

Once a Roman, always a Roman; true of newspaper men, too. Take Seward Sheldon, '15journ, for instance. He deserted newspaperdom for oil, experienced all the thrills of the petroleum world, then returned to journalism. After a turn in the East, the Scripps-Howard newspapers sent Mr Sheldon out to his beloved southwest to become editor of the "Fort Worth Press" where Author-Artist Ferguson (who is on the advertising staff of the same newspaper) sketched him

Seward Sheldon

SUCCESSFUL CERTAINTY CERTAINLY SUCCESSFUL

BY BENTON FERGUSON, '31



SEWARD SHELDON is probably the only man in the United States who ever wrote his way into the oil business, saw his mistake, and then wrote his way out again. He has enjoyed a skyrocket success in two distinct fields of enterprise. Hence, as an active and loyal alumnus of Oklahoma, he'll bear watching by the rest of us.

He was born near Kingman, Kansas, about 1895. The only Algeric episodes in his life are that he worked hard in a country newspaper office and wanted to get an education. The rest has been as full of fun as it has of achievement.

I first knew Seward when he taught me to tie my shoe lace and nick-named me Sorrel-top, the latter because my father had called him "Cotton." He came as part of the equipment of the *Cherokee Republican* when it was purchased by Walter Ferguson, '07ex, and remained as a permanent fixture until 1911. After graduating from Cherokee high school, Sheldon's ambition to get an education materialized when he entered the university.

After college he worked for two years on *The Oklahoma News*, then edited by the soon-to-be-famous G. B. Parker, '08as. Even the war couldn't arrest his abilities, for he attained the somewhat unique honor of becoming one of the youngest majors in the field artillery.

I should, at some point in this narrative, attempt to inject some interesting incidents or details about Mr Sheldon himself. But it can't be done. He makes a game of what he's doing or else doesn't spend much time doing it. His success

and adaptable good nature are his only story.

The war over, Seward returned to *The Oklahoma News*, became city editor and was well on the way toward journalistic fame, when E. W. Marland got hold of him. Chester H. Westfall, a Marland executive, lured him away from newspapering. Over everyone's protest but his own, (that's characteristic) he went to Ponca City and edited a house organ for the Marland Oil Co. until 1920, when he was appointed assistant to the financial director.

The inevitable followed and in 1925 he was elected treasurer of the company. He was only thirty.

Sheldon resigned early in 1928 and with two former Marland associates organized an investment company.

But the comparative quiet and ease of the oil business, plus the necessity of earning a livelihood stirred the long dormant soul of Horace Greeley within him. Several talks with his former boss, Parker, now editorial head of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, and his mind was made up. Sure, he would start at the bottom again. Yea?

For sixteen months he was a reporter on the *Cleveland Press*, then an opening occurred, and in May, 1932, he was made editor of the *Fort Worth Press*, which position he now holds. And the casual observer has ceased to be casual in noting how the *Press* is arresting attention.

To the few students and recent graduates this success story must be sickening. With the younger outlook, it's not pleasant to read about someone whom wars and depressions even couldn't stop. And

the worst of it is, it hasn't been a rocky road to success. From the time he entered O. U. until the present his has been a smooth and sure rise. The only credit you can give him is that he made it that way, however, for that's Sheldon—smooth and sure.

He is cotton-headed. Five feet, ten and 190 pounds. He never smiles, instead he grins, broadly and infectiously. He is never soberly serious unless necessary (its a temptation to knock off the "-ly" and insert an "or," but the change wouldn't do justice to his ability to start or stop drinking at the right time). He plays polo or poker with equal ease. He can use either a slap-on-the-back or a we'll-do-it-this-way policy, but he prefers the less hypocritical course.

This would have been a better sketch if I could have, reporter like, eased a statement out of him regarding the relative merits and differences of his two careers, business and journalism. But he'd only grin and make a joke of it: just like him. He merely wants to do a job well and to like the job. That's the only reason he came back to his first love, a newspaper. He likes it, has a good time, keeps a weather eye out to help his friends, but an even sharper eye out for Seward's welfare. It is his only formula for success; that and ability.

He is an alumnus that Oklahoma should be proud of but now that the facts are known, the school can never do him honor. The trials, legislative and gubernatorial, that the University of Oklahoma has had, can make it appreciate but never assimilate one to whom life is a smooth, sure and happy affair.