

FROM DRIVER TO POLITICIAN

"Bob" Davis' Rise To Wealth And Influence Rapid.

Robert E. Davis, better known as "Bob" Davis, who was a familiar figure in **police** and political circles, arose in a few years from an ice-wagon driver to a position of wealth and influence. His friends estimate his fortune at about \$200,000.

It has only been recently, however, that his name was brought to the attention of the general public, and this in connection with the dismissal of Capt. Bernard J. **Ward** in the Maggie Hunter case, and the investigation of the cocaine traffic by the grand jury.

Following the dismissal of **Captain Ward** Davis was arrested on the charge of receiving \$75 from Mrs. Hunter by pretending that he would prevent her indictment for keeping a disorderly house, but was dismissed.

When a young man Davis drove the ice-wagon. His customers lived in the tenderloin district, and because of his jovial disposition he soon became popular with them. Twelve years ago Davis saw the opportunities of the saloon business in that section of the city and opened a place at the southeast corner of Arch and Raborg streets. Fortune is said to have smiled on him from the beginning.

Davis realized that he needed protection from the **police**, and began to make friends with members of the department, first with the officers and sergeants, and later with high officials. His saloon business grew so rapidly that within a few years he built a large saloon at the northwest corner of Arch and Raborg streets. He afterward acquired the saloon at Pine and Raborg streets, and kept both places. While running these establishments Davis began to play politics. He got the friendship of the late Henry G. Fledderman, who was for a number of years the leader of the **Fourth ward**, and rendered valuable service to the Democratic organization in its primary and general elections. This political activity continued to his death.

Several years ago Davis embarked in the money-lending business, being the head of the Paca Loan Company. He reported then that he had given up the saloon business, but his intimate friends always believed that he still ran them under the names of other men. Because of his intimate friendship with high **police** officials it was believed among a certain element that Davis could deliver **police** protection. Daily he associated with public officials, and every morning could be found in the office of the Clerk of the Criminal Court, or in the corridors leading to the State's Attorney's office, the **Police** Board or the grand jury room.

Other frequenters of the Courthouse looked upon him as a "fixer," and he was regarded by them as the greatest "go-between" man in the city. Generally, upon leaving the Courthouse, Davis would be accompanied by some **police** official. Everyone in Baltimore who wanted **police** protection knew this. In addition, they knew that he frequented shores and other pleasure resorts with policemen, and was seen on the streets with them in the evenings.

The Hunter woman case was the first case of this alleged protection to come to the attention of the public, and the **Police** Board found enough evidence in the case to dismiss **Ward**. Davis was placed on trial in the Criminal Court for his part in the transaction, but was acquitted.

Dr. William H. Dull, who was known as the "cocaine king" of Baltimore, appeared before the grand jury last week concerning the cocaine traffic. Davis was a well-known bondsman, and when violators of the cocaine laws were arrested Davis often went their bond. At that time it was reported that Davis was connected with Dr. Dull in the cocaine business. The purpose of the grand jury, it is said, may be to ascertain if Dr. Dull paid money to Davis for going bail or for some other purpose.