

1904

## 19. ANDREW CARNEGIE'S "DAUGHTER" (SOURCE unknown)

On a bright day in the late Nineties, Mrs. Leroy Chadwick of Ohio—"Cassie" to friends—took a trip to New York. The wife of a socially prominent Clevelander who was also an unsuccessful physician, Cassie Chadwick was a vivid female with bright green eyes and stunning auburn hair. She was well into her thirties, a matronly bulk obscuring what had once been the bloom of beautiful youth.

In New York, the lady engaged a suite at the Holland House, a hotel favored by wealthy Ohioans. In the lobby she bumped into a Cleveland lawyer named Dillon and begged him to accompany her on a personal errand. To Dillon's amazement, the carriage stopped before the magnificent Fifth Avenue residence of Andrew Carnegie, America's richest man. Cassie asked the lawyer to wait, and tripped to the front door of the block-size mansion. Using her full personality, she talked her way past butler and footmen to the presence of the Carnegie housekeeper. Informing this personage that she planned to hire a maid who had been in the Carnegie employ, she asked an estimate of the girl's honesty and

ability. The housekeeper answered that no such maid had ever worked there. Cassie expressed surprise, then deliberately went on to prolong the conversation as long as possible. Twenty minutes later, waving a friendly goodbye to the butler, she departed the mansion. Getting into the carriage she stumbled slightly, dropping a paper. Gallant lawyer Dillon retrieved it—and noticed it was a promissory note for \$2,000,000 signed by Andrew Carnegie!

So began the most brazen swindle in American history. For now, assuming a caught-at-last air, Cassie batted eyelashes over green eyes and confessed that she was Andrew Carnegie's illegitimate daughter. All the world knew the Scotch-born millionaire had promised his mother never to marry while she lived, which made him an elderly bachelor who might indeed have a bastard child. As this flitted across Dillon's mind, Cassie went on to say that, as Carnegie's only offspring, she stood to inherit his huge fortune of \$400,000,000. Meantime, the old man doted on her, and persisted in giving her money. This \$2,000,000 note, for instance. Why, in a bureau drawer at home, she had another \$7,000,000 in loose securities.

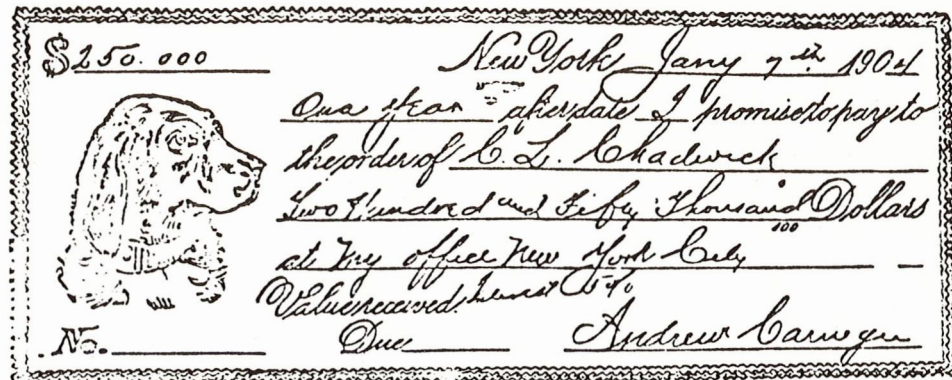
None of this was even remotely true. Cassie was born Liz Bigley, on a Canadian farm. A pretty girl with larceny in her veins, she ran away

to Toronto when in her teens. There she had calling cards printed which read MISS BIGLEY - HEIR-ESS TO \$15,000. Department stores fell all over her, begging the nervy girl to take home showy wardrobes on account. She took several before skipping to the United States. There, in a mixture of extortion, blackmail, and prostitution she averaged \$1,000 a week from men met in Pullman cars. By the time she met Dr. Chadwick, Cassie had served a three-year prison term for fraud. The two met in a bordello, where Cassie convinced the simple-minded doctor she dwelled only to teach the girls good manners and cleanliness. On becoming the social Mrs. Leroy Chadwick, she began an intensive study of Andrew Carnegie's life and habits. During long hours, she practiced forging his signature. She was setting up the country's wealthiest man for the Big Con.

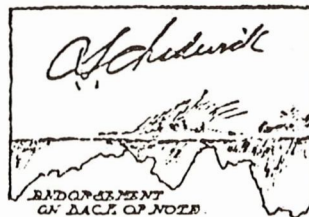
Cassie had also picked lawyer Dillon with care, for she needed a type who on Fifth Avenue would swear to keep her secret forever, at home would promptly tell. Dillon got back to Cleveland first and, when Cassie returned, social and banking circles were abuzz with the story of her fortunate illegitimacy. Dillon urged her to take a safe-deposit box for the \$7,000,000 in her drawer. On his recommendation, she carried an envelope to a banker who, without examining the contents, unhesitatingly handed her a receipt for \$7,000,000. With this receipt, her ability to forge Carnegie's signature, and the story of her illegitimacy, Cassie now commanded untold amounts of money.

She figured that Carnegie was such a terrifying man nobody would dare ask him if he had an illegitimate child. In this, she was one-hundred-percent correct. She had also figured other angles. By apparently keeping \$7,000,000 in a drawer, she neatly planted the idea that she herself might be played for a sucker. Swallowing this bait, bankers and businessmen in Ohio and elsewhere sought the privilege of loaning her large sums of money. They did so at exorbitant interest rates, thinking Cassie was too simple to catch on. But Cassie had figured this, too. Pretending to be a sucker protected her further, since the banks would not dare reveal the loans because of the criminally high interest.

THE \$250,000 CARNEGIE NOTE AND ITS SIGNATURE  
AND ADMITTED HANDWRITING OF MILLIONAIRE.



THE FAMOUS ALLEGED  
CARNEGIE NOTE.



ENDORSEMENT  
ON BACK OF NOTE.

Andrew Carnegie

THE GENUINE CARNEGIE  
SIGNATURE

Andrew Carnegie

THE CARNEGIE SIGNATURE  
ON NOTE

C. L. Chadwick

THE C. L. CHADWICK  
ON FACE OF NOTE.

Cassie spent months practicing Carnegie's signature, never got it quite right. Yet she was able to get away with forged notes like the above. Under it, Carnegie's true signature; (MIDDLE) Cassie's forgery; (BOTTOM), Cassie's own hand.

"Deed of Trust" for \$10,246,000  
Signed with Carnegie's Name.

This is one of the "assets" of Mrs. Cassie L. Chadwick, a deed of trust for \$10,246,000, signed with Andrew Carnegie's name:

Know all men by these presents that I, Andrew Carnegie, of New York City, N. Y., do hereby acknowledge that I hold in trust for Mrs. Cassie L. Chadwick, wife of Dr. Leroy S. Chadwick, of No. 1824 Euclid avenue, city of Cleveland, county of Cuyahoga, and State of Ohio, properly assigned and delivered to me for said Cassie L. Chadwick by her uncle, Frederick R. Mason in his lifetime (now deceased), which property is of the appraised value of ten million, two hundred and forty-six thousand dollars (\$10,246,000), consisting of 2,500 shares of Great Western Railway stock of England and Wales, valued at two million, one hundred thousand dollars (\$2,100,000); 1,800 shares of Caledonian Railway stock of Scotland, valued at one million, one hundred and forty-six thousand dollars (\$1,146,000), and bonds of the United States Steel Corporation of New Jersey bearing five per cent interest of the par value of seven million (\$7,000,000) dollars.

The income from the above described property agree to pay over to said Cassie L. Chadwick semi-annually between the first and fifteenth days of June and December of each year during the life of this trust, with out any deduction or charges for services or expenses any kind, this trust to be and remain in full force on Aug. 29, 1902.

In case of the death of said Andrew Carnegie, said trust to terminate immediately and said property to come and all proceeds to vest absolutely both in law and equity in said Cassie L. Chadwick; in case of the death of Cassie L. Chadwick, said trust to terminate immediately and all of said property, together with all income and proceeds thereof, to be transferred and turned over to the heirs-at-law of legal representations of said Cassie L. Chadwick.

I further agree to faithfully carry out all of the above provisions and that all of said stocks and bonds have been indorsed over in the name of said Cassie L. Chadwick, so that no further or other act will be necessary on my part or on the part of my legal representative to put said Cassie L. Chadwick or her heirs-at-law in full possession of same on the termination of this trust.

Witness my hand and seal this 27th day of February, 1901  
ANDREW CARNEGIE.

Cassie used Carnegie's name in a multitude of ways. (ABOVE), text of a Deed of Trust for no less than \$10,246,000. Supposedly signed by Carnegie, it brought Cassie added millions.

Cassie borrowed from one and all. Incredible as it may seem, she took in over \$1,000,000 a year and spent it on \$100,000 dinner parties, \$90,000 necklaces, and grand pianos for friends. She installed a pipe organ in her Cleveland home for the edification of Dr. Chadwick, who believed he could play. Yet Cassie only wanted money to spend it. She was a compulsive spender who got her thrills from watching the money disappear.

For seven years the mad whirl continued, with banks allowing the loans to ride while interest accrued, expecting to cash in gloriously when Carnegie died. But inevitably Cassie got a bad break. It came in November 1904, after she had borrowed \$190,000 from a Boston bank. For once, the bank demanded its money back on time. Cassie didn't have it and the bank sued. The story reached the newspapers and her bubble burst. In Oberlin, Ohio, the bank president admitted loaning \$800,000 to Cassie. The admission began a run on the bank, for which she was

blamed. Now, at last, someone had to speak to Andrew Carnegie, who issued a death-blow statement: "Mr. Carnegie does not know Mrs. Chadwick of Cleveland. Mr. Carnegie has not signed a note for more than thirty years."

Banks failed, firms toppled. Newspapers estimated Cassie had swindled ten to twenty million dollars. It was impossible to tell how much for many bankers, fearing to expose their gullibility, covered up losses in mysterious ways. Cassie was in New York when exposure came, living in an entire floor of the Holland House which she rented by the year. As she moved about town, trying to explain to bankers, crowds clogged the streets for sight of her. Taken back to Cleveland, she was a broken woman. At her trial she pleaded guilty—what else could she do?—and the jury sentenced her to ten years. Jailhouse life was far different from Holland House life and Cassie withered. One night in 1907, she rolled over on the hard iron cot and died.