pretty good on the flying rings. So I swung over the edge of the platform."

What followed after that brought gasps from the men down below. Like a circus acrobat, high overhead, he began swinging himself along on the braces that held the platform up. He had traveled eight or ten feet around the side of the tank before the spectators saw what he was aiming at. Then they set up a cheer as Mike reached one of the six-inch pipes that ran down the side of the tank and began sliding to safety.

"That pipe was so close to the tank," says Mike, "that I couldn't put my legs around it. I had to grip it with my knees and slide down in jerks about two inches at a time. But I got down all right except for some skin I lost off my hands, and a new pair of pants I had to buy to replace the ones I wore. They were ruined."



"The Man Who O.O.O."

Tales and Traditions
from American Political History

by ELMO SCOTT WATSON and FRANK E. HAGAN

BACHELOR CAMPAIGNERS

TODAY'S accepted view of the way to ballyhoo the voter is, broadly speaking, to tell him first one of two things—either the candidate recommended was reared on the farm or he has sold newspapers.

When this has been established the campaign manager next reaches into his bag and there begins to issue a swelling stream of pictures, mostly of the candidate in the bosom of his family. The larger the family, so much better the results, is the political reasoning.

With this in mind it is interest-

ing to reflect that two of the 31 Presidents challenged the accepted political belief that "it couldn't be done" and campaigned for office successfully while unmarried. They are James Buchanan, (1857-1861) and Grover Cleveland, (1885-1889 and 1893-1897.)

Cleveland, after little more than a year in the White house, married Frances Folsom there on June 2, 1886. Buchanan remained a bachelor and is, therefore, the man who is our only bachelor President.

Most of our Presidents have performed nobly in lifting the average size of White House families.

The Republican Roosevelt married twice, as have four other Presidents, with one child from the first union and five from the second. But John Tyler (1841-1845), also twice married, was father to three sons and four daughters by his first wife and to five sons and two daughters by the second.

Tyler may have taken his cue from William H. Harrison, preceding White House resident, who sired six sons and four daughters. The widow of Harrison, incidentally, survived for more than 20 years after his death in 1841.

Six Presidents, including the immortal George Washington, were childless. But Rutherford B. Hayes with eight, and Thomas Jefferson and Zachary Taylor, with six children apiece, helped raise the average.

TAKING A WALK

A CHECKUP on election day in November, 1933, doubtless will disclose that some of the more prominent members of both major political parties have "gone fishing."

Going fishing is the politician's milder and more modern method of showing dissatisfaction with his party's candidate and refusing to appear at the polls.

Taking a walk would be no new experience of the Democratic party but history records that Alexander Hamilton, powerful Federalist of the country's earliest days, was the first important stroller and that his action ultimately resulted in the destruction of his party.

Hamilton, a dominant political personality, was a bitter opponent of John Adams, second president, having tried to block his election as vice-president although both were Federalists.

The feud continued when John Adams became president, Hamilton secretly obtaining and holding control of the Adams cabinet. Adams, not by nature gifted in that sort of intrigue, nevertheless fought back with considerable success. At one time, our second president averted a war with France in which Hamilton was scheduled to occupy a military leadership as powerful as that of General Pershing's in the World conflict.

Hamilton was not the man to take any rebuffs sitting down. When John Adams sought re-election in the campaign of 1800 Hamilton "took a walk" by publication of a letter designed to show "irrefragable proofs" of Adams' unfitness for the job.

Hamilton succeeded too completely in his battle. Adams failed of re-election but the Federalist party went down with him. While the ding-dong "walkout" battle was in progress during the Adams presidency, Thomas Jefferson, whose name is referred to so frequently by Democratic orators, took advantage of the duelling.

Jefferson was earnestly and efficiently making his plea for unified support of the "plain peepul" and in the election he smashed the Federalists so completely they never again figured conspicuously in a national election.