

# FAMOUS "HASBEENS." NO. 5.

Former American Sprinting Champion is Now a Fat Pill Peddler—He Was Unbeatable for Several Years and Quit the Game When He Lost a Race at Virginia Exposition.

BY AL. G. WADDELL.

CHARLEY PARSONS is a has-been if there ever was one. He weighs 220 pounds and couldn't run 220 yards in twenty minutes; but a few seasons back he was America's premier sprinter.

For four years Parsons cleaned the

most decided to pass up the cinders for a season.

A man named Charles Scott was track manager that year. He was much man and had the age, but he was a big faint hearted when he was called upon to manage the cinder diggers for his college. A meeting was called for the purpose of settling the matter. Charley Broderick, a big Dutchman, who had been at U.S.C. for about half his life, came to the front and lifted the mortgage on the old farm.

He read a letter from Winnie Cutler, offering to coach the track team and handle the baseball squad for a period of two months at a salary of \$25 a week. Broderick urged the management to put a track team in the field, contending that it would take two years to get back to the starting point if the sport was neglected for a season.

Twenty-five dollars a week was a big pile of cinders to be paid out for a coach by U.S.C. at that time. The barn-like building needed half-rotting on the top and there were many places where money could be placed to good advantage; but it was finally decided that a track team would do more for the glory of Southern California than a new roof on the building.

Cutler went to work and Parsons donned a pair of flimsy running flappers. He looked too clumsy to pull anything fast, but when the tryouts were run off, he stepped all over the track and won the 100, 220 and quarter in fair time.

The only meet U.S.C. had that season was with Occidental. The affair was staged on an abbreviated track at Fiesta Park and ended in a row. Parsons ran the side-boards off everything on two legs and took first in the 100, 220 and 440. He was discovered, and from that day U.S.C. began to develop from a fourth-rate Methodist preacher refinery into a real university.

That summer Parsons won the championship at the Olympic games at St. Louis in 10 flat, defeating Nick Cartmell of Pennsylvania, the American intercollegiate champion.

Harvey Holmes came to U.S.C. the next fall. Some real athletes were drafted from somewhere and things began to pick up for the Methodists. The old brick building put on a plaster make-up and the shoulders were padded out on both ends. A gymnasium was built and the athletic field was fenced in. When the paint and plaster smell ceased to be, there was nothing left of dear old U.S.C. but the pipe organ in the remodeled chapel and Charley Parsons.

In 1905, the big runner won eighty points for his college in four meets. He was good for 10 flat any day in the week and was clocked at 9 4-5 on several occasions. In one meet, three watches got him at 9 3-5, but the timers were afraid to let it go and gave his time out at 9 4-5.

That spring he went up to the P.A.A. meet and beat Fiedler of California. He then went to Portland and won five American championships. He took the Y.M.C.A. 100, 220 and 440. On August 4 he won the junior American century in 10 flat and August 5 he won the open hundred event of the A.A.U. in 9 4-5, beating Archie Hahn, Clyde Blair, captain of the Chicago University track team; Forrest Smithson, who was then champion of the Northwest, and Dan Kelly, who was later credited with doing 9 4-5 by a lot of books at a madhouse picnic.

Parsons says that if Dan Kelly ever ran it in 9 3-5, his head is a fish market.

In 1906, Parsons was at the University of Wisconsin. In the charity games held at the Chicago Coliseum, he equalled the world's record for the 60-yard dash. He was the only scratch man out of 117 entrants and after eleven heats, in the final, he ran against a man who was handicapped thirteen feet. One of his performances at Wisconsin was to run the quarter in 49 flat.

The next year, 1907, Parsons came back to U.S.C. and won his races from Stanford in 9 4-5 and 31 4-5, beat the best Pomona and Occidental had in the dual meets and won out in the conference meet. He also won the A.A.U. century from Billy Cline. He did not run the quarter nor make a lap in the relay that year, as he had done during the first three years of his athletic career. He said he had tired of playing the part of a truck horse for nothing but glory.

Charley had always said that when he lost a race, he was going to quit. His finish came at Jamestown, Va. He won the heat in 10 1-4 and led in the finals up to the last few yards, but two men beat him out by a few inches at the tape in 10 3-8. He weighed 190 pounds at the time and says the track would not hold his weight so he could get any traction.



Charley Parsons,

The one-time great U.S.C. sprinter, as he appeared after winning the hundred in 9:4 and the two-twenty in 22:4, from Stanford in 1907.

best short-line runners in this country. He breezed into the athletic world from nowhere in particular, and after a glittering career, retired with much booty, the kind which comes east in looting cups and intercollegiate medals.

The most strenuous exercise in which the has-been indulges now, is jogging around the counter of his drug store, passing out pills and framing "perunalized" prescriptions. He puts the ban on walking in the open. Even when it is necessary for him to go around the corner and huck the lunch room he rides in his automobile.

Parsons was the first great athlete U.S.C. ever hatched. He put the local university on the map and during his performing days he was the same glory boy that Fred Kelley is today.

Many there be, who give the credit for the discovery of Parsons to Harvey Holmes. The truth is, Parsons was an American champion before Holmes ever saw him. If anybody is to get a cut on the hero worship earned by the fat druggist, Winnie Cutler, the once Pacific Coast League pitcher, should be elected.

The athlete discovered himself, but he almost was not, as a track man.

At the age of 20, Parsons showed up at U.S.C. in the fall of 1903 and registered as a prep. Football material was scarce and he had no trouble in salting down a place on the varsity at left tackle.

Joseph P. Seymour, Jr., the crack sprinter, was on an end. The 180-pound tackle discovered that he could beat him down the field under punts. This gave Parsons a hunch and he decided to go out for track, when the season came around.

The football season ended in a turbulent scandal. The captain was dubbed a professional and Seymour, the manager had his name scratched off the big register. Things looked rather foggy for track and it was al-