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John Factor 1892-1984

Half brother of famed cosmetics founder Max Factor, he was born the youngest of ten children. Factor was taken to Lodz, Poland before he was a year old and lived there until he was eleven. (He later claimed to have been born in England in order to obtain a Canadian passport.) In the early 1900's, the family moved to St. Louis, Missouri where he worked as a shoe shine boy, and later onto Chicago where he sold newspapers. In 1911 Factor married Bessie Schatz and they had a son they named Jerome – Jerome grew up to work in the insurance business and settled in Chicago. Factor and Schatz were divorced in 1918 and he married Helen Stoddard in 1921 – divorcing her in 1923. He then married Rella Cohen in 1925. During the 1920's, Factor, aka "Jake the Barber," went into business with gangsters Arnold Rothstein and Al Capone. He ran a stock scam in England and swindled nearly \$8 million out of investors and members of the royal family. He also broke the bank at Monte Carlo by rigging the tables. Factor eventually wound up back in Chicago fighting extradition all the way to the United States Supreme Court, but his case was weak and deportation loomed on the horizon. In August of 1933, Factor paid off members of Roger Touhy's gang of mobsters to kidnap him and went on to collect \$70,000 tax-free ransom for his own return. When Factor was returned, he named Roger Touhy as his abductor. Touhy went on trial in November of 1933 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. It was later stated in court that "*Roger Touhy did not kidnap John Factor and infact had no part in the alleged kidnapping of John Factor.*" Factor later got involved in questionable oil leases in Arkansas and in 1942 he and others were indicted by an Iowa grand jury for a whisky swindle that took \$459,000 from 300 victims in twelve states. In 1945 Factor found himself in prison for mail fraud, a sentence that kept him behind bars for ten years. Following his release he went on to own the Stardust Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, running it for the mob. On January 10, 1958, Moe Dalitz, Allard Roen and their Desert Inn associates took over the Stardust with the owner listed as Rella Factor, for \$4.3 million. When Factor died in 1984, he was a multi-millionaire, having amassed a fortune in real estate in California. His funeral was attended by the likes of Tom Bradley – Los Angeles' Mayor and Edmund "Pat" Brown – former Governor of California. In 1958, the Stardust hotel had 1065 rooms and had Las Vegas' only first run drive-in theater located at the rear of the resort. The hotel now boasts 1,500 rooms and suites and houses restaurants, shops, showrooms and a 2.5 acre outdoor recreational complex with swimming pools and tropical gardens. At a recent Canadian auction Factor's 1930 Duesenberg sold for \$880,000.