Charles Cushman Biography

This biography was compiled by Bradley D. Cook, Photograph Curator at the Indiana University Archives.

Charles Weever Cushman was born "...pretty close to the soil" in Poseyville, Indiana, on July 30, 1896. He was the son of Wilbur Davis and Mabel Thomas Cushman. Charles had an elder sister, Ethel, who died before she was ten years of age.

Charles' family were said to be an "...above average...cultural family..." and were "...leaders of the town..." Wilbur Cushman was a miller and a businessman; Mabel Cushman was a teacher and a librarian.

Following graduation from Poseyville High School in 1913, Charles worked for The Bozeman-Waters National Bank of Poseyville. Then, in January of 1914, he enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. Cushman's education "...was heavily accented on law..." He felt that his courses in commercial law were of the greatest value to him in his business career.

While at Indiana University he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, Sigma Delta Chi honorary journalism fraternity, the Boosters' Club, Le Çercle Francais, *Arbutus* yearbook staff, and was the sporting editor for the *Indiana Daily Student* newspaper. Charles completed his studies during the summer of 1917. However, due to a bookkeeping problem he was not officially awarded his degree until October 16, 1917. At this time he received the AB degree in English.

On July 30, 1917, he began working as a Freight Clerk for the Illinois Central Railroad Company's freight office in Bloomington, Indiana. Shortly thereafter, in August of 1917, he was moved up to the Indianapolis, Indiana office and began working as the Assistant to the District Passenger Agent. Because of his father's illness and his "...desire to enlist in [the] Army or Navy", Charles left the Illinois Central R.R. sometime during the latter half of November 1917 and returned to Poseyville.

On May 18, 1918, he enlisted in the United States Navy Auxiliary Reserve Force at Municipal Pier in Chicago, Illinois. His father died in June of 1918, and as a result of this Charles' mother moved to Chicago to be near her son (at some point, Mabel was remarried, to a man by the name of A.E. Roome). Charles was released at Cleveland, Ohio on Dec. 22, 1918. He did, however, continue to be a member of the reserves until the time he was honorably discharged on Sep. 30, 1921. While in the service he attained the rank of Seaman 2nd Class but never went overseas. Sometime after his release Cushman wrote the Indiana University Alumni Secretary and said, "About as unpoetic a military career as any of the war. Essentially a fresh-water sailor, as I never got farther east than Buffalo, N.Y."

From January of 1919 through January of 1922, Charles worked for several companies in Chicago, Illinois. These included Carson, Pirie, Scott; Albert Pick & Co.; Addressograph Co. (worked out of the Indianapolis, Indiana office); Montgomery Ward & Co.; and the South Side

Rugwashers.

In February of 1922, Charles became editor and research consultant at the LaSalle Extension University in Chicago. His duties here were to prepare business bulletins and newsletters, as well as to edit various courses on business management, business financing, organization and reorganization, credits and collections, business law, and accounting.

Charles married Elsa Jean Hamilton on June 21, 1924. Her father, Joe R. Hamilton, was a leading advertiser in Chicago, Illinois. Elsa Jean was a first cousin to author John Steinbeck.

In August of 1928, Charles left the LaSalle Extension University to become an editor at the Standard Statistics Company in New York, N.Y. His job here was:

> To edit a new financial magazine projected by the company. However, in developing material through outside sources, I started a line of work that led [the] company to establish its field analytical staff, and was given the opportunity of handling the Middle-West territory...

Thus, in April of 1929, Charles moved back to Chicago to head up the field analytical staff in the midwest for Standard Statistics Co. In this position, he was responsible for:

> Securing first-hand information (much of it confidential) on principal business firms in Middle West, through personal acquaintance with company officials; developing collateral data through banking and other sources; analyzing conditions and trends in key industries and commodities.

Charles left Standard Statistics Co. in July of 1932. The following September he became one of the organizers, and later the the treasurer and secretary, of Drewry's Limited in the United States. His initial duty:

> ...was to set up a financial program and make it work. As our business grew, I took over other responsibilities as well, including our relations with suppliers, transportation services, Federal and State commissions, trade associations. I was also placed in charge of jobber appointments and territorial assignments, and of the basic price policy of the business.

Elizabeth, Charles' second wife, believed that it was Charles' father-in-law, Joe Hamilton, that had secured the franchise for Drewry's Ale.

Charles left Drewry's in January of 1937 and from that point until August of 1942 Charles explained on his Application for Federal Employment that he was:

> Not employed during this period and had no permanent residence. Traveled extensively. Looked after personal interests, principal of which was interest in contract of sale of Drewry's business, a provision of which barred me from re-engaging in same industry for ten years.

In August of 1942, Charles became the senior liquidator-at-large for the federal Office of the Alien Property Custodian. Then in on March 1, 1944, he began work in the War Department's Chicago Ordnance District where he was responsible for conducting contract termination work.

At this point, with the exception of what may be gleaned from his images, virtually nothing is known about Charles' career and life. It is known that Charles enjoyed attending the opera and the theater, and presenting shows of his slide collection. After moving to San Francisco sometime in the 1950s he would enjoy having a five o'clock drink while overlooking the ocean.

Charles' first wife, Jean Hamilton, was born January 3, 1903 at Oakley, California. She graduated from Hyde Park High School in Chicago and attended The University of Chicago from 1921-1924. Jean died in June of 1969.

On Nov. 24, 1970, Charles married Elizabeth Juliana Gergely Penniman. Elizabeth was born November 25, 1917 and attended Gary Junior College in Gary, Indiana. Elizabeth moved to Washington D.C. when she began working for Senator Homer E. Capehart. It was while living in Washington D.C. that she met and married William F. Penniman. Elizabeth later worked for The Social Security Administration in San Francisco. She died on August 14, 2003.

Charles Weever Cushman died on June 8, 1972.

Elizabeth said, "Charles was a shrewd individual ... a sharp evaluator of people, and was very prudent and shrewd in his securities selection. He loved life—music, good books, sports, the outdoors, travel, integrity...and could not tolerate ignorance."

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