

POOR DOCUMENT M C 2 0 3 5

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THE EVENING TIMES AND STAR, ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1922

NOTED CARDSHARPS CALLED BY DEATH

"Doc" Owens, Former Transatlantic Gambler, Killed by Fall Downstairs in Havana — "Beansy" Rosenfeld, who Turned Bootlegger, Dies in Sanitarium.

(New York Times.)

W. J. "Doc" Owens, card-sharp, transatlantic gambler, and a "mastermind" well known to the police of many



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cities, is dead. He fell downstairs in the Hotel Alameda, Havana, on Jan. 14, and died a few hours later. And yesterday, here in New York, another picturesque figure, one "Beansy" Rosenfeld, gambler and bootlegger, died in the Manhattan Square Sanitarium in West Seventy-seventh street. Of the two, Owens had the longer career and was the more notorious, although Rosenfeld's later operations were of greater magnitude.

Owens passed out of the limelight about 1906 when the steamship companies barred him on the ground that he forced passengers. But "Doc" had reaped a harvest while the reaping was good, and when he unwillingly lost his sea legs he piled his trade in the vicinity of Times Square, "cheating the cheaters" and "trimming the lucky ones" for professional gamblers. "Doc" knew cards. The hand is quicker than the eye, and his fingers were like lightning.

The report got around that he had

taken \$200,000 from William Thaw in a card game on one of his trips. Both Thaw and Owens denied this, but the steamship companies, after many complaints, closed their gangways to the thickest man, slightly above medium height, with black hair, a face slightly pock-marked, eyes that stared inquiringly and a large, thick-lipped mouth drooping at the corners. The fact that Owens was so well known did much to throw his workmanship into relief. He became a marked man. Travelers watched for him.

One of the conspicuous episodes that brought Owens and other gamblers into disrepute was the loss of \$1,500 by the young Earl of Rosslyn while on his way from this city to England on the old Cunarder Etruria. He was accosted by three well-to-do Americans. They played cards, soon acquired the Earl's ready cash, and then one of them had the temerity to sue him for a \$100 check, given as part payment of the gambling debt. Two attorneys were the plaintiffs, but "Doc" Owens was believed to be behind the suit. Rosslyn won the case because there had been no consideration for the check.

About the same time "Doc" Owens had his fight to prevent his picture from finding a place in the Rogues' Gallery. He alleged that there was no reason why it should become part of the record and would greatly injure his reputation. Judge Leventritt decided, however, that no one could object to having his picture at police headquarters provided it was not used for other than official purposes. In the following year the name of "Doc" Owens was coupled with the story of a quarrel over cards that nearly ended in a tragedy. Another passenger on the Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse, C. A. Partens, was reported to have lost \$1,500 at cards. He publicly accused the man with whom he was playing. In a rage the gambler seized Partens and had thrown him over the rail had not deckhands intervened.

Owens stayed "abroad" so long that in 1915 when he wanted to return to this country the state department ruled that he had lost his citizenship. So Owens lived in London and supplied the backing for a fashionable Piccadilly millinery shop. He left a fair-sized estate in England, and his personal property in Havana is said to be considerable.

While in New York Owens "hung out" in different gambling houses until a customer had an unusual run of luck. If the lucky one were under suspicion of cheating, "Doc's" services would be called in, and upon him would fall the duty of getting the money back. According to his intimates, "Doc" could handle cards better than any man living. He could stack cards any way he wished, and detection was impossible.

Simon Ben Rosenfeld, or "Beansy" Rosenfeld, alias "The Hon. Sigmund Rosenfeld," who died at five o'clock at the Manhattan Square Sanitarium, was involved in several interesting cases, and at the time of his death was under federal indictment with Edward Donegan and others for alleged participation in a conspiracy to violate the Volstead act through irregular liquor permits. Through the arrest of "Beansy" and his alleged confederates the government hoped to check the flow of illegal liquor



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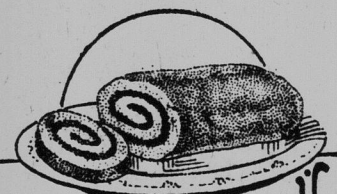
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By "BUD" FISHER