

## American Round Tables in Manila

Of the 3 well-known American roundtables in Manila, 2 still function and are at the Chamber of Commerce. The other, never so widely known as these, is at the Palma de Mallorca but for years, many years, has not been an American table. It was used in the earliest period of the American era in the Islands by a group of men from the oldtime Philippine Commission and the Executive Bureau, some of whom lived at the Palma de Mallorca to economize their expenses and to acquire Spanish, while others only took their meals there, or only lunch.

The presiding genius at that table, until his death, was Arthur Waish "Art" Fergusson. His effigy, in marble, stands on Plaza Fergusson, named for him, in Ermita. He was the secretary to the Taft Commission, 1900, then, from 1901, Executive Secretary. His monument says he was a Native Son, that is, that he was born in Benicia, California, December 4, 1859. He died in Manila January 30, 1908, and he had been, for 9 years, an able and exalted public official and popular clubman. He had gifts in rhetoric, including rhyme. The executive files would turn up many metrical compositions among his endorsements of public papers. Apparently he knew Spanish well, even back in California, and Spanish, to help his juniors, was the preferred speech at his table in the old walled city.

The Palma de Mallorca on calle Real, its site today, was near his work.

A number of Americans, working with the new government, then lived in the walled city; in fact, numbers did, for the houses were about the best in town and convenient to the offices. The clubs also began in the walled city, and many years passed before they moved outside. The library was there, too, and the doctors associated with the new health service. Also the governor's offices.

Fergusson's mantle fell when he died on Frank Carpenter, his protégé in the civil service who had come into it from a clerkship in the army and had sedulously understudied Fergusson in Spanish and palace politics. Every government paper, of any importance, passed through the Executive Secretary's office and

was given the Secretary's chop before it was sent to its assigned destination. Copies were retained in the office, and others, very often, privately by the Secretary himself. In leaving the Orient some 10 years ago, Governor (for having later been the governor of the Department of Mindanao and Sulu) Carpenter had with him a huge black box full of such historical trivia, and had the good sense to toss it into the sea before reaching San Francisco.

done about recruiting new members or this interesting club will default to time.

The cut shows the membership and officers in 1911. Tommy Wolff is still the president, as he has been without change since 1902. The table was a property of M. A. "Met" Clarke's in his old Clarke's Place, a restaurant, on the Escolta at the foot of the oldtime Bridge of Spain. Clarke had made money in the restaurant and in a candy-making business he established. With shares sold to whomever would buy them, he had taken up and developed the gold property that is now Benguet Consolidated. By 1911, though it had entailed a mortgaging of all his assets, he had got things going well at the mine, when prolonged rains flooded it and washed away the mill.

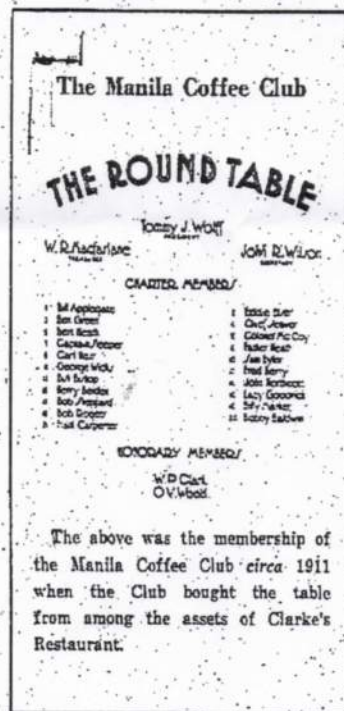
So now the bank (Bank of the Philippine Islands) was selling Clarke's, and 14 Americans whose wont had been to use the coffee table got together and bought it, later adding percolators, china and cutlery, long since lost track of. Since Clarke's was being closed, too, the table was moved away. It was placed for a time in the Hotel Migration, then for a shorter time at Tom's Dixie Kitchen. (Tom Pritchard, of Tom's, had been Clarke's chief chef. After the failure, Tom starting up for himself, and destined to fame as a restaurateur, Clarke went to southern California and soon died there of a pulmonary affection). The Coffee Table was then moved to the offices of the old Merchants' Association, forerunner of the Chamber of Commerce, and in 1920 to the Chamber of Commerce, when it was founded, where it has been ever since.

Clarke himself sat for morning coffee at this table, and many conversations preliminary to the organization of his mine took place there. He prophesied time and time again that one day the hills of Baguio on Antamok creek would fairly evacuate gold. Time has proved him right, but merely another pioneer.

Met Clarke was the Old Man Sutter of the Philippines.

The other roundtable at the Chamber of Commerce is the larger and the newer. It alone bears the official name *Round Table* because the other,

(Please turn to page 19)



Governor Carpenter lives at Washington. When he retired from the Philippines government he was rewarded, at the behest of Filipinos in it, with a special gratuity of P50,000.

The older of the two American roundtables at the Chamber of Commerce is that of the Coffee Club that gathers mornings at 10 o'clock for a round or two of coffee and doughnuts, and to match coins to determine who will pay. Members have something specially prepared on their birthdays. Only two charter members survive in Manila: T. J. "Tommy" Wolff and E. E. "Ed" Elser, and something will eventually have to be



### American Round Tables

(Continued from page 13)

that of the Coffee Club, is very fittingly baptized *Clarke's Round Table* and bears a silver memorial to Clarke in its center.

Soon after the Chamber of Commerce was founded, in 1920, with Captain H. L. Heath its president, 17 other members got together under Heath's command and had a huge table built at Bilibid to accommodate them all. Captain Heath's mind had a mathematical quirk and a bent for the nautical. It was decided to place a compass in a silver mounting at the center of this big table, over a plaque styling it the American Chamber of Commerce Round Table, and to have silver arrows pointing out each member's place infallibly.

From each arrow dangled a silver banner, and on each banner was a member's name. But the thing was 5 feet or more distant from every chair; no one could readily see where it pointed or what it said; it was hard to clean and keep in place, and was seldom correctly oriented, so years ago it fell into disuse, though it did embellish the table for some 10 years. It was an embarrassment for visitors to infer it was some sort of cruet. Probably the table boys were asked to put it away somewhere after Captain Heath left Manila and retired from active business.

Following is the membership history of the Table as disclosed by the name plates:

- North. William J. Odom.\* Wilson E. Wells.  
N. 20° W. G. T. Hermann. M. M. Saleeby.  
N. 40° W. H. O. Haynor. Daniel R. Williams.\*  
N. 60° W. S. F. Gaches.  
N. 80° W. H. L. Heath.\*  
S. 80° W. Simon Feldstein.  
S. 60° W. Julian Wolfson.  
S. 20° W. George B. Wicks.\* John L. Headington.  
S. 40° W. Frank W. Carpenter. John R. Wilson.\*  
South. J. L. Pierce.\* J. N. Wolfson.  
S. 20° E. John Gordon.  
S. 40° E. Norbert Lyons.  
S. 60° E. G. H. Fairchild.  
N. 40° E. A. E. Haley.  
S. 80° E. H. B. McCoy.\* J. F. Gargan.  
N. 80° E. C. M. Cotterman.  
N. 60° E. Gordon Johnston.\*  
N. 20° E. W. M. Butts. H. W. Foster, L. L. Spellman, E. J. McSorley.

Names of charter members who each paid P20 in the cost of the Table appear in italics. Names of members who have died are indicated by asterisks.

Colonel Henry B. McCoy was the first member to die, September 30, 1923, at his home in Pasay. He had been the Islands' collector of customs until the change-over in the Harrison administration, then he had been in business, chiefly mining, and had kept up his Republican leadership. George B. Wicks' death was next, April 2, 1927, of a heart condition that brought on an attack at the lunch table. Judge Daniel



Carson Taylor



R. L. Reynolds

R. Williams died September 21, 1931. He had been secretary to the Philippine Commission and had written books about the Philippines: e. g., *Odyssey of the Philippine Commission*. For many years later, he pioneered an estate on the Pacific coast of Tayabas.

J. F. Gargan acquired the McCoy membership and it is still in his name. Judge Williams had acquired the Haynor membership after Haynor retired from active management of Clark & Co., well known opticians in the Masonic Temple (now the Philippine National Bank Building) on the Escolta, and went back to California.

Colonel Gordon Johnston died on special duty in Mexico, March 8, 1934. He was the famous aide to Major General Leonard Wood. He was Wood's man at the Round Table, and one entity he left in town is the American Guardian Association that sees to the welfare of children of American paternity who need it. During the years he was in Manila with General Wood (when this great American soldier-humanitarian was the Islands' governor general), Colonel Johnston had much influence on the Round Table's sentiments, and the Table no little influence on his.

John R. Wilson died July 5, 1935. Two or three days before, gristle from a chicken bone had lodged in his throat and he had neglected its extraction. He had even given it so little importance as to have marched with the Veterans in the Independence Day military parade, but this aggravated his condition and he went from the parade to the Elks Club, where he was a member, and was taken from

there to St. Paul's, where he died the next day, of heart strain, before a surgeon could operate. In his earlier years, after discharge from the army, he had been assistant Lands-Bureau director under the late Captain Charles H. Sleepor, and often the acting director, but no doubt he is better remembered by the present American community in Manila, as the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

He always said he was the first American to own his own home in Manila. It was a large place on a promontory, in San Juan del Monte, bought perhaps as early as 1901, and is now the site of a number of modern residences.

Captain Herbert Lee Heath died June

#### Up-To-Date Gents Tailoring

#### GOLDENBERG'S TAILORING DEPARTMENT

Personally directed by  
"Maestro" Villa-Real,  
Manila's Foremost

MASTER CUTTER AND  
FITTER

#### GOLDENBERG'S

Dasmarinas Corner Nueva

### Consolidated Trading Corp.

#### IMPORT—EXPORT

DESICCATED COCONUT

COCONUT SHELL CHARCOAL

609 Trade & Commerce Bldg.

MANILA

Cable Address: TEXTILES



27, 1937, at his country home in Oregon outside the town where he had owned and edited a newspaper (still going, and a good one) before joining the Volunteers for the Philippines with the rank of captain. After his regiment was disbanded at San Francisco and he came back to Manila, he developed a Masbate ranch and represented the Tubbs Cordage Company of San Francisco, and other cordage interests on the Pacific coast, in the buying of Manila hemp. The history of American commerce in the Far East was a hobby and inspiration to him, and as long as he lived in the Islands he was a dominant business figure. It was natural that he should be the first president of the Chamber of Commerce, re-

elected to successive terms, and that he should head the Round Table and dominate its discussions.

William J. "Bill" Odom died of drowning, August 28, 1938, when making his way to Manila from a gold project he had been trying to develop. He tried to force his pony across a small stream in torrential flood, and failed. He too had come to Manila as a soldier, and after some years of service with Manila's police force—he was a mounted cop—he turned to building and engineering with a licensed engineer as his partner. Among Escolta buildings he put up is the Burke Building now housing the American Hardware & Plumbing Company. He built the 4 Gibbs buildings that

face each other across a short block on calle Dasmariñas paralleling the Escolta, one of which was long leased by the American Chamber of Commerce.

In the Round Table membership list above, names of members more recent than the charter members are not in italics. Reference to the list will show the reader, in each case, whose memberships the later members acquired. Thus Wilson E. Wells, a U. S. Internal Revenue Agent, acquired the Odom membership. J. F. Gargan, no longer in Manila, acquired the McCoy membership. In all, the Table has had 27 members. John R. Wilson, not a charter member, had the Carpenter membership after Governor Carpenter left Manila.

The charter memberships of Messrs. Gaches, Heath, Feldstein, Julian Wolfson, Gordon, Lyons, Fairchild, Haley, Cotterman, and Johnston have never been transferred. J. L. "Jim" Pierce was a charter member, and a plaque commemorating his death is lacking in the Table, but will surely be placed there because he was highly esteemed and the Oldtimers never forget their comrades. Colonel Joseph N. Wolfson (now seriously ill, one of the oldest Americans in the Islands and very prominent in the community) acquired the Pierce membership.

Colonel J. L. Headington, a Director of the Chamber of Commerce who has just retired from its treasurership, acquired the Wicks membership and has for many years been regularly at his place at the Table and active in its discussions. But so many years slipping quietly away, as they are wont to do in Manila, the complexion of the Table has changed. Member Feldstein never regularly occupied his place; he retired from active business years ago, after remarkable success during more than 35 years, but still lives in the Islands, with homes in Baguio and at the Manila Hotel. Member Cotterman, long a Director and Officer of the Chamber of Commerce, including a period as its president, seldom missed a day at the Table until he gave up midday meals a few years ago, and now he never comes to the Table. His son-in-law, Frank Butler, until his death some 10 years ago, was the manager of the Walk Over Shoe Store, a Cotterman property, and regularly at the Table.

Leo K. Cotterman, C. M. Cotterman's son, whose main interests are the Baguio Country Club and the Philippine Acetylene Company, has usually been associated with the directorate in one capacity or another for many years, but is no longer frequently at the Table. Other men, not yet members, come round to fill such places, though a muster of 18 is seldom achieved. Norbert Lyons, a newspaper man, who still keeps his charter membership, left Manila to live in New York 15 years ago. Senator Fairchild, like the elder Mr. Cotterman, seldom absent from the Table in years past, no longer lunches downtown and his

## Eats — Drinks — Smokes PLAZA LUNCH *"Famous for its foods"*

or

If you prefer to sip your favorite cocktail  
or meal in a cozy corner—our Magic  
Glo Cafe is the most ideal place.

### Completely Air Conditioned

56 Plaza Goiti  
Manila

FRED M. HARDEN  
Proprietor

## The Philippine Guaranty Company, Inc. (Established in 1917)

### SURETY BONDS—

We execute Bonds of various kinds, especially CUSTOMS BONDS, FIRE ARMS BONDS, INTERNAL REVENUE BONDS, PUBLIC WORKS BONDS for Contractors, COURT BONDS, for Executors, Administrators and Receivers and BAIL BONDS in criminal cases.

### FIRE INSURANCE—

In the Philippine Islands

### LOANS—

Secured by first mortgage on improved properties in the City of Manila on the monthly amortization plan.

Phone 2-24-31

Second Floor  
INSULAR LIFE BLDG.

P. O. Box 128  
MANILA



old place at the Table is for someone else. A. E. "Doc" Haley (of Gordon & Haley; builders and contractors) was regular in his Table attendance only during the early years. Now he never comes round, but keeps his charter membership.

John Gordon is as regularly at the Table now as he was at the beginning; when in town, he is there for lunch. It was through his effort that the huge table, 3 meters in diameter, was got into the new quarters of the Chamber of Commerce—by taking it to pieces and fitting it together again, then resurfacing and polishing it, a job well done throughout. (For years too long to count, without embarrassment, the writer as an interloper has sat at Gordon's right at the Table, not as a member).

Captain Heath set the precedent that the Round Table is the table of the President of the Chamber of Commerce. When Paul A. Meyer was for so many years the Chamber's president, nearly always he went home for lunch, but when downtown he lunched at the Table. President Gaches regularly occupies the Table when lunching downtown, as did C. M. Cotterman when he was president, and the others, excepting E. E. Elser, who would lunch regularly at home. The Table being the largest in the Chamber of Commerce, round it more men can be in luncheon contact with the President if he sits there. Besides this, there is the sure association with other oldtimers.

On Wednesdays, formerly, the Chamber of Commerce had luncheon speakers. These guests were seated at the Round Table, alongside the President. It became practice that the Chamber members' more distinguished guests sat there, whatever the day might be. So it was that Mr. Wells came to sit there, and followed through with a Table membership. Men gravitate to the Table who enjoy desultory business discussion, or go in for reminiscences. Nearly every charter member was a Veteran of the Occupation, as were most members who came in later. It is a Table of the Elders. We wish it another Merry Christmas, and many to follow.

W. R.

#### Cecil: New Chamber . . .

(Continued from page 12)

Iran girl born at Jolo and with the lore of the archipelago native to her childhood. They were married here, 10 years ago, and have ever since maintained one of Manila's most hospitable and delightful homes. Their children are Suzita, like her mother, and Robert E. II. Mrs. Cecil is one of the city's most popular hostesses; she of course helped with the arrangements for ladies in the November affairs at the Chamber of Commerce, the high occasion being the Ladies' reception for Mrs. Francis B. Sayre, the wife of High

Commissioner Sayre.

Cecil was in Davao only until 1930, when he came to Manila and joined West Coast in the capacity of the assistant manager. His predilection in business is finance; he had rather handle papers than things, so he thinks that from now on out he will leave commodities and merchandise to the other fellow.

The Cecils live in Pasay. Among their clubs are the Army & Navy and the Polo, the latter near their home. They are also building a beautiful country home at Tagaytay. It seems that that development, and others round Manila, may be destined to change Manila's weekends and send

more of us into the country for week-ending. The second generation of Americans claims its foothold here, changes may be expected and also welcomed when they palpably improve on the past.

#### THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE JOURNAL

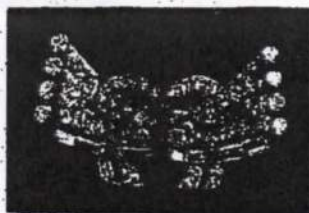
Every number contains searching suggestions criticised before being printed, helpful to the Commonwealth's economy.

#### Subscriptions

P2 a year — Foreign P6

*This Christmas  
give Her*

## Diamond Jewelry



Our diamonds, emeralds, rubies, sapphires and other genuine gems are scientifically examined and tested by a Certified Gemologist and Registered Jeweler (American Gem Society) . . . a protection which is offered only by

## 'La Estrella del Norte

LEVY HERMANOS INC.

46 Escolta—Manila

Your Jewelers since 1870