

WILMETTE LIFE

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THE FOURTH OF JULY

You may call it Independence day, the nation's natal day or anything else you like, but to one not so far removed from boyhood that no segment of memory remains it has always been, is now and will continue to be the Fourth of July. It's like "Merry Christmas"—no one ever has found or ever will find for it a satisfactory substitute. It's just the good old Fourth of July and that's all there is to it.

During boyhood, youth and thus far into maturity we have anticipated the Fourth of July with more pleasure than any of the other holidays. But we are not going to kid our readers or ourself about this anticipation. It was not, we think, rooted in all-enveloping patriotism. While we realize that one George Washington had something to do with the occurrence that brought about the annual observance, we cannot remember ever having spent the day in meditation upon the life, work and sacrifices of the father of his country. What we wanted to do was to shoot off firecrackers, the louder the better; to throw torpedoes, burn Roman candles, touch off sky-rockets, and do as much devilment and make as much noise as it was possible to crowd into the hours between 4 a.m. and midnight. For us the declaration of independence, read by the teacher of the eighth grade, had no appeal. The screameagle, flagwrapping orator who held forth for two hours intrigued us not at all. Why should they, when just across the street there was a merry-go-round, a cane rack, a doll booth, and a tall, dark gentleman with a drooping moustache who offered to bet that you couldn't tell which shell covered the pea, to say nothing of the silver cornet band and the street parade and a lot of other things.

That was what the Fourth of July meant to us, and it is not a bit different from what it means to the kids of today. Of course, the mechanics of noise-making have been revolutionized to a point where one kid can now make more noise in a given time than could many in that distant day. But that is only relative. If we could not make as much noise as today's youngsters, it was just our hard luck—a sort of penalty for having been born too soon. Anyway, in this as in other things, we did our best, to which many an adult with nerves would be delighted to testify.

The point of it all is that we must not be too hard on the lads and lassies who are doing the same things we did when at their age—only doing them a lot better than we could. If there is any blame to place, let it be directed to the adults who for a few dirty dollars manufacture the things that add tremendously to boyhood's proficiency in the art of noise making.

With what patience we can muster let us endure the racket that splits ears and wrecks nervous systems, for endure it we must. There positively is no escape.

FATHER'S DAY

The impression generally entertained is that Father's Day is a product of American commercialism; that it was conceived by the merchants

of the country for the purpose of selling more merchandise, following the popularity and permanence of Mother's Day. Now it seems that this idea is all wrong; that the merchants had nothing to do with it, except to provide the gifts with which sons and daughters shower dad when the great day rolls around. There is, it is said, a beautiful story connected with the origin of the observance that gives a more appealing reason for it, and exonerates the merchants of selfish purposes. The story is this:

"It was thirty-seven years ago that a family living in a humble cabin on the wind swept and snow swept Big Bend hills in the state of Washington was bereft of a mother. A lonely father with a brood of young children kept the vigil and for twenty years thereafter that father, William Jackson Smart, exercised paternal vigilance over that family. In 1910, one of those children, in appreciation of the sacrifices made by that father undertook to have the third Sunday in June designated as Father's Day. Little by little, the idea grew into the consciousness of the country, resolutions and petitions were presented to civic and legislative bodies by interested organizations and today, Father's Day is generally recognized throughout the land. An effort is now being made to have it nationally recognized by Congressional enactment."

AN AUTHORITY SPEAKS

No one in America speaks with greater authority or with more complete information on the crime situation than John Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. In an address at the commencement exercises of Kalamazoo college recently, Mr. Hoover gave some astounding facts on crime, and pointed out with emphasis the responsibility of parents in correcting a disturbing trend among young people to enter paths which lead directly to the underworld. These excerpts from that address are worthy of most serious consideration of parents everywhere:

"We are prone today to decry the immortality of youth, when we learn that 17 per cent of all our crime is committed by persons of less than voting age. Rather, however, we should look upon the truth of this situation which is to be found in the failure of parenthood to properly train the youthful mind into paths free from criminality. Today, there are in America over 4,300,000 criminals actively at work, plundering, marauding and murdering. There is an aggregate of over 1,330,000 serious crimes each year, which means that every twenty-four seconds there is a felonious infraction of our laws, including robbery, assault, arson, or murder. In addition, over fourteen million minor crimes are committed each year, not including traffic and liquor law violations. Each setting sun leaves its final glow over a country supposed to be the most enlightened of all the world; yet, each day and every day witnesses a total of 36 deaths at the hands of murderers. Thus, we gain an understanding of the terrific scope of criminality and the solemn duty of the citizen in his obligation to learn more of what that criminality consists and what can be done to eradicate it. Our greatest crime in America today is our toleration of crime—toleration of the conditions existing throughout the nation which help to create a national crime bill estimated at fifteen billions of dollars each year!"

"Certainly, it seems to me that when a condition exists in which 3 out of every 4 persons are potential victims of crime, at least those 3 out of 4 persons should do something for themselves in an attempt to evade the consequences of crime. This includes, first of all, knowledge, training, understanding, and then the determination to make use of this knowledge in a practical fashion. For instance, if more persons knew the facts concerning proper law enforcement, they would be able to speak more articulately against political corruption, which, when it exists, absolutely stultifies and nullifies the efforts of any law enforcement agency. No such agency can be efficient when its personnel is appointed, not as the result of what they know, but because of whom they know. No organization can properly perform its task when it is handicapped by lack of equipment, when it does not have sufficient money through appropriation to pay proper salaries, when it has antiquated equipment and perhaps antiquated minds directing its activities. When these occur, it is due not so much to the activities of so-called corrupt politicians, as it is to the non-activity of lethargic citizens who permit these corrupt politicians to enter office and gain control of a municipality or community. This lethargy all too often comes about through lack of education and a lack of knowledge of what constitutes the right way of doing things. The college or other educational institution which pounds upon the problem of teaching its students enforcement, will be a contributing factor to a greater day of welfare in America."

NEWS • COMMENT

Hoist the flag!

* * *

"Movie celebrities are made ill by vegetable spray," read a Monday headline. Shouldn't wonder a bit. Every time we are compelled to go to a movie we have an almost uncontrollable desire to spray the celebrities with vegetables.

* * *

Senator Wheeler is a master of tact, judging from the manner in which he broke to President Roosevelt the news that his Supreme court packing bill is dead as a mackerel.

* * *

The weather man has redeemed himself. Sunday he came out of his grouch and presented longing humanity hereabouts with a perfect June day. A rarity, by the way, with the particular June that closed last midnight.

* * *

This reporter acknowledges the condolences of a contributor to last week's "Public Forum" upon the fact that our only source of information (or misinformation) on the current insurrection of the C. I. O. is the Chicago Daily Tribune, assisted off and on by the Chicago Daily News. The critic states that we have been "led around by the nose" by the Tribune, and fed with "phantom news" until the density of our ignorance has become a public peril that requires the attention of some master mind in whom a kind Providence has reposed the rare gift of exact determination between that which is truth and that which is plain hooey. So the critic assumes the duty, and gives the low down on the Memorial Day battle at South Chicago. We admit that the Tribune has been leading us around "by the nose." Having no opinions of our own, and worse yet, not much of anything with which to form them, and being deprived of intimate contact with the source of all truth and righteousness which the critic so proudly boasts, someone has to make up our mind for us, and we thought that the Tribune, with an occasional assist by the News, could do the job as well as any. Then we figured that the Lord intended us to be "led around by the nose," else why should He have caused us to be born with a ring in the proboscis? But we must warn our judicially minded critic, who so unfailingly discriminates between truth and bunk, and who evidently desires to take a turn at the leading, that we are mighty particular about the kind of leash that is snapped onto that ring. We were especially gratified to learn (no, to be informed) that Mr. (howinell do you pronounce it, critic?) Krzycki is an important personage in the clothing manufacturing line. Not traveling in the same crowd with our esteemed critic, his greatness had escaped us. In fact, we never heard of him. Marveling that so boundless a fund of knowledge can be contained in one cranium, we nevertheless, remembering that "fools rush in where angels fear to tread," suggest that if our critic expects to lead us very far he (she?) will need to use as bait more of respect for law observance and less of blind, passionate, unreasoning defense of law breakers.

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For the acquiring of what Westbrook Pegler terms "a lithe, lean body," outdoor work on a farm is recommended. This reporter knows.

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The reason for so many divorces may lie in the fact that girls of today do not dare to refuse an offer of marriage for fear that the suitor will kill them. They prefer to marry the brutes, wait a reasonable time and then sue for divorce. May be safer, at that.

THE PHANTOM REPORTER

