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NAME Snaw, Frank L.

PUBLIC OFFICES HELD

(DATE)

CITY:

City Council

July 1, 1925 - Nov. 28, 1928

Mayor

July 1, 1933 - Sept. 26, 1938

COUNTY:

Supervisor, Second District

1928 - 1933

Chairman

1932 - 1933

STATE

FEDERAL:

CIVIC ACTIVITIES:

BUSINESS OR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Wholesale and retail merchandising
City and county official

PORTRAIT:

ATTACHED OR ENCLOSED IN ENVELOPE: none

PORTRAITS APPEARING ELSEWHERE (DATES)

Portrait Index

ANECDOTES AND PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

BOOKS:

See other page

NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS:

Los Angeles Times

PERSONAL INTERVIEW: none

INTERVIEWED BY:

DATE OF INTERVIEW

Written by: Clare Wallace
October 14, 1938

The Los Angeles Public Library
Local History Collection
Biography

R 92

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NAME Snaw, Frank L.

Occupation Salesman

Address _____

Birth (Date and Place) February 1, 1877, Warwick, Lambton
County, Ontario Province, Canada

FATHER John D. Snaw

Birth (Date and Place) Canada

If Deceased, When 1897, Joplin, Missouri

MOTHER Katherine Roche

Birth (Date and Place) Canada

If Deceased, When _____

IF MARRIED, TO WHOM Cora H. Shires

Birth of Same (Date and Place) _____

If Deceased, When _____

When Married February 5, 1905, Fort Smith
Arkansas

CHILDREN (Married Names of Daughters) _____

none

TITLES OF BOOKS, ARTICLES, MUSIC, OR OTHER CREATIVE WORK

(In the case of printed matter, please give date and publisher; of periodical publications also name of magazine and date.)

REVIEWS, CRITICISMS, AND OTHER BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

(Please note printed matter concerning yourself or your work. We would appreciate any such material you may send, clippings, reviews, portrait.)

Land, Who's Who in Los Angeles County

1927-28, p 142

1928-29, p 188

1932-33, p 33

Who's Who in America, 1936-37

Local Press, 1925-1938

ANCESTORS OF DISTINCTION OR LOCAL INTEREST

(Please include names of local interest as "forty-niners," or any one connected with the affairs or development of the state or city, as officials, professional men, merchants, etc.)

EDUCATION (Schools, Colleges, Degrees, Etc.)

Public schools, Denver, Colorado, and Joplin,
Missouri

CLUBS, LEARNED SOCIETIES, ETC. Mason; Elk;
Shriner; Knights Pythias; United Commercial Trav-
elers of America; Moose; Eagle; Maccabee, and others
Jonathan Club; Los Angeles Athletic Club
Church Brotherhood of America

RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION Presbyterian

POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS Republican

RESIDENCE IN CALIFORNIA SINCE 1909

SKETCH

(Please make this as full as possible, giving business affiliations, positions of honor or trust with dates if possible.)

Frank L. Shaw was born in 1877 on a farm in Ontario Province, Canada, and was brought to the United States by his parents five years later.

The Shaws emigrated to the States by the way of Detroit, the father first taking up land in Colorado and Kansas, before settling in Missouri.

Frank was educated in the public schools of Denver, Colorado, and in Joplin, Missouri. He started his business life in Joplin, where the family eventually made their home. In his early manhood Mr. Shaw became a salesman with the Campbell-Redell Wholesale Grocery Company. Except for a short interval in which he was general store manager for the Ozark Coal and Railroad Company at Fort Smith, Arkansas, he remained in the wholesale and retail merchandising business until entering public life.

As representative of the by-products department of Cudahy Packing Company Mr. Shaw came to Los Angeles in 1909. Ten years later he became affiliated with Haas-Baruch & Company of Los Angeles, and left this company in 1925 to assume duties on the City Council to which he was elected.

Since that time Mr. Shaw has served continuously in elective, non-partisan, public offices of the community.

He resigned from the City Council November 28, 1928 to take his seat on the Board of County Supervisors, from the Second District. Elected Mayor, June 6, 1933, he assumed office July 1, 1933 and served by reelection until recalled from office September 26, 1938.

He was succeeded by Superior Judge Fletcher Bowron who defeated Mr. Shaw by a vote of 232,686 to 122,196 at a special recall election. This was the first change of Los Angeles mayors via the recall election instigated by the people. Previously mayors Harper and Porter faced recalls; Harper resigned before the date of the scheduled election against him, and Porter was sustained in office by a sufficient majority vote.

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Frank L. Shaw, of the 8th District of Los Angeles came to Los Angeles, December, 1909, as district manager of the by products department of the Cudahy Packing Co. The district consisted of Southern California, Arizona and Nevada. Previous to being transferred to Los Angeles, Mr. Shaw was district manager for the Cudahy Packing Co., with offices in Denver, Colo.



May Appeal New Trial In Shaw-Cormack Case

DICKSON FILE

The state attorney general's office today was considering whether to appeal to the State Supreme Court the decision of the District Court of Appeals, which reversed the conviction of Joseph E. Shaw, brother of former Mayor Frank L. Shaw, and William H. Cormack, ex-city civil service commissioner, and granted them a new trial.

Their conviction on 63 felony counts of alteration of public records—in what the prosecution alleged was a scheme to alter examination grades and "sell" Police and Fire Department and other city jobs—was found by the Appellate Court to have rested solely upon the uncorroborated testimony of accomplices.

In a separate, concurring opinion, Justice Thomas P. White pointed out that it is a fundamental legal principle that an accomplice's testimony must be fully corroborated.

Members of the district attorney's staff explained that, according to law, appeal of the decision was out of their hands; that State Attorney-General Earl Warren had 10 days in which to do so if he desires.

If the new trial in Superior Court goes ahead as ordered by the Appeal Court, this unusual situation will result: Joe Shaw will be prosecuted by the staff of a man he recently backed for election—District Attorney-Elect John Dockweiler.

CONNECTION NOT SHOWN

A 44-page opinion by Presiding Justice John M. York and concurred in by Justice William C. Doran held that "the testimony did not connect Shaw and Cormack with the offenses charged, but only tended to create an atmosphere of suspicion."

Learning of the reversals Joe Shaw said:

"There's nothing more I can say. The opinion of the court speaks for itself."

Cormack said:

"I'm naturally very happy over the outcome of this case. I never did anything wrong and I knew that a higher court, looking at the evidence fairly and carefully, would reverse the case."

"I am very happy and deeply grateful."

District Attorney Buron Fitts and Deputy District Attorneys Eugene Williams and John Hart, who prosecuted the two men, declined comment, Fitts adding:

"I will have to study the decision before commenting."

Fitts and Attorney General Earl Warren can appeal the decision to the State Supreme Court.

JUSTICE WHITE'S OPINION

Joe Shaw said he would confer with his attorneys, Richard H. Cantillon and John Glover.

Justice White, in his own opinion, denounced credibility of the testimony of Glenn G. Gravatt, former general manager of the Civil Service Department in the Shaw administration and a key prosecution witness.

Gravatt, who owned a string of race horses while working for a comparatively small salary, testified how, under asserted threats by Joe Shaw that he would have to follow orders or forfeit his job, had ordered the changing of civil service records.

Justice White demanded:

"What credit would the jury have given Gravatt's claims that his fall from virtue was occasioned by the coercion of defendants if they had known what the defendants offered to prove, viz., that his perfidy and falsity

(CONTINUED ON PAGE FOUR)

1/17/42 Herald

Shaw Suit Quiz

DICKSON

TELLS OF SEEING POLICE 'PAYOFFS'

"Black Widow" Ann Forst of the Los Angeles prostitution racket, who is serving time for pandering in the Tehachapi Prison for Women, today blew the lid off of Los Angeles vice during the days of the years* 1932, 1933, 1934 and around about that time.

And she did it in a deposition which former Mayor Frank Shaw sought to use in his \$650,000 libel suit against Liberty magazine.

Leaning back in a comfortable chair in the women's prison near Bakersfield, Ann Forst told attorneys of the sights she had seen—including payoffs to policemen—of visits to alleged gambling joints run by Guy McAfee, one-time Los Angeles gambling overlord, and of vice in general during the waning days of the Mayor John C. Porter regime and the Shaw regime.

PAYOFFS BARED

These are among the things she told—

That out of her gross came a \$50 weekly payoff per house for the police vice squad.

That furs and jewelry lured her into the racket.

That the vice lords had complimentary police badges.

\$5000 PER WEEK

No longer clad in silks and satins, furs and jewels, Ann Forst today greeted her questioners in prison blue with a small blue jacket to keep her warm in the altitude where coyotes keep a vigil at night.

"We used to go to McAfee's gambling joints," she said, and she told of seeing chips changed into money.

She told also of taking between \$3500 and \$5000 a week from the

busy shutting down the houses. We had closed them one by one during the campaign and Guy McAfee was worried. He wanted to leave Los Angeles. Eventually he did. He went to Las Vegas."

She was asked:

"Did you ever see a payoff in the vice racket?"

PAID POLICEMAN

"Yes, I saw Wade Buckwald pay a policeman named McMullen near a service station near Selma avenue and Cahuenga. Guy McAfee and I were there with Buckwald. McMullen was in civilian clothes."

The place where she alleged the payoff was made, she said earlier, was a regular meeting place for go-betweens in the underworld.

STARTLING TESTIMONY

Startling was her further testimony.

"I was told to vote for Frank Shaw for mayor," she said, "because if he was elected the town would be wide open—wide open."

"It was my understanding that the syndicate took care of all of the police officers—the head of the squad got the first cut and what was left was split up among the other members of the squad."

"The syndicate as I knew them included June Taylor, Guy McAfee and Wade Buckwald."

The syndicate, she said, instructed her to have cards printed with "La France massage parlor" and the address printed upon them. Ann Forst said she had been assured she would not be arrested but that if she was to patronize a certain bail bond company.

So, she said, she distributed the cards at will, including 3000 before a big downtown Los Angeles store. The store protested to the district attorney's office and she was told, she said, that for appearance sake she might have to be arrested.

The name of Joe Shaw came into the case only briefly. She said she had ridden with Buckwald to the Biltmore hotel and waited outside while Wade Buckwald went to see the mayor's brother, "or so he said," in a suite in the hotel.

In her deposition made to Attorneys John R. Files and John P. McGinley, for the magazine, and Attorneys John E. Glover and E. H. Delorey, for Shaw, she told of operating "sporting houses" for "the syndicate," and of making \$50 weekly "payoffs" to the police department.

SERVING PRISON TERM

She told of coming to Los Angeles in 1928 and of starting out as saleslady before she was lured into the "vice racket" by promises of jewels and furs.

She said that Wade Buckwald, "who worked for Guy McAfee," told her that she could have furs and jewels and drive expensive cars, too.

"At first I started to work for \$50 a week," she said, "but later I was given a percentage varying from 5 to 10 per cent on the net." She explained that the girls were given 50 per cent and that the police were given \$50 weekly and that utilities, laundry and other things were paid before she got her percentage.



ANN FORST

The 'Black Widow' Talks

five houses of prostitution "I ran" to the bank and of changing the small change into larger bills.

Once, she said, by mistake, she included a counterfeit \$20 bill in the money and she was told to hide by "the combine attorney." She said after that she didn't go to that particular bank with her paper sack full of bills.

COMPLIMENTARY BADGES

To identify the men she named as involved in the prostitution syndicate, she described them for the attorneys.

Of Wade Buckwald, who she claimed was her direct contact with the combine, she said, she had more to say:

"He wore a sorta white uniform in summer," Ann Forst said, "with a white cap. In winter he wore khaki and riding boots."

Then she told of yacht trips to Catalina with members of the combine. The yacht, she said, belonged to a member of the Los Angeles vice squad. All of them, according to her testimony, carried police badges, complimentary or otherwise.

"The whole gang decided to throw a party the night that the recall election was held," the "Black Widow" continued.

"It was at June Taylor's house. I didn't go, though. I had been

MAYOR FRANK L. SHAW

1933 - 1938

✓ During his term of office, the International Airport and the Slauson Storm Drain projects were developed as WPA projects. The Los Angeles Harbor became home for the United States Pacific Fleet, and the City Employee Retirement System was inaugurated. Union Station and the Federal Building were constructed during this time. Shaw left office as a result of recall action.



HON. FRANK L. SHAW

Mayor, City of Los Angeles

Born: February 1, 1877, Warwich, Ontario, Canada. Brought to the United States in 1883.

Educated: Public and private schools, Denver, Colorado, and Joplin, Missouri.

Married.

Residence in California since 1908.

Career: Manager, general and district manager, and salesman, retail and wholesale merchandising business from 1895-1925.

Public Offices: City Council, Eighth District, 1925-1928. Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Second District, 1928-1933; Chairman, 1932-1933. Mayor, City of Los Angeles, 1933-1937.

Fraternal Affiliations: Mason, United Commercial Travelers of America; Shriner, Elk, Knights of Pythias, Moose, Eagle, Maccabee, and others.

1933 1935

When Los Angeles was a world-class city of corruption

By John R. Babcock

Old timers in L.A. no doubt "tsk tsk" Mayor Tom Bradley's plight. Even if his business dealings turn out to have violated the law or skirted ethics, it'll be tame stuff when compared with the Shaw administration in the '30s. Then, municipal corruption in L.A. was world-class.

Indeed, in "Farewell My Lovely," Raymond Chandler said of the Shaw years: "... law is where you buy it in this town. A U.S. attorney general called L.A. 'one of the most corrupt, graft-ridden cities in the United States.'"

Frank Shaw, a Canadian by birth, had served on both the City Council and the Board of Supervisors when he decided to run for mayor in 1933. The Los Angeles Times, which already had a mayor in colorless John C. Porter, opposed him. The newspaper, however, later learned to love Shaw. It was a simple case of seduction, but it's still unclear who seduced whom.

Shaw was elected when the city was reeling from the Depression. Bread lines, tar-paper shacks, flop houses and hobo shantytowns were everywhere. At the time, a county supervisor estimated that as many as 375,000 people were on relief.

John R. Babcock, director of news operations at KABC-TV, regularly writes about L.A. history for the Herald Examiner.

But for the newly installed mayor, the Depression might as well have been in another world. With his brother, Joe, joining him as special assistant and deal-maker, Mayor Shaw set about turning City Hall into a candy store.

The brothers wasted little time in contacting members of L.A.'s sleazy shadow government — gamblers, swindlers, bootleggers and confidence men. Until 1931, Charlie Crawford, backed up by Guy McAfee, ex-L.A.-cop-turned-gambler, was No. 1. When Crawford was killed, McAfee took over the syndicate that included slot-machine king Bob Gans, political fixer Kent Parrot, Zeke Caress, Tutor Scherer, Farmer Page, Charles Cradick, Chuck Addison and Tony Cornero.

The late journalist Carl Greenberg, who worked for both the Examiner and the Times, described the city under Shaw. "There were houses of prostitution all over town. So were gambling joints. Slot machines could be found in the rear of many restaurants. Pinball machines that paid off in cash helped pay the rent in many small business establishments. Bookies were tripping over each other."

The Shaw brothers themselves were quite innovative in corruption. It was no secret that if you wanted a job as a policeman, you went to the Plaza and looked for "the man with the white carnation." After making contact and negotiating a price,



Mayor Frank Shaw on the stand defending brother Joe in 1938.

he'd give you the answers to the civil-service examination.

There were rumors, later borne out, that the fixers kicked back the money to the "highest authorities" at City Hall. Shaw's police chief, James Davis, was already under fire for giving his Red Squad and Confidential

Squad the freedom to do just about anything. The squads were private police units within the larger department. Members moonlighted as company guards during labor strikes and allegedly violated the civil rights of many citizens. Davis' most notorious action, however, occurred

in 1936, when he led his L.A. cops to the Arizona border to turn back Americans fleeing the Dust Bowl.

In 1937, opposition to Frank Shaw and his chief of police surfaced. County Supervisor John Anson Ford, backed by liberals and moderates, aggressively campaigned for mayor. Shaw's people proved to be more aggressive. Before the race was over, Ford was unjustly tarnished as the "communist-backed candidate," and Shaw won a second term.

No sooner was Shaw relishing his victory than one of his Water and Power commissioners was convicted of running a protection racket. Police Lt. Pete Del Gado and brother Joe were indicted for selling city jobs. Del Gado fled to Mexico, but Joe was found guilty on 63 counts. One of Mayor Shaw's police commissioners, a lawyer, was identified as the attorney for two members of the L.A. crime syndicate.

Then, on Jan. 14, 1938, a bomb went off in Silverlake, shattering the car and garage of private detective Harry Raymond, who was hospitalized for months. Raymond had been hired by a reform political group called CIVIC, led by a former member of the grand jury, to look into the mayor's misdeeds.

Mayor Shaw returned to L.A. from Washington and suggested the bombing might have been an accident. Police Chief Davis also flew back to the city and vowed that he would personally lead the investigation, "without fear

or favor."

District Attorney Buron Fitts moved faster. He soon revealed that the bombers were members of the L.A. Police Department Intelligence Squad who had been keeping Raymond under surveillance for three months — at the request of Chief Davis. It was further revealed that Davis had his intelligence unit keeping tabs on several of Shaw's political opponents and critics.

Earle Kynette, acting captain of detectives, and Lt. Roy G. Allen were charged and subsequently convicted of "attempted murder, intent to commit murder and malicious use of explosives." A third LAPD member was found innocent. But Chief James Davis, though admitting to assigning his men to follow Raymond around and to spending thousands of taxpayer dollars for a private political investigation, was never charged with anything.

A recall election in 1938, only months after he'd been elected to his second term, ended the era of sleaze under Frank Shaw. His opponent was Superior Court Judge Fletcher Bowron, who'd overseen the grand jury the year all the corruption charges were made against Shaw and his cronies. Bowron, an L.A. Examiner reporter for six years before becoming a lawyer, was endorsed by every newspaper in the city — except the Times. Bowron won 2-1, making Shaw the first mayor of a major American city to be kicked out of office in a recall. ■

Eighth District

Frank L. Shaw

Member of City Council	July 1, 1925 - November 28, 1928
Mayor	July 1, 1933 - September 26, 1938

Supervisor, Second District	1928-33
Chairman, Board of Supervisors	1932-33

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