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- - A LOST ART FOUND AGAIN - -

BY JAMES T. STACKER.

The recent capture of dealers in the poppy product brings to mind days long gone, days when the sun shone on both sides of the street, for the lucky boys, and clouds for the fellow who failed to get through the cordon of sleuths who watched and waited for a tip from the mainland or the Orient and who followed the information until it landed on them against five tael tins of dope or that weight of molasses.

It must have been in 1880 that an important capture of opium was made, and the goods landed in the station house where it was locked in the strong room. When the legislature convened there was the usual attack on the cabinet and among the complaints was this one relating to the landing of opium. It was ordered that the containers, which happened to be five-gallon kerosene oil tins, be brought to a committee room and there exhibited. It was done, but the package marked "Exhibit A" had passed through the hands of a magician en route and the contents had turned to a poor quality of red bricks. That was one of the cases for legislative investigation that was undeveloped up to the close of that session, and forgotten at the beginning of the next. It was merely the cause of many a hearty laugh on the part of the populace.

There was a ring in San Francisco in those days with connecting links in the Sound cities and Victoria. The old Dryad House was headquarters for the party in Victoria and Will Whaley was the acknowledged head of that branch. It was only forty miles across the water to the United States and sixty miles would bring the men who did the rough work to a safe harbor on the Yankee side. Chinese constituted the most profitable contraband because the price, in those days, warranted the risk. Fifty dollars a head to land them on the beach during the night, and the money in hand before leaving hospitable British soil, and it was an easy matter to run twenty or even thirty across in a night and get back safely.

The same men who engaged in handling the Chinese were in the business of shipping opium. Whaley had his own schooner, the Halyon, a "long low rakish craft" built to sail with the wind or beat against it, and she could make steamer time if the wind was at all fair. She came to these waters on several occasions and was suspected of having opium as her cargo. Whaley managed to keep out of harm's way but was continuously under suspicion. Originally, I believe, he held a position in the customhouse in San Francisco.

Whaley in Hawaii.

Whaley spent months here at one time and handled, with the aid of assistants, all of the dope that came to him. He even aided in the landing of the stuff at various times on Molokai, on the lee side of the Maui and on this island in the vicinity of Waianae. It was in chasing the festive poppy smell that put the government to the expense of sending out the "Lehua, a dozen or fifteen years ago, and kept her swinging about Lanai in wait for the ship that never came. That was a peculiarity of Whaley. He knew the authorities in Victoria had notified the Republic of Hawaii that the schooner had sailed and was carrying opium but Whaley never left word where he was going. If he was up Sound he cleared foreign. If he cleared from Victoria he was bound for the Japan sea in search of seals. And that was the destination of several schooners sailing out of Victoria between 1880 and 1898. And the fortunes that those schooners made for the bunch of renegades engaged in the traffic were large.

But few of the alleged dealers were ever captured. An occasional instance might be mentioned, but they were the exceptions which proved the rule. The fact that the stuff came from both directions, the United States and Canada, on one side, and the Chinese ports on the other, and the demand was such that it had to come often, and often came, was a source of enjoyment on the part of men who handled the stuff here and the general public. The customs officers did not laugh, because they had the laugh on themselves and disliked to be ridiculed.

Playing Both Ends.

Getting the stuff into port was a good deal like the true sportsman shooting domestic chickens when he had been brought up to go after game. The sport was left for the men who handled it here—men on the interisland steamers and men around the plantations, for there is where it was sold. The Chinese had to have it, and twenty years ago managers of the sugar estates would send down to the city to get it for them. One time, a good many years ago, the story is told of

an official who came in contact with opium in two ways. He is dead and gone, so his name will not be mentioned, for "when a man dies he pays all debts."

In one way he came against opium-dealers as an administrative officer. And he would cinch a fellow tight enough if it suited him. Another way he came against opium-handlers was in the role of purchaser. He played the game both ways and waxed rich. Twenty years ago I was on Maui, and this is the story told me by a man who played the game:

"I was on the old Pele making the circuit of Maui," he said, "and at one of the ports two officers came aboard on their way to the place where a trial was to be held, the culprit being a Chinese who had been caught with the goods on him. The officers were going as witnesses—at least, one of them was, and the other as arresting officer. One of the men on the steamer handled a good deal of the stuff at different times, and on this trip he had a few pounds for an official concerned in the case to be tried. At the port where the party was to go ashore, the landing was some distance above the water, and assistance was needed to get to the top. It was the custom, then, for the purser to go ashore in the first boat, with the passengers and the small packages. This trip, the officer of the steamer who had the dope was on the small boat, and at the landing he handed to one of the policemen his package, the one that contained the opium, and it was handed to him after he had reached the wharf. Arriving at the shack where the trial was to be held, someone whispered to the judge, and the man with the dope went away with him after he had announced an adjournment until noon. When court convened, the deal had been made and the Chinese prisoner put on trial. He was given a year. He was a competitor of the man who imposed the sentence."

It is safe to tell that story now, because, as a matter of fact, every man who was connected directly with the opium transaction is dead or has left the country. The steamship employee went to the Coast and engaged industriously in the business and was given a term in a federal prison, and was afterwards shot while attempting to escape.

Profits More Than Fines.

Often the sentence here was a fine without imprisonment, and the handlers of the stuff did not mind it very much, because the profits were large. They were the small fellows and were intermediaries for other small fry. The big ones, the higher-ups, were those who did the importing. Occasionally one was caught, but not often, and a term of imprisonment followed. It has been said, with a good deal of truth, that the big importers were jealous of each other, and if it was learned by one that a rival had a lot of it coming down on a steamer, he saw to it that the customs officers were notified and the stuff captured. Thousands of dollars have gone in that way, and the informer would often be the next one to be informed upon.

Landing Tackles.

In the old days all of the small work was done on the steamers by men in the engineer's department and among the stewards. They would buy for the Coast at the regular price—for the price of opium was regulated as any commodity—bring it to Honolulu and get rid of it among the men on the island steamers. To get it ashore was the troublesome part, for most of the steamer men would not take the chance of bringing it on the wharf. To be caught with it in possession, leaving a vessel from foreign, meant more, in the court, than merely having it in possession. The fixed price for carrying the opium from a steamer or sailing vessel was in the neighborhood of a dollar a tin, depending upon who was on watch in the customs.

I remember sitting in the room of a friend waiting for him to return from a business call. Before he came back there was a knock on the door, which I opened to admit two tough-looking fellows from a steamer in port. They made an excuse to go to another part of the house, and when they came back into the room, a few minutes later, commonplace remarks were made and they passed out into the night. When the gentleman returned, he asked if I had had any visitors during his absence. When he heard my answer, he remarked that they were men with dope from the steamer. Into a closet in the next room they had deposited a number of half-pound boxes of the stuff. A few days later I passed him on the street carrying a box which he afterwards told me contained some of the opium that had been placed in the room while I was there. He was one of the many successful smugglers during the old days.

Coal-Oil Route.

A favorite way for the men living here, who were interested in the sport, to get in stuff was by the kerosene-oil route. Of course, they had connections on the Coast as well as here. There would be an order placed with dealers on the Coast for a thousand or more pounds of opium. The man on the Coast would order so many cases of kerosene oil, ten gallons to the case. At the proper time, half of the number of tins containing oil would be taken out of the cases and others containing opium put in their places. The

tins in this case were especially prepared, those containing oil having a shoulder around near the top, and those with the opium being plain. A special mark would be on the cases, and on arrival would be delivered to the persons addressed, and, by one interested in the game, reshipped to Chinese on

A remark dropped by one of them convinced me that they had been told of the shipment from San Francisco and they were after it. I walked back and stood by the barrels and the officials rushed up the gangplank. They went through one part of the ship and came off. I heard the chief say 'we

Brown was always landed on the lee side of Maui. Some of it was afterwards shipped direct to Honolulu, but if it was suspected that the officers were wise, the boxes would be sent to Molokai and transhipped a week later to Honolulu or back to Lanai. The men who were under Opium Brown were

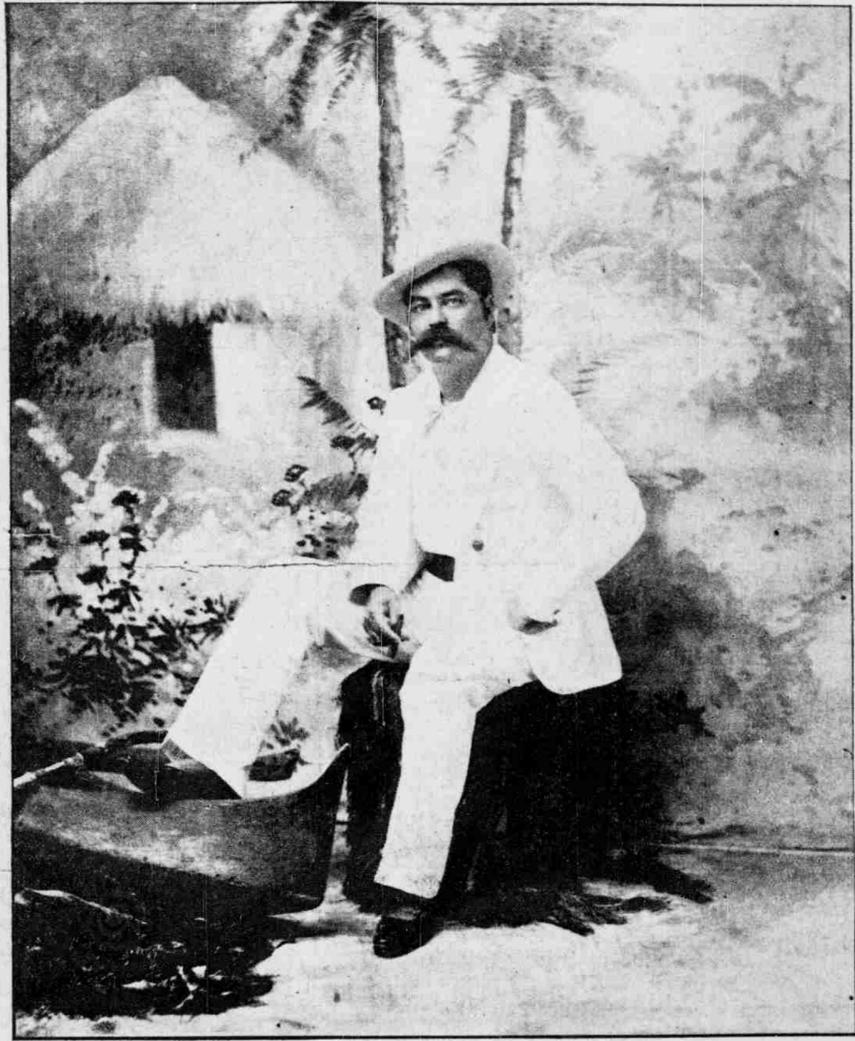
native for the plantations in Mexico. If I mistake not his was the "Monseratt" and she was found one day by a coasting steamer floating bottom up with her 'tween decks crowded with black corpses. Ferguson was not aboard.

Spilling Thousands.

Contraband opium, confiscated by the authorities, could not be sold here because it was contrary to law. The only use to which it could be put was through the board of health and as it accumulated rapidly toward the end it was decided to destroy it. During 1896 or 1897, the newspapers were notified that at a certain hour in the morning, Sunday, a scow containing quantities of the stuff would be towed out into the harbor for a distance, the tins split open with cane knives and the water allowed to pass over the floor of the scow and wash the dope into the sea. The trip was of several miles in length and the brown trail of the opium could be seen on the surface of the water for the entire distance. Representatives from three papers were taken aboard.

Much of the stuff destroyed had been brought from Hongkong and was No. 1. It had been hidden in teapots, in tins made to fit an opening in Chinese shoes and in other ways. It was brought in, also, in musical instruments and history records of the entrance, and capture, of a blacksmith's bellows filled with it. Two of the customs guards who wielded the cane knives on that trip are still in the service of the government.

In the early days a Hawaiian youth was the middle man for several parties who shipped to the other islands and he was successful. He was known to be a good musician and whenever he went to Kauai or to Windward he took with him a rather large guitar which he industriously played between ports and invariably thrummed it as he went ashore. On one occasion the small boat, in which he sat when going ashore, on Kauai, gave a lurch that upset him and exposed to view several pounds of opium concealed under a false bottom in the instrument.



THE LATE WILL WHALEY.

During one of his visits to Honolulu, the late Frank L. Hoogs, who was at that time a reporter for The Advertiser, openly accused Whaley of smuggling. Articles reflecting upon him appeared for several days, and, finally, meeting Hoogs on the street one day, Whaley assaulted him.

one of the other islands. I remember hearing of an importation of this kind going to the kerosene-oil warehouse. It was during the time George Stratemeyer, now dead, was collector of the port.

In the oil shipment there was opium to the value of more than three thousand dollars. In some way, Stratemeyer got the tip and decided to open every case of supposed oil in the warehouse. This was to have been done early the next morning. The owner got the tip in the evening and walked the streets until after three in the morning, trying to devise ways of saving his property. He could not handle Stratemeyer, so he went to an express driver and arranged to have him get out the stuff before seven o'clock the next morning. This was done, and in less than a half-hour later the customs men were in the warehouse opening cases, only to be disappointed.

Government Custodians.

Sometimes importations of this kind would go awry through the clerk in Honolulu, the man who was to look after it for the importer, not being thoroughly posted or being out from the order for delivery came. The underwriter's regulations prevented more than ten cases being stored under one roof, except in the regular government warehouse. When an order was sent to the Coast for several hundred pounds of dope to be packed in oil cases the shipment was sent to the oil warehouse on arrival and as each case had a peculiar mark the man who was handling it had no trouble to pick it out and the keeper of the warehouse was none the wiser. It would be safe to say that tons and tons of opium reached the consumers by way of the government kerosene warehouse prior to annexation.

Lots of Money in It.

I was talking to an old smuggler a few years ago. He was a man who is entirely out of the business, and living on his money at the Coast, but the owner of valuable property here. "There was a lot of money in it in the old days," he said to me, "and there was fun and excitement in dodging the officers. I brought down the stuff in different ways but one of the heaviest invoices I ever handled was packed in kegs of pork. The salmon business was precarious at the time but there was a good demand for selected pork. The steamer had scarcely made fast to the wharf that voyage when the pork was rolled out through the port. As it was lined up on the wharf I carefully passed along the wharf only to meet the collector of customs and it seemed to me, half the employees of the service,

would find it if we have to take out every pound of coal on the ship. Just then a wagon drove on the wharf and removed the pork and I went up town and collected the money."

Grabbed Boat and All.

That was one of the close calls. One day there was a strange schooner hove in sight down near Waianae. She beat around for two or three hours and Billy Sheldon, who was then deputy sheriff there, noticed a small boat coming away from the schooner. He watched with a glass and saw two men pulling and one passenger aft. Reaching the beach the passenger came toward the village and asked if it was Honolulu. Sheldon questioned him and the man said it was a fishing schooner off her course and that he wanted water. They separated and the stranger went to a store and Sheldon proceeded to the station house and telephoned the Honolulu authorities. Marshal Brown went down and interviewed the man and then, with Sheldon, went aboard and searched. There was enough contraband opium found to supply the Waianae district for months. The bunch was put under arrest, passenger, captain and crew. I think the captain got the heaviest sentence, which combined fine and imprisonment, and the crew got sentences of imprisonment. I have forgotten what the passenger received, but judging from what the others served I guess he got a stiff sentence besides losing his opium. The boat was confiscated.

I was inclined to believe at the time that it was a case of one crowd squealing on another in that transaction. I have heard nothing in the interval to change that opinion.

Opium Brown I.

The most mysterious smuggler who ever visited these shores and who was known to be in the business was "Opium Brown No. 1." He made his appearance here in the early '90s, arriving in Honolulu from Maui on one of the Island boats. No one, as far as known, can say how he reached Maui or where he landed. He was under suspicion here and in answer to questions by the police authorities said his name was Brown. The supposition was that he had a schooner that brought him on the lee side of Kaunaloa and from there he made the Maui shore in a canoe or small boat from his schooner. If I am not mistaken a small boat was found one time on the windward side of Maui and its ownership was never traced. The supposition at the time was that it belonged to some smuggler and had been left there when the man made his way across to a port where a steamer landed. It was understood that the opium brought down by

as smart, and smarter, than those who were sent to catch them.

Brown, whose real name was Stewart, was on the Columbia River when the great masonry work was being done at the Dalles. He was educated and drifted into the West because the East no longer had charms for him. He was never a talker, even when in his cups, which was frequent. He had charge of a gang of Italians on that work and when he quit he drifted toward the Sound, settling in Seattle. Then he crossed over to Victoria and mixed with the Whaley crowd from whom he learned secrets, which to him indicated the work of kindergartners and which he improved upon. Cutting loose from the Dryad House he went up Sound and was lost sight of. On his first trip to Honolulu he was recognized by an acquaintance and addressed as Stewart. Later he accepted an invitation to the room of this acquaintance who knew him on the river. They sat and talked, drinking whisky and gin until three in the morning and when they separated Brown, or Stewart, had not parted with an atom of information though he knew he could have done so with perfect safety. But it was Brown's way. He was a good listener and a very poor talker.

I have heard it, somewhere, that he was given the double-cross here by someone and lost a lot of money afterwards returning to the Coast where he became a more frequent user of liquor and died.

Another "Opium Brown" came into port but he was not the same kind of a man as the original. No. 1 would think of, he had the brains that enabled him to plan and carry out plans that were unthought of by anyone in the business. That a smuggler could make trip after trip to a port on Maui and not once be detected was a trick worth while and he kept the officials busy. It used to be said he dropped from the clouds.

Whaley's Sell-Out.

What was done to Brown it is said Whaley did to his partners in the game. There was a rumor that after he lost, or sold, the Halyon he presented a great scheme to his friends here and afterwards sold them out and took up his residence in Shanghai, opening a saloon and cafe. He died poor, though he had made a fortune in running contraband stuff into the United States from British Columbia and into Hawaii from any old place.

In the early nineties a man by the name of Ferguson, who was once a mate on the Australia or Alameda, came here with a little schooner. He was suspected of smuggling, but his real business was blackbirding. He made trips to the South Seas and gathered

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