

# A MATRIMONIAL WAR BREAKS OUT IN HOBOKEN

## In the Effort to Accelerate Marriages Two Justices Resort to Advertising.

IN Hoboken, N. J.—(do you get that?)—that strange jungleland where more refreshingly bizarre things have happened than were ever dreamed of in the philosophy of Shakespeare's Horatio or any one else, an interesting and characteristically Hobokenesque stunt is in progress.

This time it is nothing less than a hand-to-hand and eye-to-eye struggle between three Justices of the Peace in an effort to get the business of matrimonially inclined men and women who are seeking to become joined in wedlock.

So acute has the situation become that two of the more strenuous of the Justices have taken to advertising in the "Personal" columns of New York newspapers, while the third, with true Hoboken dignity, declares that he will not descend to such unprofessional means of obtaining business, but at the same time keeps his weather eye open up and down the street on which his office is located, watching for men and women whose appearance and general demeanor indicate that they are on matrimony bent. This particular Justice classifies himself as a "regular," while his competitors he places in the "insurgent" class.

The merry war reached its height this week when the two latter Justices published the following "Personals" in a New York newspaper:

MARRIAGES performed without publicity; licenses secured; open evenings and Sundays; information free; phone Hoboken ———. SAMUEL ENGLER, Justice of the Peace, No. ——— St., Hoboken, N. J.

MARRIAGE licenses procured; ceremonies quietly and privately performed. CHARLES H. WAREING, Justice of the Peace, No. ——— St., Hoboken, N. J. Phone ———, Hoboken, N. J. Open Sundays and evenings.

Justice Engler, who is a bright, cheery, clean-cut chap, no doubt scenting a possible free advertisement to the disadvantage of his competitors, greeted me when I called as effusively as does J. Rufus Wallingford a prospective investor in "Get-Rich Quick Wallingford."

"My boy," he said, "this is positively the greatest and most beneficent thing ever discovered for those poor boobs—I mean, persons—who wish to get married quietly, with dispatch and without notoriety. Why, just think of it, a pair of sweethearts can come right here and be wedded comfortably and without any fuss and no one need know anything about it

until it's all over. Of course, I don't mean by that that there is any attempt made to evade the law or do anything other than the statutes prescribe, but sweethearts can be wed here in secrecy so far as the rest of the world is concerned without anyone knowing anything about it until the thirty days in which to file my returns with the County Clerk have expired. I married Miss Ethel Croker, daughter of Richard Croker, the former Tammany chieftain, to John J. Breen, on April 28 last. He called himself a riding master, but he was nothing but a head groom. Think of Dick Croker's daughter marrying a man of his position. I purposely held back my returns in that case for nearly thirty days, and it was not until the bride was safely on a steamer leaving New York for Europe that I let it be definitely known that she was married.

"I also married Mayor Gaynor's daughter to young Vingut last year. That was a clear case of elopement, and was engineered by Mrs. Halsted-Swain, a friend of Miss Gaynor.

"Until July of last year the New Jersey law did not require that a license should be issued in the county in which the prospective bride lived, but the Legislature changed that so that now a New Jersey girl must get a license in her county before she can wed in this State. Such a license must be obtained by the woman, not by the man. On the other hand, if neither of the parties live in New Jersey they can obtain a license in any county in the State and be married anywhere in this State they choose.

"Unprofessional to advertise as I do? Why? Don't some of the biggest lawyers in New York advertise themselves? Fellows who ask a \$10,000 or \$20,000 retaining fee? Only they do it in another way, but they manage to get their names in the papers all right, and at less expense than I am put to, for they depend on their prominence to bring them the advertisement. If there is any harm in letting people know where they may be married if they intend perpetrating matrimony I would be glad to have some one point it out. I have performed 1,500 marriages

since 1900 and haven't had a single 'come-back.'

"Yes, another Justice is advertising in the newspapers, as I am. That's all right. If he thinks he can get more business than I can in that way, let him go to it, but it should be remembered that I am the only, original advertiser of that kind. There's lots of people who want to get married who don't know how to go about it. That may seem like a strange statement, but it's a true one. Here, read this letter from a fellow up in Connecticut. You see, he says he saw my ad., and now he asks me to tell him how much it will cost him to get married and to 'send all particulars.' That's the way of it; they all come to Hoboken when they want to be set right.

"What do I think about these other marrying Justices who are trying to steal my thunder—to take away business from an honest man in their own line? Well, I don't like to 'knock,' but it only shows how much originality some people have, and how they like to 'grab.' It won't be long until some of 'em will be passing coal on one of these Dutch steamships down there on the pier, believe me."

Justice Wareing was more reserved and displayed more of the true Hoboken judicial manner and mien than did his brother Magistrate around the corner. He was busily engaged in an intricate case of pinochle when I entered his office, one-half of which is partitioned off to serve as the Justice's "chambers." He was evidently deciding an important point,

for he was heard to declare in judicial tones, "You meld."

"Why do I advertise for couples who seek to be married?" he repeated after he emerged from behind the partition. "I have no other object in the world, Sir, than to help those poor people along," he said benevolently, while he looked at me from the corner of his eye. "I just tell them where they can find the County Clerk's office and how they are to go about applying for a license. Of course, if they wish to come back here and ask me to marry them, it is my duty to comply if all the requirements of the law have been met.

"Looking for business? Well, yes; why not? We all have to live in this world, and if people come to Hoboken to get married, why some one has to marry them, hasn't he, and why shouldn't I do it as well as the other fellow? Live and let live, say I. I am the originator of this advertising plan of letting two aching hearts know where they can be made one, and there's no use any one trying to claim credit for what don't belong to 'em.

"How many couples have I married? I can't tell offhand, but 300 or 400, anyhow. Yes, I used to be in the express business in New York before I came to Hoboken and became a Justice."

The third marrying Justice is George F. Seymour, who has lived in Hoboken for nearly a quarter of a century and is known to nearly every man, woman, and child there as "Judge." He is a jovial, rotund person, of aldermanic proportions, and with that size of girth attributed to Sir John Falstaff. He has been in turn a sailor on deep sea vessels, a New Jersey National Guardsman, and a Hoboken volunteer fireman. Nor is that all. For nearly twenty-one years he has been a marrying Justice of the Peace. What greater fame and honor could any man ask?

"No, let those fellows advertise," he said to me. "I don't want any of that kind of business. I believe in upholding the dignity of the law. These 'puller-in' methods are not in accord with what I regard as proper legal ethics and deport-

ment. I don't have to advertise; the people all know me. How many couples have I married during my twenty-one years as Justice? Thousands of 'em; I can't tell you just how many, but there's a host. Let's see, I've made 195 couples man and wife in the last eight months.

"There's one thing about it; I won't stand for any darned funny business when people come in here to get married, and that's more than some other Justices can say. For instance, if I see the feller is lush I simply say, 'I can't marry you to-day.'

"If he asks why, I tell him, 'cause I'm too busy.' If he insists on knowing, I say, 'You've had a few drinks too much. I ain't a-going to have you or the gal come back here in three or four months and say that I married you while you were "loaded." Come back here to-morrow and if you're all right I'll marry.' If he's a sensible feller he'll go away and return the next day with the gal and I marry 'em.

"Sometimes it's the woman who gets the 'call down.' At times she laughs and tries to be 'funny.' Then I tell her a few things. I say, 'Where do you think you are? In a circus? I want you to understand that this marrying business is a very serious thing. If you don't take that view of it there's a door there, and you can close it from the outside quick.' That generally fetches them, and they cut out the laughs."

"Is it your custom to kiss the bride, and if so, why?" I asked.

"No, I don't," he replied thoughtfully. "I believe those other fellows do, though. Well, let them. I don't for one reason, because 'my wife won't let me.' Here the other day, after I had tied the knot good and fast for a couple" (the Judge's mind seemed to be wandering back to his seafaring days) "and they were getting ready to make sail and leave the office with the witnesses, one of the latter sang out, 'Ain't you goin' to kiss the bride, Judge?'

"I says, 'No, I make it a practice never to kiss the bride in my office. If I want to do so I'll do it elsewhere than here.' The bridegroom did not quite know how to take it, but he laughed and they went away. No, I don't want no experimental kissing with strange women; there's too many microbes about, so I take no chances."