Irish American Vernacular English

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by Dan Cassidy
THE IRISH WORD JAZZ MEANS HEAT
The Pizzazz of Jazz: The Sanas (Irish etymology) of Jazz

The Irish word Teas (pronounced jass, chas, or t'as) means Heat.

teas [ainmfhocal fríosóntar den tríú dóichleabharthadh]
bail an ruda atá te, teocht (teas na gréine, na tine); brothall (teas an tsiabhraidh); diógrais, paisean (teas crábhaidh, ceana, grá).


Teas (pron. jass, heat) is Teasaí (Jassy, hot.)

Teasaí, adj. (pron. jassy, chassy, or t'assy) Hot, high spirited, exciting, ardent, passionate, vehement, fiery, hot tempered.

See: Jasm & Gism as a Source for the Word "Jazz" From the Work of Peter Tamony. PDF

"[...on March 6th, 1913, under the full page banner headline: "Seals Return From the Spa to Tackle the Famous White Sox!" the Bulletin editors gave "Scoop" Gleeson a full front page ballyhoo, a four paragraph, two column-wide lead, set in boldface type, to define the hot new word “Jazz” to San Francisco baseball fans.

“Come on, there Professor, string up the big harp and give us all a tune Everybody has come back to the old town full of the old 'jazz' and they promise to knock the fans off their feet with their playing. “What is the ‘jazz?’ Why, it’s a little of that ‘old life,’ the ‘gin-i-ker,’ the ‘pep,’ otherwise known as the enthusiasm. A grain of ‘jazz’ and you feel like going out and eating your way through Twin Peaks. It’s that spirit which makes ordinary players step around like Lajoies and (Ty) Cobbs

“Hap' Hogan gave his men a couple of shots of 'near-jazz' last season and look what happened -- the Tigers became the most ferocious set of tossers in the league. Now the Seals have happened upon great quantities of it in the quiet valley of Sonoma and they’re setting the countryside on fire.” (47)

What did this hot new word “Jazz” mean to “Scoop” Gleeson in March 1913? The synonyms he used for “Jazz” were “pep,” “enthusiasulm,” the “gin-i-ker,” and “spirit.”
“Pep” is “hot” like pepper, from which it is derived, and is defined by Roget’s Thesaurus as “energy,” “spirit,” “fire,” and “vim.” While Scoop’s marvelous invented word “enthusiasalum” showed that the young “Scoop” Gleeson had linguistic pizzazz (píosa theasa, pron. peesa has, piece of heat, excitement, passion.) (48)

But what did the mysterious synonym “gin-i-ker” mean? And how were great quantities of “Jazz” setting the Sonoma countryside on fire?

The answer is Irish.

The “Gin-i-ker” is the phonetic spelling of the Irish word-phrase “Tine Caor” (pron. jin-i-ker) and means “raging fire and lightning.” It is the gin-i-ker (tine caor, thunderbolt of fire) that produces the “Jazz” (Teas, pron. jass, heat). (49)

**Gin-i-ker**
Tine caor (pronounced jin-i-ker)
Raging fire, lightning.

Tine, al. Teine (pron. jin-ih, chin-eh), fire; conflagration, incandescence; luminosity, flash. (50)

Caor (pron. kayr), a thunderbolt, a meteor, a round mass of flame, a glowing object. (51)

**Jazz is the phonetic spelling of the Irish and Gaelic word Teas, meaning “heat and highest temperature.”**

**Jazz**
Teas (pron. jass or chass)
Heat, warmth, passion, excitement, fervor, ardor, zeal, enthusiasm, anger, and highest temperature. (52)
The ancient Irish word Teas (pron. jass, or chass, heat) was reborn in a 20th century Irish American gob as Jazz: the hottest American word of the 20th century. Jazz is always Jazzy.

**Jazzy**
Teasaí (pron. jassy or chassy), adj.
Hot, warm, passionate, exciting, fervent, enthusiastic, feverish, angry. (53)
But how does an Irish word spelled Teas, which looks like it sounds like the plural of the English word tea, -- or the taunt (tathant, pron. tah-ant, act of inciting, exhorting, pressing, vexing) of the English word “tease,” -- become pronounced “Jass” in an Irish or American puss (pus, a mouth, lips, fig. a face)?

The Jazz (Teas, pron. jass, heat) of the Affricate
“The Rule of Tír” (tír, land, country) states that the Irish word Tír can be correctly pronounced “jeer, cheer, or tear” in the Irish language. So, too, the Irish word Teas, meaning “heat,” can also be pronounced “jass” in Ulster and North Mayo, “chass” in Connaught, or “tass” in Munster, the three living dialects of the Irish language.

In Ulster and Connaught Irish, and in the languages of Scots-Gaelic and Manx, the word Teas, meaning “heat,” is pronounced “jass” or “chass” and is called an affricate, which is a speech sound consisting of a stop and a fricative articulated at the same point.

The sound of the slender consonant “T” in the Irish word Teas (pron. “jass” or “chass”), meaning “heat,” is created by blocking the air and then releasing it with friction against the palate. The sound produced resembles the “J” in the English word “joy” or the “Ch” in “chair.” (54)

The fricative friction of the affricate produces the “heat” of Teas (pron. “jass” or “chass,” heat, highest temperature), which is itself a word that is in a constant state of “Jazz” both in its meaning and in the natural physical law embodied in its articulation.

Dig it or not (Tuig é nó ná, pron. dig ay no naa, understand it or not), Jazz (Teas, pron. “jass,” heat) is an Irish and American word with naturally jazzy (teasaí, pron. “jassy.” hot) onomatopoeia.

The Jazzy Waters of Boyes Hot Springs, California

On March 8th, 1913, “Scoop” Gleeson wrote that the San Francisco Seals baseball team kept their Jazz in a can. “Spence the catcher zipped the old pill around the infield. He opened a can of ‘jazz’ at the tap of the gong. Henley the pitcher put a little more of the old ‘jazz’ on the pill.” (55)

On March 14th, “Scoop” told his readers precisely where to find the Jazz. It was in the jazzy (teasaí, hot) waters of Boyes Hot Springs where, he wrote: “there’s “jazz” in the morning dew, “jazz” in the daily bath, and “jazz” in the natural spring water” (56)It was the Jazz of the gin-i-ker at the earth’s core that caused the sizzling spring water of Boyes Hot Springs to bubble up and effervesce with 135 degrees Fahrenheit of natural Jazz.

On a website, almost ninety years later, the Mission Springs Hotel in Boyes Hot Springs, California, in Sonoma’s Valley of the Moon, is still extolling the heat and healing properties of the natural spring water on its website: “Paradise found - where Mother Nature has generously combined health enhancing water and minerals heated to 135 degrees of perfection, 1,100 feet within the Earth’s core.”

It is the earth’s water in a sizzle that is the hydrothermal womb where the “old jazz” became “life.” (57)
By March 29th, 1913, the San Francisco Seals were a lifeless fizzle, though Scoop’s snazzy prose still had pizzazz. “Scoop” used the hot new word Jazz more than ten times in this single story. (58)

Under the headline: “Now the Local Players Have Lost the “Jazz” and Don’t Know Where to Find It,” “Scoop” lamented: “The poor old Seals have lost their ‘jazz’ and don’t know where to find it. It’s a fact, gentle reader, that the ‘jazz,’ the pepper, the old life, has either been lost or stolen, and that the San Francisco club of today is made up of ‘jazzless’ Seals.

“There is a chance that the old ‘jazz’ was sent by parcel post, which may account for its failure to arrive yesterday

“The Seals pitcher, “Cac” Henley will need a gallon of ‘jazz’ From the way the White Sox stacked up, one might have suspected that they were inoculated with the ‘jazz’ during their stay in the Valley of the Moon. Suffice it to say that the Seals were without the ‘jazz’ and they played in last season’s faulty style. .... Manager Del had better send for the ‘jazz’ wagon -- Quick! Quick! Bring on the old ‘jazz!’"

Then on April 10th, 1913, the word “Jazz” brought its Irish American verbal heat and excitement to the comics for the first time in history. In a five-column wide Bulletin sports page cartoon set in the Seal’s baseball stadium, Recreation Park, headlined: “Justin Fitzgerald, the Santa Clara Lightning Bolt,” the speedy Fitzgerald was drawn by the cartoonist Breton as the personification of the “gin-i-ker” with the head of a man and a lightning bolt for a body. (59)

In the cartoon the hapless Seals’ infielders lurch and stumble, while the young slugger (slacaire, batter) zaps around the bases like a “blue streak.” In the cartoon’s foreground, a fan in a slouch hat cracks to three cronies (comh-róghna, pron cuh-roney, mutual-favorites, fellow pals.) in the bleachers: “He’s full of the ‘old jazz.'”

In the background of the cartoon, beyond the left field fence of Recreation Park at 15th and Valencia, in the Mission District’s old “Irishtown” neighborhood, Breton has sketched in the steeple of Mission Dolores Cathedral and the hills of San Francisco’s Twin Peaks.

In the hot spring of 1913, on the eve of a Great World War, there were thousands of native Irish-speakers and their first-generation Irish-American children living in the Mission District’s breac-Ghaeltacht parishes surrounding the old Seals’ stadium. Their old Mission District spiel (speal, cutting satiric speech) was peppered with the phonetic Jazz of the Irish language. (60)

In 1920, the U.S. Federal Census recorded hundreds of breac-Ghaeltacht (scattered Irish-speaking districts), containing thousands of Irish speakers in American cities as geographically diverse as San Francisco, Boston, New York City, Springfield, Illinois, Butte, Montana, and Portland, Maine. (61)
By mid-April 1913, the word Jazz had become so hot in San Francisco that Bulletin columnist Ernest Hopkins devoted an entire feature story to this local verbal phenomenon. Hopkins’ jazzy column was a lulu, illustrated with a cartoon of a hi’falutin’ dude in a swell three-piece suit, presumably Hopkins himself, precariously balancing the letters J-A-Z-Z on the tip of his middle-class snoot (snuar adorned, lofty visage.)

In Praise of “Jazz” A Futurist Word Which Has Just Joined the Language by Ernest Hopkins, April 5, 1913, S.F. Bulletin

This column is entitled “What's Not in the News” but occasionally a few things that are in the news leak in. We have been trying for some time to keep these things out, but hereby acknowledge ourselves powerless and surrender.

This thing is a word. It has recently become current in the Bulletin office through some means which we cannot discover but would stop up if we could. There should be every precaution taken to avoid the possibility of any more such words leaking in to disturb our vocabulary.

This word is “JAZ.” It is also spelt “Jazz,” and as they both sound the same and mean the same, there is no way of settling the controversy. The office staff is divided into two sharp factions, one of which upholds the single z and the other the double z. To keep them from coming to blows much Christianity is required.

“JAZZ” (We change the spelling each time so as not to offend either faction) can be defined, but it cannot be synonymized. If there were another word that exactly expressed the meaning of “jaz,” “Jazz” would never have been born. A new word like a new muscle only comes into being when it has been long needed.

This remarkable and satisfactory-sounding word, however, means something like life, vigor, energy, effervescence of spirit, joy, pep, magnetism, verve, virility, ebulliency, courage, happiness, – oh, what's the use? JAZZ.

Nothing else can express it.

You can go on flinging the new word all over the world, like a boy with a new jack-knife. It is “jazz” when you run for your train; “jaz” when you soak an umpire; “Jazz” when you demand a raise; “jaz” when you hike thirty-five miles of a Sunday; “Jazz” when you simply sit around and beam so that all who look beam on you. Anything that takes manliness or effort or energy or activity or strength of soul is “jaz.”

We would not have you apprehend that this new word is slang. It is merely futurist language, which as everybody knows is more than mere cartooning.

“Jazz” is a nice word, a classic word, easy on the tongue and pleasant to the ears, profoundly expressive of the idea it conveys - as when you say a home-run hitter is “full of the old jazz.” (Credit Scoop.) There is and always has been an art of genial strength; to this art we now give the splendid title of “jazz.”
The sheer musical quality of the word, that delightful sound like the crackling of an electric spark, commends it. It belongs to the class of onomatopoeia. It was important that this vacancy in our language should have been filled with a word of proper sound, because “jaz” is a quality often celebrated in epic poetry, in prizefight stories, in the tale of action or the meditative sonnet; it is a universal word, and must appear well in all society.

That is why “pep,” which tried to mean the same but never could, failed; it was a rough-neck from the first, and could not wear evening clothes. “Jazz” is at home in bar or ballroom; it is a true American. “(Ernest Hopkins, S.F. Bulletin, April 19, 1913)

Less than a week later, on April 25th, “Scoop” spelled out the Irish definition of the American word Jazz for his San Francisco readers: “H.E.A.T. is a staple product of Los Angeles and Manager Dillon must have had some of it expressed to Oakland for use in the third game. However, the Seals invoked the aid of “jazz” which keeps equally in hot or cold weather and were thus able to win out on a 3 to 2 score.” (63)

By May 1st “Scoop” Gleeson was writing poems to the elusive “jazz.” The old Wolf sat in the clubhouse door,

Hoping that his team might score.

The game rolled on, but he WOULD not go,

Because he loved those umpires so.

(Help! The old “jazz” is out again!). (64)

By the end of May 1913 the Seals were 9-13 and totally out of “jazz” -- in last place. On June 5th, “Scoop” Gleeson blamed the loss of the old Jazz on the old Irish hoodoo (uatha dubh, pron hooa doo, evil specter, dark phantom): “Too long have the Oaks proved to be the hoodoo for the Seals.” (65)

Then on July 7th in another large Breton cartoon on the front page of the sports section, a distraught father rushes about, frantically searching for a bottle of “Jazz” water to revive his sick baby (the S.F. Seals.) But, in store after store, he is unable to find the life-giving “Jazz” to save his kid (cuid, a chuid, a term of affection, mo chuid, my darling) (66)

By July 24th, the Seals were truly sick kids and had lost 15 of the last 16 games. In August, they were in the cellar of the Pacific Coast League without a drop of “Jazz.”. At the end of the 1913 baseball season, the San Francisco Seals had finished 5th out of 6 teams. (67)
But that “futurist” San Francisco Irish American Vernacular word “Jazz” was just starting to sizzle into the consciousness and print of American speech and culture.

In early June, 1913, the San Francisco “Jazz” had already whizzed east into Indiana. In a feature story entitled “Best Sellers in City Slang,” the Fort Wayne Sentinel reported that the “old jazz” was the “newest slang term in San Francisco.” (68)

By the Fall of 1913, Jazz jumped like an electric spark from the baseball diamond to the boxing ring. In The Oakland Tribune on October 4th, the slugger (slacaire) in the story wasn’t a Seal hitting a baseball with a smack (smeach, pron. smack, a whack) and a wallop (bhuail leadhb, pron. whual lob, a mighty blow), but two palookas dukin’ (tuargain, hammering, slugging) it out in the ring: “The Sailor was off his feet last night, although Clabby handed him shots of the old ½-jazz which made the ex-sailor’s knees sag.” (69)

The Jazz of Ireland and San Francisco was on its way to becoming the hottest new word of the 20th century.

SYNONYMS FOR TEAS IN IRISH

Research by Dan Cassidy From the work of Kevin Patrick Scannell See Software Projects -- Corpas Comhthreomhar Gaeilge-Béarla.

Teas: éagruas, fiabhras,
fever n

1939 Teas:
díbhirce, gríos, lasarthacht, mire; teasaíocht
ardor n

21801 Teas:
beirfean, brothall, bruithean, bruth, gor, goradh, gríos, téamh, teasaíocht, teaspach, teocht
heat n (warmth)

22729 gramadoir teas
hotness n

Note Diograis, Enthusiasm
3786 Teas: diograis (enthusiasm), ainmhian, an-suim, díochracht (enthusiastic), grá, paisean; teasaíocht
passion n (fervor, enthusiasm)
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My Father's Irish American Jazz

Professor Cassidy's father, Daniel Patrick Cassidy -- whose immigrant family spoke Donegal Irish dialect, which pronounces the Irish word Teas "jass" (Teas, *pron. jass, heat, excitement, passion.*) -- was born in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, on March 2, 1913.

The next day, **March 3, 1913**, Teas spelled "Jazz" made its first appearance in print in the history of American language as a baseball slang term for *hot spirited* play. The new word "jazz" then reappeared 25 more times in the month of March 1913 alone, 24 times in Scoop Gleeson's articles, and once in his fellow sports reporter Francis Mannix's column. Soon Teas (*pron. jass, meaning "heat, excitement, and passion") as Jazz is jazzing up the *SF Bulletin*’s sports headlines, sub-heads, and cartoons, spreading ancient Irish linguistic heat.

As Cassidy said, "In my family, like many Irish American families from the old breac-Ghaeltacht (scattered Irish-speaking) neighborhoods, the words 'jazz' and 'jazzy' were most often used without any reference to music. Jazz (teas, *pron. jass*) meant excitement, passion, and pizzazz. Like a jazzy dress on a goil (girl) that gotta' lotta' jazz.

"Too much jazz, though, could also get you into trouble. Someone might say, 'I don't wanna' hear that jazz, Danny,' meaning all your passion and heat. In other words, shut up! But at the end of the day, Jazz (teas, *pron. jass, heat and passion*) in Irish and Irish-American dialect is always sizzling and full of heat and life. My father Daniel Patrick Cassidy was a very jazzy guy."
Dat Ol' Jazz How the Irish Invented Jazz

By DANIEL CASSIDY

"A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary (1972; 1976) examples first printing of the word (jazz) in relation to music, The Bulletin, San Francisco, March 6, 1913, 'Its members trained on ragtime and jazz.'" (1)

"What is the 'jazz?' Why, it's a little of that 'old life,' the 'gin-i-ker,' the 'pep,' otherwise known as the enthusiasm. " Edward "Scoop" Gleson, San Francisco Bulletin, March 6, 1913. (2)

"Spell it Jass, Jas, Jaz, or Jazz - nothing can spoil a Jass band. Some say the Jass band originated in Chicago. Chicago says it came from San Francisco - San Francisco being away across the continent." Victor Record Review, March 7, 1917 (3)

Born in the slum and dockside streets of the port city of New Orleans, and at the rural crossroads of American South, and popularized in the dance halls and cabarets of Chicago in the years before the Great World War, the roots and origins of the African American music called "Jazz" have been researched and documented for almost a century in a slew (slua, a multitude) of scholarly articles, popular magazines, books, newspapers, plays, radio shows, television documentaries, and Hollywood films. (4)

Condemned and vilified as a "cultural plague" by the yackin' (éagcaoin, pron. yeeag-keen, complaining, lamenting) upper-middle class swells (sóúil, comfortable, wealthy) and cultural gatekeepers of the early 20th century, today at the beginning of the 21st, Jazz music is enshrined at the highest level of American culture by elite institutions like the Smithsonian Institute, The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, NYC's Lincoln Center, and the American Public Broadcasting Network.
Foundational Jazz musicians like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Sidney Bechet, Sarah Vaughan, Ella Fitzgerald, and Charles Mingus have been honored by Presidents, Parliaments, Prime Ministers, Kings, and Queens.

Jazz music has jazzed up High Society.

But dat ol' woid "Jazz" is still a motherless child..

The Oxford English Dictionary, the Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology, The Merriam-Webster Dictionary, and the American Heritage Dictionary all agree that the origin of the word Jazz is "not known."

Jazz, n, 1913. American English, a kind of ragtime dance (sic), perhaps related to earlier jasm, energy, drive (1860) apparently of African origin...The source of Jazz in English is not known. By 1922 jazz was applied to the music (sic)...originating among American Blacks. The meaning of energy, excitement, pep is first recorded in 1913, again perhaps influenced by the earlier jasm." (5)

Writers, crackpots, and scholars have proposed a mind-boggling variety of etymologies for the word Jazz: the name of a dancing slave named "Jasper" the moniker of the mythical musician "Jasbo" Brown;" the French word "chasse" for the gliding dance step that gave us the American word "sashay;" the Creole French "jaser," meaning "useless talk;" a New Orleans perfume called "jasmine;" and the Arabic "jazib," meaning "one who allures." (6)

John Philip Sousa, the American march composer and band leader believed the word "Jazz" came into American speech through "Jazzbo," 1890's Vaudeville slang for the rousing rollick of the finale, when performers would come back out on stage to gad about and cavort for the audience. (7)

The birth of the music called "Jazz" within African-American culture has led others to look for an origin in African languages, such as the Mandingo "jas" and the Wolof "yees," meaning to "step out of character." But, these etymologies have been rejected by American and African language scholars.

There is no evidence of the words Jass or Jazz in any African-American slave narratives, oral histories, folk songs, or recorded vernacular speech, prior to 1913. The late Alan P. Merriam, Professor of Anthropology, wrote in 1974: "I have never found the word in Africa." (8)


The press agent was the glib master of baloney and hoopla, Walter Kingsley, whose tongue-in-cheek article on the new word Jass: "Whence Comes Jass?"
was published in August 1917 in the NY Sun. Kingsley's phoney African etymology of Jazz was first exposed as a scam ('s cam, is crooked, dishonest, a deception) by the writer and researcher Dick Holbrooke, who reprinted it in full in Storyville jazz magazine in January, 1974. (10)

"Variously spelled Jas, Jass, Jaz, Jazz, Jasch, and Jascz. The word is African in origin. It is common on the Gold Coast of Africa and in the hinterland of Cape Town. In his studies of the creole patois and idiom of New Orleans Lafcadio Hearn reported the word 'jaz,' meaning to speed things up was common among blacks of the South and had been applied by the creoles (sic) as a term to be applied to music of the syncopated type. No doubt the witch doctors and medicine men on the Congo used the same term at those jungle "parties" when the tom-toms throbbed and their sturdy warriors gave their pep an extra kick (ed. italics). My own personal idea of jazz and its origin is told in this stanza by Vachel Lindsay: 'Fat black bucks in a wine barrel room With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom. Boomlay, Boomlay, Boomlay BOOM.' Lindsay is then transported to the Congo and its feats and revels and he hears, as I have heard, a 'thigh bone beating on a tin pan gong.' Mumbo Jumbo is the god of jazz. Be careful how you write of jazz else he will hoodoo you." (11)

If so, a hoodoo (uath dubh, pron. hooh dooh, a dark specter, a malevolent phantom) haunts the slick hack Walter Kingsley's "ground sweat" (grian suite, sunny site, fig. grave) for writing such racist tripe (drib, filth).

Kingsley's faux-linguistic treatment of the word "Jass" has been quoted in the academic echo chambers by dude (dúd, numbskull) scholars, historians, lexicographers, and etymologists" galore (go leor, plenty, abundant, enough.) His facile, literate mullarkey on the word "Jass" was nothing more than a cute (ciúta, a clever quip, an ingenious trick) publicity gimmick (camóg, a crooked device; an equivocation, a trick) to boost his Big Shot (Séad, Seád, pron. "shod," a jewel, fig. a big chief) client Florenz Ziegfeld's summer musical spectacular Midnight Frolic, which featured the new hot music called "Jass" on the cool snazzy (snasach, pron. snassah, elegant) roof of the swank (somhaoineach, pron. suhwainek, wealthy, profitable) New Amsterdam hotel in midtown Manhattan. The NY Sun's editors got the joke and Flo Ziegfeld's advertising moolah (moll óir, pile of gold or money), humorously entitling Kingsley's piece: Whence Comes Jazz? -- Facts from the Great Authority on the Subject. (12)

Kingsley's putative source, the writer Lafcadio Hearn, never used the word "Jazz" or "Jass" or "Jaz" in any of his books, articles, or letters, a fact confirmed by Richard Holbrooke and Hearn's biographers. But, the Hearn bunkum (buanchumadh, pron. buan-kumah, perpetual invention, long made-up tale, fig. a shaggy dog story), and Kingsley's outrageously racist NY Sun article continues to be cited by American and English dictionaries. (13)

African-American Musicians' Hatred for the Word "Jazz"
The words "Jass" or "Jazz" were not used by any of the foundational African-American New Orleans musicians -- from Buddy Bolden and Bunk Johnson to Joe "King" Oliver, Sidney Bechet, and Louis Armstrong -- prior to the release of the first "Jass" record in history: Dixieland Jass One Step and Livery Stable Blues, in New York City, in March 1917. (14)

Louis Armstrong wrote in 1944: "I moved back home with my mother (in 1918). I was working at Tom Anderson's Cabaret - located on 'Rampart...Lots of Big Shots from Lulu White's used to come there...And I was playing the Cornet. We played all sorts of arrangements T'wasn't called 'Jazz' back there in those days They played a whole lot of Ragtime music. We called it Dixie - Jazz, in the later years." (15)

The influential New Orleans Creole reedman Sidney Bechet, who was a native speaker of French Creole Vernacular, called the music "ragtime" all his life. In his autobiography, "Treat It Gentle," Bechet set the tone for succeeding generations of African American musicians, who have expressed contempt and even hatred for the name "Jazz" for their music: "What does Jazz mean to you when I come up behind you: 'Jazz,' I say, 'what does that do to you? That doesn't explain the music." (16)

Bechet wrote: "But let me tell you one thing: Jazz, that's a name the white people have given to the music (my italics). There's two kinds of music. There's classic and there's ragtime. When I tell you ragtime, you can feel it, there's a spirit right in the word...But Jazz - Jazz could mean any damn' thing: high times, screwing, ballroom. It used to be spelled Jass..." (17)

In 1968, at the height of the Black Nationalist movement, in back to back newspaper columns by San Francisco music critics Ralph Gleason of the Chronicle and Philip Elwood of the Examiner, the Chicago bandleader and drummer "Big Black" got right to the point: "We should kill Jazz, wipe jazz out...Jazz is not the proper name for anybody's musicThe truth is that jazz as a word is vulgar and profane and we should tear it down and then there won't be any jazz clubs, there will be music houses. The jazz image is a funky image. We ought to get a coffin and have a parade and bury it....It got the name through sarcasm, through misunderstanding...and jazz is no title for this music.'"

"They slapped that 'jazz' on the Black man's music to make sure everyone would treat it as an inferior kind of artistry." (18)

Chico Hamilton was interviewed by Les Tomkins in 1972: "The fact is music is a multi-billion dollar business now; it's come a long way. They've got away from using the word jazz, in many cases, and as a matter of fact, it's not a good word anyway. Originally, it didn't have anything to do with music. That's Mr. Ellington's bone of contention also, that it should be called something else." (19)
Duke Ellington said naming African-American music "Jazz" was equivalent to calling it a "four letter word." At a meeting of the California Arts Commission in Monterey in the 1960s, when one of the Commission members said that the word Jazz came from New Orleans, Duke Ellington said: "They didn't learn it there" Ellington later added, "By and large, jazz always has been like the kind of man you wouldn't want your daughter to associate with. The word 'jazz' has been part of the problem. In the 1920s I used to try to convince Fletcher Henderson that we ought to call what we were doing 'Negro music.' But it's too late for that now. This music has become so integrated you can't tell one part from the other so far as color is concerned." (20)

In 2003, Pianist and composer Billy Taylor confirmed that the negative attitude of African American musicians towards the word "Jazz" hasn't changed since Sidney Bechet's day. He spoke to Ben Wattenberg on the PBS program Think Tank.

Ben Wattenberg. "Is it true that Ellington never said that he played Jazz; that's not a word he used?"

Billy Taylor: "He hated the term, as many jazz musicians do. We're saddled with it. But the music was always called something by someone that had nothing to do with the music itself. So the (term) ragtime came from other sources. The term Dixieland, swing, almost all of the categories that jazz is divided or subdivided into were named by people who didn't have nothing to do with the music. And all of the musicians hated the term (my italics) because they felt that the terms were too confining... So the terms, we're saddled with them. (Duke Ellington) called Jazz Negro music, because he was trying to write music that reflected the thoughts and feeling and the expressions and emotions of the African American race... ...

"Actually (Ellington) was an international musician...jazz was created by African slaves and it came out of the spiritual, it came out of some of the work songs...They were not allowed to bring any cultural supports...as people who were a part of this country. And so that's why African music is African American, and it's what happened when people of African descent had to refashion their cultural expressions to fit a new situation." (21)

**Il San Francisco "Jazz" - 1913 – see the pictures**

In a series of groundbreaking articles exploring the origin of the word Jazz, written between 1938 and 1981, the world-class San Francisco sanasán (vocabulary, etymologist), researcher, archivist, and folklore collector, Peter Tamony, shocked Jazz scholars when he revealed that the word "Jazz" burst into
print for the first time in the history of the American language in the spring of 1913, in the sports pages of the San Francisco Bulletin in the jazzy prose of a natty (néata, neat, dapper) 27 year old San Francisco Irish-American baseball scribe with the snazzy moniker of "Scoop" Gleeson.

It is a testament to the strength of Peter Tamony's pre-Cyber Age grassroots scholarship that since the 1938 publication of his first article on the 1913 birth of the word "jazz" in San Francisco, only one earlier published example of "jazz" has been discovered by countless researchers, scouring thousands of published sources with the aid of computers. In 2004, using an historical newspaper data base and computer search engine, NYU librarian George Thompson found the word "jazz" in an anonymously written sports snippet in The Los Angeles Times, published on April 2, 1912, entitled Ben's Jazz Curve. Curiously, the "jazz" fizzled out in The L.A. Times after this single appearance. But, less than a year later, the new word "jazz" sizzled into print in San Francisco forever.

In a series of "Special Dispatches" written from the San Francisco Seals baseball team's spring training camp at Boyes Hot Springs, Sonoma county, forty miles north of the city, and from Recreation Park stadium in the heart of the old Mission District, sports reporter "Scoop" Gleeson used the new word "Jazz" more than forty times in March and April, 1913. This hot word "Jazz" soon spread like verbal wildfire to the Bulletin sports headlines, other reporters, feature stories, and even the cartoons.

Gleeson's first use of the word "Jazz" was on March 3rd, 1913: "McCarl has been heralded all along the line as a "busher," but now it all develops that this dope is very much to the "jazz." "

What "Scoop" Gleeson was saying here in early 20th century vernacular was that local baseball "experts," fans, and sports writers had put out the skinny" that the new Seals rookie George McCarl was an inexperienced "bush leaguer," or rural amateur league player. But, all this bad talk and gossip (dope) was nothing but the "Jazz," meaning a lot of "hot air" and baloney (béal ónna, pron. bail owny, foolish talk). Young George McCall, "Scoop" wrote, was an "experienced player" with six years of professional baseball experience.

Then three days later on March 6th, 1913, under the full page banner headline: "Seals Return From the Spa to Tackle the Famous White Sox!" the Bulletin editors gave "Scoop" Gleeson a full front page ballyhoo, a four paragraph, two column-wide lead, set in boldface type, to define the hot new word "Jazz" to San Francisco baseball fans.

"Come on, there Professor, string up the big harp and give us all a tune Everybody has come back to the old town full of the old 'jazz' and they promise to knock the fans off their feet with their playing.
"What is the 'jazz?' Why, it's a little of that 'old life,' the 'gin-i-ker,' the 'pep,' otherwise known as the enthusiasalum. A grain of 'jazz' and you feel like going out and eating your way through Twin Peaks. It's that spirit which makes ordinary players step around like Lajoies and (Ty) Cobbs.

"'Hap' Hogan gave his men a couple of shots of 'near-jazz' last season and look what happened -- the Tigers became the most ferocious set of tossers in the league. Now the Seals have happened upon great quantities of it in the quiet valley of Sonoma and they're setting the countryside on fire." (47)

What did this hot new word "Jazz" mean to "Scoop" Gleeson in March 1913? The synonyms he used for "Jazz" were "pep," "enthusiasalum," the "gin-i-ker," and "spirit."

"Pep" is "hot" like pepper, from which it is derived, and is defined by Roget's Thesaurus as "energy," "spirit," "fire," and "vim." While Scoop's marvelous invented word "enthusiasalum" showed that the young "Scoop" Gleeson had linguistic pizzazz. (48)

But what did the mysterious synonym "gin-i-ker" mean? And how were great quantities of "Jazz" setting the Sonoma countryside on fire?

The answer is Irish.

The "Gin-i-ker" is the phonetic spelling of the Irish word-phrase "Tine Caor" (pron. jin-i-ker) and means "raging fire and lightning." It is the gin-i-ker (tine caor, a thunderbolt of fire) that produces "Jazz" (Teas, pron. jass, heat). (49)

Gin-i-ker
Tine caor (pronounced jin-i-ker)
Raging fire, lightning.

Tine, al. Teine (pron. jin-ih, chin-eh), fire; conflagration, incandescence; luminosity, flash. (50)

Caor (pron. kayr), a thunderbolt, a meteor, a round mass of flame, a glowing object. (51)

Jazz is the phonetic spelling of the Irish and Gaelic word Teas, meaning "heat and highest temperature."

Jazz
Teas (pron. jass or chass)
Heat, warmth, passion, excitement, fervor, ardor, zeal, enthusiasm, anger, and highest temperature. (52)

The ancient Irish word Teas (pron. jass, heat) was reborn in a 20th century Irish American gob (cab, pron. cob, mouth) as Jazz: the hottest American word of the 20th century.

Teas spelled "jazz" by "Scoop" Gleeson holds within it the divine racket (raic ard, loud ruckus) and clamour (glam mór, great howl) of the "Jazz" (Teas, pron. jass, heat, passion, excitement) of Irish American Vernacular and African American Music.

Jazz is always jazzy (teasaí, pron. jassy, hot, exciting, and passionate).

Jazzy
Teasaí (pron. jassy or chassy), adj.
Hot, warm, passionate, exciting, fervent, enthusiastic, feverish, angry. (53)

But how does an Irish word spelled Teas, which looks like it sounds like the English word "tease," become pronounced "Jass" in an Irish or American puss (pus, a mouth, lips, fig. a face)?

The Jazz (Teas, pron. jass, heat) of the Affricate

"The Rule of Tír" (tír, land, country) states that the Irish word Tír can be correctly pronounced "jeer, cheer, or tear" in the Irish language. So, too, the Irish word Teas, meaning "heat," can also be pronounced "jass" in Ulster and North Mayo, "chass" in Connaught, or "t'ass" in Munster, the three living dialects of the Irish language.

In Ulster and Connaught Irish, and in the languages of Scots-Gaelic and Manx, the word Teas, meaning "heat," is pronounced "jass" or "chass" and is called an affricate, which is a speech sound consisting of a stop and a fricative articulated at the same point.

The sound of the slender consonant "T" in the Irish word Teas (pron. "jass" or "chass"), meaning "heat," is created by blocking the air and then releasing it with friction against the palate. The sound produced resembles the "J" in the English word "joy" or the "Ch" in "chair." (54)

The fricative friction of the affricate produces the "heat" of Teas (pron. "jass" or "chass," heat, highest temperature), which is itself a word that is in a constant state of "Jazz" both in its meaning and in the natural physical law embodied in its articulation.
Dig it or not (Tuig é nó ná, pron. dig ay no naa, understand it or not), Jazz is an Irish and American word with naturally jazzy (teasaí, pron. "jassy." hot) onomatopoeia.

**The Waters of Boyes Hot Springs, California** See the pictures

On March 8th, 1913, "Scoop" Gleeson wrote that the San Francisco Seals baseball team kept their Jazz in a can. "Spence the catcher zipped the old pill around the infield. He opened a can of 'jazz' at the tap of the gong. Henley the pitcher put a little more of the old 'jazz' on the pill." (55)

On March 14th, "Scoop" told his readers precisely where to find the Jazz. It was in the jazzy (hot) waters of Boyes Hot Springs where, he wrote: "there's "jazz" in the morning dew, "jazz" in the daily bath, and "jazz" in the natural spring water" (56)

It was the Jazz of the gin-i-ker at the earth's core that caused the jazzy spring water of Boyes Hot Springs to bubble up and effervesce with 135 degrees Fahrenheit of natural Jazz.

On a website, almost ninety years later, the Mission Springs Hotel in Boyes Hot Springs, California, in Sonoma's Valley of the Moon, is still extolling the heat and healing properties of the natural spring water on its website: "Paradise found - where Mother Nature has generously combined health enhancing water and minerals heated to 135 degrees of perfection, 1,100 feet within the Earth's core."

It is the earth's water in a sizzle that is the hydrothermal womb where the "old jazz" became "life." (57)

By March 29th, 1913, the San Francisco Seals were a lifeless fizzle; though Scoop's snazzy prose still had pizzazz. "Scoop" used the hot new word Jazz more than ten times in this single story. (58)

Under the headline: "Now the Local Players Have Lost the "Jazz" and Don't Know Where to Find It, "Scoop" lamented: "The poor old Seals have lost their 'jazz' and don't know where to find it. It's a fact, gentle reader, that the 'jazz,' the pepper, the old life, has either been lost or stolen, and that the San Francisco club of today is made up of 'jazzless' Seals.

"There is a chance that the old 'jazz' was sent by parcel post, which may account for its failure to arrive yesterday

"The Seals pitcher, "Cac" Henley will need a gallon of 'jazz' From the way the White Sox stacked up, one might have suspected that they were inoculated with the 'jazz' during their stay in the Valley of the MoonSuffice it to say that the Seals
were without the 'jazz' and they played in last season's faulty style. .... Manager Del had better send for the 'jazz' wagon -- Quick! Quick! Bring on the old 'jazz!'"

Then on April 10th, 1913, the word "Jazz" brought its Irish American verbal heat and excitement to the comics for the first time in history. In a five-column wide Bulletin sports page cartoon headlined: "Justin Fitzgerald, the Santa Clara Lightning Bolt," the speedy Fitzgerald was drawn by the cartoonist Breton as the personification of the "gin-i-ker" with the head of a man and a lightning bolt for a body. (59)

In the cartoon the hapless Seals' infielders lurch and stumble, while the young slugger (slacaire, a batter) zaps around the bases like a "blue streak." In the cartoon's foreground, a fan in a slouch hat cracks to three cronies (comh-róghna, pron cuh-roney, fellow-favorites, mutual-sweethearts) in the stands: "He's full of the 'old jazz.'"

In the background of the cartoon, beyond the left field fence of Recreation Park at 15th and Valencia, in the Mission District's old "Irishtown" neighborhood, Breton has sketched in the steeple of Mission Dolores Cathedral and the hills of San Francisco's Twin Peaks.

In the hot spring of 1913, on the eve of a Great World War, there were thousands of native Irish-speakers and their first-generation Irish-American children living in the breac-Ghaeltachta parishes and neighborhoods surrounding the old Seals' stadium. Their old Mission District spiel (speal, cutting satiric speech) was peppered with the phonetic Jazz of the Irish language. (60)

In 1920, the U.S. Federal Census recorded hundreds of breac-Ghaeltachta, containing thousands of Irish speakers in American cities as geographically diverse as San Francisco, Boston, New York City, Springfield, Illinois, Butte, Montana, and Portland, Maine. (61)

By mid-April 1913, the word Jazz had become so hot in San Francisco that Bulletin columnist Ernest Hopkins devoted an entire feature story to this local verbal phenomenon. Hopkins' jazzy column was a lulu, illustrated with a cartoon of a dude (dúd, a dolt, a numbskull) in a swell three-piece suit, presumably Hopkins himself, precariously balancing the letters J-A-Z-Z on the tip of his middle-class snoot (snua ard, lofty visage.) (62)

In Praise of "Jazz" A Futurist Word Which Has Just Joined the Language by Ernest Hopkins, April 5, 1913, S.F. Bulletin

This column is entitled "What's Not in the News" but occasionally a few things that are in the news leak in. We have been trying for some time to keep these things out, but hereby acknowledge ourselves powerless and surrender.
This thing is a word. It has recently become current in the Bulletin office through some means which we cannot discover but would stop up if we could. There should be every precaution taken to avoid the possibility of any more such words leaking in to disturb our vocabulary.

This word is "JAZ." It is also spelt "Jazz," and as they both sound the same and mean the same, there is no way of settling the controversy. The office staff is divided into two sharp factions, one of which upholds the single z and the other the double z. To keep them from coming to blows much Christianity is required.

"JAZZ" (We change the spelling each time so as not to offend either faction) can be defined, but it cannot be synonymized. If there were another word that exactly expressed the meaning of "jaz," "Jazz" would never have been born. A new word like a new muscle only comes into being when it has been long needed.

This remarkable and satisfactory-sounding word, however, means something like life, vigor, energy, effervescence of spirit, joy, pep, magnetism, verve, virility, ebulliency, courage, happiness, - oh, what's the use? - JAZZ.

Nothing else can express it.

You can go on flinging the new word all over the world, like a boy with a new jack-knife. It is "jazz" when you run for your train; "jaz" when you soak an umpire; "Jazz" when you demand a raise; "jaz" when you hike thirty-five miles of a Sunday; "Jazz" when you simply sit around and beam so that all who look beam on you. Anything that takes manliness or effort or energy or activity or strength of soul is "jaz."

We would not have you apprehend that this new word is slang. It is merely futurist language, which as everybody knows is more than mere cartooning.

"Jazz" is a nice word, a classic word, easy on the tongue and pleasant to the ears, profoundly expressive of the idea it conveys - as when you say a home-run hitter is "full of the old jaz." (Credit Scoop.) There is and always has been an art of genial strength; to this art we now give the splendid title of "jazz."

The sheer musical quality of the word, that delightful sound like the crackling of an electric spark, commends it. It belongs to the class of onomatopoeia. It was important that this vacancy in our language should have been filled with a word of proper sound, because "jaz" is a quality often celebrated in epic poetry, in prizefight stories, in the tale of action or the meditative sonnet; it is a universal word, and must appear well in all society.

That is why "pep," which tried to mean the same but never could, failed; it was a rough-neck from the first, and could not wear evening clothes. "Jazz" is at home in bar or ballroom; it is a true American. "(Ernest Hopkins, S.F. Bulletin, April 19,
Less than a week later, on April 25th, "Scoop" spelled out the Irish definition of the American word Jazz for his San Francisco readers: "H.E.A.T. is a staple product of Los Angeles and Manager Dillon must have had some of it expressed to Oakland for use in the third game. However, the Seals invoked the aid of "jazz" which keeps equally in hot or cold weather and were thus able to win out on a 3 to 2 score." (63)

By May 1st "Scoop" Gleeson was writing poems to the elusive "jazz."

The old Wolf sat in the clubhouse door,
Hoping that his team might score.
The game rolled on, but he WOULD not go,
Because he loved those umpires so.
(Help! The old "jazz" is out again!). .(64)

By the end of May 1913 the Seals were 9-13 and totally out of "jazz" -- in last place. On June 5th, "Scoop" Gleeson blamed the loss of the old Jazz on an old Irish jinx: "Too long have the Oaks proved to be the hoodoo for the Seals." (65)

Then on July 7th in another large Breton cartoon on the front page of the sports section, a distraught father rushes about, frantically searching for a bottle of "Jazz" water to revive his sick baby (the S.F. Seals.) But, in store after store, he is unable to find the life-giving "Jazz" to save his kid (cuid, a chuid, a term of affection, mo chuid, my darling) (66)

By July 24th, the Seals were truly sick kids and had lost 15 of the last 16 games. In August, they were in the cellar of the Pacific Coast League without a drop of "Jazz.". At the end of the 1913 baseball season, the San Francisco Seals had finished 5th out of 6 teams. (67)

But that "futurist" San Francisco Irish American Vernacular word "Jazz" was just starting to sizzle into the consciousness and print of American speech and culture.

In early June, 1913, the San Francisco "Jazz" had already whizzed east into Indiana. In a feature story entitled "Best Sellers in City Slang," the Fort Wayne Sentinel reported that the "old jazz" was the "newest slang term in San Francisco." (68)

By the Fall of 1913, Jazz jumped like an electric spark from the baseball diamond to the boxing ring. In The Oakland Tribune on October 4th, the slugger (slacaire,
a batter; a mauler, a bruise) in the story wasn't a Seal hitting a baseball with a smack (smeach, pron. smack, a whack) and a wallop (bhuail leadhb, pron. whual lob, a mighty blow), but two palookas dukin' (tuargain, pron. duargin, hammering, slugging) it out in the ring: "The Sailor was off his feet last night, although Clabby handed him shots of the old _-jazz which made the ex-sailor's knees sag." (69)

The Jazz of Ireland and San Francisco was on its way to becoming the hottest new word of the 20th century.

**Footnotes (abridged version)**


(2) Edward "Scoop" Gleeson, San Francisco Bulletin, March 6, 1913, p.13


(7) Tamony, Jazz, The Word, Jazz: A Quarterly of American Music, p 35; OED Online, March 31, 2005,


(9) Jesse Sheidlower, MSN Slate Magazine Online, , December 11, 2004)
(10) Barnhart Dictionary of Etymology, p. 789, "Phony or phoney, adj. not genuine, fake, sham. 1900 American English; perhaps an alteration of Earlier English slang fawney a gilt brass ring used by swindlers (1781), borrowed from the Irish fáinne ring."

(11) Holbrooke, Our Word Jazz, Storyville magazine, pp. 56-58.


(13) OED Online, March 31, 2005, quotes the August 1917, Kingsley NY Sun article and quotes a Dr. Bender, quoted in the NY Times in 1950, who cites Lafcadio Hearn bogus "Creole dialect" jazz meaning "to hurry up."

(14) Louis Armstrong, In His Own Words, NY, 1999, pp. 83, 218, 175

(15) Louis Armstrong, In His Own Words, pp. 33, 83. Big Shot: "Seód, al. seud, [Irish, sèad], a jewel, often used figuratively, Hero, valiant man, chief or warrior." Faclair Gaidhlig Bu Beurla Le Dealbhann, Illustrated Gaelic-English Dictionary, Glasgow, 1901, 1994, p. 808; see also Robert Goffin, Horn of Plenty: The Story of Louis Armstrong, N.Y. 1947, pp. 109, 111: "(In 1917) Joe Olivershowed Louis a letter from Freddie Keppard. In it Freddie reported that the new music known as ragtime in New Orleans was called Jazz in Chicago and it was creating a torm."

(16) Treat It Gentle, An Autobiography, Sidney Bechet, p. 3; Martin Williams, Jazz Masters of New Orleans, 1967, NY, p. VI

(17) Bechet, p. 3


(19) Transcript of 1972 Interview: Chico Hamilton with Les Tomkins online


(21) PBS Online, Think Tank with Ben Wattenberg, official transcript of interview with Dr. Billy Taylor, 2003;

Gleason, Phillip Elwood, October, 1958: Scoop Gleeson 1938 article "I Remember: The Birth of Jazz" in S.F. Call-Bulletin, Sept., 3, 1938, reprinted in full, p. 40; Tamony, JEMF Quarterly, Spring, 1981. NYU librarian, George Thompson, using a computer search engine discovered one earlier baseball "jazz" on April 2, 1912 in anonymously written article in Los Angeles Times, part III, pg. 2: Ben's Jazz Curve. However, the old "jazz" fizzled in L.A. Times and did not reappear again until 1917-1918.

(44) San Francisco Bulletin newspaper: see especially: March 3, 6, 8, 14, 24, 29, April 2, 9, 10 (also Breton cartoon), 14, 25, May 1, 1913

(45) SF Bulletin, Mar. 3, 1913, p. 13

(46) Dineen, p. 821. Ónna, a., simple, silly.

(47) S.F. Bulletin, March 6, 1913, p. 16, cols. 6-7.

(48) The Original Roget's Thesaurus, 1852, 1965, N.Y., p. 102

(49) Teine caor, al. tine caor: a raging fire, lightning. Dineen, p. 1200.

(50) Teine, Dineen, p. 1200; tine, Ó Dónaill, p 1235; teine, Dwelly, p. 943.

(51) Caor, Dineen, p. 163, Ó Dónaill, p. 189; caoir, p. 163, caor, p. 165


(53) Teasáí, Dineen, pp. 1194-95, Ó Dónaill, pp. 1221-22, Dwelly, p. 942.


(55) S.F. Bulletin, March 8, 1913, p. 12

(56) S.F. Bulletin, March 14, 1913, p.20. See also "jazzers."

(57) History of Mission Springs Hotel, Sonoma County, California. Online:
(58) S.F. Bulletin, March 29, 1913, p. 26. (see also March 14, 1913

(59) S.F. Bulletin, April 10, 1913, p. 14 (see also: April 2, 1913, p. 17.

(60) Fourteenth Census of the United States, San Francisco: Assembly District 22, see examples: 508 - 534 Connecticut Street; 605-665 Arkansas Street; Precinct 27, SD4; Dolores Street; Assembly Dist. 25, Precinct 28, SD4: see 2688, 2690 24th Street,1069-1081 Dolores Street; Precinct 88, 1061-1065 Dolores St.; Precinct 48-50; Precinct 52; Precinct 150-159.

(61) 14th Census, Kings County, NY (Brooklyn), see examples: ED 910-912 (Greenpoint); 14th Census, Springfield, Illinois see: ED 119-120; Portland, Maine.

(62) Holbrooke, Storyville, Hopkins' article reprinted, pp. 52-55; S.F. Bulletin, April 5, 1913, back page number illegible.


(64) S.F. Bulletin, May 1, 1913, p. 16


(67) S.F. Bulletin, July 24, p. 15, Seals Lose 15 of 16 games; July 31, 1913, Seals in "cellar;"

(68) Fort Wayne Sentinel, Box: Best Sellers in City Slang, June 4, 1913, pg. 8, col.5.
(69) Oakland Tribune, October 4th, 1913, pg. 8 (illegible), col. 7.