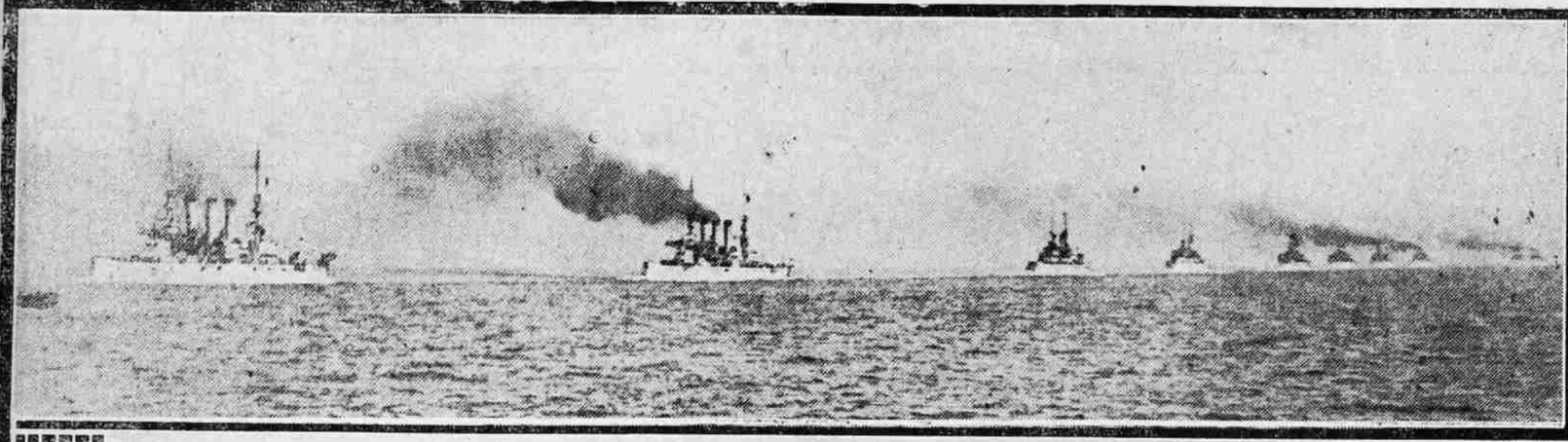
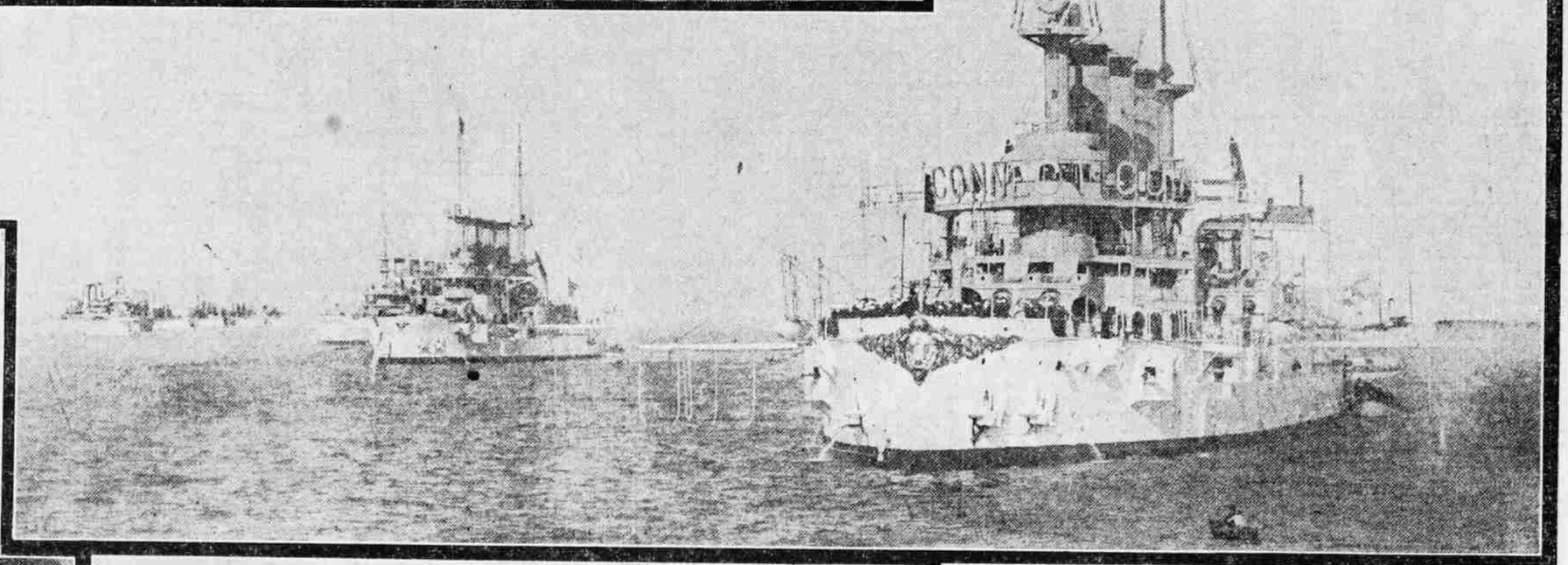
GREAT BATTLESHIPS OF THE ATLANTIC ARMADA

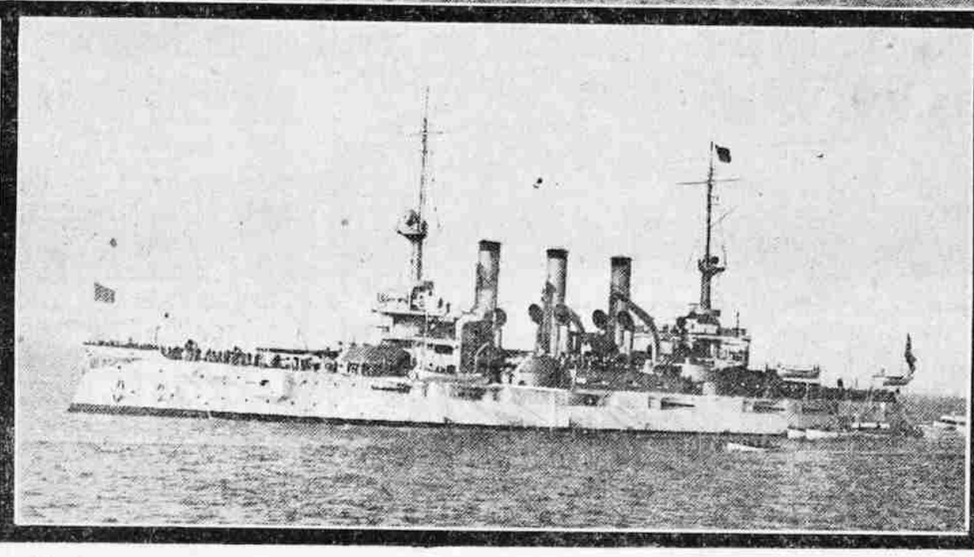
The fleet as it approached San Diego harbor. Order of the ships: Rhode Island, Virginia, Maine, Ohio, Missouri, Minnesota, Georgia, Illinois, Kearsarge, Kentucky.



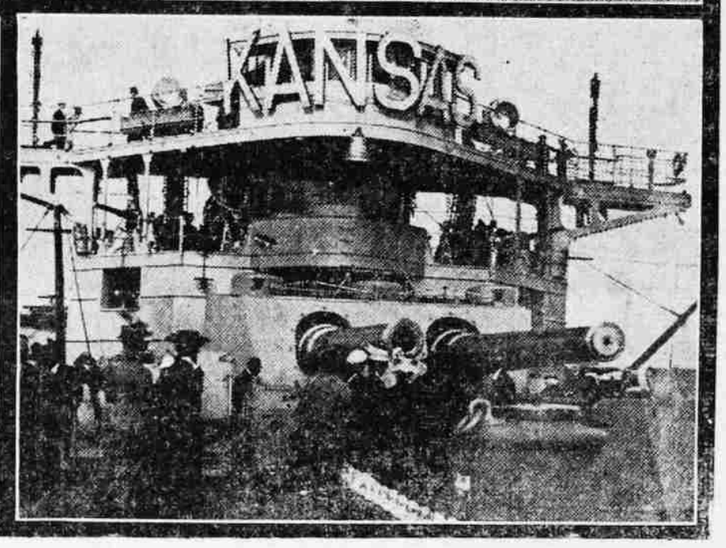
Flagship Connecticut in Foreground.



The new mascot of the Connecticut (fleet flagship) and his good friend, Jack.



The Connecticut, flagship of the fleet. Small boats shown at stern are ship's launches bringing captains of the other fifteen to report to Admiral Evans.



Taking a look in a 12-inch gun on the Kansas. Each weighs fifty eight tons (gun alone), and shoots 850-pound projectile ten miles.

BEHIND THE SCENES IN POLITICS

By ERNEST McGAFFEY

Private Secretary to Former Mayor Carter H. Harrison of Chicago.

THE CITY COUNCIL.

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My duties as a member of the board of local improvements, and, afterwards, as mayor's secretary, brought me daily in contact with various members of the city council. This body had for some years previous to my sudden elevation to office enjoyed the reputation of being "out for the stuff." Not that there were no honest men in the council—far from that—but there was a clique of men in it who managed, one way or another, to "put over" ordinances which carried with them the strong suspicion of being crooked. By cajolery, by party leanings, by straight-out bribery, by trickery and by many other methods there had been much "smooth work" done, without a doubt, but that day had passed. In my official existence the council had an honest majority. Of course, when I say honest, I do not mean to accuse each individual alderman of being honest. But one thing can be said for every individual one of them, they were as honest as their constituents. They suited their wards, and an alderman would not hesitate to "take his bit" whenever he got a chance, you may rest assured that his "constits" were of the same calibre.

It was intensely interesting to watch the different methods they employed to win a favor if they wanted one; and they usually did. Sometimes it was the hall-fellow-well-met salutation of "Hello Bo," or "How are you, pal?" from the free and easy kind, or the pouter-pigeon assumption of importance of others as they stated their wishes. Occasionally a cigar was handed out, but when they found I did not smoke, this avenue of approach was abandoned.

Leaven in Council.

There was a leaven in the council of aldermen of genuine ability, lawyers, business men, politicians, who really made up the backbone of the body. They were usually the heads of the most important committee, and were not only good talkers but men of affairs, executive ability, thinkers, and workers. But these men could be numbered within a score of the 70 members.

It spoke well for the frankness of the predatory class among the aldermen that they thoroughly respected ability, steadfastness and honesty. You could hear one alderman who was supposed to be "no better than he should be" break out into praise of some other alderman whose reputation was flawless. I remember my amusement on one of these accasions. One of the aldermen, giving vent to his feelings about honesty, remarked: "Yes, sir, I like an honest man. Give me an honest man. Give men one that will stay honest. I don't mean merely money honesty, but outside and inside honesty." Then, he added rather irrelevantly: "There's so-and-so, (referring to a certain well known and justly honored alderman) he's the only honest man in the council."

Getting Illegal Favor.

The business men were not at all above getting all the favors they could from their respective aldermen, even when they knew these favors violated some ordinance. Many of these business men belonged to organizations whose business it was, self-constituted, to weed out the "bad" aldermen and put in good ones. Yet the inconsistency of getting illegal favors never seemed to strike these pillars of commerce and society. It makes a difference, you know, as to whose ox is gored. Men want what they want when they want it, and most men are rather indifferent as to the methods employed to gain their ends.

Aldermen were very dissimilar as to calling and station in life. A descendant of the signers of the Declaration of Independence might be sitting next to a colleague who was over a few years from Russia or Italy. The first man who arrived at the mayor's office in the morning might meet you with the glad hand and the ever-ready cigar, anxious and happy to know the secretary. The next man might be some leader of the "german" in what is cynically termed "polite society" and this party might be as offish as a strange bird dog. And then there would be the ward "leaders," the regulation politicians, always smiling, successful, happy, radiant. The business men of the council came and went in a businesslike way, and wasted no compliments nor time in their matters.

Thought All Was Graft.

Very ignorant and generally newly-elected members of the council had an idea that everything was "graft" and that a five-cent cigar was the open sesame of the city hall, and that the mayor's secretary was a personage of secretly great power—which he was not, in my time. So they might be expected any time to drag in a wild-eyed looking "constit," ask for me, shove a cheap black cigar into my hand, introduce the "constit" as a most particular friend, and then ask to have a city ordinance violated, or a State law abrogated, or the constitution of the United States set aside for the benefit of the said "constit." As for the mayor, these fellows did not believe there was anything on earth he could not do if he wanted to.

Varieties of Oratory.

In the council you could hear more varieties of oratory than Demosthenes ever dreamed of. Some of the aldermen were "wind-jammers," making a bellowing, frothing harangue, such as they were in the habit of making in their campaigns, but outside of their admirers in the gallery, they never amounted to anything. This body of seventy men, mind you, was shrewd as the very devil. They knew "hot air" when they heard it, and the "bunk," the "con..., the specious argument, was something they detected instantly. Even the most ordinary among them had been educated in the school of men, and while they might be induced now and then to sell a gold brick, it was against their principles to buy one.

Was Wit to Spare.

Of wit, there was enough and to spare. Sometimes a coarse kind, sometimes biting and keen. Two or three of the aldermen were pleasant to listen to, for they always prepared themselves for their efforts and were very clear and terse in their statements. One of them in particular was very happy in his way of stating a proposition. He never wasted a word, and when he was through the council understood the situation exactly. Others floundered painfully about, knowing what they wanted, but word-bound as to vocabulary and slow in thinking on their feet. Some of them were thorough parliamentarians, and would remorselessly tangle up an opponent to gain an advantage. The helpless look of a new alderman when his motion, or order, or request was sidetracked by means of parliamentary rules, when he was just going to make or had just finished an impassioned speech about it, was something instructive and unique.

There was always the ordeal of "learning the ropes," for every incoming alderman who had not served before in the council. This meant finding out about the regular order of business, learning how to draw and present orders and ordinances, and in general to get acquainted with the council's method of carrying on its business. It usually took an alderman about a year to get himself familiar with these things, so that his first two-year term meant actually one year which would be of any public value.

In the Galleries.

On any night when there was to be a hot contest over any particular ordinance the galleries would be crowded and police stationed there to prevent disorder. The respective champions of the different sides would be aloft, and they would cheer wildly at the speeches made for their various sides. Sometimes it was necessary to clear the galleries on account of the uproar, but usually a ferocious hammering of the mayor's gavel, and a threat to clear, was enough to hold the galleries in tolerable check. There were old-timers who always came to the council gallery, just as people attend the theaters, for the excitement, and to hear the speeches. These old-timers were usually on the alert for a reformer, especially if he had the gift of biting sarcasm, and fluent and sonorous oratory. When this was the case the clans would gather and cheer their champion on.

I recollect one champion of the people who was a veritable "watch-dog of the treasury" when it came to fighting gas ordinances, electric ordinances, street-car ordinances and such like. As he was a good speaker, and a fighter, he aroused much gallery enthusiasm, and on several occasions won out in his battles. By and by he retired from the council, and about a week after his retirement appeared on the floor of the council, and through the courtesy of the council was allowed to speak on a matter in which he desired to be heard. It was a gas ordinance, and he wanted it passed. The gallery sat as silent as stones.

Ordinauce Was Killed.

A tall alderman of the wittiest race in the world rose as the gentleman concluded. The mayor recognized the tall alderman. With a deep, mellow voice that penetrated the chamber to its every cranny, the tall alderman said, mournfully: "So soon?" Even the gallery howled its approval. The ordinance was beaten.

Under the mayor's raised platform the reading clerk and the city clerk and his assistants sat, and below them the newspaper men were ranged in a half moon at the writing desks. The pages came and went with messages and papers, and the sergeant-at-arms, who had nothing at all in the world to do but "chew tobacco and draw a hundred dollars a month" salary, lounged easily around the outskirts. To the right, and raised from the council floor, was a set of reserved seats placed there for visitors, particularly ladies. There was usually something on hand that interested them, the piece de resistance in my time being a cigarette ordinance, which came and went and was mauled over and sent to committees and generally hopscotched and battledored and shuttlecocked from one year to another. But its lady champions were always on hand, alert and determined, and apparently undiscouraged and indiscourageable.

Aldermanic Courtesy.

There was such a thing as aldermanic courtesy, both in the way the aldermen addressed each other and in extending privileges to each other during the sessions of the council. They never thought of disgracing the council chamber as the Senate and the House of Representatives has occasionally disgraced itself. Personal encounters were unknown, and I never even heard the word "liar" exchanged, as I have in the courtrooms and elsewhere. There was plenty of dignity in this respect, although the irrepressibility of the "kidders" was always in evidence. The "kidders" were those aldermen who had made a reputation in their various wards and who rarely lost an opportunity to raise a laugh at the expense of an opponent. And as ridicule is so potent as a weapon, the "kidders" often won by a joke what a solid argument would never have gained.

Good to Your Ward.

All aldermen who have an eye to reelection, and most of them have, are as tenacious as snapping turtles for the improvement and benefit of their respective wards. To "be good to your ward" was to be good to yourself. A few electric lights here and there, an improvement in the way of paved streets where your "constits" wanted it, or a paving proposition knocked out if they did not want it (no matter if it was needed badly) was just so much strength for the alderman in the next campaign. Then there was the ward "appropriation" to be fought for in the council. The bigger the appropriation the more money to spend for hiring men and getting in improvements. So an alderman who could get a large appropriation for his ward was a hero with "medals" to distribute.

Round about the council chamber were always lobbyists and spectators who were interested in the passage of some order or ordinance and ex-aldermen and city officials more or less interested in the proceedings. Sometimes a visitor from some neighboring city occupied a seat alongside the mayor, and watched the proceedings.

To rule successfully such a body of men required executive ability of a high order, and judicial fairness. The slightest symptom of "playing favorites" would get a mayor into hot water instantly. The aldermen wanted a man in the chair who would give a fair hearing to any question which arose. During my time the council was "with" the mayor. That is, they entirely respected and trusted him, although of course they did not all like him. But they never openly or secretly accused him of any favoritism, and they had confidence in his judgment and opinions.

It was common knowledge, that at the conclusion of four successive terms, no appeal had been made from any one of his rulings to the body of the council. And never during these terms had any veto of his been nullified by being afterward voted down. It was a remarkable record. It was a record that justified the council in giving him a grand farewell banquet by the entire body, and showing that party preference had no weight in determining questions of individual excellence.

Shrewd Rivalry.

Aldermen quite frequently voted against one another even when from the same ward. As there were two from each ward, and often one Democrat and one Republican, there was sometimes shrewd rivalry as to which should most nearly suit the constituency. A new alderman was elected every year and one alderman "held over," the terms being for two years, and elections for the "incomer" being held each spring.

Whenever a very important ordinance came up, it was a battle royal. The measure had always been first offered and then referred to committee, and then discussed and threshed out in the newspapers. Mass meetings in the various wards had been held and a good many of the aldermen had been publicly and privately "feeling" out their "constits." Committee meetings sometimes were held in public, and even witnesses and experts examined as to the whys and wherefores of the proposed measure.

Of course the champions of both the measure itself and the opposite side had been busy log-rolling, persuading, threatening, writing letters, denouncing, praising, and otherwise making things lively, and aldermen by singles and doubles and in groups had been discussing the ordinance with the mayor and various heads of departments.

Gallery Gods in Evidence.

When the night came to take up such an important measure there was a sort of invisible feeling of warfare in the air. The "gallery gods" hung far over the railing and front seats were at a premium. All the reserved seats were occupied, and even the empty space behind was jammed with spectators. The doorkeeper was on the alert to keep out the mob that surged to get in after the gallery was filled. The officers in the gallery had been increased in number and admonished as to keeping order. Special newspaper representation was present and photographers fully bent on taking all sorts of ghastly "snapshots" were on hand.

And when the proceedings commenced, after the perfunctory roll-call and waiving of the reading of the minutes of the last meeting, there was "something doing" from start to finish. It was then, at times, that the men grew bitter. Crimination and recrimination were bandied back and forth, and real ginger was injected into the speeches, charges and counter-charges. Yet even then some witty retort would occasionally clear the atmosphere.

Quick Retort.

"Don't ever ask me for any more money to help out the party," said one indignant young alderman of paternally descended wealth, "if that is your vote," pointing his finger scornfully at a certain alderman who had accumulated large gobs of filthy lucre by means of the contracting route.

The retort came as quick as lightning. "Oh, I guess I've got as much money as you have, and I didn't inherit it, either." It was a solar plexus, and the discomfited and youthful alderman sank back in his seat amid the howls of the gallery.

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