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*'Get out when things
are getting good'*

The Master Of Success

By Lucianne Goldberg

NEW YORK — Henry Blackman Sell, among a few other things, built a fortune out of canned meat products. One of them was liver pate, and if his life could be sliced as easily as his pate, this extraordinary man could be served up in tasty bite-size portions and leisurely digested.

But Henry Blackman Sell's life has been a banquet, a smorgasbord of passions, careers, causes, and talents, not the least of which is the talent of being a charming man. In everything he touched — advertising, publicity, journalism, merchandising, and of course party-giving — Sell scored what can only be described as a success fou. (Not to mention his one-man crusade for the hot lunch program in the nation's schools!)

Parts of this extraordinary life have been compressed between hard covers in a book by his long-time associate, Dr. Janet Leckie. Appropriately called "A Talent for Living," it has just been published by Hawthorn.

Sell was born in the hamlet of Whitewater, Wis. He wandered half way through high school and quit from lack of interest on both sides.

By 1912 he was a feature writer in Indianapolis. He did a story on Queen Zenora, leader of a gypsy tribe, and became her

friend. "She took my palm in hers and changed my life," he recalled. "Zenora told me I was failure-proof, that I could succeed at anything I tried. She gave me the most wonderful gift, a feeling of indestructibility."

Armed with this supreme confidence he went off to conquer Chicago — and became a glove salesman in a department store. It was there that he hit on a business philosophy he was to adhere to the rest of his life: "Get out when things are going good."

Sell moved back into journalism, selling advertising and writing features for the Chicago Daily News, and became editor of the book page. At a time when literary criticism was dominated by the Eastern press, Sell turned his page into one of the best in the country — and, true to his credo, moved on.

But not before marrying Maud Anne O'Harrow, a young actress he had met while working as a reporter. He also had been moonlighting in the furniture department of Marshall Field's and within a few months decided he had learned enough about furniture to write a book. So he and his wife turned out "Good Taste in Home Furnishing," the first book on interior decorating to become a popular success.

The head of the Hearst



HENRY SELL has been a success in everything he touched in a fantastically varied life. His latest venture is a book.

group of magazines then asked him to come to New York to edit Harper's Bazaar. "I had never read a copy of it in my life, and had almost no qualifications for the job, so I of course decided to take it," he said.

Sell's flamboyant editing of Harper's Bazaar and his ease of movement among the super-rich caught the eye of William Randolph Hearst himself, who began summoning Sell to throw parties for him. The combination of Hearst's fortune and Sell's ability to spend it created some parties that have yet to be equaled.

Time to move on again. He left Harper's Bazaar

and Hearst and bought an advertising agency and soon had signed up an impressive list of clients.

It was his interest in health that got Sell interested in his next career: vitamins. He produced a capsule called Vitamin Plus, the "plus being iron and liver."

From vitamins, it was a hop, skip and munch to Sell's nutrient-packed liver paste. It was so good for you, one story goes, that a group of stranded American fliers during the war lived on it for three weeks — and were in better health when rescued than when shot down.

In 1948 Richard Rovere, in the New Yorker maga-

zine, did a profile of Sell — researching the series for over a year. It prompted Sell to realize he was a celebrity, and to think hard about what he would change in his life. He decided that riches weren't enough ("rich people have to be too humble"), that he still couldn't "sit up front in life."

What he wanted, he came to understand, was the journalist's-eye-view of life, and so when Richard Berlin, president of the Hearst Corp., asked him if he knew someone to take over Town & Country magazine, Sell said, "Me." He was hired, sold his meat company, and has been happy as a baby ever since.