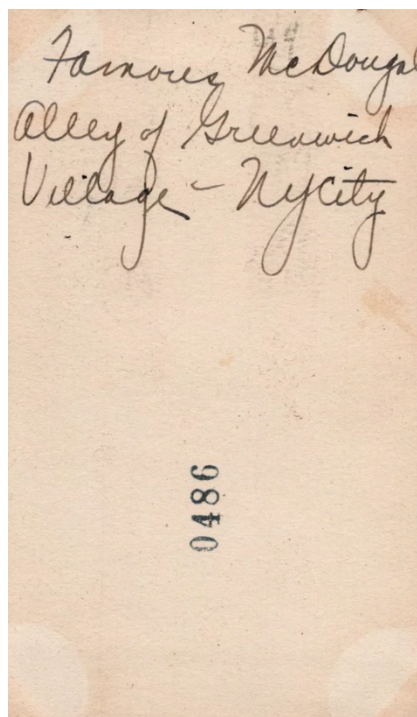


1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#47 | 16 FÉVRIER 1925



Pour 39 € on peut acheter aujourd'hui cette photo de la rue McDougall en 1925, rien de l'agitation actuelle, Lovecraft et Kirk l'empruntent chaque fois qu'ils se rendent chez Kleiner dans la Downing Street, en coupant par Bleeker bien entendu : sa fascination pour le « Village » déjà bien ancrée.

[1925, lundi 16 février]

Wrote letters — GK called — out to dinner — Downing St. — spaghetti — kittens — Times Sq. — back to Tiffany — read in GK room — return to room & read. Bed.

J'écris des lettres. Kirk passe, on va déjeuner Downing Street, spaghetti. Chats. Puis Times Square, retour au Tiffany. Je lis chez Kirk. Retour à ma chambre, je lis encore. Au lit.

Si pas plus à dire que des chats et des spaghetti, parlons des spaghetti ? Dans son *Mémoire sur la vie privée de H.P. Lovecraft*, Sonia dit que lors de leurs premiers rendez-vous à deux, à Boston, c'est toujours dans un restaurant grec qu'ils allaient. La décoration sur les murs n'était pas garantie authentique, mais il faisait la conversation tout le dîner avec les littérature grecque et l'archéologie. Lors de la première visite qu'il lui fait à New York, en 1922, il commande pour la première fois des spaghetti bolognaise et s'il en fait ainsi un plat fétiche, même bien après la séparation de fait avec Sonia, que garde-t-il de cette toute première sensation de lointain ou d'exotisme. Et pourtant, qu'est-ce qu'ils s'en prendront, au détour des récits de Lovecraft, les Italiens qui ont envahi les grandes villes d'Amérique. Première mention en tout cas de « Downing Street », et plaisanterie récurrente avec ses tantes : « Mais pas le 10, hein, le 47... » C'est la petite rue où habite Reinhardt Kleiner, à deux pas de l'angle McDougal et de Bleeker Street, mais le café Wha n'existe pas encore, Dave van Ronk ou Bob Dylan ne traînent pas aux terrasses, mais le petit resto spaghetti italien sera une de leurs bases principales les mois à venir, il y a même un chat tigré qui très vite adopte Lovecraft sans savoir qu'il en donnera des nouvelles dans chacune de ses lettres à Providence. Et que la part du temps de lecture dans l'emploi du temps en devient une part régulière, même si un coup dur se prépare à Cincinnati. Dans le journal : on a gagné deux mètres, on est tout près de Foyd Collins, mais ruissellement et inondations ralentissent la progression, on doit suspendre le travail sur le tunnel latéral. Burn-out d'un juge et son suicide à Minneapolis : dégâts collatéraux de la prohibition. Et dernier appel pour les Little Blue Books avant changement de tarif : Lovecraft ne manquera pas d'aller s'en reprendre tout un petit paquet (mais pas aujourd'hui, demain !).

New York Times, 16 février 1925. Minneapolis, Minnesota, le 15 février. Le juge fédéral de district John F McGee a été retrouvé mort par sa fille, hier après-midi, dans ses bureaux du Federal Building. La mort est due à un coup de pistolet en plein coeur, infligé par lui-même. Il a laissé sur sa table de travail une déclaration écrite et signée.

Le juge attribue la cause de son acte à sa santé déclinante et la crainte de capacités mentales amoindries. Dans sa déclaration, il dit aussi : « Le fait est que la cour de justice du district est devenue une cour de police pour le whisky clandestin et les problèmes de drogue, alors que ce serait au tribunal d'État de les suivre. Ces affaires requièrent 83 % du temps de la cour et nous portent sur les nerfs, sans perspective que ça s'améliore. J'ai tenté, en mars 1923, d'accélérer ces procédures, et pensai que j'y parviendrais, mais cela a eu raison de moi. » Le juge McGee avait l'habitude de venir travailler à son bureau tous les dimanches en dépit des dizaines d'heures qu'il y consacrait en semaine. Il quitta son domicile à 10h20 dimanche matin et, n'étant pas revenu à 14h00, faute d'obtenir de réponse par téléphone, sa fille vint elle-même le chercher. Accompagnée du vigile du tribunal, ils découvrirent le corps du juge McGee étendu sur le sol, son pistolet près de lui. Une balle avait percé le cœur. Ils appelèrent la police et découvrirent alors la lettre manuscrite du juge, sur sa table. Le juge McGee était délégué au district fédéral par le président Harding, et connu dans tout le nord-ouest comme « la terreur des bootleggers ». Dans une récente session il jugea 112 infractions à la loi sur les alcools en 193 minutes, infligeant pour 33 700 dollars d'amende.



Bleeker Street, 1925.

TENT CITY, AT THE SCENE OF COLLINS RESCUE WORK.



shrouded the scene with the going down of the sun, came the thunder and lightning storm. Vivid purplish flashes of lightning would suddenly shoot through the rolling fog, and the scene at the shaft head—the tolling men, the tall, black derrick standing idle, the canvas tents, the rifled sentinels—would dart into bold outline and then go back again as the thunder rolled an end to the transient glare.

Spare, keen-faced Professor W. D. Funkhauser of the University of Kentucky, personal representative of Governor Field, would be revealed as he stood near the shaft opening, muffled from head to heels, the rain dripping from his hat brim, watching with Carmichael, the engineer, all through the night. Neither of them slept a wink, although as the night wore on, some of the miners turned in for brief rest periods in their tents.

The guard changed. Husky young soldiers from National Guard companies in Bowling Green and Smith's Groves, points within twenty miles of here, tumbled out of the tents, dressed by the light of the smoky wood fire in each tent and went out to take the places of their soaked comrades.

The lightning and its cannonading accompaniment finally ceased.

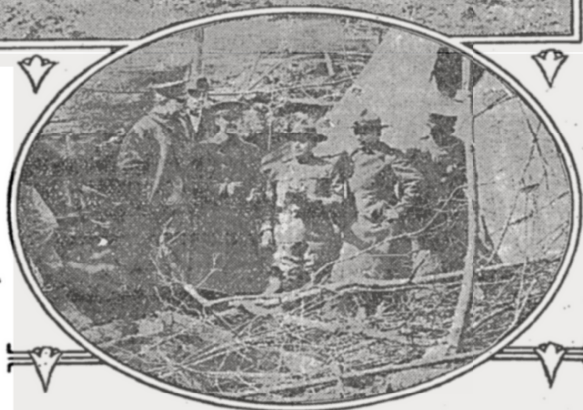
Rain Seepage Menaces Shaft.

But the rain still came down, steady, heavy, like crystal rods at times and then in quickly successive sheets. Pools formed and little rivers ran through the camp.

Then the water began to seep into the shaft. At first they took little note of it. More and more of it sought the lower level, and it became a problem. The pumps were hooked up and the motors on the hillside were started. Down into crevices in the sides of the ravine and thence to subterranean channels the rain water found its way. Eventually it began percolating to the shaft and rose, inch by inch.

The situation grew desperate; there was danger of the water creeping up to the side tunnel, started early near the top of the shaft, and once that happened the work of days might go to smash.

A V-shaped galvanized iron drain was joined to form a half circle on the hillside at the base of which is the cavern's entrance. This soon began to catch the water and a stream spurted from the ends of the pipe. The pumps, too, were stimulated a bit, and between them and the emergency drainage sys-



MILITARY MEN IN CHARGE OF THE WORK.

Left to Right—Brig. Gen. H. H. Denhardt, Colonel H. J. Stitos, Captain Alec Chaney, Captain John A. Colin and Captain J. L. Topmiller.

balance has been standing for sixteen days. It is ready to rush Collins, if alive, to the Howard Hospital, ten miles away in Glasgow. If he is dead the ambulance will not have to travel so far, for the humble home of his family is near by.

Army trucks, tilted at crazy angles in the rutted ground, stand around. Piles of timber are neatly arranged or sprawled over the boggy ground. Sections of pipe, coils of rope, wheelbarrows and the hundred-and-one things that are being used or may be needed clutter the place.

Dawn comes at last, obliterating the half lights and bringing in the country roundabout—rolling land, nearly inch showing the results of last year's cultivation; small woods of bare and brown meadows dotted with specks which are crows. The road Cave City—mud, stones, mud and reveals its tortuous windings.

Bouncing over the road come the of the Sunday throng, determined crowd as close to the cave as possible. Their machines are small and large, and they bear license tags from Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and city places of points in Kentucky far from Cave City. There are many buggies in the procession too, carrying in the "home folks."

miserated with him. Some tried to cheer him up. They found that he needed no encouragement.

"Floyd's alive and he will be saved," he said. He nodded his head to emphasize it. "He knows caves, lived among 'em all his life," he added. As he moved off he reiterated, "He knows caves."

Down at the pit were Marshall Collins and Homer Collins, the entombed man's brothers. They were in overalls and ready to lend a hand whenever called upon. Both are young men, in the twenties, "tobacco-chewing," shy back-countrymen, thrifty of speech and anxious to avoid conspicuousness.

FLOODING DELAYS CAVE RESCUE WORK, 14 FEET FROM GOAL

SHOW SUMMARY

served as a seat was Floyd's sister, Nellie Collins, short and inclined to stoutness. She poses willingly for pictures, but has little to say. Her face bears the mark of a recent long illness. Sauntering along in another part of the camp was the final member of the Collins

Federal Judge J. F. McGee Shoots Himself; "Ended Me," He Says of Bootleg Cases

Special to The New York Times.

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., Feb. 15.—Federal District Judge John F. McGee was found dead in his chambers at the Federal building here this afternoon by his daughter. Death was caused by a gunshot wound in the heart, self-inflicted.

A statement which he had signed was found on his desk, where he had left it. The Judge gave the cause for his act as failing health and fear that he was losing his mind.

In this statement he said also:

"The fact is the United States District Court has become a Police Court for the trial of whisky and narcotic cases, which the State Court should look after. Those cases occupy 85 per cent. of the court's time and are exciting and trying on the nerves, with the end not in sight."

"I started, in March, 1923, to rush that branch of the litigation and thought I would end it, but it has ended me."

Judge McGee had been in the habit of working in his office every Sunday despite the long hours he put in throughout the week. He left home at 10:30 A. M. today and when at 2 P. M. he had not returned, his daughter went to the Federal building after failing to get a response on the telephone. She and the engineer of the building

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Adv.

found Judge McGee's body stretched out on the stone floor with a pistol beside him. A bullet had pierced his heart. The police were called and they found the statement in the Judge's handwriting on the desk.

Judge McGee was appointed to the Federal District bench by President Harding and was known throughout the Northwest as the "bootleggers' terror." In one case he sentenced 112 liquor law violators in 193 minutes, assessing fines against them totaling \$33,700.

Mrs. McGee and their four daughters and two sons survive him. The Judge was 64 years old.

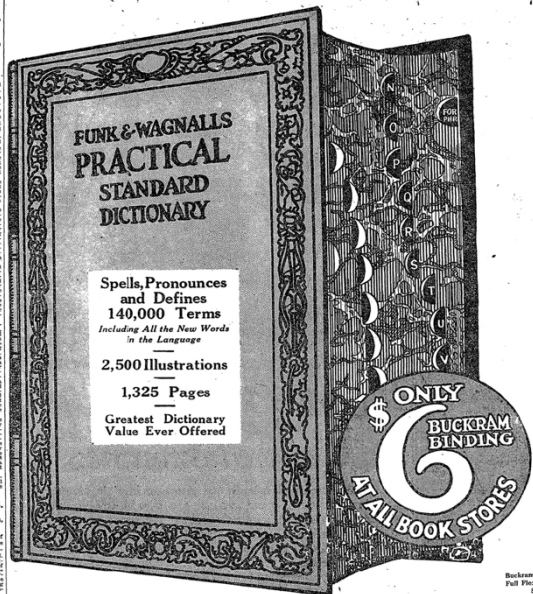
The nomination of Judge McGee for the District Judgeship by President Harding in March, 1923, raised a storm of protest from the Non-Partisan League. Judge McGee had been very outspoken concerning the activities of the league and the Farmer-Labor Senator-elect, Henrik Sulzstead, wired to Washington to his friends urging them to fight Judge McGee's confirmation by the Senate. During the war Judge McGee, then a member of the Minnesota Public Safety Commission, attacked the loyalty of the Non-Partisan League. He also was the war-time Federal Fuel Administrator for Minnesota.

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