

HOW FORTUNES HAVE BEEN MADE



IN THE "POLICY BUSINESS"

by John Eatwell

Last week, I spent \$2 for a lottery scratch ticket, with which I was extremely lucky, as I won \$2. Most of the time, the buyers of these tickets do not get their money back. "Lotto" and "Power Ball" have worse odds and mathematically are the worst gamble in existence today. Many states have adopted this method of fund-raising for various needs, such as parks, recreational facilities, wildlife projects, etc., etc. This money making scheme is not new, however.

I discovered an early version of Lotto while researching the history of one of my Denver whiskey flasks, "F. W. KOCH & CO. 1544 LARIMER ST."

CONTRIBUTE TO CAMPAIGNS

In connection with the history of "Policy" in Denver, it is interesting to note that most powerful influences have been brought to bear to permit the game to run. An important item in the expense account of the policy people is the periodical campaign contribution. It is well-known that Ed Chase has given large sums of money from time to time to the various political committees. He is the heaviest contributor.

Ed Chase was inclined to strong drink, however, and on one occasion, fired a shot at himself while sitting at his desk at the shop on 15th below Market. He did not succeed in inflicting any injury upon himself, and was hauled ingloriously to jail. This is the first instance of any man operating a policy wheel ever attempting suicide. The losers are the ones among whom the suicides may be found.

V. I. Chuchovich opened his institution

two years ago with half a dozen writers. Now he has about seventy-five writers and new ones are being employed every day. He is always looking for deskroom for a writer, and when that is found, he furnishes his new employee with a pad of oil paper, a bunch of carbon and a hard lead pencil. This constitutes the entire working capital of the writer. He need not have a cent in his pocket when he starts, and he receives twenty percent of the money he takes in. He writes down the "gigs", "saddles" and "spiders" named by the player, takes the money and closes his book half an hour before the drawing.

HOW IT OPERATES

The book is taken to the policy headquarters, where the wheel is about to be turned. All the books are in before the big glass cylinder is started in motion. The writer either carries it to the headquarters himself, or sends it by messenger. With all the boxes in the room carefully guarded, the wheelman begins operations. A blind-folded lad stands upon a little platform and a man at his side turns the crank, which revolves the wheel. There are seventy-eight numbers printed on square slips of paper. Each paper is enclosed in a tube about an inch in length, and the seventy-eight are thrown together just like so many peanuts. The mass, by the revolutions of the big glass cylinder, is mixed thoroughly. Then the wheel is brought to a standstill, a little door at the top is opened and the blind-folded boy thrusts in his hand and takes out one of the cubes from the bunch. This continues until twelve of the seventy-eight numbers are laid on the table.

A three number 'gig' is to guess

correctly three of the twelve numbers that come from the cylinder. If he is able to do that, he will receive 200 times his play - that is, for five-cents, he will get \$10 and more, in proportion to the amount of his bet. In every policy shop, there is a blackboard on which appear the numbers brought out of each drawing. No sooner are the numbers chalked up than a crowd of victims appear to compare their little slips, which they received from the writers, with the results.

Ninety-nine out of every hundred players turn away from the blackboard in disgust and tear up their tickets. The hundredth probably has played a 'saddle'



- a bet that two of the three numbers he has played will come out - and receives fifty-cents for his nickel. Occasionally a lucky finds that he has won a 'gig', and he collects 200 times as much as he has wagered, which fact is loudly proclaimed by the writer, and soon spreads among the policy fiends, encouraging them to go up against the skin game at the very next drawing. No description was given as to what constitutes a 'spider'.

Ed Chase was often referred to as the "Policy King" of Denver. His "State" and "Association" companies operated with four drawings a day for sixteen years. The officials of the city, county and state, and the members of the legislature, were all well aware that policy was running openly, but they paid no attention to it. A few feeble attempts have been made to those places, but the prosecution of the managers and writers never went beyond the county court. (1)

FRED KOCH GETS INTO THE POLICY BUSINESS

Koch entered into partnership with Dan Heatley and Jim Marshall in the gambling, saloon and policy business at 1863 Larimer Street. Marshall and Heatley

forced Koch out, but the latter, with his strong backing, had his day of revenge.

The building was owned by H. Solomon, a pawnbroker, and Jim Marshall had a lease on the upstairs for a gambling house until November, 1901. Fred Koch, who owns the saloon in the Equitable Building, had been endeavoring to get possession of the building for a gambling house for a year, and offered Solomon a higher rent than Marshall was paying. So Solomon made a pretended transfer of the property to Fred Koch. After that transfer was consummated, Koch and Solomon brought a writ of ejectment in the court. The court ruled that Marshall had a verbal lease upon the premises until November. (2)

ARNETT TAKES THE LAW INTO HIS OWN HANDS TO SERVE KOCH, ANOTHER POLICE PROTECTED GAMBLER

Fred Koch employed a posse of six notorious men, who were supplied with revolvers in order to take "peaceable possession". (3) On the night of February 13, 1901, an armed gang raided the "Bucket of Blood", the gambling house at 1863 Larimer.

Philander J. Killam was shot three times by Jim Marshall, as he was ascending the stairs. Three men were booked on the police docket with 'disturbance'. They were released after each furnished a bond of \$200. Fred Koch was their bondsman.

Fred Koch is disliked in policy circles on account of the smallness of his contributions. The other managers declare that Koch steadfastly refuses to "dig-up", although he conducts a thriving business.

Devote some time at your local historical archive source. You will be surprised what you find.

References:

- (1) Denver Times, April, 1903.
- (2) Denver Times, Thursday, February 14, 1901.
- (3) Ibid.

John M. Eatwell is a Past-President of the Federation and a member of the FOHBC Hall of Fame. He is an advanced collector of Colorado whiskeys and Pike's Peak flasks. Copies of his book, PIKE'S PEAK GOLD, an authoritative text on Pike's Peak and the bottles associated with it, are available for purchase by calling him at (303) 922-0815.

Photo, top left: Early newspaper clipping originally stated: "Wretched Dupes of the Soulless "Policy Kings" above photo. Below photo, it added: "Here are types of the patrons of Denver's Policy Business Shops, Drawn from Life by Artist Taylor."

ODDs 'N ENDS

by Bill Baab

John Wolf, a Dayton, Ohio collector, has been gathering information on cures, writing to collectors worldwide, in preparation for a book on the subject. He started bottle collecting in 1968-69...

The Rev. Bill Agee recalls owning three small River Swamp Chill & Fever Cures, the highly sought cure with the embossed alligator from Augusta, Ga., and only one large one.

"You may remember Dave Goad, the Travelin' Bottle Man. He'd found a man in Atlanta with a large River Swamp. Dave was always needing money and called me and said, 'If you'll send me \$90 by Western Union, I'll ship it to you,' and I did and he did."

Agee began collecting cures in 1967 and let up 20-odd years later "because John (Wolf) was getting the best ones. I branched out into picture mineral waters

and picture-embossed sodas for 25 years."

The 73-year-old retired Baptist minister still serves churches in need and also is an appraiser for the Dr. Pepper Museum in Waco, Texas where he lives.

Agee may attend the FOHBC Expo in Memphis later this year...

Carl Sturm and his wife, Joy, co-edited the *Federation Glass Works Journal* (predecessor to *Bottles and Extras*) and the *Bitters & Sweets* newsletter of the now-defunct Orlando club.

There is a framed half-dollar on the wall of Carl Sturm's den from an

adventure during his Navy days. "There was a party on Midway Island and I was performing magic for the kids, making a half-dollar disappear. I'd hold it in my mouth, but on one occasion, I had to sneeze and inhaled and down my throat it went. I was going to leave it in my stomach, but doctors talked me out of it, fearing future problems, so I had surgery and decided to frame the coin. The operating doctor said it was the first time he had performed major surgery for 50 cents!" (See story about Carl Sturm's collection on page 34.)

