

## Some Call it Money

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THE PRINTED RECORDS for even the commonest nonce words are not easy to locate. The difficulty is not that they do not get into print frequently, but that the attention lags, unless we set out to make a specific capture. The notation of any word-genre which depends upon desultory annotation is likely to be haphazard. Nevertheless, even fitful recognitions will accumulate eventually to a partial collection of substitutes for a normal and traditional word. We all are aware that money has many names. A dozen popular terms will come to mind without effort. Such words persist often for a long time; others live but briefly. Fashions change, and words, like men, have their day. For example, *rhino*, of unknown English origin, noted in 1688, continued in America at least until 1843. (See Robert Carlton, *The New Purchase*, N. Y., 1843, II, 175: High learning became as popular as common schools . . . It brought the rhino!). The word seems to have no record in this century.

The following list of substitutes for money has grown from a sporadic reading-list, which is made up particularly from books which appeared in the last five years. Their character is decidedly popular, because the volumes were chosen deliberately as likely sources for the kind of language which, otherwise, might not find its way into print. Even so, the laggard eye missed, no doubt, many illustrations of substitute terms, particularly, since its search had been directed to other kinds of phraseology, as well. A few words have no recent annotation, not because they have no record, but because the compiler has only heard them and has not noted their specific appearance. The contribution's value lies in its partial record of slang expressions in use during the last half dozen years.<sup>1</sup> *Alfalfa*. See *Hay*. Noted orally within the last decade. *Amperes*. John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, Bantam Books, N. Y., 1956. (Original edition, Harcourt Brace, N. Y., 1938), p. 13.

<sup>1</sup> Early appearances of words are noted as they appear in Mitford M. Mathews, *A Dictionary of Americanisms*, U. of Chicago Press, 1951. Hereafter as *Mathews*.

- Apples.* Henry Kane, *Report for a Corpse*, Simon Schuster, N. Y., 1947: He donated five thousand apples to the cause. P. 159.
- Bankroll.* Richard Starnes, *Another Mug for the Bier*, J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1950, p. 76.
- Bean.* Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1954, p. 12: The guy was down and out...without a bean. The use of beans as poker chips may have suggested this substitution for dollar. *Mathews*, I, 92.
- Berries.* Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*, Harcourt Brace, N. Y., 1922, p. 103. *Mathews*, I, 108.
- Bewks.* Henry Kane, *Until Your Dead*, Simon Schuster, N. Y., 1951, p. 154.
- Bones.* *Life Magazine (Old Life)*, Vol. 64, 1914, p. 911. Here in the sense of dollars.
- Buck.* James M. Fox, *The Scarlet Slippers*, Little Brown, Boston, 1952, p. 49; Richard Starnes, *Another Mug for the Bier*, J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1950, p. 42: I was a thousand bucks richer than I had been. A counter used in poker. *Mathews*, I, 198. See *Sawbuck*; *Seesaw*.
- Bundle.* Henry Kane, *Bare Trap*, Ives Washburn, N. Y., 1952, p.65.
- Bushels.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.
- Cabbage; Cabbage Leaves.* John O'Hara, *Ibid.*, p. 13; Stewart Sterling, *Dead Wrong*, J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1947, p. 148; Adam Knight, *Stone Cold Blond*, Signet Books, N. Y., 1951, p. 31. *Cabbage Leaves*: Henry Kane, *Report for a Corpse*, Simon Schuster, N. Y., 1947, p. 3.
- Chicken Feed.* Ira Wolfert. *The Underworld*, Bantam Books, N. Y., 1943, p. 13. Small money, usually coin.
- Chink.* See the old proverb: So we have the chink, we'll bear the stink. Henry G. Bohn, *A Hand-Book of Proverbs*, London 1875 (1815), p. 488.
- Chips.* Ed Lacy, *The Woman Aroused*, Avon Publishing, N. Y., 1951, p. 22. In the sense of gambling: "To be in the chips".
- Clams.* David Alexander, *Most Men Don't Kill*, Random House, N.Y., 1951, p. 31. Here, dollars, See also, Harold Q. Masur, *Suddenly a Corpse*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1949, p. 77.
- Deuce.* Two dollars. Walter Snow, *The Golden Nightmare*, Austin-Phelps, N.Y., 1952, p. 99: To bet upon a horse; to put a deuce on.

- Dinero.* Henry Kane, *Until You're Dead*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1951, p. 154. *Mathews*, I, 487.
- Dough.* Mickey Spillane, *My Gun Is Quick*, Signet Books, N.Y., 1950, p. 51; William Gault, *The Canvas Coffin*, E. P. Dutton, N.Y., 1953, p. 49. *Mathews*, I, 512. Earliest entry, 1851.
- Dross.* Richard Starnes, *Another Mug for the Bier*, *op. cit.*, 1950, p. 65.
- Fin.* Five Dollars.
- Fish.* Dollar. H. Allen Smith, *Low Man on a Totem Pole*, Doubleday Doran, N.Y., 1941, p. 235; John Gonzales, *Death for Mr. Big*, Gold Medal Books, N.Y., 1951, p. 52; William Gault, *The Canvas Coffin*, E. P. Dutton, N.Y., 1953, p. 121.
- Fourth-of-July-flags.* Jack Dolph, *Hot Tip*, Doubleday, N.Y., 1951, p. 156: Fourth-of-July-flags stir no hearts when they're stored in bank vaults.
- Frog Skins.* Bills. *Mathews*, I, 669, 1922.
- G. Grand.* One thousand dollars.
- Gate.* Money taken in at sporting events.
- Gelt.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Pennsylvania German for *Das Geld*.
- Gills.* Anonymous, *I. Mobster*, Fawcett Publications, N.Y., 1951, p. 150.
- Gravy.* Ed Lacy, *The Men from the Boys*, Harper, N.Y., 1956, p. 24: We all put in long hours, but the gravy was worth it.
- Green Garbardine.* Thomas Walsh, *The Night Watch*, Little Brown, Boston, 1952, p. 28.
- Green Stuff.* Sam S. Taylor, *No Head for Her Pillow*, E. P. Dutton, N.Y. 1952, p. 83.
- Hay.* Ellery Queen, *The Origin of Evil*, Little Brown, Boston, 1951, p. 6; John Ross MacDonald, *Meet Me at the Morgue*, Knopf, N.Y., 1953, p. 55.
- Ice.* Terry Spain, *Time to Kill*, Popular Library, N.Y., 1953, p. 9. Here used as pay-off of graft to public officials. Ordinarily, underworld usage for diamonds.
- Iron Men.* Dollars. *Life*, Vol. 79, p. 1, 1922. *Mathews*, II, 1022, No quote.
- Jack.* *Mathews*, I, 893, 1922.
- Kale.* Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*, Harcourt Brace, N.Y., 1922, p. 172; Raymond Chandler, *Pick-Up on Noon Street*, Pocket Books, N.Y., 1952 (1950), p. 7. *Mathews*, I, 921, 1902.

- Kick*. Harold Q. Masur, *So Lovely and So Dead*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1952, p. 4. Savings. Sometimes also the place where savings are kept.
- Kick-in*. W. R. Burnett, *Little Men, Big World*, Bantam Books, Knopf, N.Y., 1953 (1951), p. 23. Here used as graft-money. Noun from: to kick in, contribute, *Mathews*, I, 930, 1891.
- Lagniappe*. Stewart Sterling, *Dead Wrong*, J. P. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1947, p. 70. Originally, a present or tip. Here, used for income. *Mathews*, I, 948.
- Lettuce*. Stewart Sterling, *Alarm in the Night*, Dell, N.Y., 1949, p. 74. Handing out lettuce-tips. Here, obviously, bills.
- Long Green*. Mickey Spillane, *Vengeance Is Mine*, Signet Books, N.Y., 1951, p. 66. *Mathews*, II, 999, 1896.
- Marker*. Frank Kane, *Bare Trap*, Ives Wasburn, N.Y., 1952, p. 64. The meaning here is I.O.U., that is, money on a gambling debt. Probably from one who wrote stock-market prices on the board. *Mathews*, II, 1029.
- Mazuma*. Mickey Spillane, *My Gun Is Quick*, Signet Books, N.Y., 1950, p. 53. Yiddish. *Mathews*, II, 1038. 1926. At least five years earlier. See William MacLeod Raine, *Gunsight Pass*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1921: I'd ruther show the way at the finish than at the start. You're more liable to collect the mazuma.
- Mint Leaves*. Mel Colton, *The Big Fix*, Ace Books, N.Y., 1952, p. 37. *Mathews*, II, 1061, 1929.
- Moo*. Henry Kane, *A Halo for Nobody*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1947, p. 111; W. R. Burnett, *Vanity Row*, Knopf, N.Y., 1952, p. 270. Short for *Moolah*.
- Moola(h)*. John Roeburt, *There Are Dead Men in Manhattan*, Graphic, N.Y., 1946, p. 112.
- Open Seesaw*. Henry Kane, *Until You're Dead*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1951, p. 154. Here, a ten-dollar bill.
- Package*. See *Bundle*. Jack Dolph, *Hot Tip*, Doubleday, N.Y., 1951, p. 156. A top-rider during his few best seasons puts away a package. Here, savings.
- Plunk*. One dollar. *Mathews*, II, 1267, 1891.

*Ready.* Usually, the ready, as in, "I don't need the ready."

*Sashweights.* Henry Kane, *Report for a Corpse*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1947, p. 151.

*Sawbuck.* Ten dollars. *Mathews*, II, 1463, 1850.

*Scratch.* Anonymous, *I, Mobster*, Fawcett, N.Y., 1951, p. 38; William Ard, *A Private Party*, Rinehart, N.Y., 1953, p. 21. See: to scratch gravel, that is, work for a living, hence, money for the effort. *Mathews*, II, 1477, 1898.

*Scrip.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1956 (1938), p. 13. *Mathews*, II, 1479, 1790.

*Shekels.* Marston Lafrance, *Miami Murder-Go-Round*, World, N.Y., 1951, p. 24. Yiddish.

*Spinach.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

*Stack.* Ernest K. Gann, *Fiddler's Green*, William Sloan, N.Y., 1950, p. 29: So I'm quietly getting a stack. Here, savings. Probably from poker, a stack of chips. *Mathews*, II, 1631.

*Sugar.* James M. Cain, *The Moth*, Knopf, N.Y., 1948, p. 16; Tom Wicker, *The Kingpin*, Pocket Books, N.Y., 1955, p. 24: Judge Benton kicked in for the Colonel. Heavy sugar, too. *Mathews*, II, 1676, has: To bring sugar in one's spade; i. e., to pay a bribe, hence, easy money.

*Swad.* H. L. Davis, *Honey in the Horn*, Pocket Books, N.Y., 1951 (1934). As a swad of money, a large amount.

*Swag.* James Hadley Chase, *The Double Shuffle*, E. P. Dutton, N.Y., 1953, p. 37: The barman collected the swag. See Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt*, Harcourt Brace, 1922, p. 236.

*Take.* What was taken in; the whole amount of money.

*Tin.* *Puck*, X, p. 68, 1881. Remembered from about 1914. No recent usage.

*Velvet.* Raymond Chandler, *Pick-Up on Noon Street*, Pocket Books, N.Y., 1952 (1950), p. 42. *Mathews*, II, 1809, 1901.

*Volts.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Here, dollars.

*Wad.* Joseph Shallit, *Lady, Don't Die on my Doorstep*, J. B. Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1950, p. 48; Oakley Hall, *So Many Doors*, Bantam Books, N.Y., 1950, p. 126: We shot our wad on the dam thing. *Mathews*, II, 1821, 1814.

*Wampum.* John O'Hara, *Hope of Heaven*, *op. cit.*, p. 13. Mathews, II, 1828.

*Washer.* Dollar in silver.

*What-it-takes.* John Roeburt, *There Are Dead Men in Manhattan*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

*Where-withall.* As in, "He didn't have the where-withall."

*Yard.* One hundred dollars. Henry Kane, *Report for a Corpse*, Simon Schuster, N.Y., 1947, p. 209: a yard and a half; Raymond Chandler, *Pick-Up in Noon-Street*, *op. cit.*, p. 103: 5 yards; James M. Fox, *Bright Serpent*, Little Brown, Boston, 1953, p. 7: three yards.

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*Buck or Horse.* — The definition sawhorse, as given in the June issue of *Names*, takes in too much territory. I was familiar with the contraption in my youth and the combination: bucksaw and sawbuck seemed an inseparable one. I came from a family of carpenters and they did not use the word "horse" in the sense of a temporary support. These objects were called "trussles", i. e. trestles.

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