

LIFE IS ONE LONG, HARD FIGHT

'Alfalfa Bill' Rises From Cotton Picker to Governor

This is the first of a series of stories on "favorite sons" in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, which soon will be decided at Chicago.

BY ROBERT TALLEY
NEA Service Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY, June 23.—"Alfalfa Bill" Murray told me the story of his colorful life in a long interview held in his bedroom in the executive mansion adjoining Oklahoma's state capitol here.

It was evening. Governor Murray seemed tired after a hard day. He lay upon the bed, completely dressed, his shoes on the white bedspread.

Occasionally, during the four hours that we talked, he changed his position for greater comfort; when he did, he lay with his head at the other end of the bed.

His bedroom seemed in chronic disorder. Obviously, he was a man who demanded that housekeepers leave his things alone. Books, old magazines, old newspapers, old documents were stacked and piled in every corner.

He is a lean, grizzled man of 63, with heavy gray hair, bushy gray eyebrows, keen, blue eyes and a walrus-like gray mustache. He spoke in a deep, resonant voice and, being a little hard of hearing, he frequently cupped his ear with his hand when a question was asked.

Here was Oklahoma's "favorite son" candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination, the political champion of the man with the empty pocketbook and the patch on the seat of his pants. He is a product of the depression and perhaps a dangerous contender in a year of unemployment and breadlines.

Oklahoma opinion sharply is divided on Murray. To the state's rich oil men and others of the wealthy, he is a political charlatan, a faker and shyster of the first water.

To the backwoods farmers in the red clay hills who are struggling to pay their taxes, Murray is the greatest champion of the common people since Abraham Lincoln. The latter have the most votes; that explains why Murray is Governor today.

HERE, recumbent on the bed, was the man who hopes to ride to the White House on his campaign slogan of "Butter and Bread, Bacon and Beans" in this depression year, 1932.

Here was the boy who ran away from home and became a cotton picker, who educated himself when he didn't have money to buy shoes, who studied law while running a country newspaper in the back end of a Negro barber shop, who wrote the Constitution that made Oklahoma a state, who led a colony of farmers to the South American wilderness, who returned home broke after five years, campaigned for Governor on cheese and crackers and now seeks the nation's highest office.

"I was born," said Governor Murray, "in east Texas on Nov. 21, 1869, in a small box house, which had a sandstone chimney and strips of board nailed over the cracks to keep out the wind and rain."

"My grandfather owned a nearby mill that was powered by sixteen yoke of oxen on a tread wheel. My father was U. D. T. Murray, a minister of the gospel."

When Murray was an infant, his mother died and his father remarried. When he was 12, he and his brother ran away from home.

"I remember I left home on the day before Garfield died," he related. "I passed a cotton gin and a boy yelled to me: 'Do you know Garfield is dead?'"

"I hollered back: 'Who's Garfield?' and the boy answered 'He's the President.' It was the first time I had ever heard the word 'President.' I didn't know what he meant."

MURRAY worked as a cotton picker and cordwood chopper until he was taken in by Mr. and Mrs. E. R. Loper, farmers of Wise county, Texas.

He spent a year there, working on the farm and fared forth as a book agent. He worked his way through school at Springfield, Tex., and later taught school at several places.

Eventually he was elected to the Texas state senate. A little later he moved to Corsicana, where he rented the back end of a Negro barber shop and started a newspaper. At nights, he read law. Soon he was admitted to the bar.

In 1898, Murray moved to Tishomingo, Okla., then the capital of the Chickasaw Indian nation. He soon became attorney for the tribe, was admitted into it and a little later he married the niece of Douglas H. Johnston, Governor of the nation. She was Miss Alice Hearrell, a school teacher.

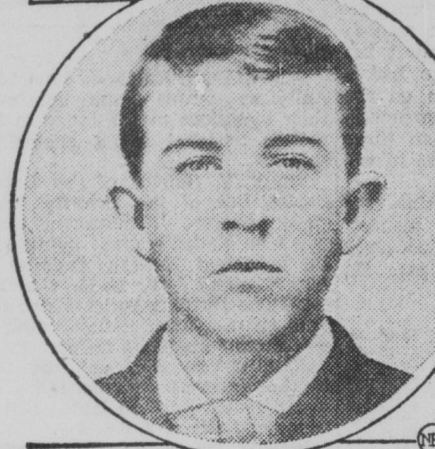
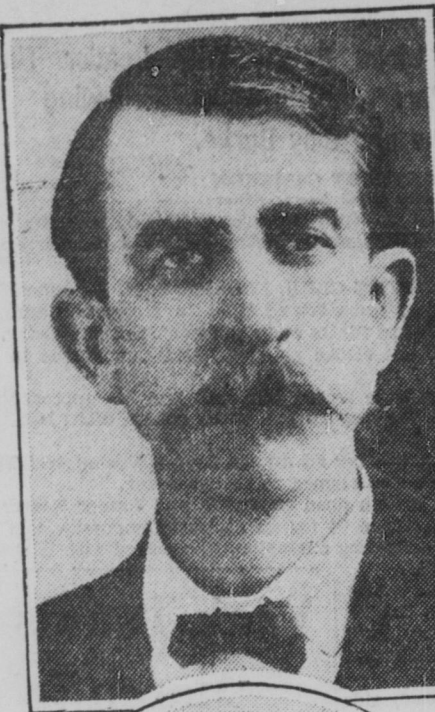
Following an unsuccessful attempt to carve an Indian state named "Sequoyah" out of the Indian lands, Murray joined those who were creating the state of Oklahoma and drafted a model Constitution.

He was elected president of the constitutional convention which met at Guthrie in 1907.

IN 1912 and again in 1914 "Alfalfa Bill"—so nicknamed because he had encouraged Oklahoma farmers to plant that crop—was elected to congress.

"In June of 1914," relates the Governor, "I told my audiences that the most disastrous war in history was then brewing in Europe. They laughed at me, but they elected me. On the day after I was nominated, German troops marched into Belgium."

I asked Governor Murray how



Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, Oklahoma's picturesque chief executive, is shown above at three stages in his colorful career. At lower left is an old picture of Murray at the age of 14, just two years after he ran away from his Texas birthplace to make his own way in the world. Above, Murray as an Oklahoma congressman in 1915. At the right is a recent photo.

he knew, before the assassin's shot at Sarajevo, that the World war was coming.

"From the reports on secret European treaties at the state department," he replied, "Secretary of State Bryan, a friend of mine, let me read those confidential reports. It was clear that war was coming."

In 1916 Murray was busy predicting that America soon would be dragged into the war. That was the year Wilson was running for re-election on a platform of "He kept us out of war." Murray was defeated for re-election.

BETWEEN Murray toured South America for several years. He traveled almost the length of the United States slipping more and more into the jungle Indians who paddled his canoe. He made six trips to South America between 1919 and 1923.

"Each time I came back from one of these trips, I could see the United States slipping more and more into the hands of the jungle," Murray said. "I saw the approach of the present depression—I foresaw the millions of unemployed we have today."

"Unless we meet this, our nation will break up into little bands like Rome did in the seventh century; these unorganized bands will take what they can get; in congested centers disease will wipe them out; people in the remote regions will be those who will survive."

Thus was born Murray's Bolivian colony idea. He made a contract with the Bolivian government for 75,000 acres of rich prairie land near the foot of the Andes, interested eighteen Oklahoma farm families in his plan and set out with them for South America in May, 1924.

"We sailed from New Orleans. Our colonists began to get homesick. Some of them wanted to go back before we got to Cuba. Others quit at Panama. We landed at Antofagasta, Chile, and took a train inland to the railroad head."

"The rest of the way we traveled by ox cart. By that time, all but two had quit us, and they left for home the following week."

But Murray, his wife and two sons and their wives went ahead. They founded the colony, populated it with native labor and resident European farmers, and remained there five years.

"The first year we were mighty lonesome," he continued, "but after that we got to like it."

THE Governor turned to his 5-year-old grandson, Johnny Murray, who was playing on the bedroom floor.

"See that boy?" he said. "He was born in South America. I delivered him. I had to. There wasn't a doctor in 200 miles."

"No, I never studied medicine; but I picked up a little knowledge of it by listening to doctors testify before the pensions committee in congress, and by reading books on anatomy."

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celebrated Murray's concession and he and his family came back in August, 1929.

He says his South American venture cost him practically every dollar that he had—that he refunded all the money collected from the Oklahoma farmers for the land, though he did not refund their transportation expenses.

FIVE months after Murray returned to Oklahoma he became a candidate for Governor, announcing in January, 1930.

"When I left Tishomingo to begin my campaign I had exactly \$13," he related. "I gave my wife \$1 of this to buy postage stamps so she could write me while I was gone and arranged with a Republican grocer of Tishomingo to credit her for food while I was away."

The details of Murray's campaign in which he lived largely on cheese and crackers are too well known for repetition here. However, he denies that he hitch-hiked, insisting that these rides were provided by friendly

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farmers who hauled him over the state in their Ford.

Keeping away from the unfriendly big cities until the last, he made his appeal to the farmers and won handsomely.

As Governor, his actions often have been drastic and equally picturesque. Several times he has called out state troops to enforce his executive orders.

By Oklahoma's rich and upper classes Murray is bitterly assailed. But his strength lies with voters like a grizzled old farmer—in hickory shirt and tattered pants—who expressed his views to me in this manner:

"Sure, I'm for Bill Murray—because he's just like I am. Bill ain't got nothing, and I ain't got nothing, either."

Next: Governor George White of Ohio... newsboy, grocery clerk, student at Princeton under Woodrow Wilson, day laborer, prospector in the Alaskan gold rush of 1898, lawyer, congressman, Governor.

ANNOUNCE PLANS FOR AN OPERETTA

"Once in a Blue Moon," an operetta, will be presented at 8:15 Wednesday and Thursday nights, June 29 and 30, in the parish hall of Zion Evangelical church. Melvin Berryman is the director, assisted by Mrs. Ross Caldwell and Miss Phyllis Mattern. Mrs. Alma Daubenmire and Joseph Foy have the leading roles. Other members of the cast are:

Misses Margaret Rasbach, Evelyn Eberhardt, Marie Schackel, Helen Kinsing, Irene Miller, Mrs. Mildred Brooking, Messrs. Harold Brooking, Fred Winter, Charles Hunte, Paul Silvestri, Dwight Baboy, John Rother, and a chorus of twenty voices.

Shower to Be Held for Bride-Elect

Mrs. Walker B. Knotts and her mother, Mrs. W. H. Hanning, 909 East Maple road, are to be hostesses for a luncheon-bridge and crystal shower today at the home of Mrs. Hanning, honoring Miss Agnes Louise Kalleen, who will be married July 2 to Jacob Guire Wilcox.

The bride-elect's chosen colors, pink and blue, are to be carried out in the appointments, and in the flowers, which are to be arranged on the tables and about the home. Guests are to include Mrs. James L. Kalleen and Mrs. O. E. Wilcox, mothers of the bride and bridegroom-elect, and:

Mrs. Gerald McDermott, Misses Nancy and Betty Kalleen, sisters of the bride-elect, Charlotte Twilley, Peterson, Edith McCoy, Corrie Schol, Betty Jane Barrett, Delbert Morrison, Skippy Smith, Marcella Moore, Jean Underwood, Jane Seidner, Virginia Walter and Marcelle Jane Bannister.

The wedding will take place at 8:30, the night of July 2, in the First Presbyterian church, and will be a candlelight ceremony. Miss Agnes Kalleen is a member of the Butler university chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma.

Miss Chapman Weds
Miss Pearl Chapman, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lee M. Chapman of Williams, became the bride of Carl A. Hauenstein at their new home at 2728 North Harding street at 6 Tuesday night. The Rev. E. L. Adams of the Church of Christ officiated. The couple will be at home after a motor trip.

ALUMNAE CLUB IS ENTERTAINED

Miss Martha Ann Rudy entertained members of the Wilson College Alumnae Club at luncheon Wednesday at the Ulen Country Club in Lebanon.

Special guests were Miss Dorothy Day, who will enter the college in the fall; Mrs. Robert Miller, Rochester, and Mrs. Oral Van Metzger of Roann.

Bridge Party Arranged for Bridal Group

Miss Margaret Brick will entertain tonight with a bridge party at her home, 551 South Central court, in honor of Miss Dorothy Jane Sutherland and Adolph Grossman of Yonkers, N. Y., who will be married Saturday.

Miss Brick, who will be assisted by her mother, Mrs. Thomas E. Brick, will carry out a color scheme of pink and blue. Roses and tapers will decorate the serving table, centered with a miniature bride and groom.

Guests with the bridal pair will be Misses Margaretta Grossman of Yonkers, Esther Harrison Beatty and Martin Grossman of Yonkers, Dudley Shouse and Louis Adams.

Miss Catherine Lohman, 2215 West Sixteenth street, gave a dinner for Miss Sutherland and Mrs. Grossman Wednesday night. The table was arranged with a plateau of lilies, white sweet peas and roses. Green and white tapers were used. In addition to the honor guests

covers were laid for Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Feland of Chicago, Miss Grossman, Miss Beatty, Mr. Grossman, Mr. Adams, Misses Jane Sutherland, Margaret Linder and Mary Lohman, and Robert H. Reiner and Harry Guedelhoefer.



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