Newspapers by ancestry

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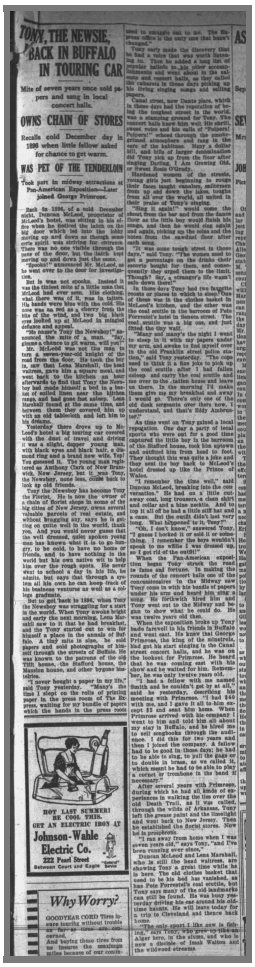

TONY, THE NEWSIE, BACK IN BUFFALO IN TOURING CAR

Min of seven years once sold papers and sang in local concert halls.

OWNS CHAIN OF STORES

Recalls cold December day in 1896 when little fellow asked for chance to get warm.

WAS PET OF THE TENDERLOIN

Took part in midway attractions at Pan-American Exposition—Later joined George Primrose.

Back in 1896, of a cold December night, Duncan McLeod, proprietor of McLeod's hotel, was sitting in his office, which was then on the first floor of the big door which led into the lobby swung up and down as though some one outside was shifting the entrance. There was no one visible through the glass in the door, but the door kept swinging up and down just the same.

"Spooks!" announced Mr. McLeod, as he went over to the door for investigation.

But it was not spooks. Instead it was the tiniest mite of a little man that McLeod had ever seen. His clothes—what there was left of them—hung in rags from his thin body, and his feet, one of which was bare, were as cold as a cherry from the kiss of the wind, and tiny big black eyes looked up at McLeod in mingled defiance and appeal.

"Is this the home of Duncan McLeod?" asked the mite of a waif, "and please a chance to get warm, will you?"

Mr. McLeod was not the man to turn from the door a child in need, even from the door. So took the boy in and that Lena Marshall, the head waitress, gave him a square meal, and sent back to the kitchen an hour later to help the cook wash dishes. The boy had no friends! And he was afraid of cold! Soon near the kitchen range, and had gone fast asleep. Lena Marshall found at the noon time, and between cook and Dear covered him up with an old tablecloth and left him to sleep.

Yesterday there drove up to McLeod's hotel a big touring car covered with the dust of travel, and driving it was a slight, dapper young man, with a diamond stud in his shirt and a wedding ring and a head here with Tay Tea guessed it. The young man right-fered as Anthony Clark of New Britain, New Jersey, but it was Tony, the Newsboy, who, once, came back to look up old friends.

Tony the Newsboy has become Tony the Florist. He is now the owner of a chain of florist shops in some of the big cities of New Jersey, and owns several valuable parcels of real estate as well. He is prospering, says he is getting on quite well in the world, thank you. And you would never guess that the well dressed, quiet spoken young man has known what it is to go hungry, to be cold, to be without a friend, and to have nothing in the world but his own native wit to help him over the rough spots. He never went to school a day in his life, he says, but he has managed to educate all his own to ask keep track of his business ventures as well as a college graduate.

But to get back to 1896, when Tony the Newsboy was struggling for a night in the world. When Tony awoke on the morning after he had been taken into Mrs. McLeod's home he had breakfast, and the Tony started out to win for himself a place in the annals of Buffalo. A tiny mite in size, he sold papers with a voice that could be heard all through the streets of Buffalo. He was known to the patrons of the old Fifth house, the Stafford house, the Mansion house, and other bygone hostelries.

"I never bought a paper in my life," said Tony yesterday. "Mister, the time I slept on the rolls of printing paper in the press room of The Express, waiting for my bundle of papers with the hands in the press room

HOT LAST SUMMER! BE COOL THIS. GET AN ELECTRIC IRON AT Johnson-Wahle Electric Co. 222 Pearl Street Between Court and Eagle Why Worry? GOODYEAR CORD Tires insure touring without trouble or worry or time and expense. And buying these tires from us insures the greatest tires because of our consi-

moved to complain was to me. The Express office is the only one that hasn't done so.

Tony early made the discovery that he had a voice that was worth listening to. Then he added a long list of popular ballads to his stock in trade, and began to work the corner saloons and concert halls, as they called the cabarets in those days picking up his living singing songs and selling papers.

Canal street, now Dante place, which in those days had the reputation of being the toughest street in the world, was a stamping ground for Tony. The concert halls knew him well. His shrill, "Here's your Courier, Express and Enquirer!" echoed through the smoke-filled atmosphere and rang in the ears of the habitues. Many a dollar bill, and bills of larger denomination than dollars, were left in change by the dapper Darling, I Am Growing Old, or Sweet Rosie O'Grady.

Hardened women of the streets, young girls just beginning to escape from the parental roof, and men who had come down the lakes, freighters from all over the world, all united in their praise of Tony's singing.

"Sing it again!" would come the shout from the bar and from the tables and floor as the little boy would finish his song. Then he would pass the hat around and again, making up the coins and the notes from the sawdust floor after each song.

"It was some tough street in those days," said Tony yesterday, "and I had to get a percentage on the drinks that sentimental people bought for them, and consequently they urged them to the limit. Though? Say, a stranger's life wasn't worth a plugged nickel.

In those days Tony had two favorite rooms or places in which to sleep. One of these was in the clothes basket in McLeod's kitchen, and the other was in the coal bunker in the basement of Forrestal's hotel in Genesee street. The coal bunker was a big one, and just fitted the tiny waif.

"Many and many's the night I would go sleep in it with my papers under my arms, and awake to find myself covered with coal dust from head to foot," said Tony yesterday. "The coal used to think it a fine join to pick up the coal scuttle after I had fallen asleep and carry the coal scuttle and me to the bunker and empty us both on there. In the morning I'd wake up, then give up my breakfast and away I would go. There's only one of the old dusk sergeants over there now, I understand, and that's Billy Ambrose."

As time went on Tony gained a local reputation. One day a party of local sports who were out for a good time captured the little boy in the barroom of the Buffalo house, took him upstairs and washed him up a bit. Then they decided that they would like to see a little real champagne drunk by the kid, and they hied themselves to the bar Prince of Wales.

"I remember the time well," said Duncan McLeod, breaking into the conversation. "Tony was then in his seventeenth year, long trousers, a dark shirt and collar and a blue necktie. And to top it all off he had a little stiff hat and a cane. But the outfit didn't last very long. What happened to it, Tony?"

"Oh, I don't know," answered Tony, flicking a speck of dust from his clothing. I remember the boys wouldn't speak to me while I was dressed up, so I got rid of the outfit."

When the Pan-American exposition began Tony was engaged by Colonel Sam Dawson to sell papers in front of the concert halls one of the concessions in the Midway now Tony came in with his bundle of papers under his arm and heard him sing a song. He forthwith hired him and Tony began to sell papers and also to show what he could do. He was twelve years old then.

When the exposition broke up Tony bade farewell to his friends in Buffalo and went east. He had an engagement in Primrose, the king of the minstrels, and was to appear with him on the Chestnut street concert halls, and he was on the lookout for Primrose. He heard that he was coming east with his show and he waited for him. Between Tony and Primrose this is what took place:

"I had a fallure with no casket," Smith and he couldn't get by at all," said he yesterday, describing his meeting with Primrose. "I had $40 with me, and I was sure that I could get by at once but was broke. When I met Primrose and with his compass I went to him and told him all about my star in Buffalo, and he hired me to sell songbooks through the audience. I did this for two years and then I was engaged as a singer. I had to be good in those days; he had to be able to sing, to put the gags or to double in brass, as we called it, which meant he had to be able to play a cornet or trombone in the band if necessary.

"After several years with Primrose, during which he had all kinds of experiences in walking the tan over the old Death Trail, as it was called, through the wilds of Arkansas, Tony left the show business for a time and went back to New Jersey. There he established the florist store. Now he is prosperous.

"I ran away from home when I was seven years old," said Tony, "and I've been running since."

Duncan McLeod and Lena Marshall, who is still the head waitress, are showing Tony a great time while he is here. The old circles basket that used to be his bed has vanished, as has the coal bunker, but the kitchen range is sure many of the old landmarks can still be found. He was busy yesterday driving his car around his old-time haunts. He will leave today for a trip to Cleveland and thence back home.

"The only court I like now is fishing," said Tony, who goes up to Alger here, to the shores, and who is now a disciple of Izaak Walton and the wildwood streams.

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