



## Hardly a Column

By Charles  
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### Note for Nitro

BACK DURING 1917 and 1918, while the adjoining community of Nitro was a war boom town and a marvel of rapid construction and expansion in the then more sparsely settled valley, there came this way from his native Ohio a lanky lad looking for work: He found it in the town where powder was king and remained for six months. Today he remembers the experience vividly and he recalls the Charleston of World War I just as distinctly.

"It was a good town and I remember it very well," he told S. G. "Mut" Corey, proprietor of the Arcade market.

The conversation took place at Ciro's in Hollywood and Clark Gable was telling the friendly "Mut" something of a previously unpublicized chapter in his life. He related that he came this way looking for work, a kid from Cadiz, O., out to cash in on the big salaries of war time. He was then around 16 or 17 years old.

"Mut" said Gable also volunteered the information that he enjoyed the six months he spent at Nitro, although the work was fairly rigorous for a "teen age boy, and that he laughingly disclosed that at the same time he made several trips to Welch.

"I had a girl there then who I thought I was in love with and I went down to the coal field town to visit her several times," the screen star said.

"Mut," and his brother, "Babe," have an unusual business set-up. They own the market here on Virginia street and another in Los Angeles on West Pico Blvd. "Mut" manages the market here for six months and then goes to the west coast for a like period while "Babe" returns to Charleston to take over.

Several top-flight stars regularly patronize their Los Angeles market and Tommy Dorsey, Marjorie Main, Keenan Wynn and Esther Williams are regulars, "Mut" said. He said Gable had also stopped in on several occasions.

"Mut" declares Gable to be "a great guy and a great star" and added that "I have had several occasions to visit his San Fernando valley home.

"I thought the people around Charleston would enjoy knowing that the star once worked in Nitro and was around here quite a bit when he was a youngster," said "Mut."

Nitro can now post a sign at the corporate limits:

"Here's where Clark Gable started his career as a boomer that led him to movie stardom and fame."

Then, they could erect one reading: "Gable Slept Here."