

Carl could not get to the building. But he had slept that night on its roof with the bicycle beside him.

At the appointed minute his familiar smiling face appeared over the parapet. He leaned over the roof's edge holding the prize. Then he dropped the glittering wheel.

Police raced into the building and up the fire escape. Carl escaped by a back stairway. He had every move planned. The chase that followed was like one of the Mack Sennett comedies that were to become popular in a few years. Police finally picked his shop, waiting for him, and armed with a summons. There they received a gay message from Carl.

"You can come to see me in the police station. I just gave myself up." He got off that time.

Collectively they pursued him; but as individuals, the police were his friends. One told him, admiringly, "Fisher, what you need is a year-round circus license with parade privileges."

People complained, maligned, berated Carl and his stunts. But some began to say he was an asset to the city. He was helping to add to the glamour of its name.

He was still being considered, as in boyhood, "the biggest show-off in town." But the fact that he was showing off never occurred to Carl. Those who met the headlined Carl Fisher were astonished to find an unassuming, shy man who never talked about himself. As his mother once remarked to me, "Carl was always too absorbed in the thing he was doing to realize it was he who was doing it."

Publicity men like Steve Hannagan, who later publicized Carl's projects, would complain of Carl's insistence upon remaining in the background while staging his greatest dramas. He was difficult to interview and difficult to photograph. It was never Carl, but his idea that mattered.

His most spectacular stunt in these days was thought up to popularize the Pope-Toledo bicycle. Carl considered this one of the best bicycles made, and yet it did not sell. He went to Toledo to see Colonel Pope, its manufacturer. He was made to cool his heels for five days before he was admitted to Pope's office. Once there, he burst into his plan.