

ALAMEDAN PROSPERS, PLAYS DESPITE BLINDNESS, DEAFNESS

**Black and Silent
World Conquered
By Samuel W. Bean**

By **ELINOR HAYES**

Samuel W. Bean is both deaf and blind—not a sound or sight but memory has entered his life since he was 13—but he gets along with a philosophy and joy that would do credit to the most fortunate man in the world.

Bean, 52, of 1807 Santa Clara Avenue, Alameda, hasn't heard a word in 39 years but he has retained the ability to talk. He never saw his wife or two sons. All their smiles, affection, problems and normal family expressions could only be brought to him through their fingers tapping words out into his hand.

His world is completely black and silent, or so it would seem. In it he has made himself a bright, prosperous citizen. His hand, and this is characteristic of his whole attitude toward life, is his only contact with life and is held out as gaily as that of a candidate.

CHAMPION AT CHESS

His life and position toward it possibly is given its best example in his prime hobby—chess.

Bean not only plays chess. He is a champion. He ranks fourth or fifth always among the 100 players of the Oakland Chess Club, they report.

When Northern California played Southern in a test at Atascadero recently, Bean took his special raised board into No. 24 spot, which indicated he ranked in that place among the 80 boards in play.

He won his match after a grueling, four-hour heat.

Follow players regard him as an excellent team player.

One of them discussed his attitude toward the game thus:

"He plays chess, as he does everything, wholeheartedly. Although he is so limited actually, he isn't fanatically, preclusively engrossed in it, or anything. He does other things also."



Samuel W. Bean (left) has been both deaf and blind since he was 13 years old, but as salesman, poet, chess champion and philosopher he regards himself as "master of my fate." He is "talking" with his business companion, Fred Schieff, who taps words into the palm of Bean's hand.

LIKES TO DANCE

Dances, for one thing. One partner reported that he merely asks whether it is a waltz or fox trot, swings into it and seldom bumps into other couples. She said that she tapped the tempo on his shoulder and they got along famously.

In the main, possibly the most amazing ability of this able man is that he has remembered how to talk all these years, clearly even though in a monotone.

He tells the story of his affliction:

"I was watching some boys on a Palo Alto playground when I was 13. One of the boys picked up a rock and threw it, only playing. It hit me in the head, caused intense inflammation and destroyed the optic and auditory nerves."

TEACHER PRAISED

Bean is the son of a former Palo Alto contractor and builder. After his accident his mother brought him to Alameda and he became a student at the California School for the Blind in Berkeley.

"I had a wonderful teacher, Miss Mary White. She was blind herself," Bean said. "She taught me that a handicap is a handicap only in the degree in which you allow it to master you."

It was there that he met another young woman teacher, whom he later married. That happy marriage ended when she died of rheumatic fever in 1933, leaving two sons, Samuel Bean Jr. and Earl Ray Bean.

"I had a swell wife," Bean said.

He had two years of study at the University of California and expected to be a cabinet maker but the lure of living among people led him to become a salesman.

PHILOSOPHY SPREAD

He and his wife traveled from coast to coast, Mexico to Canada, giving wide circulation among other things, to his philosophy:

"The time to be happy is now; the place to be happy is here; the way to be happy is to make others so."

He presented to customers a little booklet, "Light in Darkness," of his own poems. One states his theory: "Let grouch and pessimist depart—I want a happy, cheerful heart. No matter if things go dead wrong, I'll smile, or whistle, sing a song. I'll rise in joy to greet the morn, And bless the day that I was born."

SPEAKS FOR BLIND

Remember it was written by a