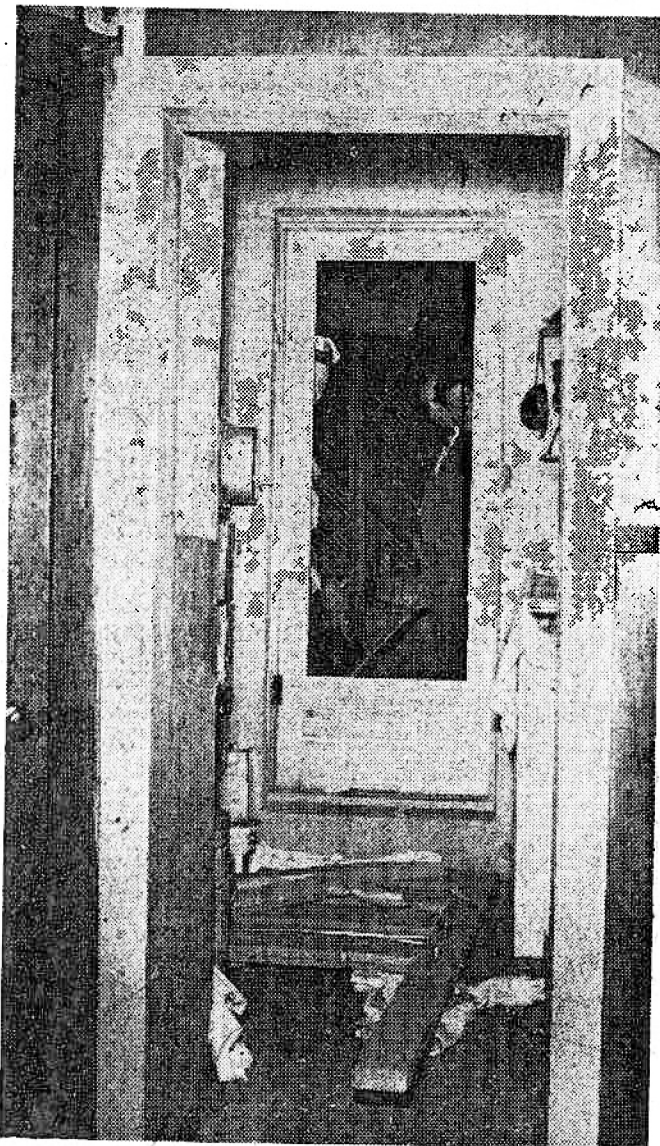


Old Peoria? As Wide Open As The Gateway To Hell



It is not new for Peoria to be called a city of sin, a modern Sodom. Such it was.

Peoria is a city where once the roar of a bursting bomb was louder than the voice of the judge. Peoria is a city where the crack of the pistol settled many of the "business" arguments.

First of a Series

Peoria is a city where once the red lights blossomed in three districts devoted to vice. It was a city where every sordid taste of human passion had its willing handmaidens.

Peoria is a city that was as wide open as the gateway to Hell. It was a city where gambling joints were more common than banks, or downtown churches.

Peoria is a city where once the slot machines displayed their oranges and cherries near the outlet of every school. Where even penny machines were displayed to lure the last coppers out of the kids' pockets.

Peoria is a city with a bold tradition, a tough river town where once the gangster ruled with gun and bankroll. For it is no secret in towns where vice and rackets flourish that a well placed bribe can be more effective than a shrewdly aimed bullet.

This empire of vice, violence and corruption now is as dead as the friendly, tolerant community it invaded and absorbed. Because Peoria was a river town it acquired a glamor which neighboring communities never quite could achieve.

SURE, IN ITS WAY IT WAS A BAWDY TOWN, but always with a twinkle in its eye. It was a jolly old rascal determined to walk straight and keep its high hat cocked rakishly atop its head.

Its bon vivants thought nothing of escorting the reigning madames in their fancy buggies to all except the most exclusive social and sporting events.

And the ladies of the haute monde expected to be addressed as Miss Cora, Miss Belle, or whatever name they chose with which to dignify their establishments.

There was a Continental flair about this city, even though the gaiety was only tinsel. In fact, Miss Fern's Midnight Cotillion,

conducted each Saturday night in the grand ballroom of her "home" at Fayette and Washington sts. was known from coast to coast, and as favorably as New Orleans' famous Quadroon Ball.

The hoodlums, the thugs, the gangsters and panders wanted none of this. Crime was crime, gambling was gambling, and vice was vice. Each was a business, and must pay its way.

Even prohibition here had its flavor of the old days. But now the dry era was dying, and ways must be found to continue the flood of illicit funds.

GAMBLING AND PROSTITUTION AFFORDED the easiest access to ill-gotten money. If Miss Fern bowed out of this new picture, there was a Diamond Lil to take her place. Or a Big Vic was ready to offer her orgiastic wares.

Lil's place featured the "female impersonator." Her shows, too, became widely known, but could be classed only as infamous. Practically every house near the intersection of North

Continued on page A-4

Old Peoria? As Wide Open As The Gateway To Hell

Continued from page A-1

Washington and Eaton sts. became a brothel.

Cedar and Walnut sts. in part were taken over by dives. Prairie Alley, sections of what is now South Jefferson ave., and other portions of the city became "districts."

HUSTLERS ROAMED THE DOWNTOWN BARS, offering a quick trip to a hotel room or even an affair in the rear seat of a parked automobile. One downtown eating place even provided the parked cars in a lot at the rear. Usually it was patronized by young girls eager to earn half a dollar.

Narcotics were quick to reach the hands of these impassioned and giddy kids. The addict population of Peoria today acquired much of its habit at that time.

Across Fulton st. from the city hall were two buildings dedicated to gambling. One, ornate and tastefully furnished, offered about any sort of action the gambling man could desire. It also was understood that no one need be lonely while losing his money at the old Sportsmen's Club which later became the Clover Club.

AT THE OTHER, THE ALCAZAR, baseball pool tickets and similar instruments of chance were on open sale. Slot machines also were available, but the real action was upstairs where a stiff, but honest, poker game was in nightly session.

Also in the 400 block Fulton st. was the Mint. Gambling was carried on in a back room, but only on a small scale. Operators refused to deal with the mob, and well-paid policemen always were poised to close them down.

Around the corner, in the 100 block, S. Jefferson ave., was Peoria's best known establishment, the Empire. At various times, the Empire offered all types of gambling, but always it was the home of the "baseball pool" which frequently paid off jackpots of \$5,000 or more.

THIS WAS THE MOST LUCRATIVE SPOT in Peoria. Its proprietor, Bill Urban, was one of the early kidnap victims, obtaining his release only after paying \$80,000.

In the same block, the Saratoga had a short career in big time gambling. For almost a year, before Mayor Carl O. Triebel pulled down the lid and kept it down, a casino flourished in the rear. Real he-man poker also was available in an upstairs room.

Also across from the city hall, but this time across Madison ave., was the Shelton gang's headquarters, the Palace club. Gambling of all forms was available here, too. It was unlucky to be lucky here. Too large a winning might result in a broken head and a quick frisking after the patron left the club. Eventually this club was sold, and a respectable tavern operation now is conducted nearby.

The old Palace club is not to be confused with the Palace Arcade, in the 100 block N. Madison ave. The partners here ran a gambling and horse betting operation on their second floor. When the hoodlum heat developed, they simply closed their doors. They were gamblers of the old school.

FURTHER DOWN ON FULTON ST., a block and a half away, were the old Lyceum and Windsor. The latter was a major factor in the city's life. Fortunes were won and lost across its roulette and faro tables. Many of its dealers had followed the goddess of chance to the far ends of the earth. True, but almost unbelievable stories were told of Klondike days, and other famous places where fortunes were made and lost swiftly. Nevertheless, it was a gambling house, and one of the city's most widely known.

THE LYCEUM WAS STRICTLY A GANG OPERATION, it pushed every operation which might lure the sucker's buck, and except for its horse betting, was held in somewhat low esteem by the city's gangsters. It is now in new hands and is an excellent restaurant.

Yes, a man could get action aplenty in these days. But he was not too well aware of the beatings, the killings, the connivance that went on behind the scenes in order that the kingdom of hoodlumery might survive.

The kidnappings, murders and bombings brought Peoria wide notoriety throughout the Midwest. Outside newspapers sent ace reporters into the city to cover the "Roaring Peoria" story. These events will be covered in tomorrow's article.



A PEORIA JET PILOT, 2nd Lt. John H. Larson, 114 Wren ave., donned a pressure suit yesterday on Channel 19's Fun For All show dedicated to the Air Training Command. Shown with Larson, who is stationed at Scott Air Force base, are Wayne West and Nina Dancy, who appear each day on the afternoon show.

PEORIA!

THIS IS THE TYPE of publicity Peoria received in the nation's press during the "Roaring Peoria" days. The candid camera shot was taken in a local gambling establishment by a Chicago Herald-American photographer in 1941 and used in a full page report on "frontier town that runs wide open."

Old Peoria: Fixed Cops, Gang Murders, Wholesale Kidnapping

Half a dozen bold kidnappings, and a series of gang style murders brought "Roaring Peoria" a share in the nation's lime-light as the hoodlums tightened their grip around the city's throat during the 1930's and early 1940's.

"Protected" slot machines played their part in this gigantic underworld conspiracy. The citizen who was suspected of tampering with a "box" was convicted on the spot. The penalty—to get his head knocked off by a hoodlum or a policeman assigned to guard the precious one armed bandit.

A Peoria locksmith died in a screaming blast of double O buck shotgun slugs in an alley behind his home. The death car had a red front light, frequently associated with police work.

Generally it was assumed that his killers came from Joliet, where it was known he had associated with slot machine racketeers. It is a fact, however, that he had escaped, just before his death, from Peoria police. The officers had caught him as he tried to enter a building where previously he had tampered with a slot machine.

BILL URBAN, proprietor of the Empire, may have been the first of the local gamblers to be kidnaped. He was taken on July 1, 1930, from Radnor, near his country estate.

Bill may have been the first to go, but in well informed circles it is understood that a lesser light of the gambling world had been snatched, paid off, and kept his mouth shut.

Urban was released after one of his employees turned over \$30,000 on a lonely road near Peoria. Typical of the times, an attempt was made by another gang to steal this ransom money as it was being taken away from the bank.

Startling as this crime was to Peorians, who felt their city had been going along in its live-and-let-live fashion, it had another astonishing impact.

Peoria was in the headlines of the nation, and not in friendly fashion, such had occurred before.

NEWS AGENCIES sent staff reporters into Peoria to spell out the story of its wickedness. Feature writers and specialists soon were on hand to give their versions, often distorted or misinformed, of what went on with-

in the city which had considered itself innocently liberal.

An attempt was made to kidnap Clyde Garrison, partner in the Windsor, one of the more flourishing gambling houses. In an ensuing gunfight, Garrison's wife, Cora, was killed by a machine gun bullet fired by a kidnaper. One of the gang was wounded fatally by Garrison.

More notoriety for Peoria. More streams of writers, more columns of type depicting the city as the capital of a gangland empire.

It was. Peorians learned in dismay that the Sheltons, a murderous tribe of brothers from southern Illinois had taken over. With them came an army of equally desperate criminals willing to kill at a moment's notice.

Another kidnap victim was Dr. James W. Parker, one of the city's better known medical men. This attempt proved a fiasco. Although he was held for some time, he was released without payment of ransom.

SHREWD DETECTIVE work by Peoria police and operatives of the Secret Six, Chicago

See Editorial on Page A-8

crime fighting organization, revealed the kidnapers. They were arrested and most were given stiff sentences after conviction. This was the only kidnap case actually "solved" in the courts.

Some fairly definite evidence was uncovered about participants in other cases, but none was brought to trial here. Several notorious gangland figures were killed by law enforcement men, or by their own fellow thieves. Generally it is assumed that all of the kidnapers paid for their crimes in these encounters.

This was especially true of Jack Klutas, who began his career of crime here and became one of the nation's most notorious gang leaders. Klutas was literally shot to pieces outside his Maywood, Ill., home by Capone machine gunners in retribution for the kidnaping of Jack Lynch, one time Chicago sportsman.

Klutas popularly was associated with at least one of the Peoria kidnapings.

During the era of gang rule here, three men were shot to death in mob execution style. They included Joel Nyberg, Frank Kraemer, and Bernie Shelton.

NONE OF THESE activities escaped the attention of the nation's press. The Shelton death especially was significant, but none of the others was ignored. Writers and investigators combed Peoria from top to bottom.

Unfortunately, they found many things which were true, and which redounded to Peoria's discredit.

Pounded out upon the press

wires, the magazines and the sensation papers was the fact that gambler-gangsters were working in close co-operation with some city hall offices.

Regular rates of pay had been set up for various "concessions." A slot machine in a given location cost so much, a crap table in another place had a different face value, a roulette wheel could be operated at some fixed price.

It is not true that a levy was based on so much per bed in the red light districts, as has been charged, but a fee was fixed for every girl.

Heralded before the world, too, was the fact that the vice masters were intent upon maintaining a "clean" operation. A system of frequent medical inspections was set up, naturally with a fee attached.

Money from all these sources rolled into a huge jackpot. Most of it, of course, stayed in the pockets of the hoodlums. Generous sums, however, were paid into the city treasury to keep the entire operation afloat. Large amounts, too, were paid to individuals in and out of government who could assist this gigantic racket.

Many downtown taverns were call houses. Ignorant and unwanted was the bartender who could not dial a telephone and produce a beautiful companion to supply any taste in pulchritude or affability.

And the nation heard about it, in full detail. Even if the writers missed on a few small facts, they had enough big ones to justify their most lurid yarns.

So, Peoria changed its character in the eyes of the nation, due to this plunge into the darkest depths of gangdom. It ended only when a .351 caliber bullet killed Bernie Shelton outside his Farmington road headquarters.

Third article in the series, dealing with the killing of three men in gangland fashion, will appear in Monday evening's edition of the Journal Star.

COUNTY MEETING

The Peoria County Council of the American Legion meets at the Limestone Post No. 979 in Bartonville 8 p.m. Tuesday. County Commander C. A. Jones of Chillicothe has requested Post Commanders of Peoria county to submit membership reports.

Births in Peoria Hospitals

METHODIST HOSPITAL

Daughters were born to:
 Mrs. Ivan R. Bachman of Roanoke, Friday p. m.
 Mrs. Richard Little, 511 Park Ave., Friday p. m.
 Mrs. Chris W. Knapp of Deer Creek, Saturday a. m.
 Mrs. James D. Theobald, 107 Moushon Dr., East Peoria, Saturday a. m.
 Mrs. Robert C. Kendall, 4517 Hamilton Rd., Saturday a. m.
 Sons were born to:
 Mrs. Howard J. Goins of Airport Rd., RR 1, Peoria, Friday p. m.
 Mrs. Marion Burdett, 2711 W. Forrest Hill Ave., Saturday a. m.
 Mrs. Alfred T. Henderson 715

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Peoria Journal Star

SUNDAY
CONTINUING

THE PEORIA TRANSCRIPT
ESTABLISHED 1855

THE PEORIA JOURNAL
ESTABLISHED 1877

THE PEORIA STAR
ESTABLISHED 1897

Published Sunday only at War Memorial Drive, by The Peoria Journal Star, Inc.
Entered as second class matter at the post office at Peoria, Ill., under the
act of March 1, 1879.

MEMBER AUDIT BUREAU OF
CIRCULATIONS

National advertising representative: Ward Griffith Company, Inc., New York, Chicago,
Detroit, Boston, Atlanta, San Francisco, Charlotte, Portland, Ore., Philadelphia.

This Was Peoria

If a resident of this city 20 years ago had been magically projected into the Peoria of 1956, he would have found the improvement unbelievable. But we, having seen it, tend to forget the lawlessness and moral squalor from which we have emerged.

To appreciate what we now have, we need to look backward once in a while. Some of us still remember vividly the Peoria of the "liberal" days when "Live and let live" meant, "Don't bother my racket and I won't bother yours."

One of the symbols of what was called "liberalism" in Peoria in the late nineteen-thirties (and for that matter in the early nineteen-fifties) was protected prostitution. This racket was so big that we had, not one red light district, but several.

There was the North Washington and Eaton Street district. There was another that sprawled over South Jefferson and Walnut and State streets. And Prairie Alley was a nest of disorderly houses.

In this racket, the city government was a silent partner. Under the pretense of keeping prostitution "clean" (a concept which required vast rationalization) the city government, through the police department, required prostitutes to regi-

ster and report to a doctor, named by the city, for periodic examinations for venereal disease.

Police provided protection for the houses. Patrons were as safe from arrest as if they had been in a movie theater.

Houses of prostitution in Peoria became key points for transportation and distribution of heroin and marijuana. They were centers of gravitation for hoodlums and criminals.

Another aspect of community life 20 years ago was the "sanctioned" gambling, which helped pay the cost of running the city government, and was the source of most corruption in the City Council and police department.

You could walk across the street from the police department and into one of the city's most elaborate gambling casinos where you could play for any stakes at any game you liked. Cross the street in another direction from the City Hall, and you entered another gambling joint.

Upstairs, less than a block from the City Hall was a protected dice game, a big one. Toward the river one block and around the corner was the headquarters of the fabulous lottery known as "the baseball pool." City and county police, mayors and state's attorneys winked at this for many years until a state's attorney closed it in 1953.

Within a block of the baseball pool were two other thriving gambling dens. A horse book operated almost next door to the City Hall. Bookies were everywhere. Slot machines were so common that they were found in newsstands and neighborhood drug stores. Saloonkeepers said slot machine revenue paid their rent. The "take" ran to millions every year.

Lest we forget, this was Peoria not so long ago.

Bring Back The Good Old Harmonica

Herb Shriner, the Hoosier comedian, believes harmonica playing has become a lost art. He would like to see it brought back as a way of teaching children music. And he would also like to see the harmonica accepted as a serious instrument. He says it could eventually be used as a solo instrument in a concerto.

In Old Peoria It Was 'Murder By

During a nine-month period back in 1946, three men were murdered near Peoria in gangland fashion.

The epidemic of sudden deaths occurred while gambling activities were at a low ebb inside the city proper, but running as an accelerated clip in the county under the guise of "sneak" operations.

On orders of the administration then in the city hall, slot machines which earlier could be found by the hundreds in even such unusual places as drugstores and confectionery shops, had done a fadeout, only to reappear in many spots outside the city limits.

CARD GAMES FOR BIG STAKES and elaborate horse race booking establishments were cropping out like a rash in the rural areas. Thousands of dollars were spent on expensive equipment and conveniences for the comfort of the customers.

First of the trio to be mowed down in this era was Frank Kraemer, co-proprietor of two Peoria taverns.

In earlier days, authorities say, Kraemer had been identified with a local slot-machine syndicate. But his activities along that line terminated when there was a sudden change in the top echelon of the syndicate.

Third
of a
Series

ON THE NIGHT OF FEB. 29, 1946, Kraemer was reading a newspaper in the sunroom of his home near the Kickapoo hill on Farmington road, when an automobile moved into the driveway.

A moment later there was a crash of glass as a bullet whistled over Kraemer's head.

Kraemer yelled to his wife, who was sitting near by, to take cover, and then he started for an adjoining living room.

He had moved only a few steps when five more shots rang out. The tavern-operator dropped with three slugs in his body. The two others were imbedded in furniture and walls.

Kraemer was still alive when county police arrived, but he died about an hour later at St. Francis hospital. A coroner's jury returned a verdict of murder "at the hands of persons unknown."

JUST SEVEN MONTHS TO THE DAY after Kraemer was murdered, the body of a man who had been shot and badly beaten was found by a caretaker on the golf course of the Lacon Country club, two miles east of Lacon.

Otto F. Brinkman, a Peoria Journal reporter, was the first to identify the body as that of Joel (Joe) Nyberg, a Peoria police character, frequently arrested here for sluggings and shootings, and who repeatedly appeared in police court.

Five bullets from a .38 caliber gun had entered Nyberg's back, several emerging from his right side. In addition, his face and head had been severely beaten.

POLICE IMMEDIATELY ASSUMED that Nyberg's murder was a resumption of the gang warfare, first marked by the killing of Kraemer, but it never was established if or how the two murders tied in.

Characterized as "one of the most indicted persons in Peoria county," Nyberg was out on bond at the time of his demise, after being convicted several months prior on a charge of assault with intent to kill a Morton, Ill., youth during an altercation at a local night club. Nyberg had received a 4 to 14 years prison sentence, but the case was before the state supreme court for review on an appeal.

Some time earlier, Nyberg had been arrested after he shot and seriously wounded another Peoria gambler, Jack Nahas, in a tavern brawl. Nahas, however, later recovered and the charge against Nyberg dropped.

THE LAST OF THE THREE 1946 KILLINGS occurred on the night of Oct. 25, with Phillip Stumpf, an ex-convict, as the victim. Stumpf, accompanied by a casual acquaintance, had answered a call to repair a slot machine at a tavern on the Big Hollow road.

He was driving home, with his friend at his side, when a car approached from the rear. There was a burst of gun-fire and a bullet grazed the head of the man who said he had accompanied Stumpf "just for the ride." The latter dropped to the floor boards.

In the driver's seat, Stumpf jammed down on the gas pedal and his car shot forward. So did the car behind him. Then there was another burst of bullets and Stumpf slumped over. The car crashed off the highway near Glen ave. into a hillside.

Stumpf was dead by the time county officers arrived on the scene.

The coroner's jury went through the usual routine of returning a verdict of murder by "parties unknown." And like the two earlier killings, the murder of Stumpf finally entered the record of "unsolved crimes."

Tomorrow: The Shelton era.



FRANK KRAEMER

Peoria Journal Star

PEORIA, ILLINOIS
MONDAY, APRIL 14, 1958

EVENING

B-1

Ad Club Names Top Essayist

Jessamine Jochman, 16, a junior at Academy of Our Lady, today was announced first place winner in the 1956 essay contest conducted by the Peoria Advertising and Selling club.

The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Jochman, 2110 W. Ayres ave., will receive a one year

Essay On Page A-7

scholarship to Bradley university, valued at \$490, or she may take \$150 cash.

Essay subject this year was "Does Advertising Better the American Way of Life?"

OTHER PRIZE WINNERS in the contest were: Judith Smith, junior at Woodruff High school, second prize, \$100; Rod Grove, senior at Peoria High school, third place, \$75; Brad Lentz, senior at Woodruff High, fourth place, \$50;



Old Peoria Was 'Right' For Sheltons Until Death Closed The Books

School Board Beats Motion That It Quit

Post-election bitterness erupted at the Peoria School Board meeting last night and culminated in a motion that all seven members resign.

The motion was defeated 5 to 2. Mrs. Vivian Roszell, who made the proposal, and Mrs. Marietta Bloom, who seconded it, were the only two who voted for it.

The action came about during a heated discussion of last Tuesday's school board race in which W. C. Jacquin and Mrs. Bloom were re-elected to the board. In a statement the day after election, Mrs. Bloom accused Jacquin of asking people to vote for only one candidate.

Some 40 persons attended the meeting and one of them, Mrs. Gladys Schiffeling, asked Mrs. Bloom whether she "considered proper" that a board member instruct voters to vote only for him.

Charging that the president of the board "signed and sent out many postals" requesting people to vote for Jacquin, she commented that none were sent for Mrs. Bloom. "This is board participation in politics," she said. Mrs. Bloom agreed with Mrs. Schiffeling's statement, declaring that the "practice was indefensible."

BOARD PRESIDENT Frederick M. Bourland answered that he sent the post cards out under his name as a private citizen and not as a board member, urging his friends to vote for one member only.

Serving on the board does not prevent him from speaking as a citizen, Bourland said.

Jacquin echoed Bourland's sentiment, stating:

"My status as a board member is separate from my status as a citizen. I don't consider myself unethical.

"I ran as an individual citizen. I can't instruct anyone to vote for me alone. My friends did and I knew about it. Why should I as a candidate stop it?"

At this point another person in the audience, Eugene Allison, got up and suggested that Jacquin resign "to gain the confidence of the people."

This was met with a round of laughter, after which Mrs. Roszell announced that whether he knew

Continued on Page B-12

Resigned Because He 'Served Long Enough,' Caldwell

G. Chapman Caldwell of Peoria said today that he resigned from the Illinois American Legion's anti-subversive commission because he "strongly felt" that he had "served long enough."

He was replaced on the six-member commission Sunday by E. D. Stoetzel, secretary of the Peoria Manufacturers association. Caldwell called the appointment a



BERNIE SHELTON

Frost Seen Likely In Area Tonight

Near freezing temperatures and fair skies are forecast for tonight. The low is expected to be between 30 and 33 degrees.

John Wenke, Peoria Journal Star garden editor, said he doubted if there will be any frost injury because cool weather already has delayed some crops. The two exceptions he said were possible are early set tomato plants and apricot trees. There are only a few of the latter in this area.

Wednesday will be partly cloudy and continued cool with a high around 50, according to the weather bureau.

Winter's return will result as Peoria area comes under the influence of a high pressure ridge now extending from the Dakotas to Oklahoma.

FROST OR FREEZING temperatures will arrive, however, as winds subside. Today, in addition to being partly cloudy, was rather windy. A high of near 50 was indicated this afternoon.

Weatherman Wayne McDaniel, in a local weather summary, said skies cleared over southern and central Illinois during the night but cloudiness was expected to develop and increase again during the day.

Cancer Fund Has \$10,013

At a Cancer Fund report meeting at Hotel Pere Marquette Monday, Charles E. Gagnier, general chairman, announced that \$10,013.52 has been collected.

The goal is \$32,038. Reports were given by Mrs. Ben McIver and Leonard Goudy, co-chairmen of the commercial division. Mrs. Duane Phillips, chairman of the residential division; Mrs. Beatrice Zerwech, chairman of buildings; Clayton White, chairman of the industrial division, and Rudy Fiala, chairman of special gifts.

The drive will be continued through April 30. Next report meeting will be Friday, April 27.

A single shot from a high-powered rifle, fired by a gunman hidden in a wooded thicket behind St. Joseph's cemetery eight years ago, ended a long era of big time gangland rule in Peoria. But the lone bullet, which snuffed out the life of Bernie Shelton, did much more.

It precipitated a series of reverberations which shook Peoria's official circles for months and echoed throughout the state and nation.

Many Peorians believe that the wave of revelations which came in the wake of Shelton's assassination played an important role in the election of Adlai Stevenson, then virtually a political unknown, to the office of governor of Illinois.



Carl Shelton

FOLLOWING THE PEORIA KILLINGS, a U. S. Senate committee headed by Estes Kefauver, began its famous probe of nation-wide operation of major gambling syndicates.

Prior to the arrival of the Sheltons on the Peoria scene and for some time thereafter, gambling operations in Peoria were on a more or less peaceful and well-organized basis.

Last of a Series

For years, it had been the policy of city administrations to collect "fees" for gambling and vice. No attempt was made to hide this fact, and it was often called to the public's attention that cessation of the practice would mean higher tax bills for Peoria citizens. When former Mayor Carl O. Triebel, came into office he cracked down on open gambling, but "sneak" operations were on a wide-spread scale, especially in the county area surrounding the city.

While this snug arrangement was in operation, "outside interests," attracted by the fertile Peoria field, tried to muscle in.

IT WAS ONLY NATURAL THAT PEORIA'S earlier day gambling kings—business men rather than gunmen—should seek protection of bodyguards.

On this score the Sheltons—Carl and Bernie—appeared to fill the bill perfectly.

They were leaders of a gang of desperadoes which had come off victorious in a long and bloody underworld war in southern Illinois and had attracted international attention during the prohibition era.

So the Sheltons moved into Peoria. For a while they carried out their role as guardians and "enforcers" for their local employers.

IN TYPICAL SHELTON FASHION, the brothers "took over" from those they had been hired to protect. The latter, taking the hint when some of the toughest members of the old Shelton gang began to appear on the scene, quietly withdrew into other fields of endeavor.

Over quite an extended period, the Sheltons ran the Peoria gambling machine with a firm hand. Carl, the elder, suave and business-like and with a flair for making friends in the "better circles" was the majordomo. Bernie, a more rugged character with numerous bullet scars on his person as mementoes of earlier encounters, strung along in the role of first lieutenant.

The happy-care-free life of the Sheltons suddenly came to an end Oct. 27, 1947.

On that date, Carl, on a visit to the family's homestead near Fairfield, Ill., was mowed down by a barrage of bullets while he was riding down a country lane.

Just nine months later, Bernie who succeeded his elder brother as commander-in-chief here, dropped from the single shot, fired from ambush as he stepped out of the Parkway tavern on Farmington road, opposite the lower entrance to Bradley park.

Bernie died a few hours later at St. Francis hospital without giving an inkling as to who his slayer might have been or why he was shot.

From that day to this the identity of the killer remains a mystery.

REVELATIONS WHICH FOLLOWED THE SHELTON killings, however, kept Peoria in the nation's headlines for months.

They started with a story by Ted Link, famous crime reporter of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, about a phonographic recording made by the Sheltons, purporting to show that a high county official had tried to obtain \$20,000 from them to avoid prosecution on a comparatively minor charge, some months before the killing.

Circuit Judge Henry J. Ingram called a special grand jury and appointed a special prosecutor to investigate. The grand jury returned a series of indictments naming the state's attorney, sheriff and an investigator for the state's attorney on charges of malfeasance, attempted bribery and perjury.

The grand jury report also set forth that it had found "much evidence that too many public officials are too closely associated with gangsters and racketeers."

This was followed by another special grand jury session, under direction of a special prosecutor from Chicago, appointed by ex-Gov. Dwight Green.

THE SECOND GRAND JURY RETURNED indictments against Link and several Shelton gang members, all on charges of kidnapping. The charges stemmed from the questioning by Shelton's friends of a minor Peoria hoodlum whom they believed played a "finger" role in Bernie's murder.

Meanwhile political changes came both on the state and local basis and all the indictments returned by the two grand juries

were subsequently dropped or permitted to die on the vine because of lack of "substantiating evidence." From the legal standpoint, the battle of the grand juries ended in a draw.

The death of Bernie Shelton, however, definitely ended Peoria's gang era. The remnants of the Shelton clan have long since departed these parts as well as their home territory in southern Illinois where some of their neighbors have shown an antipathy for the family in the form of periodic gunfire.

Even the "Golden Rule" farm off Farmington Road, where the Sheltons once held forth in baronial splendor, has passed to new hands and a new name.

Peoria Journal Star

PEORIA, ILLINOIS
TUESDAY, APRIL 17, 1948

EVENING

B-1



TIME OUT from preparations for putting up Downtown Days flags is taken by Ross Shride of the Peoria Flag & Decorating Co. as his assistant, Ed Cremeens, answers a "What are you doing?" inquiry from tricycle rider Ralph Martin, 1318 1/2 N. Monroe St. Downtown Days are Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week.

Downtown Days Fete Readied

Three consecutive days of bargain shopping are being planned by downtown merchants for Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Downtown Days in Peoria.

New spring and summer merchandise will be offered at attractive prices in this cooperative effort to focus attention on the advantages and convenience of downtown shopping. This is the third such semi-annual event under the guidance of the retail trade events committee of the Peoria Association of Commerce.

A SPECIAL ADVERTISING supplement for Downtown Days will appear in all editions of The Peoria Journal Star Wednesday, presenting top values being offered, David Purner, chairman of the Downtown Days Committee, emphasizes that this sale is not just a clearance sale but that excellent bargains will be available all three days. The retailers are making a special effort to have real values on the counters all three days so that Friday and Saturday shoppers will have as great an opportunity to shop advantageously as the Thursday shopper.

"The purpose of Downtown Days," said Purner, "is to make the public conscious of the advantages of loop shopping, to emphasize the convenience of a concentrated variety of merchandise and services, to make them aware of the value of the loop area to the entire community as

Continued on Page B-12

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ELECTRICAL QUIZ

Q: Why is it dangerous to use a lot of extension cords?
A: Because it's a good sign your house was never wired to carry enough power for all your appliances. "Octopus" outlets can cause fire! **OVERLANDER** Call us!

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Council May Get Stop Sign Petition

Residents in the vicinity of Robert A. Taft housing project are expected to present a petition to the city council tonight for the installation of a traffic signal or stop sign at the intersection of Adams and Green sts.

Parents began circulating the petition after several neighborhood children were either hit or had close shaves while crossing Adams.

Parents have complained to city officials that Adams st., near the housing, has turned into a speedway and is proving to be a definite hazard to children and adults alike.

Traffic Engineer Daniel J. Hanson yesterday said the problem is being discussed with school officials with the idea of having chil-

Pastor-Legislator To Address Methodist Men

An ordained Methodist minister who also is a state representative will speak here tomorrow night.

He is the Rev. Clarence G. Hall, minister of First Methodist church of Catlin, Ill., and currently serving in the general assembly as state representative from the 22nd senatorial district comprising Vermilion and Edgar counties. He will address men of the First Methodist church after a 6:15 p.m. dinner.

Mr. Hall has spoken in this area on previous occasions and is considered outstanding in his field. His subject tomorrow night is: "Has The Church Lost Its Job?"

He is a former secretary of the YMCA, a past department (Illinois) chaplain of the American Legion and the Veterans of For-

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AT SPECIAL LOW PRICES

Wednesday **NOON** Feature
PERFECTION SALAD
You have a choice of any dressing with this salad. A

Wednesday **NIGHT** Feature
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