

Civic Pride. Peoria's 83-year-old Mayor Ed Woodruff was locally noted for taking pride in the town's "liberal" outlook. When a reform candidate—Carl O. Triebel, owner of the Ideal Troy Laundry—filed against him this year for the Republican nomination, old Ed Woodruff did not change his attitude: "Peoria likes to live and doesn't want to be told what to do and what not to do all the time."

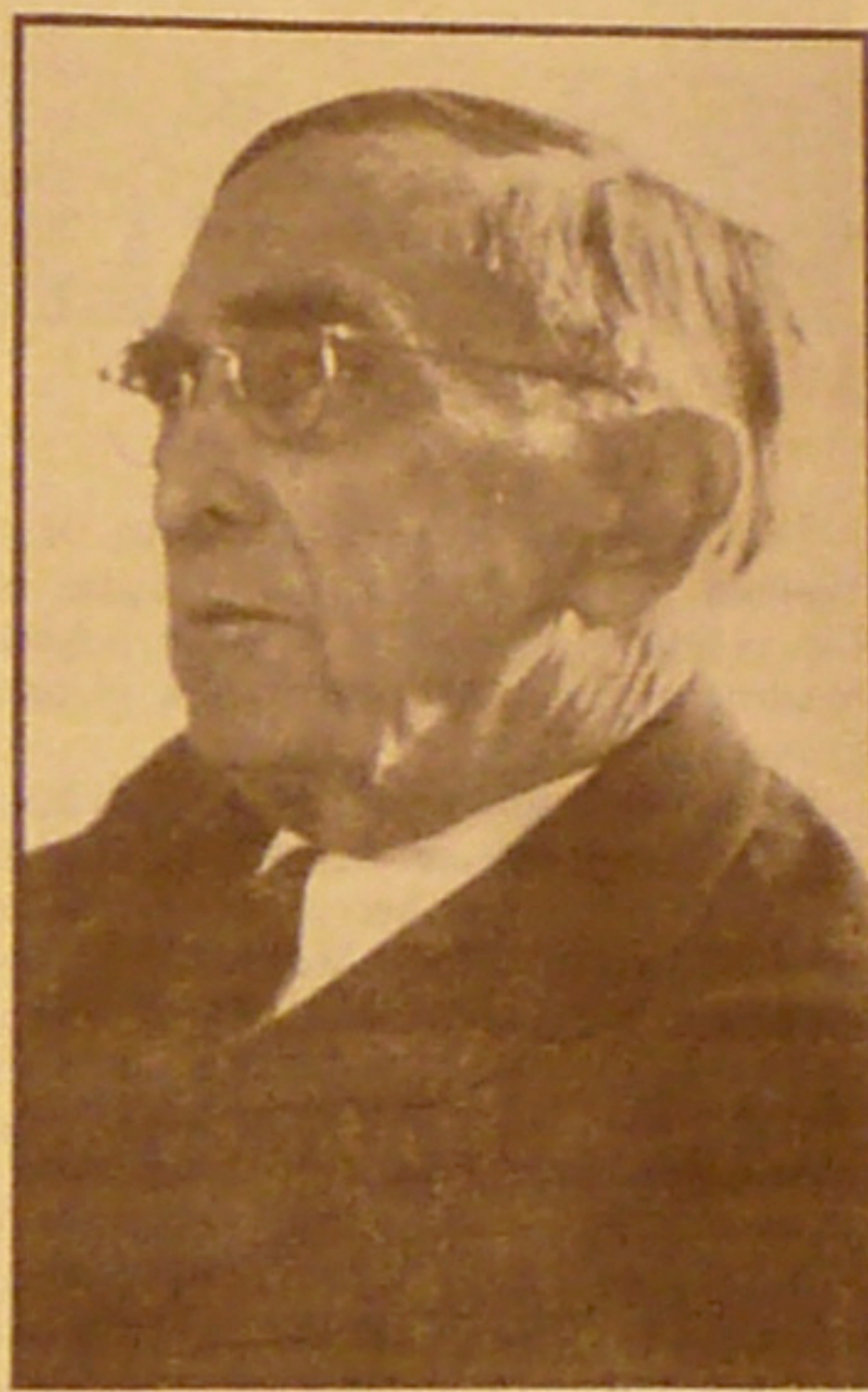
Old Ed was repeating a well-tryed political philosophy. He had been using it since 1903; he had been elected eleven times for a total of 24 years. In all that time, profane, fox-faced Ed Woodruff had never hidden his benign attitude toward Peoria's gamblers, bawdyhouses and bars.

He liked to spend weekends drinking and gambling himself, aboard a craft

made a white-slave raid. All this was had enough. But when Peoria discovered that gamblers, barmen and madams were showing interest in the reform candidate, it decided that Ed Woodruff had lost his steam. Last week Peoria voted, Laundryman Triebel won. Woodruff ran a bad fourth.

After the returns were in, the rheumy-eyed old Mayor sat at home, cigar ashes spilling on his vest, and muttered defiance. "The crusaders got me," he mumbled, "but the people will be asking me to run again. Why do they always talk about the goddam girls? I didn't put stools in the bars for them to sit on."

But nobody really thought Peoria would become Illinois' holy city if Laundryman Triebel beat the Democratic nominee, Tom Madden. One of Triebel's backers on The Bluff, the town's fashionable residential section, made it plain that even reform is liberal in Peoria. Said he: "We've got to have control, here. Gambling will be supervised and the prostitutes will have to be licensed."



PEORIA'S WOODRUFF
"The crusaders got me."

LIFE

ILLINOIS

By the River

*Oh, how I wish't I was in Peoria,
Peoria tonight,
Oh, how I miss the "goils" in Peoria,
Peoria tonight. . . .*

Like the rubber billiard cue and the collapsible bicycle, the word Peoria has always been good for a laugh in vaudeville. Generations of hoofers and comedians used it to epitomize U.S. hick towns. But though Peoria, Ill. lies in the corn belt, it is a pretty big town (pop. 105,087). It is also a river town, and it grew up around a whiskey keg, not a cracker barrel. Last week, after a new city primary election, Peoria had occasion to remind itself of its free-&-easy tradition once again.

Peorians have long been aware that steamboat men on the Illinois River had certain lusty "natural appetites," and many Peorians saw no reason to ignore them. The town's distilleries turned the corn harvest into liquor, and Peoria's back streets were always comfortably shaded by brothels, gambling joints and saloons. When the river trade fell off and industry (Caterpillar Tractor, Hiram Walker, Keystone Steel & Wire) came in, Peoria went on being the biggest little wide open town in the Midwest.

known as the "Bum Boat," an ancient stern-wheeler converted into a houseboat. When the City Council decided one December to clean up the red-light district, he protested vehemently that such an action in the week before Christmas would be un-Christian. On such occasions he was a formidable figure—a wry neck kept his head cocked to the right and made him look like an angry rooster. Once he ended a two-hour Council debate by rising and bellowing "Bull!" at the top of his lungs.

No Twelfth Term. But as this year's campaign grew hot, all sorts of political land mines started blowing up around Ed Woodruff. The Association of Commerce appointed a committee to investigate vice, and the committee called on the State's Attorney, who in turn shouted for a grand jury. The Army complained about Peoria's prostitutes and the FBI