

WITHOUT CAPITAL BOY OPENS BANK IN RHINELAND

Its Checks Now Are Held in Preference to Currency.

UPSETS HABIT OF CENTURIES

American Lad in Two Years Has Actually Taught the Germans to Use Checks in Ordinary Business—Neidecker, Successful Bond Salesman at Ninteen, Wins War Honors in Air and at Twenty-Five Heads American Plan Bank in Germany.

The crowded life story of B. Coles Neidecker at the age of twenty-five is not reflected in the youthful, smiling personality of an American boy who capitalized opportunity and foresight, opened a bank in Coblenz, Germany, in June, 1920, without capital and ignorant of the German language. Its checks now are held in preference to currency throughout the Rhineland. He actually taught the Germans in two years to use checks in ordinary business, upsetting the strictly currency habit of centuries.

He is founder and chief of the Rhineland bank (Neidecker, Weinhegen & Co.), Coblenz, has declined offers to merge it with great banking institutions of Germany and is in New York organizing the Travelers' Bank of Paris with fully developed plans for its operation there and through branches, all over Europe.

Not a fairy story at all. The Guaranty Trust company of New York, in its banking school taught him so well that he was the youngest bond salesman in New York in 1916 when he was barely nineteen years old and he showed a record with sales that included one to a very wealthy New York capitalist of \$450,000 in Anglo-French bonds.

Went to the War.

Thus fairly well started in life as a financier, he decided that it was too slow a game when the war was on. He applied for admission to the Franco-American flying corps. His name was superficially changed to the Lafayette Escadrille when the German ambassador at Washington early in 1917 protested against association of the word American with a military enterprise against Germany, not then an enemy of the United States.

Neidecker's application for a chance to fight in the air was under favorable consideration when he decided to get to France at once. He joined the American ambulance in Paris in January, 1917, drove ambulances and later camions when the ambulance service was diverted to transport of supplies for the American forces. He saw some very lively times around Solsons and on the Aisne in that work, but he wanted to get into the real thing, and as soon as American military aviation was organized Neidecker joined that service, August, 1917.

When the armistice was declared November 11, 1918, the American military aviation service had five graduate air pilots at the front. Neidecker was one of them. He wore the Croix de Guerre with palm, had three recommendations for the Distinguished Service decoration and a record of bringing down three Fokkers and their pilots in air combats.

As pilot he was a first lieutenant and with that rank he was immediately attached to the Hoover mission to Poland on the staff of General Groves, its chief. Lieutenant Neidecker was sent to Lithuania and there superintended distribution of American food supplies.

This young man was educated entirely by tutors and prepared for Exeter and Harvard but when he was seventeen decided on business life, banking, for his career. He entered the Guaranty Trust company's service in its school of instruction in 1915 and within 15 months was selling its bonds in Wall street.

That training made him realize the tremendous possibilities all about him in post-war Europe. The American Rhineland force whose headquarters were outside Coblenz numbered about 30,000 and the United States was distributing there about 1,000,000 good American dollars every month in paying them.

There was not in Coblenz any bank which accepted dollar accounts. All the banks handled marks exclusively as the basis of their transactions. There was a depositor's field for that million a month just crying for a dollar deposit bank.

Found Credit Ready.

Capital was not an asset of the youthful American financier but he leased a two-story building, remodeled it, fitted it up with a modern American office equipment and had crowds of Germans coming in to just look at it before it was finished. The German banking house type then was a small office with a counter, which only recently had supplanted merely the desk of the German banker in his office in his home, where he transacted all his business.

Credit for this enterprise young Neidecker found ready for his asking on all sides. He had learned not to be afraid of doing the unusual in Germany.

A partner who could speak German was a great need for the new bank-

ing house of one American boy. Neidecker found Paul J. Weinhegen in the American camp. Weinhegen, a San Francisco boy, commissioned in the American artillery service, was out of the army after the armistice and also broke.

That sort of boy was the boy who appealed to the boy embryo banker and they joined forces, wonderful but not capitalists.

But capital, you know, really is a part of the routine in preparing for a banking business. The American youths advertised for partners with capital. They got two.

The bank was opened in June, 1920, when the senior partner was twenty-three years old and did not look his age. Its site had been well chosen, on the main route in Coblenz from everywhere. Everybody bound from the American camp for the other banks, the Salvation Army headquarters, the theaters and to pass the American bank.

Before it had a dollar of deposits it had all fittings and supplies which would be a credit to any bank in America, including bank check books which cost about 20 cents each. It paid for them and all its other construction liabilities in no time.

Godsend to the Army.

Immediately a tremendous business in small loans developed. The American doughboys were always sending money somewhere and most of them wanted to borrow between paydays. An officer's indorsement was all the enlisted man needed to borrow a reasonably large portion of his pay in advance. A minimum fixed charge was made for discount of these notes and time loans were made to officers at 8 per cent per annum. This business put the bank on its feet almost before it needed feet.

The big field of local banking business with the Germans came more slowly, but it rose and rose until it reached important volume. The enormous speculation in industrial stocks and municipal bonds which followed rapid depreciation of the mark in 1920 and 1921 brought the Rhineland bank of the young Americans another source of large income in commissions for executing sales and purchases. This grew to such size that the bank was not able to handle all of its brokerage business and had to divide it with correspondent banks.

Success of this phenomenal sort naturally attracted to the American bankers the keen interest of great German banking houses. Offers were made to buy or absorb the new institution, but they were not entertained.

When the Rhineland bank was opened the Germans of Coblenz never thought of using checks except in large transactions. If a business man received in payment of an account a check for 1,000 marks he tucked it carefully in his pocket and went around to his bank, which resembled an old-fashioned law office rather than a financial institution. The banker sent the check to the bank on which it was drawn, or to his own, and paid out the cash, which was carried off by its owner or deposited to his account.

The American bank paid its bills with checks, of course, and thus advertised its modern methods locally. Germans began to be depositors in satisfactory numbers and they learned to pay their bills in checks. Their example spread.

Then came one of the strangest things in financial history. As the gold value of the German paper mark shrank German industry was increasing as never before. This meant an increasing need for currency and an increase at the same time in the amount of currency needed. Two marks were needed one month to pay what was a bill for one mark the previous month.

Checks Better Than Money.

Scarcity of currency grew. A climax came last July and was repeated with growing threat of disaster thereafter week after week. The printers who printed the Reichsbank national paper currency of Germany went on strike in July following the murder of Dr. Walter Rathenau, minister of finance. No currency was printed for weeks, and issue never has caught up with increasing demand for currency.

Checks of the Rhineland bank of the young Americans became cherished things. They were preferred to currency. Those lucky enough to get them held on to them as if they were gold coin. The bank could not get its checks back.

Thus millions of marks were loaned to the bank by these holders of its checks because the cash held to protect them became available for loans by the bank with great profit from such use. The necessary securities to meet these checks were, of course, kept in the depository banks of the Rhineland bank. Those securities bore interest and the money representing the withheld checks was bearing interest in loans, so the bank profited both ways.

Mr. Neidecker married Miss Sibly Kosminski, whose father was famous as American director of the French line of steamships during his administration throughout the war years.

Parachute Jumper Drowns in River.

Falling into the Tennessee river near Chattanooga, Tenn., D. A. Chandler, a parachute jumper, was drowned. Chandler was giving exhibitions at an interstate fair near the city.

Pays Fine for Flying Too Low.

Charged with driving his airplane too low over the business section of Birmingham, Ala., Sar P. Farrell, airplane pilot, paid a fine of \$5. Birmingham regulates air traffic by ordinance

DRUG STORES AND THE DODECANESE

Harks Back to Hippocrates, Father of Modern Medicine.

'DRUG ISLAND' NOW HERBLESS

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GLORIOUS FREEDOM

By DOROTHY DONAHUE

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Pa Whittaker, being fifty-two and henpecked, wiggled his toes happily in his broad-toed shoes to express his great joy when Ma Whittaker decided to take a vacation—minus Pa.

Of course, Pa conceded, within the protective walls of the woodland, Ma had a few merits. She did darn his stockings and keep his clothes mended and give him the best of meals, besides keeping the house as spotless and shining as a new aluminum pan under the direct rays of the sun; but Pa felt justified, nevertheless, in his happiness, because, oh, how Ma Whittaker's tongue could fly.

So it was that Pa closed the house the next day and made for the city.

Pa reached the city in a state of glorified individuality. His funds were low, very low—so the only restaurant that could possibly attract him was exceedingly undesirable with its smoke-clouded windows, greasy, wet counters and suspiciously revolving stools. But Pa was hungry, so he forced his way in and sat down a little mournfully, with the odor of corned beef and cabbage prevailing. He was thinking of Ma Whittaker when he ordered flapjacks—and was disappointed. Thin, soggy, burnt—horrible! Pa gulped down his coffee, and, forgetting that he was not in the broad-backed chair at home, leaned back! Two dark-faced roaring sailors picked him up, snapped a few pieces of invisible hayseed from his shiny coat and bowed low.

Pa reached the street, greatly surprised and humbled, minus the bravado of early morning.

Pa felt a sudden desire for quiet and calm. Everyone seemed to be rushing past him. In the midst of the excited, jabbering throng he felt strangely alone. The cool gray front of a movie theater, with its welcoming gaudy splash of posters, attracted Pa. He went into the soft darkness and groped his way to a seat near the back, sitting down with a worried little sigh of relief. But his eyes were a little weak, and he couldn't read the subtitles. Ma Whittaker had read them, gladly, the few times they had been.

A stout, laughing woman wedged her way into the row in front of him, followed by her husband. Her broad, expansive back obstructed Pa's view to the point of exasperation. He moved uneasily in his chair. The stout lady read the first title in a loud, husky voice. The man with her nodded and stared straight ahead.

An aching flood of genuine homesickness almost overcame Pa. He crept out of the dark little palace into the sunshine and decided at once to go home and sleep rather than brave the terrors of a public and cheap hotel.

Pa found the house empty, hollow-sounding, lonely. The deadly absence of Ma's merry but insistent chirping was distracting. He fell asleep reading the Gazette and stroking the cat. He dreamed it was Ma's hand he was putting while she scolded him, furiously, for some little thing—and he awoke smiling, only to frown at sight of the purring little ball of fur.

Outside it was drizzling. It had been drizzling in Pa's heart all day. He pulled on a battered hat and started for the garden. He could almost see her now pattering among those swaying poppies and that deluge of color that spread over half an acre. "Pa Whittaker!"

Pa blinked pale eyes and swung around like a well-trained soldier. He must be getting old. His eyes—"Pa Whittaker—out in this wet garden without your rubbers! I've told you and told you, and just because you think I'm not looking, you sneak out and plow through this wet. You're not a young man, I want you to remember, and if—"

Pa followed the voice blankly into the house and fell into a chair. The voice went on. "And I decided I'd better not stay away more'n a day with you so forgetful, so I trudged right home, and here you are, as usual, doing something that will be the death of you. I've been looking everywhere for you—everywhere, and—"

Pa still stared. Understanding crept slowly, very slowly into his mind. "Something inside him kept repeating: 'She's here—to stay. She's here—to stay.'"

Fifteen minutes later Ma ran out of breath and stopped to regard the silent figure in the chair. "Fer land sakes, Pa, are you dumb? Say something!"

Pa looked up into the sharp eyes that held a glint of kindness. "Ma, please—please keep right on talking. I was never so happy in my life! Never!"

Strange Bear.

The Chemosit, or Nandi bear, a mysterious animal that is said to haunt the deep forests in the most inaccessible parts of the East African highlands, has again been seen, this time by a party of reliable European and native witnesses.

It has been seen by various people several times during recent years, but no specimen has been killed or captured. The latest description of the bear tallies accurately with previous reports. The animal is between five and six feet high, walks on its hind legs something after the manner of a chimpanzee, and has a long fringe of white hair completely encircling its face.

SIoux CITY ITEMS

Mrs. Alice Flowers, of Robinson, Ill., who is in the city to spend the holidays with her daughter, was entertained by a host of friends on Christmas day at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Russell Bryant, 1411 Cook street.

Mr. Calcum Stubbsfield, who is attending college at Ames, Iowa, is in the city spending the holidays with his parents in their home at 3214 Jones street.

Miss Lenora Sing Watkins, an accomplished pianist of this city, who accepted a position with Mr. Walker's orchestra about two weeks ago, and who is now filling engagements in Wyoming, reports a very pleasant experience. Miss Watkins is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Watkins, 612 Otto street.

The Dames Club which has been meeting every two weeks, will not meet this Thursday but will announce the meeting after the holidays.

The Entre Nous Club, which was organized less than a year, is to be commended for the splendid work that was carried on during the Christmas

LINCOLN COMMENT

Christmas day was an ideal one in this vicinity, as the sun shone brightly and warm. Thousands of people strolled to and fro mingling with relatives and friends, offering tokens of cards, presents of various kinds, which gladdened the hearts of the recipients. Thousands of children were made glad by the Order of Elks who played Santa to them at the City Auditorium on Christmas morning. Seemingly everybody was proud of the fact that they were able to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Milton Johnson is spending the holidays with his parents at St. Joseph, Missouri.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Bush and children are spending the holidays with relatives at St. Joseph, Mo.

Mrs. W. L. Todd is spending the holidays with her mother in Brunswick, Mo.

Rev. C. W. Wilson from Chetopa, Kansas, is visiting his daughters, Mrs. M. Griffin and Mrs. W. Pierce, here.

Mr. W. M. Clark went to his home at Wichita, Kansas, last Saturday.

Miss Alma Wiley left Monday night to spend the holidays with her mother in Plattsburg, Mo.

Mr. Chris C. Stith is able to be out after some days' illness.

Mrs. Bertie Brooks is reported confined at home with illness.

Services at Mt. Zion Baptist church last Sunday were Sunday school at 10. The pastor preached an interesting sermon on the Birth of Christ at 11. The B. Y. P. U. met at 7 p. m. At 8:15 Rev. Botts told the church of the doings of the National Baptist Convention which was listened to with interest. Mrs. C. J. Griffin gave echoes of the women's work at the convention which was inspiring. The Children's Christmas tree was held on Monday night, all of which was nicely attended. The several suppers given in the interest of the church proved successful.

The choir of the A. M. E. church gave a cantata at the church at 6 a. m. Christmas morning, which was well attended. The annual union services of the churches were held at 11 a. m. at the A. M. E. church, and Rev. J. H. McAllister of Newman was preacher of the hour, which all present enjoyed. Union services will be held at the Mt. Zion Baptist church in December, 1923.

The supper and entertainment given by Amaranth Chapter, O. E. S., last Tuesday afternoon and evening proved to be a success.

Mrs. H. R. Roberts and Mrs. J. W. Jewel of Omaha were guests at the homes of Mrs. O. J. Burkhardt and Mrs. W. M. Jenueris during the holidays.

Rev. O. J. Burkhardt of So. Omaha is spending a few days at home, shaking hands with friends.

Mrs. J. Sherman Jones and her brother, Wm. N. Johnson, attorney, of Chicago, are spending the holidays with their mother and friends here. Utopian Art Club will meet at the home of Mrs. E. Black on Thursday evening, January 4th.

A. B. Mosley spent the holidays with his brother and friends at Atchison, Kansas.

The A. M. E. Church Sunday school held their Christmas tree last Saturday night. The pastor conducted the services Sunday during the day. Watch-meetings will be held in the several churches next Sunday night.

We wish all our readers a happy and prosperous New Year.

MEN TAKEN FROM JAIL MAY HAVE BEEN SLAIN

Pilot Point, Texas, Dec. 29—Two colored men, who were spirited away from the county jail last Wednesday, may have been slain by white mobsters. A notice, written on plain paper and unsigned, was found on the door of a local newspaper office warning Negroes to leave the town.

PAYS \$5,000 FOR SAYING WOMAN HAS NEGRO BLOOD

Stigler, Okla., Dec. 29—Trial of the slander suit of Miss Beulah Ford, attractive school teacher of Tehamah, Haskell county, against Andrew Dalton, well-known farmer was abruptly discontinued here when Dalton confessed judgment and handed Miss Ford a check for \$5,000. The teacher had brought suit for \$20,000, alleging Dalton had said that she had Negro blood in her veins.

holidays, and one act I wish to bring to the attention of the readers of The Monitor is the gift of \$10 which they gave to Mrs. M. Knight, who is quite elderly and who is fostering six of her nieces.

Miss Leona Cross, who is teaching school in Kansas City, Mo., is in the city this week to spend the holidays with her parents in their home at 819 West Eighth street.

The homes of two of our people were made sad the last week when death knocked on the door of Mr. and Mrs. Holder, 319 West 7th street, and robbed them of their four-months-old daughter. And also at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clay at 7th and Soo streets, where their eight year old daughter was called to rest.

The Haddock Church and Mt. Olive Church held union services on Christmas day at Haddock church at 3 p. m. There was an appreciative attendance and the time was well spent, with a program for the occasion.

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