



## SKITTLES ROOM

### From the Archives

Hosted by  
Mark Donlan



### From the Archives...

Since it came online many years ago, [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) has presented literally thousands of articles, reviews, columns and the like for the enjoyment of its worldwide readership. The good news is that almost all of this high quality material remains available in the [Archives](#). The bad news is that this great collection of chess literature is now so large and extensive – and growing each week – that it is becoming increasingly difficult to navigate it effectively. We decided that the occasional selection from the archives posted publicly online might be a welcomed addition to the regular fare.

Watch for an item to be posted online periodically throughout each month. We will update the [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) home page whenever there has been a “new” item posted here. We hope you enjoy *From the Archives*...

In an article published in the first number of the *American Chess Journal*, the legendary tournament held at New York in 1927 was examined in depth. One of the issues discussed was the failure of the only ex-World Champion of the time, Emanuel Lasker, to play. A month or so after the conclusion of the 1927 tournament, Lasker released his version of events. It was a ten-page single-spaced explanation of both the clock incident and the financial questions that lingered from the 1924 tournament. [ChessCafe.com](http://ChessCafe.com) is pleased to present this article in four parts. Herewith, we bring you part one of...



Emanuel Lasker  
December, 1927

### The Emanuel Lasker Affair

#### Lasker's Version, Part One

From: Emanuel Lasker  
To: Various Newspapers and Organizations  
Date: April or May [?], 1927

#### The Late New York Chess Tourney Dispute

To my article of December 21st, the Committee, Mr. W.P. Shipley, Mr. Lederer and Mr. Capablanca have replied. The Committee had as spokesman its Secretary, Mr. Lederer, who issued a statement of a most aggressive nature which appeared on January 26th in the *New York Times* and thereafter in many other papers and also in magazines. Mr. Shipley spoke in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and the *American Chess Bulletin*. Mr. Lederer sent a kind of letter or article for which he himself bears responsibility to the *Telegraaf* Amsterdam which sent it to me, and Mr. Capablanca wrote me an important letter in connection with the dispute. Much that has been written by my opponents needs correction. Under these conditions, I must crave pardon if I again fly for safety into publicity and if the present article which contains, for the sake of much-needed clarity, several hitherto unpublished letters verbatim, extends to great length.

To begin with, my article of December 21st, which appeared abridged in the *Essener Allgemeine Zeitung* and other papers of the Girardet concern, was published, translated and abridged, on January 3rd in the *Telegraaf* Amsterdam, and probably appeared in January in *Nacion* Buenos Aires, has never fully nor correctly been made known in the United States. He who desires to judge the original should collect its various publications as above stated.

The *New York Times* of January 26th I cite: “Mr. Lederer, on behalf of the Tournament Committee, said that all of Lasker’s charges were false. Concerning the clock incident, Mr. Lederer explained, ‘What happened is that Lasker forgot to stop his clock after one of his moves. The time was running against it and he did not notice it. I reached over and stopped his clock.’ He went on, ‘Anything to win is Lasker’s motto. He indulges in virtual gas attacks on his opponents.’” And he dwelt on great length on charges designed to prove that I won my games in New York by tactics altogether foreign to chess, for instance, by smoking “long, black five-cent cigars which caused acute irritation in the nose and back of the throat of ordinary persons.”

It is surprising – but perhaps it is not surprising – that the Tournament Committee should lend its name to support such statement. The clock incident was at the time of its occurrence commented upon by various eye-witnesses and, I think, also in quite a number of papers, and was by no means so harmless as the statement of the Tournament Committee wants to make out. As to the charges of gas attacks, etc., I wrote a letter to the *New York Times* which proved to the satisfaction of every thinking man that these charges are ludicrous.

Walter Penn Shipley in the Philadelphia *Inquirer* according to the *American [Chess] Bulletin* told his readers of my charges. Unfortunately, he sees the facts in a wrong light. He exaggerates my statements. I did not charge that the clock in my game with Capablanca had been “fixed” as Mr. Shipley says; I had said that the clock was defective, not that it had been artificially caused to be defective. In regard to the promise of the Committee to divide the surplus among the Masters, I charged that the Committee, after having pledged their promise, had been generous with the surplus and thus reduced it to nothing, but I never doubted the fact of the deficit, which fact is doubted by no one, but he does not touch upon my real charge. He leaves his readers in the dark as to my motive, which is to force a certain clandestine spirit of intrigue into the open, to prove that the Committee of 1924 was partial to Capablanca and the Committee of 1927 likewise, and that such partiality leads to bad results.

The article of Mr. Shipley is also otherwise inaccurate. He speaks of my “wonderful record previous to 1921” and forgets for his conclusions my embarrassing record after 1921. According to this record I still seem able to compete with young masters though Mr. Shipley doubts that. The Committee had stated sundry reasons, published by various newspapers, why it did not invite [me to New York 1927]; Mr. Lederer’s letter of December 10th, the insincerity of which is demonstrated by his attack on me of January 26th obviously was an afterthought. Mr. Shipley’s motive is to show me up as a “cantankerous, unreasonable individual.” I doubt whether Mr. Shipley has read my article of December 21st which he so strangely criticizes and so strongly condemns. He does not seem to be critical as the hearsay that has reached him. Such is the attitude of one who being versed in Law must be versed also in the rules of testimony and argument.

[End, Part 1]

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