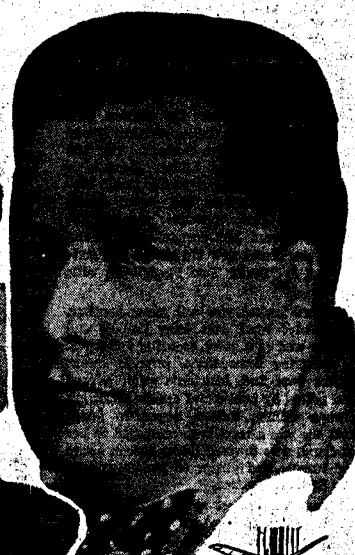


They Worked on The TIMES



Gordon R. Young

Charles F. Lummis

A. J. Rogers
S. JohnJames
Willard
Schultz

Julian Johnson

Carl Clausen

By
Harry Carr

AS AN author factory, The Times has been notably successful. Graduates from the local news room are sitting among the elect and the famous as writers of books, plays and poems.

Perhaps the most notable was Willard Huntington Wright, whose writing name is S. S. Van Dine. He has just come back to Los Angeles, unable longer to resist the blandishments of the movies.

The way Willard happened was this: John Daggett—"Uncle John" of the radio—was a commuter to and from Pasadena. A young man who took tickets at one of the gates at the Pacific Electric depot attracted his attention. He looked sort of intellectual or something.

Finally John led him around to The Times and introduced him to Harry E. Andrews, the managing editor of The Times. Mr. Andrews was a man of "hunches" and instant decisions. He put Willard to work as the book reviewer of The Times. Thereafter every shuddering author was afraid to come out from under the bed until his friends told him that the worst was over.

He wrote a story for an eastern magazine that won him instant national fame. It was called "Chemically Pure Los Angeles." It was high treason and the least that should have happened to him was to be boiled in oil. It resulted in an offer to edit the Smart Set Magazine in co-operation with two co-conspirators—H. L. Mencken and George Jean Nathan. So Willard left town, and it's lucky for him that he left. And in a hurry.

After fussing around with the Smart Set for a while, he retired to write a book on art. Willard knew a lot about art. This book still stands as the standard work of critical artistic analysis. But it didn't make any money. No fooling. Willard was a hard-up young man.

During the World War, he lightly fingered the pages of the solemn Encyclopedia and it pleased him not. Thereupon he fell upon that offending work with force and violence. He tore the old thing limb from limb and danced a war dance on the bleeding shreds. The result

was that Willard nearly got himself into jail. Some of the half-witted morons who were doing gum shoe for the Allied forces saw at once that the world could not possibly be made safe for democracy unless Willard Wright liked everything in the Encyclopedia Britannica. There were investigations and gum shoes and cross examinations.

In the end, Willard went to bed—literally a nervous wreck. While an invalid, he got to studying detective stories. The result was Philo Vance and the Van Dine series of murder mysteries. It proved to be one of the greatest single-barrel hits in the history of American literature. In a year, Willard was rich.

Another graduate from The Times news room was Lanier Bartlett—co-author of "Adios," which threatens to become another "Romona."

The Author of "Adios"

Lanier was a good reporter and hated it. He could do it because he had brains and high ability, but newspaper life was foreign to his instincts. He was a sensitive, cultured student. Lanier bowed out of the newspaper business one day when he was sent to interview Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Premier of Canada. Sir Wilfrid was one of those monocle Englishmen who was shocked at the rough and tumble methods of American news men.

He gave Lanier a frozen glare and Lanier indignantly retired. The city editor told him to go back and try again. Lanier promptly resigned the job. He is now on the way to great celebrity. He knows California (where he was born) and he knows the Spanish language, which he learned under the tutelage of Charles F. Lummis.

Another man who left The Times to become famous was Richard Barry, who is an author of national standing.

Richard was just a kid when promoted to be dramatic critic of The Times. One day he wrote a youthful and freezing article about Lawrence Hanley, the Shakespearean actor. Dick told Larry that he didn't know a darn thing about reading classic lines. Whereupon the actor wrote one of these attempting-to-be-sarcastic articles. "Perhaps you will be good enough to show me how to read Shakespeare." "Sure," replied Dick cheerfully. I well remember going into Dick's office one night. Here was the actor sitting all doubled up in a corner. He looked as dejected as a wet hen. In the middle of the floor was Dick with a copy of Shakespeare in his hand walking up and down and ruminating "To Be Or Not to Be" like a pipe organ.

Afterward Richard went to China for the Russo-Japanese War and pulled off one of the great scoops of all time on the fall of Port Arthur. It made him world famous.

He went to New York to live and was elected to be a member of the snuffy Players Club, the youngest member of which—so far as I could observe—is 108. Dick signalized his election by writing a magazine article on actors in which he saved all actors alive. He didn't leave

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