

Matter of Fact

Fabulous Dr. Teed Hooted

By TOM CAWLEY

MANY a harassed prophet has passed through our village, but the one who was chivvied the most was Dr. Cyrus Teed.

He was the father of the late Douglas Arthur Teed, the artist, of whose accomplishments we spoke in last Sunday's column.

To put it in a nutshell, Dr. Teed had it figured that we live on the inside of the earth, not the outside.

His idea was that we were walking around on the inside surfaces, like flies in a tennis ball.

Word of the fabulous physician came filtering through after the



column on his son appeared. Our search led us, naturally, to the incomparable Carl Carner, who lets no legend fall without keeping his eye trained exactly on it.

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As noted here last week, many of Douglas Arthur Teed's paintings hang in local homes, and in the Arlington Hotel, where he had lived. Many Teed paintings also hang in the Hall of Arts at a place known as The Koreshan Unity on the West Coast of Florida, south of Fort Myers.

Koreshan Unity was the colony founded by Dr. Cyrus Teed, who gathered followers who all figured, too, we were living inside the earth.



MR. CARMER tells the story in his most recent book, "Dark Trees to the Wind."

Dr. Teed combined practicing medicine with spreading his fas-



inating theory of life inside the earth, and all he got for his trouble was the back of everybody's hand.

Binghamton, Carmer notes, "denounced him as a crackpot." Other New York towns hooted at him. Mrs. Teed got so nervous she went back to her old home at Trout Creek in Delaware County. The doctor, deducing that New Yorkers were a little too tough to convince, went West.

In Chicago, he struck pay dirt. The air must be different in Chicago, or something. Anyway, Dr. Teed won followers and money. He moved to Florida to found his colony.

Elaborate experiments were made to prove the living-on-the-inside theory. Rules were laid down that members of families no longer were family-members when they moved in. Cellbacy was encouraged on the ground that continuity of life was caused, really, by reincarnation, not by processes generally believed.

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The reincarnation argument was advanced so vigorously by the doctor that his followers really expected something dramatic when Dr. Teed died in December, 1908.

Instead of burying him, they just left the body in state, waiting for a new body to form. Some of them really thought they saw it happening, but the reactionary old public health authorities in the neighborhood put their feet down and made the colony put the leader in a tomb.

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HIS theory that we live inside this ball of mud instead of scrambling around on the outside never really caught on. If you ever feel you're scaling a sheer wall of a concave surface, it's just Monday morning, or your liver. Things will brighten up tomorrow.