Old Peoria? As Wide Open As The Gateway To Hell

First of a Series

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 rear of a blustering bomb was located, or the voice that judges Peoria is a city where the crack of the pistol settled many of the "business" arguments.

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

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 peely-eyed machines were displayed to lure the last coppers out of the kid's pockets.

Peoria is a city with a bold tradition, a rough river town whose gayest revelry reeked with gin and bootleg. For it is no secret in towns where vice and racketeers flourish from a well-pleased bible can be more effective than a shrewdly-sluiced bible.

This empire of vice, violence and corruption now is as dead as its friends. tolerant community it invaded and absorbed. Because Peoria was a river town it acquired a glimmer which neighboring communities never quite couldachieve.

SURE, IN ITS WAY IT WAS A RAVEY TOWN, but always with a tinkle in its eye. It was a jelly-eyed race determined to walk straight and keep its high boot, high color, high top.

Its hate vixens thought nothing of encrusted the reigning madames in their fancy buggies to all except the most exclusive social and sporting events.

And the ladies of the ladel monde expected to be addressed as Miss Core, Miss Bick, or whatever name they chose with which to dignify their establishments.

There was a Continental flair about this city, even though the majority was only timid. In fact, Miss Fern's Midnight Cotillion, conducted each Saturday night in the grand ballroom of her "home" at Fayette and Washington st., was known from coast to coast, and as favorably as New Orleans' famous Quadrille Ball.

The hoedowns, the thugs, the gangsters and panders waxed non-stop. Coffin was cursed, gambling was legal, 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 goods.

GAMBLING AND PROSTITUTION afforded the easiest access to illicit money. If Miss Fern bowed out of this new picture, there was a Diamond Lill to take her place. Or a Big Bic was ready to offer her orgastic wares.

Lill'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

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Old Peoria? As Wide Open As The Gateway To Hell

Continued from page A-1

Washington and Eaton st., became a brothel.

Cedar and Walnut st., in part were taken over by doing.

Prairie Aley, sections of what is now South Jefferson ave., and other portions of the city became "distibles."

HUTLEYS ROAMED THE DOWNTOWN BASINS, offering a quick, quiet and clean hotel room in the rear seat of a

parked automobile. One downtown eating place even provided the shelter of a door at a low cost. Usually it was patronized by young girls eager to earn half a dollar a day.

Narcotics were quick to reach the hands of these impatient

and glutton kids. The earliest portion 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, Excelsior and facially furnished, offered anyone a sort of action the gambling man could desire. It also was advertised that no one need be lonely while using his money at the old Sportsmen's Club which later became the Clover Club.

AT THE OTHER, THE ALACARZ, 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 soft, but honest, poker game was in nightly session.

Also in the 500 block Fulton st., was the Mint. Gambling was carried on in a back room, but only on a small scale. Operators roved with the coin, and well paid gloves always were pushed to close them down.

Across the corner, in the 300 block, S. Jefferson ave., was Peoria's best known establishment, the Empire. At various times, the Empire offered all types of gambling, though it was the home of the "baseball pool" which frequently paid off jackpots of $500 or more.

This was the most lucrative spot in Peoria. Its proprietor, Bill Urban, was one of the early kidnapping victims, obtaining his release only after paying $10,000.

In the same block, the Saratoga had a short career in big

time gambling. For almost a year, before Mayor Carl O. Truett pulled down the lid and kept it down, a custom furnished to back 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 Castella, renamed the Madison Palace. Gambling of all forms was available here, too. It was notable for its gambling status. The house was a desirable place to be broken and a quick refunding after the partner left the club. Often this club was said, and a respectableIA!™6f%-

casino operated in a nearby neighborhood.

The old dam aged club is not to be confused with the Palace

Arcade, in the 500 block N. Madison ave. The partner here ran with a certain crowd who betting operated on their second floor.

When the hoedowns best 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 Loveman and Windsor. The latter was a major factor in the city's life. Fortunes were won and lost across its mustard and fern tables. Many of its dealers had followed the goddess of chance to the far ends of the earth. Tintor, but almost unbelievable stories were told of Kandite days, and other famous places where fortunes were made and lost with skill. Nevertheless, it was a gambling house, and one of the city's most widely known.

THE LACERUS WAS STRICTLY A GAMBLING OPERATION, it pushed every operation which might lure the partner's back, and except for its horse racing, was held to no more than few centimeters for the city's gamblers. It now is in new hands and is an excellent restaurant.

Yes, a man could get action nightly in these days. But he was not too well aware of the hoedowns, the killings, the overthrow that was behind the veil of the city in order (that the kingdom of hoedowns might survive.

The kidnappings, murders and burnings brought Peoria wide notoriety and fame began to be heard in the Midwest. Chicago newspapers and the Associated Press reporters into the city to cover the "tearing Peoria" story. These events will be covered in tomorrow's article.

A PEORIA BAIT PILOT. 2nd Lt. John H. Larson, Tif Ware, was

drowned a pressure suit yesterday on Channel 13. His plane, a Farm Fun All show dedicated to the Air Training Command. Shown with Larson, who is stationed at Scott Air Force base, are West and Nuna Daniels, who appear each day on the afternoon show.
Old Peoria: Fixed Cops, Gang Murders, Wholesale Kidnapping

Half a dozen bold kidnappings, followed by a trial that aroused public wrath because it showed the life of the hoodlum himself. The city was on the edge of a crisis during the trial of the three men. The "Protected" slot machines that line the city's underworld were under siege. A citizen was named as a jury foreman. A little girl was killed. The story of the trial is told in this special report.

A Peoria chamber of commerce member was killed by a machine gun bullet fired by a man inside a car. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

Generally it was assumed that the trial was a matter of public justice. But it was revealed that the public was assuming that the trial was a matter of public justice. In fact, it was a matter of public justice. The public was aware of the trial because of the press.

BILLY LEE, proprietor of the "Protecor," one of the first of the local gambling outfits, was killed by a machine gun bullet fired by a man inside a car. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

Bill may have been the first, but he was not the last. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

One of his employees was killed, and the event made headlines. The Peoria Chamber of Commerce was shocked. The public was aware of the trial because of the press.

Startling as this crime was to Peoriaans, who felt their city was being invaded by the hoodlum life, it was an event that brought the trial to a close. The public was aware of the trial because of the press.

Peoria was in the headlines again this week, when the trial of a man accused of murder was held. The man was found guilty.

NORTH ENDEAUGMENT news staff reporters into Peoria to alert the public. Feature writers and specialists were on hand to give their version, often distorted by misinterpretations, of what was known.

In the city which had considered itself immune from crime, the trial of the three men buoyed the hopes of the public.

An attempt was made to kidnap a man in the city, but the attempt failed. The man was located and was not harmed.

More notoriously for Peoria was the trial of three men accused of murdering a man in the city. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

It was Peoriaans learned in the trial that the Shelleys, a man who had been shot by a man in a car, were killed by a man in the car. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

Another Kidnapping trial was that of Dr. James W. Parker, one of the better known medical men in the city. This attempt proved a failure. Although he was held by some, he was released without payment of ransom.

BREW DETECTIVE work was done on the case of the Secret Six Chicago.

See Editorial on Page 4-A.

Crime-fighting organization, reorganized and reorganized was an organization that fought crime in the city. The trial opened with a bang, as the accused were arraigned.

The domestic violence evidence was uncovered about participants in other cases, but none was brought to trial here. The public was aware of the trial because of the press.

The public was aware of the trial because of the press.

This was especially true of Jack King, who began his career in crime with the inspection of the Nose of the city's most immoral crime. He had a long history of gambling, and was involved in many of the seamy places outside his Maywood, Ill., home.

Gangs in retribution for the activity of Chicago sportsmen.

Kittis popularity was associated with Peoria kidnappings.

Starting of the gang radio here, three men were shot to death in each execution style. They included Joe Nyberg, Frank Kranner, and Benno and Bert.

NORTH END ensemble: none of these activities escaped the attention of the Peoria press. The Shelton death distinctly experimentally, but neither of the others was ignored. Crum had two papers, as well as two newspapers, to cover Peoria from top to bottom.

Unfortunately, they found themselves involved in a case of child abduction.

FOUNDERED on the press wire, the magazines and the newspapers. The Shelleys, who had been involved in the kidnapping business, had set up in competition with some city halls.

Regular rates of pay had been set and a police force was organized to keep the peace.

A slot machine in a given location cost as much as a craps table in another place. There was a different face, a different roulette wheel could be opened at a different fixed price. It was not true that a law was based on so much per head in the red light district, as has been charged. The trial was fixed for every girl.

Hatred was shown in the city. The world was, but the fact that the vice ministers were intent upon maintaining a "clear" operation was a sign that the future was ahead.

Money from all these sources was used for district attorneys. Meek, sly, of course, was not the only man. Overflow, Goddess, some of the policies, a small hostelry to keep the empire operating. Most, large amounts, too, were paid to be silent. A man who might be better informed could assist this man.

Many downtown taverns were raided by the police. Again, it was said that the man was the bartender who ran the place. It was a matter of producing a beautiful companion for the vice ministers with the prospect of producing a "clear" operation on the future.

It was heard about it. Even if the report was not true, the police had to have something to do. Here is the story of the Peoria police in the city.

So Peoria changed its character in what was noted as the old days. This was the end only when a 30-caliber Mauser was found on the premises.

Third article in a series, dealing with the killing of three men in a gangland feud, will appear in Monday evening's edition of Chicago Tribune.

COUNTY MEETING

The Peoria County Council of the Republican League met at the Limestone Post No. 875 in Bartonville. The council was addressed by Dr. Charles A. Johnson, president of the county council.

C(&$#3 200 COUNCIL meeting.

Peoria county council of the national organization to be held last Thursday, when a 30-caliber Mauser was found on the premises.

Births in Peoria Hospitals

METHYSTICAL HOSPITAL

Dr. Mrs. E. M. Bashman of Peoria,

Dr. Mrs. Richard Little, 311 Park Avenue.

Dr. Mrs. Richard W. Cringer of the Peoria Hospital.

Dr. Mrs. James Thobold, 107 South 7th.

Dr. Mrs. Marion Ward, 2721

Dr. Mrs. Howard J. Goss of Altoona.

Dr. Mrs. Marion W. Black.

Dr. Mrs. Marion Goss, 2721

Dr. Mrs. Marion W. Black.

Dr. Mrs. Marion W. Black.
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 which 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 register 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 newstands 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-months 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 fever pitch in the city proper, but running at an accelerated clip in the county under the guise of "mash" operations.

On orders of the administration 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 fast exit, 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.

ON THE NIGHT OF FEB. 28, 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 slurrings and slurs, 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 indelicate persons in Peoria county," Nyberg was out on bond at the time of his death. After being convicted of several months prior on a charge of assault with intent to kill a Newton, 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 gunfire 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.
**Old Peoria Was ‘Right’ For Sheltons Until Death Closed The Books**

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, returned Peoria’s attention to a mystery that had consumed the city for decades. But the bullet, which struck out the life of Bernie Shelton, did much more than that. It became a symbol of a larger struggle against organized crime that gripped Peoria’s streets and their entire state and nation.

Many Peorians believe that the wave of revelations and indictments of top mafia leaders was merely a first step in the campaign against organized crime in the state. This sentiment is shared by the city’s police department, which has been working tirelessly to expose the inner workings of the underworld. However, the investigation has been met with resistance from some local political leaders, who claim it threatens their ability to do their jobs.

The FBI has been working closely with local law enforcement agencies to uncover the truth about the mafia’s activities in Peoria. The bureau has been working closely with the city’s police department to ensure that the investigation is conducted in a thorough and transparent manner. The FBI has also been working with the state’s attorney general’s office to ensure that all evidence is collected and presented fairly.

**Peoria Journal Star**

**EVENING**

**PEORIA, ILLINOIS**

**Tuesday, April 17, 1990**

**Downtown Days Fete Revisited**

Three consecutive days of downtown shopping are being planned by downtown merchants for Downtown Days in Peoria.

New special interest merchandise will be offered at attractive prices during this year's Downtown Days event. Over three dozen merchants will participate in the event, which is expected to draw many visitors.

**A SPECIAL ADVERTISING SUPPLEMENT FOR Downtown Days will appear in all editions of The Peoria Journal Star.**

**Hammond**

**ELECTRICAL SPECIALS**

**ONE HOME owner in the city is already preparing for Downtown Days, planning her dressings during a recent three-day weekend.**

**Reprinted from the Peoria Journal Star**

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**Resigned Because He 'Served Long Enough' - Caldwell**

G. Chapman Caldwell of Peoria, who served as a member of the Illinois American Legion's executive committee, announced his resignation because he said he had "served long enough." Caldwell was a member of the committee's executive board for 10 years and served as its chairman for the past three years.

Caldwell said he had decided to resign because he felt the committee had not been as effective as it could have been. He said he had decided to step down to allow someone else to take over the reins of the organization.

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**Caterpillar 1st Quarter Profit $114.7 M.**

After Caterpillar Inc., the Peoria-based manufacturer of construction equipment, reported a profit of $114.7 million for the first quarter of the year, analysts were optimistic about the company's future.

The company said the profit was up 21 percent from the same period last year. The increase was driven by higher sales and stronger margins. Caterpillar's backlog of orders was up 25 percent, indicating that the company is poised for continued growth.

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**Double Feature at the Palace Cine-Mat:**

**SALAD**

**SALAD**

**SALAD**