

LIFE'S LIKE THAT

By FRED NEHER



"Mind if I watch? It can't be as much fun as you pretend."

Pastimes Help Persons Forget Present, Future

There's not much difference psychologically between the comfort a child gets from carrying around his favorite blanket and the satisfaction a man achieves from playing around with an antique auto.

Both, in the studied opinion of Psychologist Chaytor Mason of the University of Southern California, are a search for ideal life fulfillment. The blanket is necessary to the child, often long after he is presumed to have "outgrown" it, Mason says. And, particularly in these uncertain times, the antique car may be just as necessary to the man.

"THE MAN who spends his spare time restoring a Model-A rumble-seat roadster is turning away from the pressures of the present and the fears of the future for a page from a pleasant past he knew or wished for in boyhood," says psychologist Mason. "The parallel between man and car, child and blanket, is strongly evident."

Antique car lovers aren't the only ones who fit into this framework, attests the USC psychologists. So do Civil War buffs, model train builders and people who collect old telephones.

"EVEN THE violent glories of the American Civil War can be more of a comfort than contemplating the destruction of a 50-megaton K-bomb," according to psychologist Mason.

"This probing into the past isn't just an academic fascination with history. And the rather remarkable and significant thing is that men are the chief probers. Although women long have had interest in antiques, never before in American history have men turned en masse toward the past while making such a big noise about the future," says Mason.

"WE DIDN'T see this thing generally after the Civil War, or even after World War I. But it began to evidence itself strongly in the days following World War II. It's a kind of a sad desperation, when you consider it closely."

The USC psychologist admits his own interest in the past. He puts buildings he knew as a boy into the model train layouts he now builds. Some of them are big buildings, like hotels and office buildings he remembers. Others are houses, or the corner grocery or drug store.

Leisure time and a general affluence have helped adults "play with the past," says the USC faculty member. "But these things are merely a means to an end. They are not the cause of this phenomenon."

"THE REASON an astronomer collects old circus posters and a banker suddenly blossoms as an authority on American railroading is because they're pressured by the present and fearful of the future."

"Sooner or later they find that they must get off the whirling merry-go-round and

Torrance Coed In Drama Role

Sophomore Carol Mathlin played a prominent role in the recent University of Redlands production of "J. B." which won a Pulitzer Prize for Archibald MacLeish. Carol is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Mathlin, 1115 Cerise Ave.

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