WHO'S NEWS THIS WEEK

By LEMUEL F. PARTON

NEW YORK. — Mushing along with Jim Titus, an old desert rat, about twenty miles southeast of Tonopah, many years ago, this scrivener was alarmed by the approach of what seemed to be a savage sandstorm. Old Jim, who seemed to know everything, reassured me.

Case-Hardened Diplomat, Ticket on Key Pittman

"It's that young feller Key Pittman. He's runnin' around in that big rattletrap automobile of his tryin' to get up a telephone company. Just kickin' up a dust—that's about all. No peace for anybody around here."

Mr. Pittman roared on through the greasewood, to set up his new telephone company, sluice a tidy little fortune out of that and sundry mining ventures, and to become chairman of the foreign relations committee of the United States senate. He backs up the President.

"Why shoot a man when you can starve him to death?" says Mr. Pittman, indorsing the hint of "financial sanctions" against world outlawry in the President's address. He readies his committee for action.

In Nome, Alaska, Mr. Pittman was a charter member of the Ornery Men's club, organized at Tex Rickard's bar. Years later, Ole Elliott, Tex Rickard's partner, reorganized the club in Tex's northern saloon in Goldfield. I believe Mr. Pittman's affiliations were with the Montezuma club, down the street, but he was a highly esteemed alumnus of the Alaska chapter and he found enthusiastic "sourdough" backing in his financial and political enterprises. Since 1913, Nevada has been sending him regularly to the senate.

He has been steadily against Japan—that is, against strong-arm Japanese trade and military aggression—and quite as fervently for silver. Well up in the headlines today is the conjecture that the President's new trade and credit militancy will move first in the direction of Japan.

Born in Mississippi, educated in Tennessee, practicing law in Seattle, Mr. Pittman landed in Dawson, Alaska, with a Canadian dime in his pocket. He manned a unilateral bucksaw for a few months before he was appointed district attorney. Jack London and Rex Beach found in him a rich pay streak of copy.

THE son of a Buffalo dock worker, one of nine children, who had seen labor wars in his youth and through his lifetime, has sought ways to end them, was influential in bringing about the truce in the New York taxicab strike. He is the Rev. Father John Peter Boland, chairman of the unique New York State Labor Relations board since June, 1937. During his incumbency, New York has attracted the attention of the nation in its industrial mediation.

Priest's Fight on Strikes Gets Eye of Nation

"Stop them before they get started" is his formula, as he quotes the pope's encyclical, advising priests to "go to the workingman." When he was appointed to his present post, he retired from his parishes of St. Lucy and St. Columba, with the blessing of his bishop, the Rev. John A. Duffy of Buffalo. He became profoundly interested in techniques of labor mediation while studying for the priesthood in Rome. He urges regular meetings between employers and employees and continuous and constructive effort, rather than emergency action when trouble comes.

WHEN the young German immigrant, Max J. Kramer, landed in New York and slept on a park bench, he had no "Don't Disturb" sign. Hence a policeman wakened him by whacking his feet with a nightstick. It was really opportunity knocking. The policeman, who happened to speak German, steered him into a carpenter's job, and, before long, he was buying and building hotels with the facility of a child handling building blocks. That was the only time he ever slept out.

Opportunity, as a Cop, Knocked With Nightstick

Last May, his wife, Maria Kramer, bought the 30-story Hotel Lincoln for $7,000,000 cash, tooling it over into the black in less than six months. She is a linguist, has made a career as a fashion expert and interior decorator.

Mr. Kramer, who had $3.50 when he landed, built more than 500 tenements, and, in 1925, had more than $10,000,000 worth of buildings under construction.

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Tuberculosis an Old Disease

The earliest descriptions of tuberculosis of the lungs are those of Hippocrates among the Greeks and Galen among the Romans. The disease, no doubt, goes back to a very early period in human history. The first modern treatise on the subject was written in 1689 by Richard Morton.

Statues of Generals

Statues of generals are not monuments to war but monuments to courage—and brains.

Anniversaries During 1939 Recall The Fame of the Chouteau Family

First of Line, Born 190 Years Ago, Helped Found the City of St. Louis; Another, Born 150 Years Ago, Was Head of the Company, Organized 100 Years Ago, Which Played an Important Part in Making St. Louis the "Fur Capital of the World."

© Western Newspaper Union.

Chouteau's Trading Station Near Kansas City (A part of the sculptural frieze on Kansas City's new city hall).

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

AMONG the anniversaries to be celebrated during 1939 are several connected with the famous family of Chouteaus. In fact, there are so many of them and so important was this family in the history of the West that it might not be amiss to call this a "Chouteau Anniversary Year."

The first of the line, born 190 years ago, helped found a city that was once the "Gateway to the West." Another, born 150 years ago, was the head of the company, organized 100 years ago, which played an important part in making that city the "Fur Capital of the World."

There are other anniversaries, too—for "years ending in 9" seem to have been constantly recurring dates in the history of this family. Arranged chronologically, here are some of those dates:

1749—In September of this year there was born to M. Rene Auguste Chouteau and his wife Mme. Marie Therese Chouteau in the French city of New Orleans, a son to whom was given his father's name, Rene Auguste Chouteau. Rene Auguste Chouteau Sr. is said to have been cruel to his wife, whom he had married when she was only fifteen years old. So they separated.

Living in New Orleans at that time was a thirty-eight-year-old merchant named Pierre Laclede Liguest who fell in love with Marie Therese Chouteau. Historians disagree as to succeeding events. Some say that she simply went to live with Liguest (or Laclede, as everyone knew him and as he was later to be known to history), while others insist that there was some sort of civil marriage, despite the fact that M. Rene Auguste Chouteau was still living.

At any rate she bore Pierre Laclede four children, all of whom took the name of Chouteau. One of them, born in 1758, was given his father's name, Pierre.

In 1763 the French governor of Louisiana granted to Laclede and five associates the exclusive right of trading, for eight years, with all the Indians in the vast Missouri river valley and authorized him to build trading posts in that region. Laclede organized a fleet of keelboats and flatboats which he loaded with supplies and in August of that year started up the Mississippi with a force of about 30 men and boys, two of whom were his stepson, Auguste Chouteau, who appears to have been Laclede's chief lieutenant, and his son, Pierre Chouteau.

In December they reached the French village of St. Genevieve where they expected to spend the winter. But being unable to find there a house large enough to shelter his supplies, Laclede was glad to accept the offer of the commandant at Fort de Chartres to store his goods there. A little later he took Auguste Chouteau with him and set out in a canoe upriver. They went as far north as the mouth of the Missouri river, then drifted down the "Father of Waters" 17 miles until they reached a high wooded region rising from a limestone bluff.

"This is the place, Auguste," said Laclede. And thus St. Louis was founded.

1789—On January 19 of this year was born in St. Louis, Pierre Chouteau, son of Pierre Laclede Chouteau. At the age of fifteen he became a clerk for his father and uncle in their fur-trading operations which resulted in the organization of the Missouri Fur company in 1808. Associated with him in this company were his four brothers, Augustus P. Chouteau, Francis Gesso Chouteau, Frederick Chouteau and Cyprian Chouteau. Five years later the Missouri Fur company was absorbed by John Jacob Astor's American Fur company.

1819—In this year a branch of the American Fur company was established in St. Louis under the general direction of Samuel Abbott. The Chouteaus and others who had been connected with the old Missouri Fur company then became interested in the American and were given favored positions in the new firm.

Pierre Chouteau, Jr. and his brother, Francis, traveled throughout the present states of Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska, establishing trading posts and acquiring the business of local independent traders. They established trading posts along the Osage river and on the Mississippi from Keokuk to St. Paul.

Among the posts which they established was one on the Kaw (then known as the Kansas) river about 20 miles from its mouth, which was selected to be the seat of a general agency for the company. Pierre Chouteau's original hut, built in 1821 about three miles below the present site of Kansas City, was washed away by a flood in 1826 and he rebuilt on higher ground in what is now known as Guinotte's addition to Kansas City. This marked the beginning of Kansas City as a fur-trading center, a role which, incidentally, it maintains to this day.

Fur traders "cordelling" up the Missouri.

In 1827 Frederick Chouteau established a trading post in what is now Douglas county, Kan., and three years later moved it to the present site of Valencia on Mission Creek. Although part Osage, Frederick Chouteau lived much of his life among the Kaw Indians. His brother, Cyprian, married Nancy Francis, daughter of John Francis, hereditary chief of the Shawnees and lived with that tribe. It was through such intimate relations as these that the Chouteau brothers established themselves solidly with the Indians and profited thereby in their trading operations.

1829—On February 24 of this year died Auguste Chouteau, the pioneer, in the city which he as a lad of fourteen, had helped found. He had also founded a "dynasty of fur," for by this time the Chouteaus were becoming the dominant force in the fur trade of the West. They became ever stronger in 1834 when Pierre, Jr. and his associates purchased John Jacob Astor's interests in the American Fur company.

1839—In this year was organized a new company under the firm name of P. Chouteau, Jr. & Co., and it became the greatest fur-trading company in American history. Under its banner the Chouteaus extended their operations as far south as the Cross Timbers of Texas, as far north as the Falls of St. Anthony in Minnesota and as far west as the Blackfeet country in Montana. They also engaged in trade over the historic Santa Fe Trail.

1849—On October 10 of this year there died in St. Louis Pierre Laclede Chouteau, "whose influence, covering a forty-year period, practically controlled the destiny of the Osage nation, in trade, policy, and dealings with the government." But if Pierre Chouteau, Sr. was a powerful force in an Indian nation, he left a son to carry on his work who was an even greater force in the American nation.

For Pierre Chouteau, Jr., became the best business man of the entire dynasty. For 50 years he was an economic power, keeping abreast of the rapidly changing times to hold his place. It was he who foresaw the importance of steam to navigation and transportation on the Missouri.

Pierre served as a member of the Missouri state constitutional convention in 1820. His business operations were extensive and foreseeing. He foresaw the doom of the steamboat and the increasing importance of the railroads. He was one of the original incorporators of the Missouri Pacific railroad in 1849 and also of the Ohio & Mississippi railroad in 1851. In addition to his varied business interests he was a patron of the arts, sciences and literature.

These interests at frequent intervals took him away from St. Louis—to eastern cities, to England and to the Continent. He lived for many years in New York city but at the end he came back to his native city of St. Louis. There he died on September 8, 1865. With his death, the greatness of the Chouteaus began to decline.

Descendants of the Chouteau family are still numerous in the United States. But none of them is as outstanding as old Auguste or Pierre Laclede or Pierre, Jr. But their fame is secure.

The Chouteaus built towns, erected forts and developed new systems of transportation, amassing large fortunes for themselves while serving their government in pushing back the frontier and maintaining peaceful relations with the Indians. They were sharp diplomats, using the arts of diplomacy on red man and white alike. They imprinted their name indelibly upon the history of the West. They were Empire Builders.

Fur Trade Still Important in Kansas City

Today there are three large fur warehouses in Kansas City where thousands of raw furs are received daily, says an article in a recent issue of the Kansas City Times. These warehouses, situated within a few hundred feet of the Missouri river, stand on virtually the same ground that the early stations occupied. The concerns which still carry on the fur business here have an annual turnover of almost three million dollars and at the height of the fur season in the fall and winter months employ almost 400 persons. Each company has its lists of many thousands of trappers and hunters all over the United States and Canada from whom furs of nearly every kind are received. Card records are kept and it has been found that these trappers supply pelts to the same firm year after year.

The most popular animals with the trapper of today—which in most cases is the average farmer or his son—are the skunk, opossum and the muskrat. The pelts of these animals command consistently good prices and are always in demand. The beaver is protected by game laws in nearly every state and rarely are these pelts received now.

The founding of the Missouri Fur company, which marked the real beginning of the Chouteau family in the epic of the fur trade, was the direct result of a trip made up the Missouri river by an expedition led by a Spanish trader named Manuel Lisa. When Lewis and Clark returned to St. Louis in 1806 from their famous exploring expedition into the West, Lisa talked with them and became inspired by their tales of the riches in furs which could be harvested in that far northwestern country where the Missouri flows close to the Rocky mountains. So in the spring of 1807 he set out for the Indian country with a small party of trappers and traders who spent the winter on the Yellowstone, hunting, trapping and trading with the Crows.

"The following summer found Manuel Lisa back in St. Louis, flushed with the success of his prosperous venture and dreaming of greater things to come," says the chapter on "Traders and Trappers on the Great Plains" in "The Lure of the Frontier" (Yale University Press, "The Pageant of America"). "Excitement ran high among the principal men of that frontier town. Listening to Lisa, one after another decided to join the enterprise which was duly incorporated under the name of the St. Louis Missouri Fur company. On the records appear most of the leading citizens of St. Louis: Manuel Lisa, William Clark, who had helped to blaze the trail across the continent, Pierre Chouteau, Sr., Auguste P. Chouteau, Reuben Lewis, and Sylvester Labadie. To this list other names were added: Pierre Menard and William Morrison of Kaskaskia in Illinois, Andrew Henry of Louisiana and Dennis Fitz-Hugh of Louisville, Ky. The Spaniard, Frenchman and Englishman, reflecting in their vary names the history of the Louisiana country, united to exploit the rich fur country of the Upper Missouri."

A medal symbolizing loyalty to its interests was issued by the Chouteau Fur company of St. Louis to friendly Indians of the Northwest in 1843. The medal was of silver, 3⅛ inches in diameter, and bore on the obverse side a bust of Pierre Chouteau and the legend, "Pierre Chouteau, Jr. & Co., Upper Missouri Outfit." On the reverse side was a crossed tomahawk and calumet and clasped hands and the wording, "Peace and Friendship."

Early the next year the company sent its first expedition up the river. It consisted of 150 men who took a great quantity of merchandise in their boats to be used in establishing along the river several posts where traders were left in charge. Late in October the main body of the expedition went into winter quarters in the Crow country where they carried on a profitable trade with the Indians and also secured many valuable pelties by trapping for themselves.

In the spring of 1810 a large party headed by Andrew Henry pushed on to the Three Forks of the Missouri, where they planned to establish a post in the heart of the Blackfoot country. But disaster overtook this post for in April a war party of Blackfeet swooped down upon it, when most of the trappers were away, killed the five men who had been left in charge and carried away the horses, guns, ammunition and the packs of furs which they had labored so hard to accumulate. But despite many misfortunes the young company saved the capital it had invested and even made a small profit.

It suffered from other vicissitudes of fortune during the War of 1812 but it managed to survive them, although reorganization after reorganization of the company followed. As the years passed, one by one of the original founders dropped out—all except Manuel Lisa, who had active direction of its operations from the end of the war until his death in 1820. His successor was Joshua Pilcher, a worthy subordinate of the great Spanish trader. In the summer of 1822 more than $25,000 worth of furs were sent down the river.

Eight years later he gave up the business and the career of the Missouri Fur company came to an end. As previously stated, it was succeeded by the firm of P. Chouteau, Jr. and Co., which was destined to enjoy a greater prosperity than the pioneer company had ever known.

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One of the Chouteaus has some claim to the title of "first white child born in Kansas," that is if a half-breed can claim that distinction. William Myers Chouteau, son of Francis Chouteau and a Shawnee woman, was born in Johnson county, Kan., on July 21, 1828—one month and one day before the birth of Napoleon Boone, son of Daniel Morgan Boone, born on August 22, 1828, who is usually credited with being "the first white child born in Kansas."

Old Sore Spot, Memel Makes Trouble Again

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

Recent elections in Memel, Lithuania, resulting in reported Nazi party victories, swings the busy European news spotlight to another German-border sore spot.

Lying along the northeast frontier of East Prussia (now cut off from the rest of Germany by the "Polish Corridor"), Memel territory is an irregular sliver of land covering an area of about 1,000 square miles. In general a farming and cattle-raising region, it has a population of about 150,000 people

Map showing Memel's strategic position as a Baltic outlet for Lithuania, also its contiguous position to German Prussia.

and includes the long-contested and vital Baltic port of Memel—"Klaipeda" to the Lithuanians.

Given up by Germany under the Versailles treaty, Memelland was administered by the Allied powers for several years after the World war. In 1924, following Lithuania's action of the previous year in taking over the area, Memel territory—with certain autonomous rights—was legally ceded to that country in a League of Nations pact signed by Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and Lithuania. Since then Memel has periodically rated news space as one of Europe's problem children.

An International Football.

Such dramatic events as it has seen since the war, however, are mild compared with the bloody past of this strip of land on the crossroads of international history.

More than 700 years ago, before the town of Memel was founded, its site was a battleground between Lithuanian tribes and invading Teutonic Knights, a military and religious order of German crusaders. Destroying the Lithuanian fortress which stood guard against Baltic pirates, the Knights built their own stronghold, following it with the town of "Memelburg."

As an early trade center, Memel grew and prospered, but found little peace. In the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth centuries, it was attacked and burned time and again in a three-cornered tug-of-war between Lithuanians, Poles and Teutons, the latter winning out in the Peace of Melno in 1422.

For a short time in the 1600s, the Swedes called Memel theirs; later it was occupied by Russian troops. After sacking and burning the town they left it to the mercy of a deadly plague. But the stubborn city again struggled to its feet. As a thriving Prussian town, it became, until the World war, Germany's northernmost Baltic port.

Lithuania's Window on the Sea.

Today Memel is the Lithuanian republic's only good port. Modernized by the government, with new wharves, warehouses, docking machinery, grain elevators, and cold storage equipment, the old city has been given a new lease on life, not only as a timber center, but as a general transit port for foreign and domestic trade. Regular shipping service links it with British, Polish and Latvian ports; rail and airplane lines connect it with Berlin and Moscow.

Much of Lithuania's commerce flows through Memel, including imports of textiles, coal, machinery, and cement; and exports of bacon, butter, eggs, lumber and skins. To its protected harbor, which, unlike many other Baltic ports, never freezes over, nearly 1,400 ships came in 1936.

Lumber, floated down from Lithuania's great forests by canal and river, provides raw material for a busy industrial life in Memel's sawmills, cellulose plants, and shipbuilding yards. Varied enterprises in which Memellanders make their living include an ancient and famous industry which produces amber trinkets from fossil gum recovered along Baltic shores.

A Non-Melting Pot.

Sandwiched between East Prussia and Lithuania, both the territory and town of Memel are mixtures of German and Lithuanian influence. Like that other border region of Sudetenland, where German population is largely centered in the cities, with the Czechs in the country, Memelland's Teutonic concentration is urban; the Lithuanians are predominant in rural districts.

Memelland has not only Lithuania's sole port but also four-fifths of its already limited seaboard with a teeming fishing industry. While Memelland is not especially fertile, particularly in the sandy regions near the shore, it holds the lower and navigable section of Lithuania's chief river, the Nemunas, a vital economic artery of the country.

Liberia, Uncle Sam's Protege, Tightens Bonds with Sponsor

A general view of the main street of Monrovia, capital of the African republic of Liberia, during the military parade featuring the inauguration of President Edwin Barclay, early in 1936.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

Another link in Uncle Sam's bond with Africa's only independent republic was forged recently with the signing of a new treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation with the "Black Republic" of Liberia.

Colonized by freed slaves of the United States some 40 years before the Civil war, Liberia has long been a "protege" of the United States. Although established as a free and independent republic in 1847, this West African country has, in its turbulent history, more than once turned to the larger republic for "aid and comfort." Its flag, constitution, and government are patterned, with certain reservations, after the U. S. model, while an American receiver heads the commission in charge of customs duties.

Zebra Antelope Size of Small Goat.

A ragged patch of land on the under side of the great west African shoulder that bulges into the Atlantic ocean, Liberia is about the size of Ohio, with a population estimated at more than a million and a half Christian, Moslem and pagan Negroes. As the last stop of the continental curve on the sea lane between Europe and South Africa, this state occupies a strategic geographic position. Furthermore, the "Grain Coast" (so-called from its one-time trade in pepper, or "Grains of Paradise,") not only boasts one of the more healthful climates for this part of the world, but a wealth of natural resources, and some of nature's best side-show oddities.

Found in Liberia, for example, is the zebra antelope, no bigger than a small goat and made up in prison garb of broad black stripes on a bright brown coat.

Two species of Liberian shrew (a molelike creature with velvety fur) are peculiar to the country; while out of "Alice in Wonderland" itself is a local version of the dormouse, a small rodent whose habit of going torpid in cold weather may have had something to do with his sleepy characterization at Alice's famous tea party.

On the debit side of nature's generosity to Liberia, however, are at least seven species of poisonous snakes, three varieties of crocodile, the gigantic scorpion, and the big west African python.

Untapped Economic Wealth.

Liberia has been called the "Garden Spot of West Africa," blessed with the "good earth," dense tropical forests, mineral deposits—and that modern essential to a world-on-wheels, rubber.

Its well-watered soil is capable of producing a lush growth of coconuts, a good grade of coffee, considerable cocoa, cotton, and rice. Its pasture land is well suited to the raising of goats, sheep and cattle. Gold and diamonds are found there, as well as copper, zinc and iron.

Yet, with the exception of the vast rubber plantations worked under concession to American interests, much of this potential wealth is as sterile as buried treasure. In an area of some 43,000 square miles, there is no railway, and only about 150 miles of motor road.

Once outside the typically white-washed coastal towns, one meets a primitive jungle life of tom-toms and wild tribal dances. On the other hand, considerable progress has also been made in Liberia, as shown by certain encouraging figures in today's economic and financial books. Revenues in 1937 show an increase of nearly one-fourth over those of the preceding year. Foreign trade jumped almost a million dollars, largely due to increased rubber production.