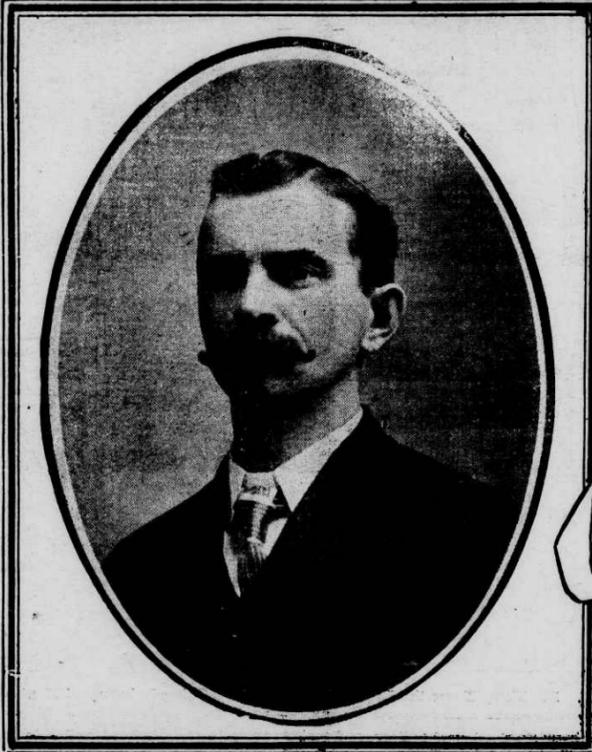


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THE PRESS GANG OF BUTTE

NEW YEARS night the new Butte Press club will celebrate its annual "blowout." In the spick and span new rooms of the Rocky Mountain club the members of the newspaper craft will gather to enjoy a banquet and mingle together in a social way. The past year will be reviewed and the proceedings given a tinge of holiday gaiety by congratulations upon the outlook in the newspaper field in which the club's members are active today. As many as half a hundred newspaper men will attend the jolly gathering. There will be a few guests of honor also. An honorary member will be taken into the fold and a program of entertaining musical and literary selections will be rendered by the members. Taken altogether the evening's festivities will be in recognition of the fact that another year has gone on its prosperous way over the heads of Butte's newspaper men and the future is rosy with promise. There will be no posted and ledgered account taken of the year's doings. In the midst of the gaiety of the night a trial balance will be struck: the members will renew pledges of good fellowship in the usual happy-go-lucky way of the craft and call it square.

It's a New Club.

The new press club is in a flourishing growth, springing from the ruins of an ancient and honorable predecessor which thrived in Butte's early days and was later allowed to fall into decay. For the first time in a decade of the city's history the news writers have come together in organized assembly, elected officers and mapped out a line of procedure which insures a steady and permanent growth. The coming banquet is the first festive event in the history of the new regime. There will be others; the plan under which the organization is formed contemplates a similar event once every year. The busy young men who are em-

ployed to load the daily papers to the brim with items of current interest each day have not much time for social pastimes. During their working hours they work and work hard; when they are asleep they frequently attend banquets in their dreams but there is not much resembling a picnic even in that. On New Years eve while they are assembled around the festal board and merriment is at its height the clang of a fire bell, the shrill alarm of the police whistle or the roar of an explosion may cut short the night's delight. The call to duty is paramount to every other consideration with the newspaper man and should news happenings requiring "extras" take place as the old year dies there will be a deserted banquet hall where the members planned the feast and steaming viands will cool upon the tables while the Butte public is being served with a sensation piping hot.

The Old-time Reporter.

Butte's news writers are adepts at the business in which they earn their daily bread. Within the circle of the craft the men who stand nearest the top of the ladder have the work of preparing news reduced to a fine point. Long residence in the city has made the average reporter a walking encyclopedia of information useful to him while he plies his trade. The day of the reporter who charged in and out of busy crowds and struck a gait which caused his coat tails to wave and snap in his wake never dawned in Butte. The best men on the street are the ones whose long and intimate acquaintance with matters and things of which news is made makes the journalistic yoke easy and its burdens light. The best reporters are able to stroll easily into a political convention and while apparently casual observers of what is passing catch every motion, nomination and speech and stroll back to the office with material for a full and accurate report. Nine

times in ten he has the principal speeches in his pocket the day before, and a bosom friend upon whom he relies for news has told him in a general way just what may be expected to occur. It is much the same in the church, court room, police station, coroner's office, hospital, morgue, hotel or other gathering which is a common source of news. The old reporter knows his field, its people and peculiarities, and the new reporter loses no time in learning this very necessary part of the business.

They Play No Favorites.

The reporters are a democratic crowd. There are no high degrees in the ranks of the craft. When a youth who prepares copy for a newspaper gets the notion that his pen drips a superior quality of wisdom he is mercilessly guyed by his fellows. Little in the way of praise is passed around and what refers to the pen productions of the newspaper man is generally said in the jagged accounts of sarcasm by his best friends. The worst case of swell head that ever afflicted a writer can be cured in a week by the specialists in the business who work on newspapers of Butte. What is uttered in commendation of a writer is generally spoken behind his back and the biting comments upon his work are said to his face while his dearest friends stand by to extract malicious delight from the situation. By this means all who put pen to paper to write for the public of Butte keep their journalistic trolley securely on the wise and walk humbly before men who are holding jobs in the same office or on rival papers. This good natured raillery is a gauntlet which all must run. It keeps the spirit of good fellowship alive and brings the members of the craft to a common level.

The Club's Officers.

Friendships firm and enduring are

formed in the circles of the press gang. "Johnny Mc," who is called John A. McMurray when introduced to strangers, is president of the Press club. He is known far and near as the man who can work a railway company for a special train whenever the press gang wants to take a ride on the cars. He has a gold loving cup given him by the Montana Press association once upon a time in Salt Lake. Upon this occasion he was the cicerone of the state's press gang and bunced the Oregon Short Line out of a special train of Pullmans and put through one of the most successful newspaper junketing trips ever pulled off in the West. He has a child's mania for "choo-choo" cars in the form of special trains and the New Year's night banquet is largely a product of his gift for benevolent assimilation. Other officers of the press club are: Second vice president, John Dierks;

treasurer, Jesse Searles; secretary, J. W. Gilbert; assistant secretary, J. H. Macmillan; chaplain, W. W. Walsworth; musician, Ned C. Haynes; chairman of the executive committee, W. W. Cheely; executive committee, Charles Copenhaver, H. E. St. Charles, A. H. Whitner and Frank Sullivan. These well-known newspaper men represent a variety of temperaments and a high order of ability. They will share in the festivities of the New Year's banquet and enter into the jollity of the occasion with the same zest with which they tackle their daily tasks. A program has been arranged for the banquet, and post prandial oratory will flourish with luxuriance hitherto unknown at occasions of this kind. President McMurray will deliver his inaugural address, and then the ball will open for the intellectual portion of the feast.

John B. Read is assigned to respond to the toast "Butte's Pioneer Press Club." W. W. Walsworth will speak of "Reminiscences of Jerry Rounder," J. Lawrence Dobeil has been assigned to play a selection on "The Silver Bow Bugle," Charles Copenhaver will speak upon "Our Friends in the Theatrical Profession," J. W. Scott will read an original poem, D. J. Walsh will be heard in his pleasing story telling specialty, and other members of the organization will lend their aid in making the evening one of lively interest. It will be the most notable night in newspaper circles of Butte since the bright and shining press club of early days went glimmering into history.

Thought There Would Be a Fight.

Up in Clay county several years ago a Christmas frolic ended in a tragedy. Old Mrs. Philpott was a witness at the trial. "Tell us all about the fight," said the lawyer. "I never seed no fight," replied the old lady. "Well, then, tell us what you did see," remarked the lawyer in a careless sort of way, taking her at her word. Mrs. Philpott moved her sunbonnet back, lit her pipe and proceeded. "Cy Sewell he give a Christmas dance, an' me and a whole lot of others was thar. The boys an' gals they got to dancin', an' as the boys went dancin' round an' round they got to slappin' each other, an' finally one boy he slapped another boy too hard—harder than he 'lowed to—an' knocked him down. An' the boy what got knocked down he jumped up an' jerked out a great big knife, 'bout long as your arm, an' whacked the fellow that knocked him down right across the middle from side to side. An' then the brother of the fellow what got cut he pulled a British bulldog 'bout the size of a ham, an' he let go six 44's right squar at the fellow who had the knife—an' jest then Bill Smiley—Bill's cousin of Jake Hayes what got shot—come runnin' outen ole man Sewell's room with a double-barreled shotgun an' let off both barrels right into the crowd; an' ole man Sewell he got excited an' jerked a Winchester outen from under the bed an' went to pumpin' lead into their gang; an' by that time the house was full o' smoke an' flashin' an' hollerin', an' I seed thar was goin' to be a fight, so I left the house."—Cincinnati Enquirer.