How Comic Strips are Made

WHY THEY HAVE AN ENORMOUS INFLUENCE ON AMERICAN THOUGHT AND CUSTOM

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HALDEMAN-JULIUS PUBLICATIONS
GIRARD, KANSAS
THE PICTURE STORY

A rough 500 centuries ago, a grimy Magdalenian man sat on his haunches in a cave in France. From a stone lamp, burning fat with a moss wick, came a flickering light. With nothing but a sharp stone, perhaps a stone knife, he scratched pictures on the wall of the cave. He was recording to the best of his skill what had happened on a recent hunt, or what he hoped would happen on the next.

His pictures of reindeer, bison, even of the mammoth, harassed by spears thrown by men who, in this primitive drawing, looked like clothespins, survive as the earliest examples of narrative art—the picture story.

Today this form of story telling is best known in the comic strip and the movies. Except in animated cartoons, the work of making motion pictures is done by the camera. In the comic strip the artist works much as the old Magdalenian worked, but he uses better tools, has better light and he is much less untidy. He works laboriously, telling what has happened or what some reader hopes will happen to Little Orphan Annie, or any of the 200 odd characters who influence the lives of a large chunk of the literate world of today.

Both the movies and the comic strip are comparatively modern inventions. One might say they are products of the 20th century, although both had beginnings in the 19th and they are direct descendants of the scratches on the Magdalenian cave wall. The world might have had either comics or movies sooner, but the methods of producing them were crude until this century came along.

While the movies have been widely publicized, few people realize the planning and effort required to produce a comic strip. In fact, letters received by every syndicate show that a considerable number of readers believed that the strips are prepared only a few days ahead of publication. As a matter of fact, many strips are planned six months in advance. Especially is this true of the Sunday color pages. An artist seldom starts drawing on a story until every detail of its progress from beginning to end has been worked out.

A story—that is, an episode in the life of a character of the comics—runs one day to as long as six months, with the average approximately eight weeks. Proofs of the comics are issued to newspapers two or three weeks ahead of the release dates and the artist usually draws each strip from four to eight weeks ahead of the day it appears in the paper. In the case of the Sunday pages, the drawing may take place as much as three months before the date of release.

The comic artist himself is not a smock-attired individual who has a special gift of the gods called “talent,” “creative genius,” and the like. He usually has spent years learning to draw, more years trying to sell his idea to an editor, and more years waiting for the public to appreciate his work. As a rule he works hard. While he sometimes has assistants, he does more work than all of them combined.

This book will tell how comic strips are made.
THE ROOTS OF COMIC ART

After the Magdalenian man, art developed slowly and in many ways. Sculpture probably appeared soon after the first scratchings on the cave walls of Europe, and when the early men learned to make clay pottery, they soon started to decorate it. After a few tens of thousands of years, some progressive people living in Mesopotamia began to keep accounts by scratching in wet clay. This was the beginning of printing.

Curiously enough, men learned the principle of printing before they knew how to write. These marks on wet clay were, at first, mere tabulations—business accounts. They were not alphabetical writing. Certain firms, in order to authenticate their accounts, made use of seals—types of marks that were used over and over again. So the marks were engraved on wooden stamps, just as an early wood cut was made.

Within a few years, it was found advisable to record other things besides business deals. The Sumerians began to draw pictures of important events, such as the time the king slaughtered a few wild tribesmen in the desert. Then a primitive alphabet developed which could, by using pictures, convey a thought. The king learned to sign his name by drawing a picture. Later, he used a seal, which had the lines raised and in reverse.

The Babylonians carried this procedure further still. Not only are some of their wooden stamps preserved in the British Museum, but there are several stamps made of bronze which have raised characters (in reverse) on their faces. On the backs of these bronze stamps are handles, and the uses of these handles are quite evident. These are the first printing presses.

The Egyptians developed their means of writing by hieroglyphs which conventionalized pictures almost to alphabetical form. And, in order to make the meanings clear, they drew pictures to illustrate what the story was about. The Egyptians were great comic strip men. They drew illustrations of everything, games, industries, wars, commerce, and all. Their temples and their tombs were art galleries.

While Egyptian art may appear crude, it was intentionally conventionalized. The Egyptians might have been more realistic, since their sculptures show a good understanding of anatomy, but art was practiced as a magical rite. It seemed too easy to draw a god or a king as a man, so he was given a lion's body or a raven's head. Furthermore, the principles of perspective were not well known and some of the conventionalization may have been to compensate for the lack of knowledge in this direction.

The Greeks improved the technique and made their figures more lifelike and better proportioned. There are examples of narrative art on Cretan vases (approximately 1000 B.C.) and similar relics have come down from the later Hellenistic period.

While the Romans lacked much of the artistry of the Greeks, they did not overlook the practical side of printing. They used signets. At just about the same time the Chinese were printing from blocks—actually printing.

There was not much progress during the next millennium, but the relationship between art and religion persisted in the monasteries where monks, copying old books, did some high class doodling in the illumination of old manuscripts. The artistry of these designs, borders and initials gradually developed into illustrations of the religious texts themselves.
By the 9th century, picture stories were being told. Jonah and the Whale, Jacob and the Ladder and a host of other stories were illustrated. The Bamberg Bible shows Adam and Eve with the tree pointing an accusing finger on the trespassing couple, an innovation which certainly smacks of comic art.

In India, China and Japan, picture stories were being drawn on scrolls giving history of the times and many legends. Some of the Japanese scripts symbolized human beings with figures of animals, just as many comics have made animals behave like humans. Toba Sojo (1053-1140) drew frogs and rabbits waving fans, using bows and arrows and doing things just like people.

The value of pictures in livening up a story was realized almost from the start of manuscript production. Reading has always been difficult for some people inasmuch as it is a complicated process. We must recognize combinations of letters with our eyes, interpret them as sounds to pronounce the word, associate the sound with a symbol which creates another image in our brain, then go on to the next word. With a picture, the visual image is created for us, and we see just what the artist intends us to see. Often a writer is interpreted differently from the way he intended.

It is interesting to note at this point that in producing a comic art story, this interpretation from written word to visual picture goes on as a direct exchange between the artist and the writer of the continuity (who is also the artist sometimes). In other words, it’s a two-man job—even when done by one man—to turn words into pictures.

Modern printing and narrative art had their beginnings at approximately the same time. The Chino twins about the end of the 13th century, at the age of 16 years, engraved a series of pictures upon wooden blocks. There were nine pictures in the series, about the number of panels in a Sunday comic page, consisting of the “Heroic Actions of Alexander the Great.” They used a small knife to engrave the figures on wood. These are believed to be the first attempts at block printing in the Western world.

Early in the 15th century block printing was fairly common and the next step, of course, was printing from movable type.

Like many of the arts and crafts of those times, the practitioners of printing carefully kept the secrets of their trade. While there are one or two disputants, the invention is popularly attributed to John Gutenberg. There is legal evidence to support this claim in the form of an action brought against him by the brother, as heir, to one of Gutenberg’s partners who died. Evidence brought out at the trial showed that Gutenberg and his partners had kept their craft a secret for some years prior to 1439. Gutenberg carried on his art some years more before retiring in 1465 and dying in 1468. Before his death the storming of Mentz, where Gutenberg’s printing office was located, resulted in the dispersal of his workmen, most of whom took the secret of printing with them to other lands. One of Gutenberg’s men, William Caxton, brought printing to England.

Gutenberg did his best to keep his process of printing with movable type a secret from possible competitors. His associates were sworn to secrecy. The Gutenberg Bible’s pages were illuminated by hand, probably as much to disguise the fact that they were printed as to make them more beautiful. But war and a lawsuit revealed the invention to the public and within a short time printing was being done everywhere in Europe.

Another big stride toward the comic strip was made about the same time by an artist, Annibale Carraci (1560-1609), who invented a system of mock portraiture, which exaggerated certain characteristics of the subject rather than to make a realistic likeness. This system was termed caricature, in Carraci’s honor.

Carraci’s invention represented a full turn of the wheel since the
days of the first artists. The bison pictured in the Magdalenian cave was caricatured. Primitive sculptures exaggerated breasts and buttocks of women in order to make them recognizable as women. Caricature does the same thing—it exaggerates characteristics in order to make the drawing understood. Caricature also is comic art.

About a century after Carracci died an invention appeared that was vital to present day art. This was stereotyping. No one knows the exact date, but stereotyping was invented early in the 18th century, before 1725 and after 1701. William Ged, an Edinburgh goldsmith, gets the credit for the invention, but Earl Stanhope, who developed the iron printing press, most certainly had a great deal to do with perfecting it. Early stereotyping was done with plaster of paris casts of type forms. Modern stereotyping is done with a heavy paper. Without stereotyping comic strips could never have the wide circulation they have today.

From early stereotyping came a process that simplified the making of cuts. Chalk blocks were used instead of steel or wood. Engraving was simplified a thousand fold. The chalk plate survived the turn of the 20th century.

The chalk plate was a thin block of chalk on a metal base. The artist made his drawing on the chalk surface and then etched the lines down to the metal with a stylus. Stereotype metal was poured over the plate and a cut was formed with the lines of the drawing raised and in reverse, ready for printing.

The chalk plate was used widely in America before the turn of the century and its use continued on some smaller papers for several years before World War I. However, a few early cartoonists actually engraved their drawings on steel or copper plates.

The caricature and cartoon had increasing popularity after the beginning of the 17th century and the early newspapers used it as a propaganda weapon. Artists learned that the cartoon was an effective way to run a man down, but ineffective as a method of dishing out praise.

The word cartoon is a corruption of the Latin charta, meaning paper. Renaissance artists used the term as a name for rough sketches made before they started to work on a drawing or painting. Later it came to be applied generally to all sketches, then specifically to the caricatures which appeared in newspapers.

During the 18th century, Thomas Rowlandson invented the balloon. His characters had their utterances tied to them by strings. Even the balloons have been conventionalized in modern strips and they are all shapes, from bubbles to clouds.

Next came the power press. On November 28, 1814, the London Times informed its readers that they were reading the first newspaper printed by steam power. The Times' press was capable of delivering printed copies of the newspaper at the rate of 1,100 per hour. Within the next century the speed of the printing press was increased to a point where the hourly output of the Times' press could be duplicated in one minute.

The rise of the great news gathering organizations in the 19th century also had a part in the development of the comic strip, although these agencies, which today include the United Press, the Associated Press, International News Service, Reuters and many others all over the world, did not produce comic strips.

However, they did have organization and facilities which made news a commodity—as it probably always has been. They sold news. At first newspapers printed news and advertisements and little else. Then they added editorials and cartoons. But when newspapers began printing feature stories and things that would be just as good a month hence as they are today, it was logical that syndicates and feature services should be developed in the same way that the news gathering associations grew.

Back in 1870, Miss Ellen Browning Scripps, sister of Publisher E. W.
Scripps, began writing miscellaneous feature stories about almost anything that struck her fancy. She sent them to her brother, who then was editor of the Cleveland Press. Mr. Scripps printed them and asked for more. Later when he added newspapers to his chain, he ordered them to copy Miss Scripps' features.

At the turn of the century, members of the Scripps chain began to pool their individual writers and feature men and distribute the output along the lines of the wire news gathering organizations. This organization, called Newspaper Enterprise Association, soon added comic strips.

Syndicates and other feature services have grown along the same formula. While both are sometimes called syndicates and they operate in the same manner there is a difference. Feature services, such as NEA, the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Enterprise Association; the Associated Press Features, and Central Press, which is the Hearst service, sell a blanket service including features, editorials, columns, etc., on an "all or nothing" basis. Syndicates will sell one paragraph or almost a whole newspaper full of material to all comers.

When the Scripps and Hearst chains began to expand, the pooling of writers offered them strong competitive advantages over single, privately owned concerns. Big dailies competing against the chains met the threat by offering to sell features to other non-competing newspapers. As a result syndicates sprang up all over the country. Whenever a newspaper had an outstanding writer or artist, it began to offer his work to other papers. Most of the early syndicates were subsidiaries of private newspaper enterprises.

HEARST SETS STAGE FOR COMIC STRIP

William Randolph Hearst came to New York out of the West and at once caused consternation on the New York World, which was operated by Joseph Pulitzer. Pulitzer was a progressive newspaperman who believed in trying new things. At the time of Hearst's arrival he was virtually unchallenged as the circulation leader in Manhattan, but Hearst also believed in innovations. A newspaper war broke out and the stage was set for the comic strip.

In 1894 nothing could stop the comics from appearing. Cartoonists were lampooning political figures, stereotyping had developed to the mat stage, and there were facilities for pooling and distributing features. Furthermore, color printing was improved and there were innovations in the engraving field with the introduction of the zinc etching.

The improvement in the method of making cuts over the old chalk plates wrought by the zinc etching made artists as important to newspapers as photographers are today. Artists accompanied reporters everywhere, sketching fires, train wrecks, murder trials and other events. These newspaper artists became skilful and fast. They could draw a display at a flower show or a baseball player knocking a home run. The requirements of their job made newspaper artists develop a special drawing technique, also. While zinc etchings were improvements on anything that had been used for cuts before this time, they had certain drawbacks. The zincographs demanded strong, bold lines. Subtle, delicate lines did not reproduce. The result was that newspaper art became vigorous art.

In the rivalry between Pulitzer and Hearst, the outstanding pen and ink draftsmen were brought into the newspaper industry to illustrate the news of the day. Most of these men already had reputations and with newspaper seasoning they became enriched with speed and self-confidence. They didn't know from one hour to the next what their next picture would involve. They tried new ways to work. They invented shortcuts in the old methods.

"We didn't have morgues (libraries) full of photographs in those
days," says an early day artist. "When we had to draw a picture of something we had to go out and take a look at it."

Then in 1894, the New York World unpacked a Sunday punch to deliver against Hearst's Journal's chin. Pulitzer brought a color press and Old Lady Journalism was hurried to the maternity ward to give birth to the comic strip.

**FIRST IN WHAM, FIRST IN POW**

One of the highly skilled artists working on the World when Pulitzer bought a new color press was R. F. Outcault, who had illustrated a story called "McFadden's Flats" by F. W. Townsend. Outcault's contemporaries were Fred Opper, Tom Sullivan, Gene Carr, and Palmer Cox, all top ranking draftsmen.

Cox had experimented with funny pictures and had produced some children's books, "Adventures of the Brownies." Outcault drew a series for the World involving the capers of a clown and a dog.

The World's new color press had been purchased with the serious intent to innovate a color fashion section, but that aim was soon forgotten because of Mr. Outcault.

This artist drew a page showing some "tough kid" characters he had used in "McFadden's Flats." He called his first page "Hogan's Alley," but one of the characters, "The Kid," stole the show and gave his name to the first comic.

Hearst met the challenge with another color press and he began putting his artists to work drawing funny pictures as well as sending them out to draw the serious things of life.

Mr. Hearst was not content to use his own artists, but he reached over and grabbed a few of the World's men, including Outcault. Outcault brought "The Kid" to the Journal, where he painted his hero's shirt yellow, and called him "The Yellow Kid." As a result, Hearst's innovations were called "Yellow Kid Journalism," and finally "yellow journalism."

In those days, the artist drew his characters in black and white, just as he does today. A negative was made and a print was made, from which a black key plate was etched. With this key plate as a guide, prints were made for the artist to color. Then the various combinations of red, yellow and blue were laid in on three additional plates made from the original negative. This laying in of color was done from the artist's sketch by the plate maker and it was called the Benday process. This process was in use for at least a quarter of a century and although newer types of plate making, including process, now go into the making of comic pages the place where the color plates are made is still called the Benday room.

**THE HUMOR OF MAYHEM**

Sullivan, Opper, Zimmerman, Dirks and others began drawing comics. Opper was the mass producer. He drew "Happy Hooligan and Gloomy Gus," "Her Name is Maud," "Alphonso and Gaston," "Mr. Dubb and Mr. Dough" and "Our Antedeluvian Ancestors." Outcault drew "Buster Brown" after dropping "The Yellow Kid."

There is a legend that grew up in the Benday rooms about how Opper began to draw pictures of Maud, the mule, who always left the imprint of her heels in someone's behind in the last panel of every strip and Sunday page.

Sullivan had been working for hours trying to draw a picture of a mule sitting in a chair. At last he called for help from Opper. Opper
picked up a pencil and with a few lines roughed out a picture of a
comical mule sitting in a chair.

"But no mule could get in that position," Sullivant objected.
"This one did," Opper replied.

Outcault later drew "Buster Brown," who always wound up his ac-
tivities with a pillow tied to his posterior. It seems that comic artists
often made devils out of their readers—the kids. This might have been
due to European influence for about the time of the Civil War in Am-
erica Wilhelm Busch produced a book of sketches about two little ras-
cals named Max and Moritz. Max had long, straight but unruly black
hair. Moritz had light hair and he had one tuft of it standing up right
over his forehead in what might be called a cowlick.

Dirks was asked to invent a couple of bad boys to perform along the
lines of Max and Moritz and the result was Hans and Fritz Katzen-
jammer. Their hair resembled that of Max and Moritz and so did their
dispositions.

But nearly all early comics were violent. Any kind of mayhem was
supposed to be funny. A kick in the pants by Maud the mule, throwing
Captain Katzenjammer into a vat of molasses, tossing bricks, getting
blown up by a powder keg and other little things were done every Sun-
day to make the readers laugh. At this time continuity comics—those
that tell a continued story—had not been invented.

EARLY COMIC ARTISTS

Other early comic artists included Gene Carr, who drew "Lady
Bountiful," James Swinnerton, "Little Jimmy" and "Mr. Jack," Winsor
McCay, "Little Nemo," Carl Schultz, "Foxy Grandpa," E. D. Kemble,
"Black Berries," and Frank Nankivel, "Uncle Mun." Of these, Swinnern-
ton and his comic are still in business.

Ill health forced Swinnerton to abandon comic art some years ago.
While convalescing in the Southwest he took up painting. He illustrated
"The Canyon Kids," which ran in the Cosmopolitan magazine, and
staged many exhibitions of his oils. Then he came back to the comics
to do "Rocky Mason," a western, and later he revived "Little Jimmy."

McCay, a genius in many fields of art and whose name will come up
frequently as we go along, began drawing "Little Nemo" for the Herald
in 1905. Later he went to Hearst's Journal and took his characters with
him under the title of "Dreams of a Rarebit Fiend." His strips showed a
beginning of continuity, although he made each one complete as a
dream of Little Nemo. Nemo was said to have been inspired by McCay's
young son Robert.

At length McCay gave up the funny paper to illustrate Arthur
Brisbane's editorials. An attempt was made some years ago to revive
"Little Nemo" in the comic books, but this attempt failed, possibly be-
cause the original drawings were not used. More recently the Richard-
son syndicate of Indianapolis revived the comic by re-issuing the origi-
inals, which were prepared for modern newspaper sizes by Robert Win-
sor McCay, the original inspiration.

The Katzenjammers have had a hectic life outside of the Sunday
pages. Dirk's left Hearst's Journal in 1914 to go to the World, which was
a reverse of the pilgrimages of Outcault and McCay, but not at all un-
common, since all New York artists were going back and forth in a
continuous procession from one paper to another in those days. Dirks,
like McCay, could not take his creation with him, but no one could take
away his style of drawing so he concocted a new strip, exactly the same
as the old in style, and called it "The Captain and the Kids," which is
still issued by United Features Syndicate. Hearst got H. H. Knerr to
draw the Katzenjammers, and the average reader cannot tell the two
pages apart today.
During the first World War the Katzenjammers temporarily changed their names to Shenanigan, protesting that although they were Dutch, many people believed them to be "doddered Germans." When war hysteria ended everybody forgot about the "Shenanigan Kids."

THE LAND OF MAGGIE AND JIGGS

Another early immigrant to the land of wham and pow was George McManus, who drew a page devoted to the doings of Mr. and Mrs. New-lywed and their offspring Snookums. Later McManus had a better idea. He forgot about the Newlyweds and Snookums and introduced a small, bandy-legged, red-headed Irishman named Jiggs, who was married to a shrewy tyrant called Maggie. Maggie wanted to make a highbrow out of Jiggs, but Jiggs persisted in longing for corned beef and cabbage. The page usually ended with Jiggs being the target for a shower of dishes.

A few years ago, when papers began making their comics elastic so that they could conform to tabloid, half page, full page, third page and all other types of makeup, most of the ranking cartoonists were required to do a filler strip to go with the Sunday page for makeup pur-poses. McManus introduced a lovesick swain and his "girl friend in a feature called "Rosie's Beau." This strip was superceded later by a re-vival of the Newlyweds and Snookums under the title, "Snookums."

Many of the old time comics which still live, such as Bud Fisher's "Mutt and Jeff," "Bringing Up Father," "The Captain and the Kids," and others follow the early technique, in direct contrast with more modern styles. The old form made all of the panels the same size, each complete with a background, no closeups, and violent slapstick. The closeup was the contribution of Hollywood to the comic strip, for it did not appear until the movies began using it.

Backgrounds in every picture meant a lot of drawing. The early comics were made on a grand scale, very large to allow for plenty of re-duction. Most of the old timers still draw large strips and Sunday pages. The younger artists draw small size strips, and put as much or more into them as the big drawings of the old days. They all reduce to the same size.

It was said of some of the early artists that they like to stand their characters behind a box or a fence, so that they needed only to draw heads and they need not draw the rest of the bodies of their characters. It's a pity that no one thought of the closeup.

George Herriman's "Krazy Kat" introduced variety in backgrounds. Every background was different, although his characters might not have moved an inch. He used modernistic figures, trees and landscape which intrigued the highbrows and his strip eventually inspired a symphony.

While the comics started in New York, other cities were early fol-lowers in the game. Chicago, St. Louis and San Francisco had Sunday comics within a few years. St. Louis had another "Max and Moritz" theme in the form of the Feinheimer twins, who looked like Hans and Fritz. Bud Fisher got his start drawing "Mutt and Jeff" for $15 a week in San Francisco. By all rights, both Mutt and Jeff should be old men by now, for in 1910 they were both the same age they are now.

While nearly all the strips presented violence, Wallace Morgan originated the pin-up girl comic with "Fluffy Ruffles," in the days be-fore World War I. As a result Fluffy Ruffles fashions were the rage. This, however, was not the first attempt to capitalize on the popularity of the comics. Buster Brown suits were worn by small boys in the early days of the century.

While big town papers were printing colored comics, the Kansas City Star gave its reader one comic strip. This was a black and white drawing called "The Intellectual Pup," which appeared every Sunday.

10
on the editorial page. It was, however, the claimant to being one of the first actual "strips." The colored comics were "pages," not strips, although the term strip may be applied to them loosely. "The Intellectual Pup" had four pictures and originally was six columns wide, the size of the first strip cartoons.

Before the first World War, when newspapers had only seven columns instead of eight as in most cases today, the original comic strips ran six columns across the page and were about three inches deep. After the second World War, the standard comic size was four columns wide and two inches deep. Now this would seem only a third reduction in the size of the comic strip, but it really was cutting the space in half. The 6-column comics used up 18 column inches. The 4-column comics use but eight column inches. Two comics now can be published where one was published before and there are two column inches left over.

Part of the popularity of 4-column strips was due to paper rationing during the second World War, but they are probably here to stay because publishers can get more comics into the same space by using smaller sizes. More inches mean more newspaper readers.

The era just before the first World War was the day of "he-she" gags, consisting of two line jokes underneath a picture. The old humorous magazines, Life and Judge, used practically nothing else and the Chicago Daily News printed a full page of cartoons each week, which offered markets for men who were trying to break into the comics.

The creative procedure for these old time artists was to think of a funny picture, draw it and then make up some lines to fit it. Some gage artists still use this plan, but it is not the best way to work.

George Scarbo, a Minnesotan of Norse ancestry, is one of the men who today draws a picture, then thinks of a gag, although he does not work this way all the time. Scarbo worked in the lumber camps as a youth, took a mail order cartoonist course and landed a job on a Toledo newspaper before becoming a comic artist. Today Scarbo does a wide variety of things including a "kiddie" color comic called "The Comic Zoo."

In addition to being an artist, Scarbo is also a musician, playing piano, violin, whistling, collecting old phonograph records and singing in a barber shop quartet. It was natural that on one occasion recently George should think of a funny picture involving a fiddle. His idea was to picture a mouse grimacing at the strings of a violin. When he finished the picture he couldn't think of a gag. So he drew another mouse. Still no gag. He drew mice Nos. 3, 4 and 5, but the result was no better. Finally, when the picture got so cluttered up with mice that he could draw no more, he tossed his drawing aside and figured out another picture.

The era of the "he-she" gags ended when editors were changed on Life, about 1912. Hundreds of pen and ink draftsmen suddenly had to change their style of being funny or starve and, no doubt, many of them nearly starved. Dorman Smith, an old-time gag cartoonist who is one of the outstanding political cartoonists today, went to work as a crane-man in a steel mill for some years before he got a newspaper job in Des Moines.

After the first World War there was a change in drawing styles. Fewer pens were used and more brush and grease pencil artistry found their way into newspaper comic pages. Pens are still used today, but artists sing praises of the brush. To the layman, however, the difference seems hard to detect. Quite a number of artists who began as penmen quickly adapted themselves to the brush. "A good artist can draw a picture on a piece of burlap with a match-stick dipped in mud," says one man, who certainly could if anybody can.

The content of cartoons changed too. Fewer bricks were used. By the 'twenties it was apparent that a revolution had occurred in comic
art. The Chicago Tribune style of comics began to tell a story instead of a gag. The page of panels all the same size was disappearing. Closeups were used for the first time.

The old fire-horse comic artist, who covered murder trials when not drawing his strip, had completely disappeared and in his place was the professional comic artist. Instead of going out and taking a look at something that was to be drawn, artists drew from files of photographs. Cameras replaced the sketch pad.

There was a greater degree of accuracy and there was an attempt to depart from caricature. Artists learned that short men, tall men, and fat men were not humorous unless they did or said something funny. A long nose did not get a belly laugh and being hit by a brick was not the jolliest thing that ever happened.

The cave man of the comic strip was racing away from a bison-type caricature; he was approaching Greek perfection. For a time it began to look as if the comic artist were trying to compete with the photograph. Then the pendulum swung back with "Blondie," "Li'l Abner," "Alley Oop," and "Moon Mullins." There was violence, but there was also real humor.

**THE MOVIES’ INFLUENCE ON COMICS**

The movies, whether or not they were the cause of the revolution, certainly had an effect on the comics. The movies are a form of narrative illustration, just as the comic strip is. Many of the tricks that Hollywood introduced were taken from the movies, and it is quite possible that Hollywood also stole from the comics. The fact remains, that when the movies began to emerge from their trial period, the comics began to improve.

Another underlying cause may have been an improvement in the ways of producing and distributing comics. Dry mats permitted comics to be released simultaneously in any city in the United States and Canada. Dry mats were simply paper matrices for stereotype castings, a direct descendant of the plaster of paris casts used by Lord Stanhope. Mats were made quickly and cheaply from the zinc etchings of the comic drawings and mailed out to client newspapers two or three weeks ahead of the release date.

As a result, syndicates sold comics to small newspapers. A newspaper in Higginsport or Podunk could give its readers the same things a big city paper offered.

A syndicate salesman describes the period after the first World War as the golden age of the comics, from his viewpoint:

"Newspapers were hungry for features. They'd buy anything that looked good enough to print. You didn't even have to make a trip to see the publisher—you'd send him a sample and a price and he'd send a check by return mail."

It is obvious that the more money a syndicate made off the strip, the more the comic artist would make, since most artists worked on a percentage basis. Artists often received more than the editors who hired them. However, the artist's cut was not all profit. He had to pay an assistant, sometimes he paid a writer for gags or continuity, and in more modern times he was subject to other expenses, such as models. He also furnished his own place to work, often had to hire a secretary to handle his correspondence, and had to keep himself in supplies. Art supplies are not cheap.

But the rewards were enough to attract the best men to the field. Competition was keen. Editors were quick to realize the value of comics and they attempted to offer their readers the best comics they could obtain. The best comics had more clients, the artists made more money.
Many a top rank illustrator has envied the income, but not the hard work, of a comic strip artist.


Sidney Smith, before drawing “Andy Gump,” did a page on the life of “Old Doc Yak,” one of the last of the popular strips which utilized animals behaving as human beings. Doc Yak drove an old, dilapidated car No. 348, which he turned over to Andy Gump when Andy replaced him in the Chicago Tribune.

No. 348 was also the license number Sidney Smith was issued each year by the State of Illinois. One day, after signing a new contract to do Andy Gump, Smith set out in old 348 in high spirits. On that drive he met a fatal accident. Today Andy Gump is carried on by Gus Edson.

Billy de Beck died a few years ago and his strip is now handled by Fred Lasswell under the title “Barney Google and Snuffy Smith.” Clare Briggs’ page, “Mr. and Mrs.” now is done by his daughter.

ANDY GUMP INTRODUCES THE CONTINUITY IDEA

The idea of telling a continued story in the comics seems to have begun with Winsor McCay. In an early sequence, Little Nemo went to Mars in his regular Sunday dream. The ensuing pages told of Little Nemo’s adventures on Mars. There were further attempts at continuity during later years and then Andy Gump ran for Congress on the platform, “He Wears No Man’s Collar.” Andy’s candidacy and defeat presented a real plot and the story’s success resulted in other comics carrying on the continuity idea.

Frank King, also working for the Tribune in Chicago, started out drawing a hodge-podge called “Crazy Quilt,” consisting of unrelated drawings patched together resembling an old patchwork quilt. It was an innovation from the sameness of a 12-panel Sunday page. Characters such as Phillip Space did little weekly chores each Sunday at the behest of King’s imagination. One patch was called “Gasoline Alley.”

Using the characters of this patch, King developed the comic devoted to big, fat, boy-faced Walt Wallet. One day someone left a baby on Walt’s doorstep. Walt called the child Skeezeix and his growing up has entertained readers since. Skeezeix now is married and Walt is a grandfather, but life goes on. King turned a comic strip into a novel.

In contrast with the lifelike growth of Skeezeix, Harold Gray’s “Little Orphan Annie,” also issued by the Tribune-News syndicate, shows the doings of a little girl who by all rights should be a grown woman by now, but seems to get old slowly. Gray’s underworld characters are apt to say “Hark” instead of “Listen,” but the strip has a large following.

Speaking of growing children, the Katzenjammer boys ought to be approaching 50, but they haven’t grown at all. Merrill Blosser’s “Freckles” has grown about a year for every five or six of his existence. Only recently has “Boots,” who was a college girl in the early 20’s, become a young bride and later a mother. Incidentally, Boots never had a last name until she got married.

“Let the moral of that be,” says Ernest (East) Lynn, comics director of NEA Service, Inc., “never invent a character without a last name.”
MODERN COMICS

Today comics are diverse and it is hard to say just what the modern trend is. One of the steps, originated by the Patterson-McCormick Tribune-News syndicate, is a synchronization of daily and Sunday comics. That move is so drastic that it requires a special technique, even a special writer in some cases, for handling.

A synchronized comic tells a story so that the reader who reads only the daily strips, and a reader who sees only the Sunday page, each gets a complete story, yet if the reader reads both he will at no time be conscious of repetition. It requires a clever bit of story telling to do that, but there are several methods, so complicated that it would take an entire book to discuss them. However, Milton Caniff did a bang-up job in his handling of "Terry and the Pirates."

There is a chance for a much better story when Sunday and daily strips are synchronized. Only a few newspaper editors object to the system and they do so probably because they do not read comics. The chief objection is: "Why should we buy both the Sunday and daily when one of them tells the story." The answer to this is that there is actually no repetition and the readers like it. Let them read one of the synchronized comics, "Dick Tracy," "Red Ryder," or Alfred Andriola's "Kerry Drake."

The striving toward realism may be a good or bad sign. There is danger in becoming too realistic, because comics are primarily "escape" fiction. But a little straightforwardness has helped a lot.

Some years ago Allman's "Doings of the Duffs," introduced the "family" type of strip. It was one of the most popular strips of the day and far ahead of its time. Attempts were made, after Allman's untimely death as the result of overwork, to get someone to carry it on, but no one could be found to do the job satisfactorily.

One day Allman's strip showed a picture of a stork flapping its wings over Tom Duff's home. Tom Duff had become a father.

Today, the birth of a baby in the comics is a most common event. The characters behave realistically. Before the birth, the artist is careful to show the expectant mother in positions where her pregnancy will not show — utilizing the old "Mutt and Jeff" trick of putting her behind a table or some object where only her head and shoulders will show. She is shown sewing, reading a book on child care. The reader is taken into the secret.

After Boots was married and editors were told that she was about to become a mother, some of them urged that the birth be "hurried up." However, great care was taken that the baby was not born until Boots had been married a respectable period of time, lest there be gossip. When the baby came, the editors were sent engraved announcements and cigars by Artist Martin.

Death occurs in the comics less frequently. Nearly always it brings protests if the demise is a popular character. "Smilin' Jack" lost his wife some years back, but Zack Mosely revived her by showing that after her plane crashed into the sea she was picked up by an Axis submarine. Later she was killed off again.
COMIC STRIP CHARACTERS GO TO WAR

During the war there was a rush by comic strip characters to get into the services. Artists and writers permitted this with some misgivings. They knew that the end might come suddenly and it was necessary to keep the story moving from one to four months in advance of release. However, it was argued here that, after all, the doings of the comic strip characters were fiction, and it could be presented as such. If the war lasted a little longer in the comic strips than it did in real life, no one would be harmed. As it happened, there was enough warning by Germany’s surrender, by which time most comic strip fighters had been moved to the Pacific, to get the characters set in case of a sudden surrender by Japan. Most strips handled the situation without prolonging the war alarmingly.

The influence of the comics has been felt in the American language almost as much as the influence of Shakespeare on the English language. Almost from the first “dodgast” uttered by Captain Katzenjammer, there have been innovations.

Much of this influence has resulted from taboo. Early in the game, protests came from various people that the young readers were asking what the stars and asterisks meant in the balloons that mad comic characters gave out. These, of course, were artists’ conceptions of cuss words.

THE LANGUAGE IS ENRICHED

Comic artists had to make their characters say things when angry. “Goodness gracious” did not often fit. The artists wanted their characters to cuss without actually cussing.

Cliff Sterrett added “So’s your old man” to the language. Tad Dor- gan gave the world the expression “Hot dog.” Billy de Beck aptly promoted “Horsefeathers.”

As a result of the popularity of these words, comic artists incorporated other quips. When Dorgan said “Yes, we have no bananas,” a popular song was written. He also said “Thanks for the buggy ride.” De Beck originated “banana oil,” and “heebie jeebies.”

Elzie Crisler Segar, who created “Thimble Theatre, Starring Popeye,” drew a little animal which he called a “jeep.” The term was applied to a general purpose (G.P.) vehicle used in the late war. Hamburgers became Wimpies, because the sleepy-eyed glutton in Segar’s cartoon loved them more than life itself. Segar’s goons became the popular conception of a goon. People quoted Popeye saying: “I yam disgustipated.” Segar enriched the language as much as anyone possibly could and it was too bad he died at the height of his career. Today his strip is drawn by B. Zaboly and written by Tom Sims.

Al Capp’s “Li’l Abner” has inspired a popular song, just as did “Barney Google” and Dorgan’s failure to have bananas, yes. He also created “Sadie Hawkins Day,” which is observed by young people as the day when girl goes after boy. Capp’s characters such as “Lena the Hyena,” and “Available Jones,” have caused him to be compared to Dickens. It might better be said that Dickens was a 19th century Al Capp. De Beck also was called a “Modern Dickens.”

Back in the early days of the comics, there were several strips de-
voted to pseudo-science. One included a robot ("Brains He Has Nix"), and "Hairbreadth Harry" was continually running afoul of the machinations of Rudolph Rassindale, the villain. As we have mentioned before, Little Nemo took a trip to Mars, and NEA issued a strip called "The Man from Mars."

But there were no half-way measures when the modern comic took over. Trips to Mars and other planets were not treated in a light of the ridiculously impossible. "Buck Rogers" by Dick Calkins, and "Flash Gordon," issued by King Features, were genuine pseudo-science presented in dramatic style.

THE AMAZING RISE OF SUPERMAN

Suddenly something even more revolutionary took hold. This was "Superman," by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.

The story of the rise of this strip is not so different from that of other comic strips. It was a struggle to keep from being discouraged.

Siegel and Shuster relished reading the pseudo-science pulp magazines which enjoyed a vogue prior to the late war. They got together and invented a hero who was undefeatable. He was impervious to heat, cold, electricity, bullets and even poison. They peddled the idea to almost every comic syndicate and were turned down. Finally they took it to the publisher of "Action Comics," where it first saw the light of day. It was sensational.

Psychologists explain the public reaction on the escape theory—readers identify themselves with the hero and love to feel that nothing can defeat them. Siegel and Shuster must have felt this way, or they would have been discouraged.

In 1938, Superman was syndicated to newspapers and it is still going strong, although its popularity may have waned a little.

The success of Superman proved that anything was possible. Although heroes of fiction have long been supermen, it was always felt that it was best to give them a few vulnerabilities. To be invulnerable meant that it was impossible to put obstacles in the hero's path and it is the obstacles and their surmounting that makes a story interesting. But here was a hero who, by definition, couldn't be beaten. The readers loved him.

Another modern trend is the revival of "animal comics" in which the animals dress and talk like human beings. There are animal comics, such as "Napoleon" and "Sinbad," which show animals as they are in relation to real surroundings, but the satire on society enacted by animal characters was an early manifestation in comic art that was dropped, with a few exceptions, right after the first World War. We have already mentioned "Mr. Jack," "Old Doc Yak" and "Krazy Kat," the latter of which persisted until Herriman's death.

However, Walt Disney and his competitors in Hollywood used animals in movie cartoons and disclosed that possibilities of animal satires had not been exhausted. Disney allowed "Mickey Mouse," "Donald Duck" and other of his characters to be syndicated. Warner Brothers released "Bugs Bunny" for syndication. The comic books went wild with all sorts of animals.

Panel cartoons and human interest gags are enjoying an unprecedented vogue, although these have always had a place in the daily newspapers. There is plenty of high comedy in Reed's "Off the Record," Lichty's "Grin and Bear It," and Dick Turner's "Carnival." There is human interest in Galbraith's "Side Glances," and George Clark's "Neighbors." Jim Williams' "Out Our Way" cartoons are probably among the best loved panels in the nation today.

Williams has had a wide range of experience and he packs every bit of it into his pictures. He was a cowboy, an old time cavalryman, a
boilermaker, and he raised a family. He was working as a machinist when, after taking a cartooning course by mail, he was called to NEA in Cleveland to draw his popular cartoon. He uses at least six different sets of characters, giving one set a play one day each week. He shows trials and tribulations of cowboys, machinists, soldiers, and people as they lived in days before modern conveniences. Williams has a heart ailment which has caused him to slow down in the amount of work he has turned out in recent years, but this has not affected the funniness of his cartoons. He still packs as good a punch as he ever did. However, two or three days a month he reprints an old cartoon, usually at a reader's request, in place of drawing a new one. He also receives help on his Sunday page from Writer Hal Cochran and his son, Artist Negley Cochran.

Williams was one of a group of artists brought to NEA shortly after the First World War. The others included Gene Ahern, Martin, Blosser, Roy Crane and William Ferguson.

Crane drew a little dwarf who was always getting in trouble. This character was named George Washington Tubbs, which eventually was shortened to Wash Tubbs. After considerable experimenting, Wash started out on a series of adventures which took him all over the world. During his travels in Kleptomania, Wash met a stalwart, black-bearded man in prison who said his name was "Captain Easy." Easy was a soldier of fortune and soon he took charge of things; in fact, he became the principal character of the strip.

After shaving off his beard, Easy was one of those characters who couldn't help but be the star performer and once he got in the strip he stayed there. Crane was forced to invent a past for his character and so he gave him a name, William Lee, and a history which included expulsion from West Point because of marriage, a later disillusionment and divorce. Crane said afterwards he was sorry he had revealed this about Easy, but he did it in a moment of weakness. However, Easy extracted a promise from Wash never to bring up the subject again and it has never been mentioned in the strip since.

Crane received many attractive offers to leave NEA and at length he succumbed in 1943, going to Hearst's King Features to draw "Buz Sawyer." Immediately Les Turner, who had been Crane's assistant for many years, took over on the daily and Walt Scott was given the drawing end of the Sunday page.

Crane was always in the van in trying out new methods of producing his strip. He made a trial of grease pencil. But his big success came when a special type of paper was introduced to the art world. This paper required a developer which produced shading with a "Benday" effect. One or two degrees of shading could be obtained in the same paper and a separate chemical was used for each type of shading. Crane and his assistant, Turner, became expert in the use of this special paper. Today their drawings, which are nearly identical in style, look almost like halftones instead of pen and brush work.

It was inevitable that as soon as continuity became a part of the comic strip that adventure should supplant some of the slapstick humor. Every type of adventure was explored. Hal Foster's "Prince Valiant" is an Arthurian legend done in superlative style, which is envied when artists get together. Milton Caniff put his characters in the Far East. Fred Harman shifted to the Far West. Dick Tracy adventured in crime at the direction of Chester Gould. Ham Fisher used Joe Palooka in the prize ring.

Milton (his real first name is Wilton) Caniff decided to be a comic artist as soon as he finished his education. He packed his tools and started East, telling his friends, "I don't know where I'm going, but I'm on my way." Eventually, he landed a job with Associated Press Features doing "Dickie Dare." His work attracted the attention of the Patterson-McCormick interests who wanted a rip-roaring adventure strip. The
name "Terry and the Pirates" was selected and Caniff saturated himself with love about China.

His story has a charm in it that makes it "feel" young. His characters are real. Caniff goes in for realism on a big scale and he makes his backgrounds authentic. He uses models and he stages his productions with as much thoroughness as a movie producer. After years with the News, he signed a contract with the Chicago Sun syndicate for a reported guarantee of $100,000 a year. A young illustrator from AP Newsfeatures, where Caniff got his start, was selected to do "Terry." The artist, George Wunder, was only 33 but his first work "breaking in" even before Caniff left the job shows that he has the experience that would do credit to an older man.

Another modern strip man is Fred Harman who began by syndicating his own western strip at a time when no one but Jim Williams was putting cowboys in the comics. A brother of a Hollywood movie cartoon producer (the Harmanizing cartoons), Fred Harman used to travel up and won the West Coast in a car, drawing and selling his strip at the same time.

Finally Harman got an agent, Stephen Slesinger, who marketed a new cowboy strip, "Red Ryder," by Harman through NBA. The only character Harman salvaged from his first effort was Little Beaver, whom he attached to Red Ryder as an orphan after the Indian boy's father, Chief Beaver, was killed by a wild horse. Harman's strip has millions of followers who read it in 700 newspapers. It has laid claim to being the most widely distributed comic, but Williams' "Out Our Way" may be in a position to dispute that claim, although Williams' creation is a "panel cartoon" and not strictly a "strip."

Slesinger, in addition to handling "Red Ryder," also manages the production of "King of the Royal Mounted," and "Ozark Ike." He maintains a cartoon studio in New York which is comparable to a small syndicate in itself, although his three strips are syndicated by others.

**MARSHALL FIELD BARGES IN**

In New York (PM) and Chicago (The Chicago Sun), Marshall Field entered the newspaper picture with enthusiasm comparable to that of William Randolph Hearst almost half a century earlier. With Field's brand of journalism it was logical that a new type of comic strip should develop. This expression appeared in PM under the term "Barnaby" by Crockett Johnson (Ted Ferro and Jack Morley).

Barnaby is satire, but deep. Few readers appreciate its subtlety. Nevertheless it is a growing strip and when it finds its audience it is highly popular.

Barnaby is a small boy who wished to have a fairy godmother. The wish is not granted, but he does get a fairy godfather named Mr. O'Malley, of whom Barnaby is proud. Mr. O'Malley has a cigar, instead of a magic wand. He is always promising big things in magic, but usually gets Barnaby's father in a jam, then extricates him. One is inclined to believe that Mr. O'Malley is a mountebank, even though he wears wings and is the associate of Gus the Ghost, Homan the Invisible Leprechaun, and others. These dubious benefactors appear to Barnaby, but never to members of the adult cast. Barnaby's dog also talks, when adults are not around.

Satire is at its best in comics and "Li'l Abner" makes the best of it. Before becoming a comic artist, Capp peddled his strip from office to office of various syndicates, getting nowhere.

One day as Capp emerged from an editor's sanctum in New York with his rejection under his arm a stranger stopped him.

"I'll bet you've got drawings in that package," said the stranger,
who did not happen to be Mr. O'Malley, but was Ham Fisher, who draws "Joe Palooka." Fisher looked at the drawings and gave Capp a job as his assistant. After gaining experience under Fisher, Capp again tried to market his strip and was successful in selling it to United Features, which doubtless has never been sorry it had the chance to give Capp one of the best contracts in the country.

Close to "Lil Abner" in rollicking satire is Raeburn Van Buren's "Abbie and Slats," also from the United Feature Syndicate. Capp and Van Buren are close friends and when Capp is asked what comic is his favorite he modestly reply "Abbie and Slats."

There may be an argument whether or not "Joe and Asbestos" is a comic strip or a scratch sheet. But Ken Kling, its creator, is certainly a comic artist. Kling got his art experience as an assistant to Bud Fisher. One day in Florida while visiting his old boss, Kling was intrigued by Fisher's prognostications on the performance of one of his race horses. So Kling, according to the story told in Life magazine, sunk his entire savings, $1,500, on the horse, $500 to win, place and show, and the horse ran out of the money.

Kling asserted that he was so surprised that he asked Fisher if "they aren't going to run the race over again?" Finding out that the results were official, Kling took a job in Baltimore to recoup his losses. He drew a strip, largely autobiographical, about two characters who bet on a horse. It was a popular strip in Baltimore, where there are four big race tracks. Kling wanted Joe and Asbestos to lose so he had them place their bets on a horse that he felt certain would never be first under the wire. To Kling's surprise, the horse won.

Kling had the characters bet again, and once more the horse won. About this time the readers of the strip began telephoning the editor thanking him for paying their rent and grocery bills and the editor sent word to Kling that "whatever you're doing, keep it up." Kling began to study horses. He built up a "system," so they say, that dopes horses and his comic characters give tips on entries in the races.

One of the early comics was Condo's "Outbursts of Everett True," showing a blimp-sized gentleman who lambasted pests that worried him and everyone else. True was, in turn, subjected to assault and battery by a shrewish wife. The strip appeared as a two-column panel and it had all of the violence of the early comics. The anti-pest theme was revived lately with a new twist by a West Coast man, Jimmy Hatlo of San Francisco, who draws "They'll Do It Every Time."

This young satirist began his career as a San Francisco sports cartoonist. When sports were dull, he filled in with a panel showing foibles of humanity and called it "They'll Do It Every Time." Bob Ripley began drawing "Believe It Or Not" as a sports page filler also. Hatlo's idea caught fire and now is issued daily with a Sunday color companion entitled "Little Iodine."

Another panel cartoon, "Our Boarding House," is unusual because it uses continuity. Few panel comics—that is, comics which are not strips but rely on a single drawing, or possibly two drawings to put the thought across—tell a continued story.

The hero of "Our Boarding House" is big, noisy, prevaricating Major Hoople, self-styled inventor, philosopher and veteran of the Boer War. Gene Ahern, Major Hoople's ideological parent, was asked to develop a story about a group of boarding house characters and Mrs. Hoople's boarding house was the result. At first Mrs. Hoople had no husband, then a short, dumpy little man wandered in one day and announced that he was her long-lost spouse. As originally drawn, Hoople did not fit the Major's character, so slowly Ahern made him larger and taller until he reached his present size. The growth was so slow that no one seemed to notice.

Ahern went to King Features to do "Room and Board," and NEA continued the old strip. After trying several teams of artists and writers,
the right one, Artist Bill Freyse and Writer Bill Braucher (pronounced Brower), was found. Freyse and Braucher are Hooploque characters themselves, with a flow of language that often is preserved intact in the comic.

CREATORS AT WORK

When Al Capp asked readers of "Li'l Abner" to submit their pen-and-ink version of Lena the Hyena, whose face was so horrible that it couldn't be printed, it was announced that about half a million contributions had been submitted to the 381 newspapers which run the strip.

Since there are about 4,000 daily newspapers in the United States and Canada it is quite obvious that all of the would-be cartoonists were not reached and possibly some that were reached did not try for the $500 prize. In fact, that out of many artists known personally to the man who wrote this book, only one admits he submitted anything to Capp and this one artist's cartoon did not win.

Even granting that one out of every four people who want to be comic artists — or artists of any sort — submitted anything in this contest, it means that there are 2,000,000 aspirants for the comic strip field. How many will make the grade?

"When I started out," says a comic artist, who has been recognized by "Who's Who," and should be famous, "there were hundreds, even thousands of young fellows who could draw as well as I, who had just as good ideas, and who had as much enthusiasm as I had. The reason that a few of us succeeded and the others didn't, was because we stuck with it longer."

That sounds like the old copybook formula of "work hard and succeed," but everyone knows a juggler has to practice and drawing a comic strip is a lot tougher than juggling. In fact, some artists can also juggle.

By far the largest percentage of comic artists today, as in the early days of the comic strip, came up from the ranks of newspaper artists. They were editorial cartoonists, sports cartoonists, retouchers, staff men, illustrators and the like. They learned to draw everything and to draw fast. They got self-confidence and, most important, they continued to eat while they peddled their strips.

Another good-sized percentage of comic strip men worked as assistants to other artists who already had strips. But in order to do this they had to learn to draw and, while art school may be good foundation, all of the drawing that a comic strip man does is not learned there.

Other sources of comic artists include magazine illustrating, gag cartooning for magazines, commercial studios, and advertising concerns. Many a free lance man has eventually wound up with a strip, or with a job as an assistant to a strip artist, but it is a long, tough road to travel.

"Once we were down to our last dollar," said the wife of a comic artist, "so I sent hubby out to buy some staples, like beans, so we could eat a long time on the dollar. He came home with a dollar's worth of ice cream."

That family can laugh now, but it wasn't a laughing matter then. Becoming a comic artist is not half as secure as being a street car motorman, yet there is at least one former street car motorman in the business.

But there are comic strips and there must be artists, so somebody is going to be a new artist some day, no matter how many red flags are waved.

PEDDLING COMIC STRIPS

Peddling a strip means exactly that. It must be sent to almost every syndicate that is using strips and then sent to the comic books. Most likely everybody will turn it down and the reasons will be so con-
tradiory that the artist won't believe them. But a syndicate is in business not as a concession to art, but as a business concern. Promoting a comic strip is costly business. It means that a salesman must call on editors all over the country and convince them that the strip is the one thing that every paper needs. Editors feel that they know what their papers need. There are advertising bills, engraving bills, printing bills.

Before a strip is accepted and the artist is given a contract, the syndicate must feel sure that there is a good chance to make money. For this reason, the young artist should be patient, get experience and, if possible, get his stuff in print. He should send gags to the magazines, pick up extra change drawing wherever and whenever he can.

Comic strips are usually submitted to editors as finished jobs. The artist does a couple of weeks of dailies, plus two or three Sunday pages. A colored print of the Sunday page helps.

From this point on no advice can be given. It's all in the hands of the editors.

Most comic artists spend about two days on a Sunday page. It has been done in less, considerably less, but two days is a reasonable length of time for the work. Two daily strips a day is a fair average. Allowing three days a week for the daily strips and two for the Sunday page gives two days for working out gags or writing continuity—oh yes, comic artists work seven days a week when they start out.

Artists work from four to eight weeks ahead of release on daily strips and from six weeks to three months ahead on the Sunday pages. The reason for this is the time it takes to prepare the cuts and mats, and in the case of the color pages, the color work. Many smaller newspapers do not have their own color presses and sufficient time must be allowed for the printing and delivery to the paper that is to use the completed job.

There are two types of daily strips. The first is the type that uses a gag each day. The second is the continuity strip. There is controversy as to which is the more difficult.

In the gag strip the artist must work out a new idea for each strip. He must mix his pitches and not allow his work to grow tiresome. He must have a good sense of timing and he must know when something is funny. "Blondie" and "Mutt and Jeff" are examples of gag strips.

The continuity strip gives a serial story, maintains suspense from day to day and the artist must know something about short story writing to handle it. If the Sunday and daily use the same story, the artist must make sure that the reader who sees the Sunday page only will miss none of the important elements of the story. He must also make sure nothing is left out of the daily strip. He must make each strip carry its share of the story, and provide enough suspense to cause the reader to look for the strip tomorrow. "Dick Tracy" and "Red Ryder" are examples of the continuity strip where the daily and Sunday use the same story. "Li'l Abner" and "Alley Oop" provide different stories for daily and Sunday readers.

Because the story and the gag are so important and because artists only have seven days in a week, gag men and continuity writers have made their appearance in the comic field. Gag men supply gags as piece work usually, receiving a certain agreed-upon sum for each gag. If and when the artist produces a gag himself he saves himself money.

Continuity strips usually rely on the same man to produce stories year in and year out. Sometimes the writer receives credit, as in the case of Tom Sims, who writes "Popeye," but in many other cases, perhaps the majority, the continuity man "ghosts," or allows the artist to receive the whole credit. Strangely enough, speaking for a number of writers, this is looked upon as preferable, not because the writer is ashamed of his work, but because he can sometimes write the stories for several strips without becoming identified with any certain type of work.
Many artists write their own continuity. This takes time but they may handle the extra work by hiring an assistant to do the less difficult tasks in drawing the strips. There are stories about artists who have men to write the story, men to draw the figures, men to do the backgrounds and men to letter the balloons. All the artist draws is the check. This, however, is an exaggeration.

"Lots of times I dream at night that I get in a fix where I can't draw," says one artist. "I wake up in a cold sweat. As exasperating as this business is, I wouldn't give it up."

Fred Harman once broke his arm, but he had the arm—his drawing arm—fixed so he could work with it and he drew his strips on schedule with a broken arm.

Strip continuity is the story and the "shooting script" for an episode in a comic. When a special writer does it, the story is written much as a short story or novelette is written. Usually, however, they are more informal, with the writer pointing out in spots how a certain situation will be handled in pictures. Some writers go to considerable lengths in working out their stories, but others do the job in less than 3,000 words.

THE TABOOS OF CERTAIN NEWSPAPERS

After that come difficulties. The story goes to the artist and to the editor of the syndicate or feature service for an okay. The story is examined from every angle—how it will be received, whether it has objectionable features, whether it breaks the taboos of certain newspapers, whether it contains controversial matter.

Newspaper taboos are the chief bugaboo. There are a few papers in the country which never use a picture of a snake. This means that no comic strips printed by these papers should portray a snake. If a snake has a part in the story, it must not be shown—it must always be offscene.

There are other taboos that the comic artist and the editor must know. Divorce always brings objections. Cruelty to children is bad. Death of a principal character has been tried numerous times and while it is not objectionable to the client newspapers it does get kicks from the readers.

There also are the postal laws, but in most cases good taste will tell the writer that crime should not be made to pay, and that lotteries are not permitted to operate through the mails.

When a story has been worked over so that it meets all requirements as to story and taboos, it is ready for production. Sometimes points in a story are subject to vigorous argument and the final solution is a compromise.

The writer now sets out writing the "breakdown" or "shooting script." This is handled just as a drama or a movie scenario is done. The setting is outlined, characters described, their positions noted. The wording of the balloons is given, just as the speaking parts of a play. The writer must always keep in mind that space is limited and that balloons should be short. He must remember too, that the reader sees only one side of the character, who can't wear a smile with his back to the reader. The positions too must be kept in mind—a character can't be all over the panel in the same scene. As a rule, 27 words is the limit of balloon space in the usual size panel. This can be stretched, but not much. Therefore every word has to mean something, or have a good reason for being there. If the situation can be handled without balloons, so much the better.

Often a story involves backgrounds that the artist is unfamiliar with. In this case the writer has to dig out photographs to assist the artist. Sometimes diagrams of the action accompanies the script. In at least one case, an entire fictitious town was mapped for the purpose of
keeping the characters and backgrounds in their right places in a complicated action.

Once the continuity for "Our Boarding House" called for a goose with a frown. Since a frowning goose is rarely met by a comic artist, a picture of a goose was obtained from the morgue by Writer Braucher who gave it to Walt Scott, a former artist for Walt Disney. Scott retouched the photograph so that the goose appeared to be frowning and it was sent to Artist Freyse in Arizona.

The breakdown is sent to the artist, who rarely lives in the same town with his writer, and he begins work. First he puts in the characters, then the backgrounds, leaving space for the balloons. After everything is penciled the artist inks in his drawing. Sometimes the balloons are inked first, and other times last, it's all a matter of taste. Some artists have lettering men, who letter the balloons.

The artist may take liberties with the writer's script, providing he does not wander too far off the beaten path. He often changes the arrangement of the characters in a scene to provide a better picture or an unusual angle. However, on one occasion an artist introduced a new character into the continuity. When the startled writer received the strip and began to burn up the wires asking why, the artist calmly replied: "Just go ahead and write your story, I'll take care of the character." The artist did, but the writer to this day does not understand why the extra character was introduced.

The completed strip is sent to the writer, who goes over the drawing for mistakes or innovations, then it is okayed by the editor and sent to the engravers. In the case of a Sunday page, staff men apply "register marks" and line up the page for color engraving.

Register marks are on all Sunday pages but if the reader sees them, it is unintentional. These are crosses or little black dots with a white space in the center of them. Sometimes these are printed on gummed paper and pasted in the proper spots so that the staff man is not required to draw them in with ink.

Each separate segment of a Sunday page must have two or three register marks in the margin to assist the engravers in getting the various color plates to "register"—to make them line up so that the proper colors will print in the proper places. In addition to the register marks for the engravers, some color plants ask for lines to assist in press registering. These are usually drawn in the gutters between panels. All register marks, press and engraving, are routed out before the presses start to roll.

Modern newspaper color printing has advanced to the point where the colors are rarely out of register. Early day comics had perfect register only by accident.

As was mentioned previously, all of the colors in a comic page are made up with the primary colors of red, blue and yellow. Benday rooms have three gradations of each color, solid, line and dot. This means that the color may be solid, broken up in lines for a lighter shade, or broken up into dots for very light tints. Mixtures of red and yellow give nine gradations of orange and vermilion. These include solid, line and dot yellow with solid red, line red and dot red. Combinations of red and blue give nine of purple and violet; blue and yellow give nine more shades of green. Then there are also different varieties of tan, brown, etc., which can be obtained by mixing the tints of red, yellow and blue. Almost any shade of color wanted by the artist can be matched by the color plates.

Because newspapers use comics in full, half-page and third-page sizes, comics must be elastic enough to conform to these pages.

The artist usually draws his Sunday feature as a half-page which, curiously enough, has more pictures in it than the full page. The drawing is arranged so that panels can be transposed to conform to the full-page layout, and any additional slack is made up with a "filler" comic.
One panel of every Sunday half-page can be taken out without spoiling the sense of the page. This is called the "eliminator" or "throw away" panel.

Third-page comics came about during paper rationing in the war and they apparently are here to stay. Publishers found that by reducing the size of their comics they could print just as many in two-thirds of the space. Third-pages require a special reduction of the drawings and then staff work to make the pictures fit. Sometimes the backgrounds are cut down, or the legs of the figures cut off. The staff man often is required to do some drawing on his own hook to make the pages fit, but primarily, the making of third-pages is a paste-up job.

In every case, except one, separate plates are required for the various sizes of comic pages. The one exception is the tabloid full-page which can be made from a standard half-page simply by shifting the panels around and tossing out the eliminator.

"We've made everything but round pages," said the foreman of an engraving plant. "We'll probably be making them next."

After the engraving is completed, the matting takes place. Impressions of the plate are made in heavy paper so that stereotype plates can be cast by the client newspaper. If the newspaper has its own color press, the mats are mailed directly to the client. If the newspaper "farms out" its color printing, the mats go to the plant which does the printing.

Newspapers always have the selection of the Sunday comics it prints, just as it can select its daily comics. It doesn't ask the color plant to send a printed funny paper. It buys its comics, then has them printed.

SELLING THE COMICS

Selling the comics is just as important as the manufacture. The newspaper feature business is probably one of the most competitive in modern industry and therefore sales talent, like art talent is top notch. It's the salesman's job not only to sell the product, but handle complaints after the product has been sold. He must know the clients of the syndicate, what they want, and he must see that each client is satisfied.

A few well-known syndicate salesmen are former artists. Others are old-time newspaper men.

The daily strip mats reach the newspaper in a package every one or two weeks. Proofs of the mats are included and the editor may read them over before sending them to the stereotyper. There is considerable doubt in the minds of comic artists whether editors read the comics. One artist who took over an old strip after it had been drawn for many years by another man noticed that almost six months after he had started signing his name, several newspapers were still carrying his predecessor's by-line.

If editors don't read the comics, others do, however. There was an instance on a middlewestern newspaper when the man whose job it was to send the comics to the stereotyper left the proofs of the comic strips on his desk. A local character, not a newspaperman, drifted into the newspaper office that night and read the proofs, among them "Little Orphan Annie." The next day the angry editor heard how this local character had gyped several other local characters out of cash by betting on the outcome of Orphan Annie's current mess. After that, proofs were kept locked up in a desk drawer.

With the advent of radio, newspapers began using more comics. Comics are something the radio cannot compete with. To meet the challenge, the radio adapted several comic strips to soap opera form. While the result might amuse kiddies, they do not have the appeal of the
funny paper and never will have. The charm of the comics lies in the artist’s pen and ink creations.

However, the artist and the syndicate profited by radio and movie adaptations of the strips. These rights are sold to the radio and movies and there is no extra work involved, since radio and movie writers and actors do the toiling. Comic books also are extra dividends. Reprint comics simply pick up previously published strips and pages and staff artists of the magazine lay them out in the margin format. New plates must be made, of course.

Most of the comics printed in the United States are American made. A few imported comics have been used, but as a rule they are not up to the standard demanded by Americans, although they may be just as popular abroad.

A syndicate which peddles an Australian Sunday page in the United States has as its chief worry the relettering of balloons. Australian slang must be changed to American slang. This goes both ways, for “Flash Gordon” is “Speed Gordon” in Australia.

American comics are exported to most of the countries of Europe and South America. They have followers in every land where English language newspapers are printed and they also have been translated into at least 25 languages. During the recent war when the comic characters were fighting Japs it was amusing to see Spanish and French speaking Jap villains in the pages of foreign newspapers. It must have been just as strange to the translators to see the Japs talking English.

One of the effects of the reduction of comic strips to 4-column size was the increase in size of lettering in balloons, so they could be more easily read when the strip was reduced. Early day balloons gave the readers about twice as much to read because the lettering was smaller. In the old time panel cartoon “Our Boarding House,” Ahern once used more than 100 words in a single balloon. There are only 79 words in this paragraph.

Nearly every large newspaper in the country has its own political cartoonist nowadays. Many of these are seldom heard of outside their own community, but many of them are top-notch artists. Since this book is about the comic strip and Sunday page there is no room to deal with them. However, their work is similar in all respects to the men who turn out the strips. They think up their own ideas, or receive their ideas from the editorial writers. They work with pen, brush and grease and they enjoy their work.

A few of the old timers, such as Billy Ireland and J. N. (Ding) Darling, made their reputations in small towns and refused to listen to the siren call of the big city. Their fame is just as great as any comic artist today. They are immortals. Art schools point to their work. Nearly every art student in the country knows that Davenport always pictured Mark Hanna in a suit decorated with dollar signs.

THE COMIC BOOKS

The first modern comic book made its appearance in 1933. This book, Funfies on Parade, was made up entirely of reprints of Sunday comics. Famous Funfies appeared immediately afterwards.

In 1935 Fun appeared with original comics, it being assumed that the comic book rights on all of the major color comics had been grabbed by that time. Nowadays there are more books containing original material than those using reprints. When one firm started out to print comics recently it sought a name for its product and found that more than 250 names had been trademarked for comic books.

Comic book artists work in the same way that strip artists work. Some furnish their ideas, others use ideas sold by writers. During the
war comic artists were in such demand that it was reported some were receiving $75 per page. Writers were getting as high as $25 per page. The usual rate is $20 a page for art, $10 per page for writers.

The reduction of the comic books from 64 pages to 32 during the war had no effect on their popularity. Comic book publishers managed, by decreasing the size of the pictures, to crowd as much in a 32-page book as they got in a 64-page book before the war. Since that time, there has been a gradual increase in the number of pages so that eventually the reader will get twice as much for his money as he got in depression days. The wide sale of the comic books, some of which have circulations comparable to the big slick magazines, make them even more profitable than the pulps. The comic books have driven many pulp magazines out of business, with the editors and writers doing comic continuities now.

One of the trends of the comic books has been to revive animal comics, which were so popular in the early days of the newspaper strip. Quite a few good animal comics are found in the comic books, in addition to the Hollywood cartoon characters.

"Pogo and Albert," by Kelly, introduces Albert Alligator and Pogo Possum, who speak in southern dialect and who indulge in rip-roaring comedy in every picture.

The "Superman" idea brought about many imitators and a flock of comic books concerning the doings of invincible men. The owners of "Superman" followed the tactics of big business in meeting the competition by buying out several of the invincibles.

The comic books vindicated the judgment of the syndicates in the proposition that adventure was better than humor in promoting sales. Not that "humor has no place in the comics," but the reader prefers a story in place of a gag. The story may be funny, but it should be a story. And it might be pointed out, too, that the biggest selling comic books today are still those which reprint the newspaper Sunday pages, and the daily strips colored for the comic books.

In addition to the reprint comics and the comics which use original material, a third type of comic book, the "one-shot," has enjoyed wide popularity. These may use original or reprint material, but the entire book is devoted to one character. The first of these appeared early in the game—about 1935—and dealt with the adventure of Percy Crosby's "Skippy."

Some radio characters have reversed the trend of from comic pages to the air, and have been drawn up for the comic books. "The Lone Ranger" and "Captain Midnight" are examples. Both of these also have appeared in newspaper strips. Several other comic book favorites also may soon appear in the newspaper funnies.

Even pulp magazine characters, such as "The Shadow," have been adapted to comic books.

Because the comics were popular with children it was inevitable that some people should begin to be afraid that children who read comics might grow up to be slapstick characters and so educational comics were devised. These told true stories, or portrayed things in an educational way, but they failed to enjoy the popularity of Superman and the slapstick comics.

Few people realize that the comics, as they are, are educational. A vast amount of research and ingenuity goes into the production of comics. The educational features are hidden beneath a veneer of corn and slapstick, but they're there. Comic artists are educated men. Some have not the advantages of formal collegiate education, but they are self-educated. They can talk on any subject. They can discuss ship building with a naval architect or music with a maestro. They have culture and appreciation for beauty where a large number of formally educated people can't pass judgment on a billboard.
The children who read the comics are getting educational material, and it is sugar coated. The satire is healthy satire, sneering at sham and poking fun at stuffed shirts.

THE ANIMATED CARTOON

The first movies were drawn. These figures were on separate sheets of paper which were flipped through the fingers, causing the figures to appear to move.

When the motion picture film was invented, only the enormous amount of drawing necessary to make a figure perform held up the animated cartoon. A comic artist saw possibilities, however, and he engaged in the laborious task of making the first animated cartoon. We've met him before: his name was Winsor McCay.

McCay's first film was about a dinosaur named "Gertie," and he gave public exhibitions of this film. Later he enjoyed showing it in private. This short film animated a dinosaur drawing and was done in McCay's usual style—easily identified because McCay could draw everything but feet. (McCay's cartoons of feet appear to be "blobs").

Later McCay produced the first color cartoon, featuring "Little Nemo." The film was hand-colored by a woman artist. Still later, McCay made 10,000 drawings animating the sinking of the Lusitania.

Lyman H. Howe, a producer of travelogues, experimented with animation on a small scale, giving his audiences a brief bit of animated titles and endings for his pictures. These were drawn in white on a black background, like the movie sub-titles of silent days. Only Howe's films weren't silent—he sent a troupe of sound men over the country with his films and these men made noises backstage.

The early animated cartoons produced in New York and Hollywood used some funny paper characters. Then Walt Disney brought his own characters into the game and made them just as famous. Silent cartoons used the balloons, with the lips of the figures moving and the balloons coming out of their mouths like bubbles. Sound tracks really put the movie cartoon over and as a result the two-reel comedies were driven out of business.

Like the early comics, the movie cartoons used animals in place of people. Voices, like Donald Duck's, were made a part of the show. A good, catchy tune helped the animation.

No one was able to overcome the obstacle of the tremendous amount of drawing necessary to produce a cartoon, but some shortcuts were found. One of these consisted of drawing the moving characters on a transparent sheet which was superimposed on the background. This did away with the necessity of making a new background for each picture. Then methods were devised promoting specialization. One group of artists specialized in backgrounds, another in animation, a large number of others were known as "in-betweeners," who did the mass producing of pictures between spots keyed by the animator's drawings. Another group, usually women, did the coloring.

In the producing of a cartoon, a man known as the "story artist" begins drawing sketches which carry out the whole story from beginning to end. A sound track is provided, but this is not the track used in the finished production. Substitutes are used for the voices of the characters, and the track is worked out principally for timing.

The still drawings of the story sketch are run through a machine which drops the story sketches into position at the proper moment. When the timing is "on the nose," and all of the gags possible have been worked in, the animators go to work.

Animation is one of the highest paid jobs in a cartoon studio and the artists are specialized. Often an animator cannot draw anything
else, but no one can imitate him in his field of making figures move. Every movement is authentic. If the animator wants to picture a falling feather, he gets a slow-motion picture of a feather falling and studies it. When a cartoon character walks the screen, he is really walking. The background shifts behind him. The background in this case is drawn on a large strip which is moved along from the beginning of Donald Duck’s stroll to the end, then if necessary it is run through again. Sometimes, intentionally to get a humorous effect, the background moves back more swiftly than the character moves forward so that he seems to be walking on air, or on a treadmill.

The old comic strip trick of putting the character behind a fence so there won’t be so much to draw is often used in animation. The character walks behind a rock, disappears for a few feet of film, and then reappears. During this time the background took the place of a large amount of animation.

Animators know exactly how many seconds (how many pictures) each movement will take and therefore it is simply a matter of mathematics to synchronize an action to music. The animator draws the start of a movement, another later drawing and the finish, and the rest of the work is left up to the in-betweener, who fill in the gaps.

After the production is complete the “regular” voices for the characters are put to work and their words timed exactly so that they meet the requirements of the film. Afterwards these voices are dubbed in to take the place of the substitute voices used in manufacturing the film and the picture is set.

Like the comic strips, the movie cartoons go for violent action and slapstick. The action is what makes any picture. Even Whistler’s Mother would be more interesting to lovers of movie cartoons if the old lady were throwing a brick.

Lately there has been a move to bring the cartoon to television. What the next form of narrative art may take is problematic, but when television comes there will be work for the comic artist, that much is assured.

Movie cartoons can be broadcast by television, but this is no improvement over the movies. An attempt was made in 1946 to send newspaper comic strips by television, allowing voices to take the place of the balloons.

Most of the criticism of this trial broadcast hinged on the fact that it was a strange combination of still life and animation. The drawings stood still while the voices “moved,” or spoke.

Perhaps television will supply a way to animate a cartoon without thousands of drawings. No one knows just what can be done with television yet, since so far the job of improving it has been in the hands of the radio engineers. When television becomes common, creative geniuses from the movie and comic strip fields may create a “television cartoon” which will outrank anything that has been done previously in the field of narrative art.

When the movies produced “The Great Train Robbery,” no one dreamed of the super-productions of today. No thinking person would say that perfection in comic art has been reached today in a half-century of existence.

* * *

Briefly, that is how comic art is produced. The book could only skim the surface because a whole encyclopedia would be necessary to go into detail. In fact, listing all of the artists would require a large volume.

Many of the famous, like Hogan of “Jerry on the Job,” have not even been mentioned in this work. Many of those unmentioned are better artists than some of those mentioned, but the examples included were intended to prove a point, to illustrate a statement or, in some cases, for purely historical purposes. A few personal friends of a writer
named Russ have been omitted, not because they aren't top-notchers, but because they couldn't be dragged in without making the book too big.

There were a lot of interesting little footnotes omitted, such as the reason for the super-abundance of exclamation points in the comics. The reason being that the rapid-fire etching in producing the daily strips often-times causes periods to "fall out" and rather than have no punctuation at the end of a sentence the artist draws an exclamation point!

But these little items are of no historical interest and the book is finished. To close it in a good comic strip style:

WHAM!
NOTES AND COMMENTS

By E. Haldeman-Julius

Reprinted from The American Freeman, Published at Girard, Kansas.

EDUCATING THE WORKERS

A strange story spreads from Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, and other cities of the Middle West. There is a ferment of an entirely new type amongst "the common men." You see two men in a street-car, a group of workers in the lunch hour, a bunch of small traders and drummers hammering out some point of difference with tense faces and glittering eyes. And when you get within earshot you find that the subject in dispute is not the skill of Joe Louis, the strength of the local ball team, the last strike, or the rival curves of Lucille Ball and Barbara Stanwyck. "I tell you," one man is shouting, "that Einstein did not say that the universe is infinite," or "Hamlet is a hell of a lot better than Faust but they're both small beer to Prometheus," or "you can stick your Michaelangelo up your chimney--Epstein's the man." You wonder whether the Messiah or the Millennium or the predicted mental breakdown of the race has come, but you get the explanation that somebody in Chicago has succeeded in establishing popular groups--mechanics and garbage-men, butchers and clerks--for reading and discussing the world's best books.

When we make every allowance for the fact that we read this in the papers, which laudably attach more importance to "the human interest" than the cold truth of the stories they serve up, we still have here a valuable and significant experiment. Progress out of the mess in which the world is depends vitally upon our success in inducing at least a large number, not necessarily the majority, of the people to demand accurate news of world events and movements and reflect critically on them; and by the people we do not mean only the mechanics and other workers in the towns but waiters, farmers and their wives, store-girls, every individual who is an active unit in a democracy. We need to give as large a number as possible, quite apart from their grouping in political, religious, or anti-religious bodies, a wish to read, reflect on, and discuss serious matters. It is, in fact, not merely a question of workers and farmers. Open an elegant literary or scientific monthly and read through the list of subjects upon which they are using their expensively educated brains: "Sentence-construction in the Novels of Henry James," "Chronological Bibliography of the Writings of Samuel Clemens," "New Coin of the Emperor Tiberius," and so on. It is just as legitimate a form of recreation as pool, jazz, or fishing if you don't neglect more important matters. Unfortunately, most of the readers of this sort of things do.

A social student, a man with the correct slant on the vital conditions of progress, listened to a group of professors discussing social, religious, and political questions. It happened that none of them was an expert on a subject that provided correct material for judging such questions, and the value of their opinions was nil and the accuracy of their "information" not much better. He then got into a group of what we, with a lingering trace of the old aristocratic disdain, call the workers. Some were radical, some conservative, but all were pathetically
I'm an autocratic figure in these democratic states,
A dandy demonstration of hereditary traits.
As the children of the baker bake the most delicious breads,
As the sons of Casanova fill the most exclusive beds,
As the Roosevelts and Barrymores and others I could name
Inherited the talents which perpetuate their fame—
My position in the structure of society I owe
To the qualities bequeathed me by my parents long ago.
My pappy was a gentleman, and musical to boot,
He used to play piano in a house of ill repute.
My mammy was a lady and a credit to her cult,
She enjoyed my pappy’s playing, and I was the result.
So my mammy and my pappy are the ones I have to thank
That now I am the chairman of the National City Bank.