

Hoosier Vagabond

By Ernie Pyle

Editor's Note: This is the 21st of a series of Ernie Pyle war dispatches that are being reprinted while Ernie takes a rest.

THE TUNISIAN FRONT, February, 1943.—On the morning of the German surprise breakthrough out of Faid Pass, I was up in the Ouedjela valley with another contingent of our troops.

Word came to us about noon that the Germans were advancing upon Sbeitla from Faid. So I packed into my jeep and started alone on the familiar 65-mile drive south to Sbeitla. It was a bright day and everything seemed peaceful. I expected to see German planes as I neared Sbeitla, but there were none, and I drove into my cactus-patch destination about an hour before sundown.

I hadn't been there 15 minutes when the dive-bombers came, but that's another story, which will come later.

I checked in at the intelligence tent to see what was going on, and found that things were dying down with the coming of dusk. So I pitched my tent and went to bed right after supper.

Next morning I got up before daylight and caught a ride, just after sunrise, with two officers going up to the new position of our forward command post. We drove very slowly, and all kept a keen eye on the sky. I didn't have a gun, as correspondents are not supposed to carry arms. Occasionally we stopped the jeep and got far off the road behind some cactus hedges, but the German dive bombers were interested only in our troop concentrations far ahead.

Finally we spotted a small cactus patch about half a mile off the road. We figured this was the new home of the forward command post, and it was. They had straggled in during the night and were still straggling in.

Nothing Left to Work With

THE CACTUS PATCH covered about two acres. In it were hidden half a dozen half-tracks, a couple of jeeps, three light tanks and a couple of motorcycles—all that was left of the impressive array of the traveling headquarters that had fled Sidi bou Zid 18 hours before.

The commanding general had already gone forward again, in a tank, to participate in the day's coming battle. The remainder of the command post were just sitting around on the ground. Half of their comrades were missing. There was nothing

left for them to work with, nothing to do.

When I came into this cactus patch the officers that I knew, and had left only four days before, jumped up and shook hands as though we hadn't seen each other in years. Enlisted men did the same thing.

I thought this was odd, at first, but now I know how they felt. They had been away—far along on the road that doesn't come back—and now that they were still miraculously alive it was like returning from a voyage of many years, and naturally you shook hands.

During the next few hours there in the cactus patch I listened to dozens of personal escape stories. Every time I would get within earshot of another officer or enlisted man he'd begin telling what had happened to him the day before.

Perfect Sounding Board

TALK ABOUT having to pull stories out of people . . . you couldn't keep these guys from talking. There was something pathetic and terribly touching about it. Not one of them had ever thought he'd see this dawn, and now that he had seen it his emotions came to show up since their escape, I made a perfect sounding board.

The minute a man would start talking he'd begin drawing lines on the ground with his shoe or a stick, to show the roads and how he came. I'll bet I had that battleground scratched in the sand for me 50 times during the forenoon. It got so I could hardly keep from laughing at the consistency of their patterns.

That morning should have been by all rights a newspaperman's dream. There were fantastic stories of escape, intimate recountings of fear and elation. Any one of them would have made a first-page feature story in any newspaper. Yet I was defeated by the flood of experiences. I listened until the stories finally became merged, overlapping and paralleling and contradicting until the whole adventure became a composite, and today it is in my mind as in theirs a sort of generalized blur.

The sun came out warmly as though to soothe their jagged feelings, and one by one the men in the cactus patch stretched on the ground and fell wearily asleep at midday. And I, satiated with the adventures of the day before, lay down and slept too, waiting for the day's new battle to begin.

(Continued tomorrow)

OUR TOWN: 'RILEYANA' . . . By Anton Scherrer

New Book Clears Up Some Riley Mysteries

(Continued From Page One)

will receive the bulk of the edition. Libraries and collectors will get the rest. No copies are for sale.

BIBLIOGRAPHY, I learned, is one of the most important branches of bibliography. Rendered in more lusty language, it means that it is the science which treats of the descriptions, cataloging and preservation of books. At any rate, that is more or less what it is when under control.

Out of control, it may easily lead to bibliomania which, not to put too fine a point on it, is a passion for possessing books because of certain accidental circumstances attending them—as, for instance, the omission of the word "not" in the seventh commandment which gives the so-called "Wicked Bible" its name.

TO BE SURE, the Russos didn't discover anything quite as exciting as that. Nobody has. Just the same, they uncovered plenty. For example, in the second edition of Riley's first book appear the words "chipmunks" ("chipmunks" in the first printing; "breth" ("breath" in first printing; "natchural" ("natural" in first printing).

There's no telling which word is right, dialect poetry being what it is. It may be the result of Riley's practice of polishing every line until it glistened and, then again, it may be the fault of typesetters who, not infrequently, play by ear.

THE STORY of Riley's first book improves with age like good wine. It appears that Mr. Riley had dreamed of a first book as early as 1877, but it wasn't until six years later that anything was done about it.

"The Old Swimmin' Hole" brought it to a head. When that poem appeared in the Indianapolis Journal on June 17, 1882, and got the reception that it did, it convinced George C. Hitt that something had to be done to preserve Riley's poems for posterity.

A year later, Mr. Hitt (an important cog in the Journal's office) went in search of a publisher. He wrapped a dozen poems including the headline, "The Old Swimmin' Hole," and submitted the proposition to Robert Clarke & Co., an old and well-known Cincinnati publishing house. They gave one look, discovered that it was dialect poetry, and refused to touch it. It was beneath their dignity, they said. It was not beneath their dignity, however, to consider the proposition as a printing job. Mr. Hitt contracted for 1000 copies at a total cost of \$141, including the price of copy-right.

THE QUESTION of a publisher's name on the cover was finally settled when Mr. Clarke shamelessly suggested that Mr. Hitt could lend his own. Mr. Hitt developed the idea by adding "and Co." Mr. Riley was the "Co."

The pamphlet sold for 50 cents and the first reviews in Indianapolis papers appeared on July 20, 1883. The Indianapolis Herald and patron split \$108.40, the profits of the first edition, and called it a day.

Fifty years later, an autographed copy of the Hitt & Co. edition fetched \$750 at a New York sale. I hope none of Mr. Clarke's descendants is listening in today.

THE RUSSOS have also set me right concerning the cover of "The Boss Girl." Riley's second book (1886). Surely you remember it. It depicts an imp descending head first out of the clouds and touching off a cannon in the shape of an ink bottle. It's too cute for words.

Well, for 50 years now I've been content to believe that the cover was the work of Booth Tarkington, who was 17 years old at the time. It turns out to be a collaboration.

We have Mr. Tarkington's own word for it.

IN A LETTER to the Russos, Mr. Tarkington says: "Sometimes he (Mr. Riley) would spend the greater part of an evening drawing with me and he went so far as to ask me for suggestions about the cover of his first 'full-size book'."

"It was to be a paper cover, and for it he'd designed an ink bottle mounted as a cannon firing a charge that exploded into the words THE BOSS GIRL. When he'd sketched the design, I drew upon the paper an imp flying downward from the top of the page and, with the point of a quill pen applied to the touch-hole, firing the ink-bottle cannon."

"The idea pleased the poet; he made much of it and of me, and the book was printed with my imp on the cover. Whenever he talked to me of 'The Boss Girl' he spoke as if to a fellow-workman who'd had much to do with the book's creation and rightfully shared credit in its modest success."

"I glowed, but didn't swell. In all my relations with the good and true poet, mercy from on

BARNABY

Gus! I must be in my headquarters when my important political conference gets here! Please—

After all, it's Gus's haunted house.

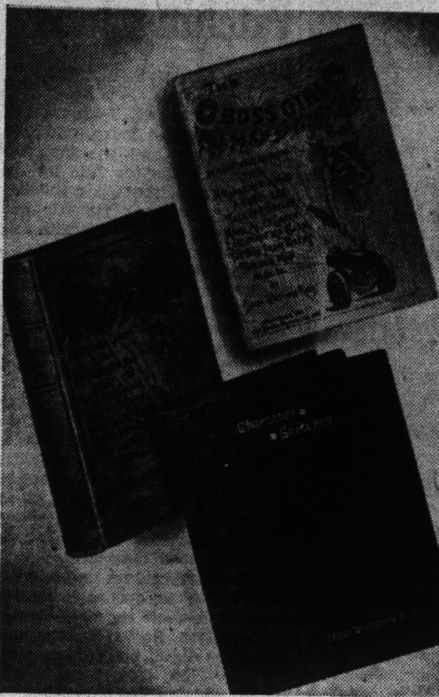
Please go away, O'Malley! I need quiet—Oh, dear! Now someone's at the back door—

Imagine those sober, conservative gentlemen! Arriving for a serious discussion of our party's campaign issues! And being met by a Ghost!

Gus might scare them.

HELP! EEEEEEE!

That's GUS yelling!



First edition (1886) of "The Boss Girl," the cover of which was designed by James Whitcomb Riley and Booth Tarkington.

know vouchsafed that I should know my place."

IT SURPRISED me, too, no end to learn (by way of the Russos) that "Leonainie," the subject of the famous hoax, had been set to music. Today being what it is, as good a time as any to tell the story again.

Riley lived in Anderson at the time along with Will Ethell, a sign painter; Samuel Richards, an artist, whose "Evangeline" later on created such a stir; William F. Myers, later secretary of state; a photographer by the name of Clark, and W. N. Croan, who was not only the publisher of the weekly Democrat, but Riley's boss as well. Mr. Riley was a reporter on the Democrat at the time.

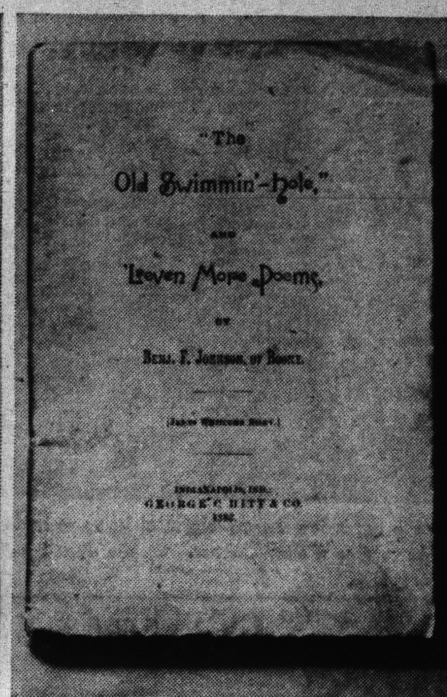
THIS GROUP of buddies met regularly during the period of 1876-77. On one occasion when everybody was especially sour about the public's inability to recognize genius, Riley pulled from his pocket a manuscript and, without further coaxing, started to read:

"Leonainie—angels named her; And they took the light Of the laughing stars and framed her

In a smile of white." There were three more stanzas at the end of which Riley returned to the subject under discussion by remarking that, if given to the world over Edgar Allan Poe's name, "Leonainie" no doubt, would go over big. (It is now known that the editor of the Anderson Herald, the rival sheet, had just got done calling Mr. Riley "a jingling poet").

IT WAS the start of the hoax. Somebody got hold of an old copy of Almsworth's Dictionary on the fly-leaf of which Samuel Richards (or maybe, Will Ethell) transcribed Riley's poem in imitation of Poe's handwriting. A facsimile in an old magazine furnished the pattern.

After which, Oscar Henderson, publisher of the Kokomo Dispatch, was dragged into the plot. Mr. Henderson printed "Leonainie" on the front page of his paper, issue of August 2, 1877, along with a lurid and elaborate account of how the poem was found. Mrs. Samuel Richards is generally credited with thinking it up.



Cover of the first edition of "The Old Swimmin' Hole," published by George C. Hitt & Co., Indianapolis, 1883.

By that time, everybody had forgotten, or forgiven, the "Leonainie" hoax.

WELL, AS I was saying, "Leonainie" was set to music. The song was composed by Will H. Pontius and dedicated to the Amphion Glee Club of Columbus, O.

It carries the copyright date of 1879, and if that were not enough to tax our credulity, it also credits the words to "J. W. Riley."

The Russos combed all Indianapolis to find a copy of that song, but without success. The illustration in their book is a photograph of the copy in the Library of Congress.

THE RUSSOS classify "Leonainie" as an example of Riley's "Ephemeral Publications," which brings me to the division of their book labeled "Attributions," in the course of which they explode most of the tall tales that have come down to us as classics. Much of the confusion can be traced to one James Riley, an Irishman born in 1848, who had three books published in Boston. To this day, the "Reader's Guide" and, apparently, some librarians accept Riley, the Irishman, and Riley, the Hoosier, as one and the same man.

THREE MORE examples: (1), "The Autobiography of James Whitcomb Riley" (written by Bill Nye); (2), the poem, "When the Boose Is in the Bottle" (written by Robley D. Stevenson of Indianapolis, and widely known as "Wickwire"); (3), the poem "I Wood Not Be a Drummer," signed with Riley's pseudonym which appeared in 1882 in the Saturday Review (Indianapolis).

The Russos reveal that, before Riley's identity was disclosed, some scamps around here passed themselves off as the rural poet, "Benj. F. Johnson."

MOST significant of all, however—considered culturally—is the discovery that James Whitcomb Riley had nothing to do with the writing of "The Passing of the Backhouse" (beginning "When memory keeps me company and moves to smiles and tears"). It has appeared in pamphlet, leaflet and broadside form and on one occasion turned up as one of the "gems" included in the so-called "Suppressed Poems by James Whitcomb Riley and Eugene Field."

One of the printings, indeed, described the poem as having been found among the manuscripts after Riley's death. It's a falsehood on the face of it, declare the Russos.

WILLIAM LYON PHELPS and George Ade were of the same opinion. When Dr. Phelps edited "The Letters of James Whitcomb Riley," any number of people wrote in regarding the possible authorship of the "Backhouse" poem. His answer: "I have never found any proof whatever that he wrote it."

As for George Ade, he made it the subject of a point in his convocation address on James Whitcomb Riley delivered at Purdue University in 1922 when he said: "He (Riley) never wrote anything which had to be circulated privately, and if any one tells you that he ever wrote anything which needed expurgating, you are hereby commissioned to nail the statement as a falsehood."

People who remember the speech recall that Mr. Ade bit his lip when he came down on the word "falsehood." Which confirms another suspicion I've entertained for some time—namely, that nobody can be more serious than a humorist when he gets fighting mad.

Labor

G. O. P. Tries New Plan for Labor Setup

By FRED W. PERKINS

NEW YORK, Oct. 7.—What has

become of the labor division of the Republican national committee, which has been a traditional part of the campaign organization for many years?

The answer is that there isn't any, and isn't going to be any in the a c c u s t o m e d form. The s t r e a m l i n e d set-up which

National Chairman Herbert Brownell presides over here in the Hotel Roosevelt (named for T. R.) has adopted a new idea, one of several departures from the usual campaign procedures.

"In this campaign," he said, "we have not adopted the traditional plan of setting up a labor division, because Governor Dewey and I consider the labor field so important that I am giving it my direct attention. But we have something more than the usual labor division."

"A STRONG Republican labor committee has been organized in each of the industrial states outside the Solid South, to carry into effect the labor policies of the national committee. In place of the usual formal national labor committee of 20 to 25 members, we have thus enlisted the support of approximately 3000 union officials and members of the rank and file.

"We think that will prove to be the better plan."

The chairman said that the proportion of labor support he expects "is all a question of how far the trend goes."

"There is a very heavy trend now in our favor among working men and women. Governor Dewey undoubtedly will draw a much larger support from labor groups than recent Republican candidates have had."

IN THE Biltmore hotel, only a block away, the Democratic national committee has followed tradition by setting up a labor division under Dan Tobin, head of the teamsters' union.

He is assisted by his son Fred, also an official of the teamsters' union. Dan shuttles back and forth between Washington and New York, but Fred spends most of his time here.

The Tobin setup has no apparent connection with the political activities of Sidney Hillman, who heads both the C. I. O., Political Action Committee and the National Citizens P. A. C.—the difference being that the latter can contribute money to candidates while the former is prohibited by law from doing so.

We, the Women—British Plan For Soldiers Is Realistic

By RUTH MILLETT

A LONDON newspaper reports that the British army has ruled that soldiers in the Middle East who have had more than three years' overseas service may return home to start a family—providing their wives are over 35.

In case that sounds as though the British army is showing signs of sentimentality—consider that stipulation that the wives have to be over 35 years of age.

A wife of 20 or 25 might be just as anxious as a woman of 36 to get about the business of starting a family. But the army knows that she will have enough child bearing years left when the war is over to have the children she wants and England needs.

"It's the woman of 36—if she is or to have a first child—ought to be getting at it. And England can't afford to have such marriages remain forever children."

So the husbands of these women are going to get to go home.

THERE'S NOTHING sentimental about that kind of reasoning. We in this country are the sentimental ones. For the pressure brought to bear on the war department to get our men back home almost always is in favor of the men who already have children.

If anybody is going to get first chance at leaves or of being given duty in this country we think the fathers should have it—and the more children a man has the more we feel he is needed at home.

So, of the two attitudes, ours is the more sentimental and least realistic.

Inside Indianapolis By Lowell Nussbaum

MRS. MARY MEANS, 2832 N. Tacoma, called in yesterday to report that one of her hens had laid an egg no larger than a robin's egg. It was the smallest she ever had seen. . . . Ronald Skyrme, of the Employers Liability Assurance Corp., and Mrs.

Skyrme participated in the radio breakfast club program at Chicago yesterday morning. . . . While hurrying to the Union station Monday to catch a train, Karl Cretors of the Hugh J. Baker Co. found he was on a "hot seat."

The rear seat cushion of the taxi in which he was riding caught fire and he had to make a hurried exit. He suffered no damage. . . . The candy stores are doing a rushing business as folks feverishly shop for overseas Christmas packages. The crowd in Graeter's yesterday was so large they were handing out numbered tickets to customers as they walked in the door. That way, they were waited on in turn, just as in the old-fashioned barber shops on Saturday night. . . . It looks like winter down around the Severin with white sand, resembling snow, scattered on the sidewalk and street. The building is getting a cleaning by the sandblast method. It makes quite a difference, too. . . . Police officials are disappointed over the light response to their appeal for folks living near schools to serve as school traffic police. There are quite a few schools for which there have been no applicants. The job pays \$50 a month, requires only an hour, or an hour and a half a day, at the most, five days a week. The school cops will wear civvies with a white belt to distinguish them. And they don't have to arrest violators—merely take their numbers. If you can spare a few minutes morning, noon and evening, check with Chief Becker or Capt. Eddie Rouls. They may be able to use you.

Dead or Alive

A WASHINGTON ST. restaurant has a sign on it reading: "Wanted—waitress, dead or alive." . . . Glen B. Tharp of the OPA price department drove down to Evansville with several other OPA officials the other day. They didn't get back here until late at night, and then Mr. Tharp had to drive to his own home at Danville. He was tired

and nervous from so much night driving, and started dreaming. In his dream, he was still driving the car. He dreamed he lost control of the car and it was about to hit a tree, so he jumped. The dream was so vivid that he actually did jump, landing on the floor and almost breaking a toe. . . . Bob Harrison of the schools administrative staff is a creature of habit, as are most of us. Every morning, he goes through the same routine—bath, breakfast, shave, etc. The other morning, he varied the routine and was on the bus headed for town before he happened to rub his cheek and discover he had forgotten to shave. . . . Mrs. Stella Davis, of the state safety responsibility division, went to a department store with her daughter and asked the clerk if she had any hair "rats." Replied the clerk: "No hair—rat." Mrs. Davis' daughter, Diane, who was along, shot back: "All rat (right)—but leave out the punctuation."

False Alarm

MRS. ROSEMARY CANTOR who works in the state selective service headquarters was awakened about 3 a. m. the other night by a strange noise that made her scalp tingle. She quickly awakened her sister, and the sister decided they'd better call their mother. They did, and the three women, huddling together for safety, investigated. They traced the noise to the front porch and decided it was someone trying to get in the house. Mustering up their courage, they slipped on the porch light—hoping to frighten away the intruder. Then they peeked out and saw what made the noise: An opened umbrella which had been left on the porch to dry. The wind had risen and caused the opened bumbush to slide around on the porch, thus making the terrifying noise. Just like a lot of the other things in life that frighten us—nothing to it. . . . Bill Evans, the schools publications director, was at home, reading, the other evening. His daughter, Shirley, was studying her history lesson. "Daddy," Shirley asked, "what was it that Miles Drake did?" "What's that?" asked Bill. "Do you mean Miles Drake, the head of the schools' supply department?" "Oh, no," she giggled. "I meant to say Sir Francis Drake." . . . Laura Nelson asks why, if the proper name of the town is "Speedway"—not "Speedway City," there's an official sign at the east city limits on 16th st. reading: "Speedway City." We don't know, for sure. But it's probably to distinguish the town from the race track.

America Flies

By Max B. Cook

SODA POP gas, the kind that puts the fiz in your soft drink, is performing innumerable vital war jobs including saving lives and preventing fire in speedy fighter planes.

But that is only one of hundreds of recent amazing aviation developments, so highly technical in detail that it is difficult to describe them so that the average layman reader will understand.

New gyroscopic "gunsite brains" which automatically "lead" enemy planes traveling at more than 400 miles an hour were announced today. A "retractable aileron" system has been created and applied to the famed Black Widow P-61 night fighter, making it possible for the plane to land on small strips at safe landing speeds. Use of air in forming the new "bubble canopies" which have recently appeared on two AAF fighters, the P-51 Mustang and P-47 Thunderbolt also is announced.

War Stimulates Scientists

NEEDS OF WAR, developed on the many fighting fronts and in the air, are stimulating the nation's engineers and scientists to all-out efforts.

My Day

By Eleanor Roosevelt

WASHINGTON, Friday.—Last evening a few of us gathered in the diplomatic reception room to hear the President make his speech. One member of the group, who had not been with us before, remarked that she had always wondered, when listening on the radio, whether the President could really be as calm as he sounded.

It was a great satisfaction to her, she added, actually to see that one could speak on the radio as easily and with as little excitement as if one were speaking to a friend in the same room.

The President devoted his speech in large part to the importance of the work which is done by precinct workers in getting people to register and vote. This is very largely done by women, and he took the opportunity to explain to women how great is their responsibility in this election.

At this time of historical crisis, it seems important that all people in a democracy, regardless of political affiliation, be urged to express their will.

It is important, of course, that they do this after seeking information and giving thought to the issues at stake. But to have such important issues decided by a small group of citizens would seem to be really a tragedy.

One can well understand the great pre-occupation of our people with the war at the present time. It is particularly difficult for workers in cities to find the time to get the proper information, register in person, and vote.

It is to be hoped that all possible effort will be made to give them the opportunity to perform these civic duties with as little harm to their work as possible.

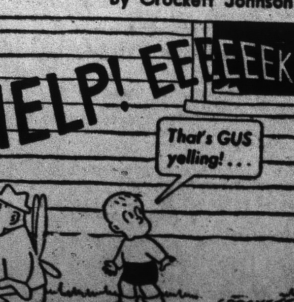
The other afternoon Madame Manuël Quezon and her two daughters came to say goodbye. They are going to the West coast, where they will feel a little nearer their own beloved islands.

Up Front With Mauldin



"Sure I got seniority. I got busted a week before you did."

By Crockett Johnson



That's GUS yelling!