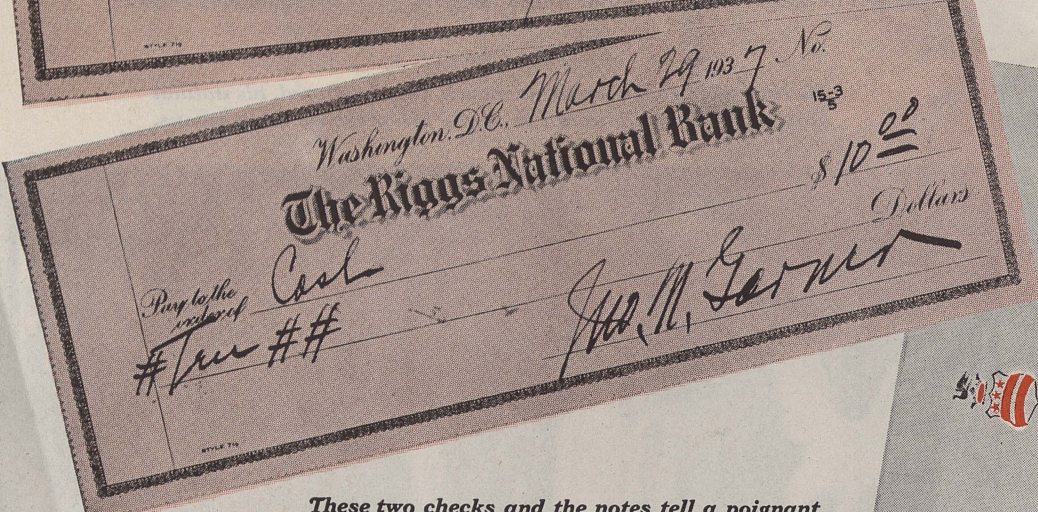
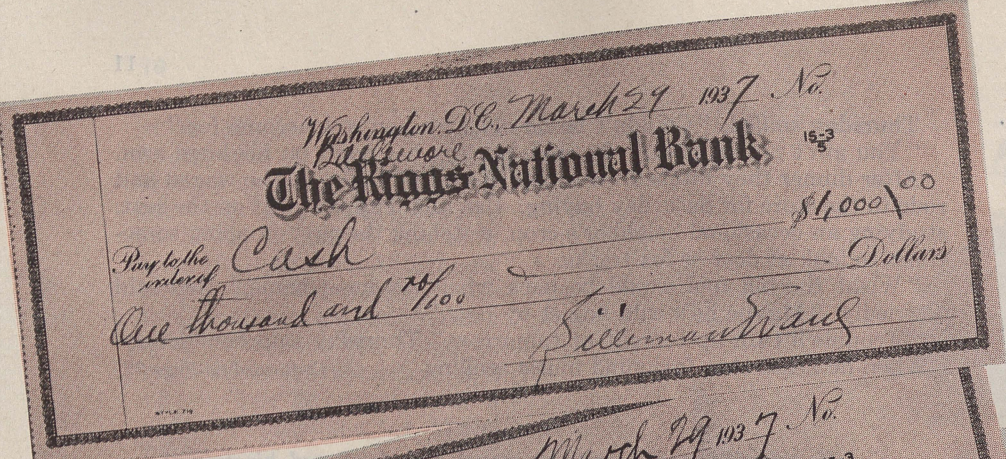


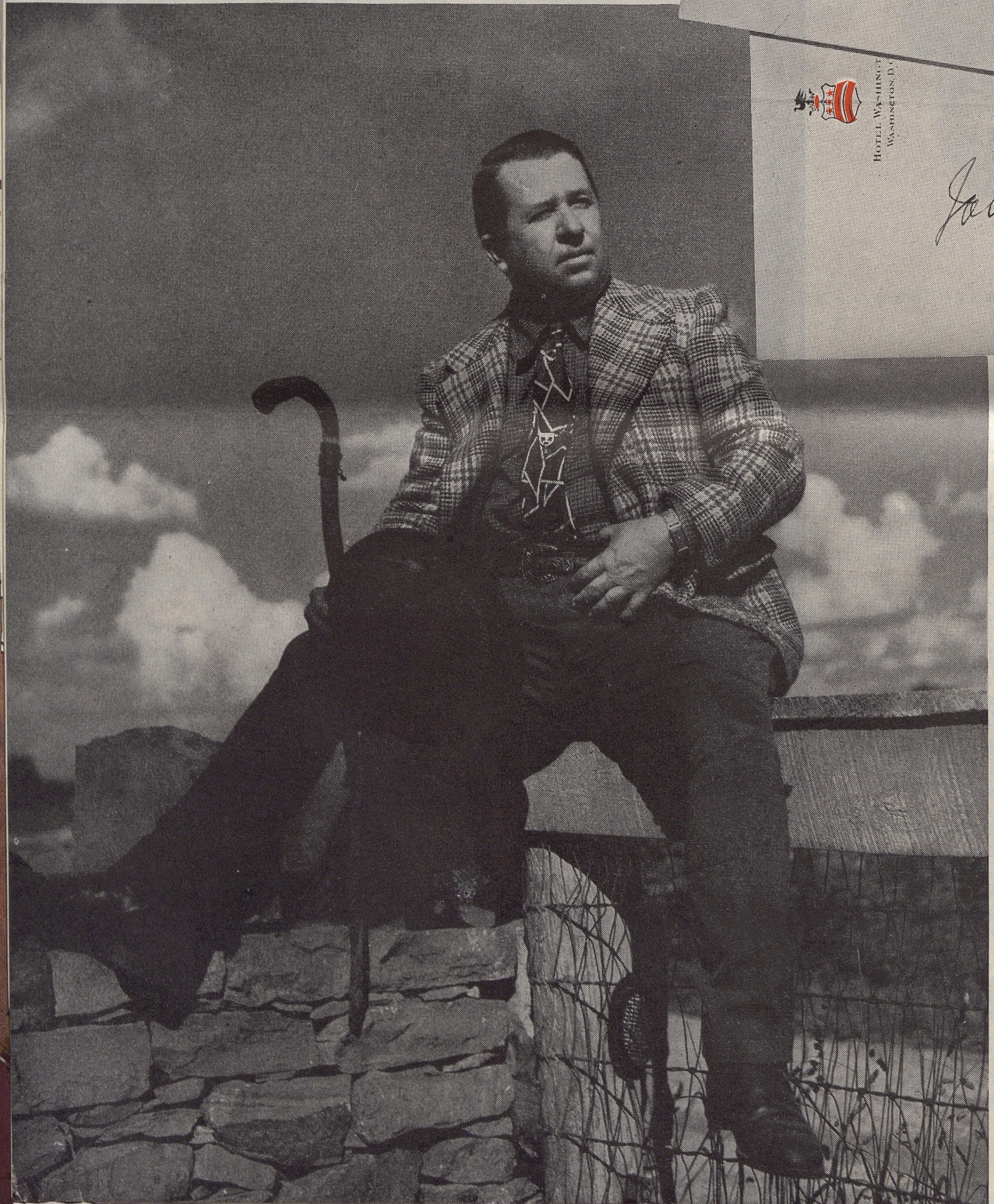
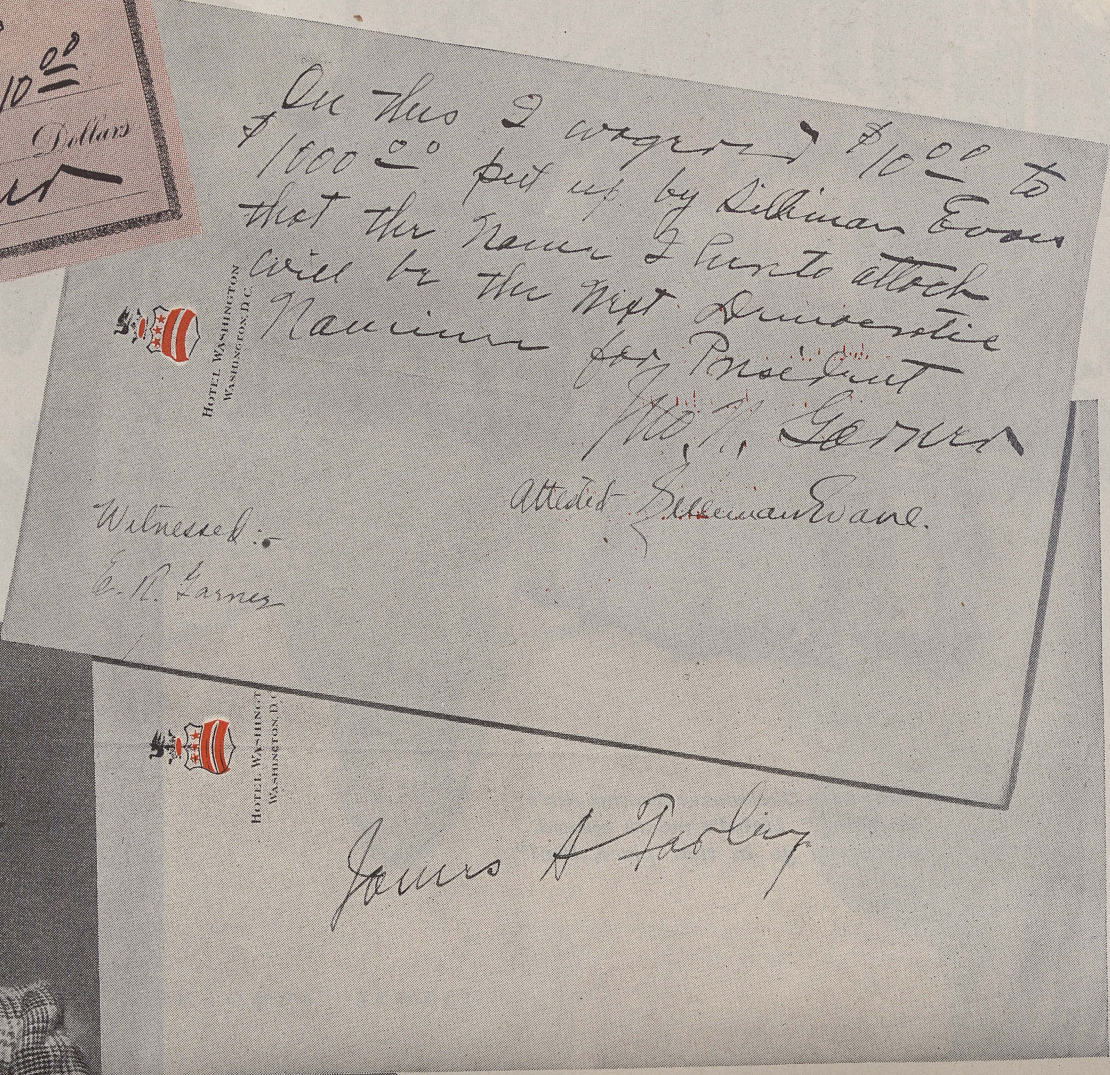
"SILLIMAN— HE'S A WONDER"

By Roger Butterfield



These two checks and the notes tell a poignant tale of a major political irony. Vice President Garner, on March 29, 1937, bet Silliman he could name the next Democratic nominee for the presidency. Cactus Jack wrote "James A. Farley," never suspecting F. D. R. would seek a third term.

PHOTO BY ED CLARK, NASHVILLE



DOWN in the bluegrass country around Nashville the hard-riding outdoor gentry have to laugh fit to bust when they see Silliman Evans on a horse. "Silliman sure knows how to run a newspaper," they tell you, "but his idea of what to wear on a horse is perfect'ly killin'." For an ordinary Sunday-morning outing, stubby little Silliman, who is about as broad in the saddle as he is tall, puts the mild Tennessee landscape to shame in an orange-and-blue-plaid belted jacket, straight from Abercrombie & Fitch, a chocolate-caramel shirt, maroon tie crisscrossed with jagged lightning flashes of white, a great baggy pair of tan breeches, and a soft green mountain-climbing hat with a feather in the band, that looks as though it might start yodeling all by itself. Silliman has fancier combinations than this, but he saves them for Derby Day or his frequent appearances as judge in near-by steeplechases.

Silliman's neighbors all think he's a great fellow, but they dearly love to tell about his famous spill, soon after he arrived in Nashville. "Old horse Nellie was standin' beside a gate an' Silliman leaned over to open the latch," they say. "Lost his balance an' broke his arm."

That little accident is history in itself, for it is about the only instance on record when Silliman Evans, of Texas, Tennessee and points east as far as Copenhagen, has failed to land squarely on his feet. And he has taken many a dizzy plunge.

Like his arrival in Nashville to take over the Tennesseean newspapers, for instance. That was in 1937. As far as outward appearances are concerned, there was probably never a sadder pair of news-

papers than the morning and evening Tennessean when Evans acquired them. They had been operating under receivership for four years; the former publisher, the celebrated Col. Luke Lea, had spent two years in jail for conspiracy after a series of frauds that milked the papers and bankrupted thousands of Southerners. The offices and printing plant were in a rickety, narrow old building that had been a fashionable gambling club thirty years before; now it was overrun with rats and sagging at the joists. The presses, patched with baling wire, alternately produced papers too faint to read or too ink-smudged to handle. One pressroom foreman spent most of his time bootlegging. The composing room was above the city room; every now and then a printer would put his foot through the crumbling, ornately paneled ceiling above a rewrite man's head. The city desk was in constant terror because it was located directly under a 3000-pound pot of molten type metal. Shortly after Evans moved in, a big section of ceiling collapsed in his office and a jagged piece of plaster seriously gashed an advertising man he was talking to. The victim was in the hospital for two weeks.

Forty-five days after Silliman took over this mess, the Tennesseans were again in the black. He tackled old Horace Greeley Hill, the Nashville chain-store millionaire, locally regarded as "tough as your boot," and by sheer persistence and will power persuaded Hill to build him a brand-new \$175,000 building. "I don't know why I'm doing this," said Hill unhappily, as he signed the final agreement. But his investment is now paying better than 7 per cent, and he tells everyone that Silliman is a wonder. Today, the morning and Sunday Tennessean—the evening edition was killed in a deal with the rival Banner—is not only the most active and potent newspaper voice in the state but it is probably read with more attention in Washington than any other Southern paper. It is paying off its debts and making a pretty pile of pennies for Silliman Evans. And it has done things to Nashville and to Tennessee, of which more anon.

Silliman Evans is a short, pudgy, immensely energetic person with a round red little nose stuck in the middle of his broad face like some well-baked gingerbread man's. In a headlong career of forty-six years he has been star reporter for Amon Carter's newspaper in Fort Worth, a barnstorming air-line promoter in the Southwest, a New Deal politico in Washington, and—though he admits he still knows next to nothing about insurance—the president of one of the nation's best-known insurance companies. Once he was trailed halfway across the continent and arrested for smuggling the Russian crown jewels into the United States. He is continually popping up in Washington, California, New York, Texas or Chicago, having acquired the habit of skipping around the country in planes while press agent for American Airways. Some of his friends call him the nerviest man they know; others put it differently; they merely say that he has a colossal crust.

When Texans Get Together

THE Tennessean, under his management, has been a loud defender of TVA and led a successful fight to have the city of Nashville buy its share of Wendell Willkie's Tennessee Electric Power Company. When the battle was over, Silliman flew up to New York one day and invited Willkie to the Ritz suite where he operates the year round as his paper's best advertising salesman. The two chatted for a while in front of a cupid-decorated fireplace, and then Silliman pulled out a big sheet of paper. "I thought you might want to buy a page in the Tennessean to say good-bye to Nashville," he told Willkie, handing him a dummy ad he had written himself. Willkie was so awed by this maneuver that he immediately agreed to buy the page, stipulating only that he would write his own ad. This he did, and it is still remembered as one of the best institutional ads in recent years.

Silliman Evans, as an admiring Washington correspondent remarked lately, is the world's leading example of the way Texans stick together. One spring Saturday in 1934, for example, Silliman rode out to the races at Pimlico, Maryland, with Vice-

President Garner, Jesse Jones, of the RFC, Congressman—now Speaker—Sam Rayburn, all from Texas, and the late Sen. Robinson, of near-by Arkansas. At the moment, Silliman held the unimpressive title of Fourth Assistant Postmaster General, a job that had come to him for helping line up the Texas delegates on a Roosevelt-Garner ticket at the 1932 Democratic convention. People in Texas thought it was a shame Silliman didn't get something better. But fate was already at work. Jesse Jones was telling Jack Garner about a problem that had worried him a lot; the Maryland Casualty Company, a big, stately, historic firm in Baltimore, was up to its ears in \$90,000,000 worth of doubtful mortgages, and needed an immediate loan to avoid a crash. Jesse was willing to lend it \$7,500,000, but wanted to install a new chief executive to clear out dead wood in Maryland's home office. Nobody wanted the job; he had already been turned down by two prominent Maryland Democrats and the insurance commissioner of another Eastern state.

"Why don't you take this pu'sely-gutted little feller here?" suggested Garner, poking his thumb at Silliman Evans. (Note: "pursely-gutted," Texas and Tennessee slang for "paunchy, fat.")

Jesse looked at Silliman, sized up the confident angle of his cigar, recollected that Silliman had been credited with saving money in the Post Office Department, pondered in slow Texas fashion. That afternoon, everybody, including Silliman, won some money and stuffed themselves with hot dogs. When they got back to Washington, Jesse phoned some Texas friends. Their reports were encouraging. Jesse made up his mind.

"But I don't know a darned thing about insurance—I only took one course in algebra and I flunked that," said Silliman, when Jesse told him the news.

"That's what we need. Nobody who knows insurance would take this job," replied Jesse.

A few days later the directors of Maryland Casualty were called to Washington to pick up their \$7,500,000 and meet their future president. At least one of them, John K. Shaw, a rich Baltimore coal dealer, laughed out loud when Silliman trotted into the room in the lee of towering Jesse Jones. But, like old Mr. Hill, of Nashville, he became an ardent admirer as he watched Silliman go to work. The Connecticut insurance commissioner was threaten-

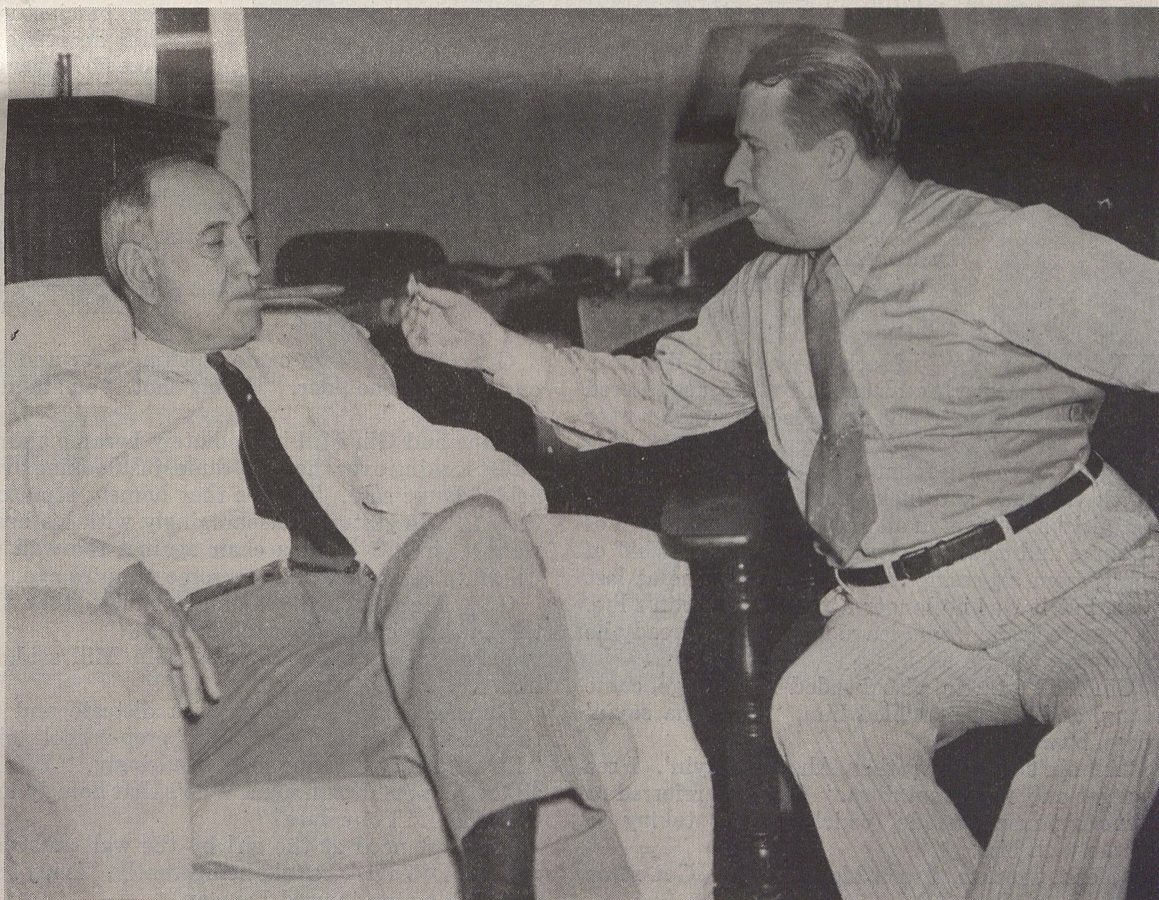
ing to close up Maryland because its reserves were inadequate; Silliman flew to Hartford, the ancient rival of Baltimore's insurance companies, and pulled an old reporter's trick. "All right," he said, in effect, "shut us up, but I will go out and phone the newspapers that you have put four thousand employees and ten thousand agents out of work because of the old insurance jealousy between Hartford and Baltimore." Connecticut granted him a ninety-day extension, during which he went back to Jesse Jones and borrowed another \$10,000,000 to see Maryland through.

"He had us there; we had to come again to cover our first investment," chuckles Jesse.

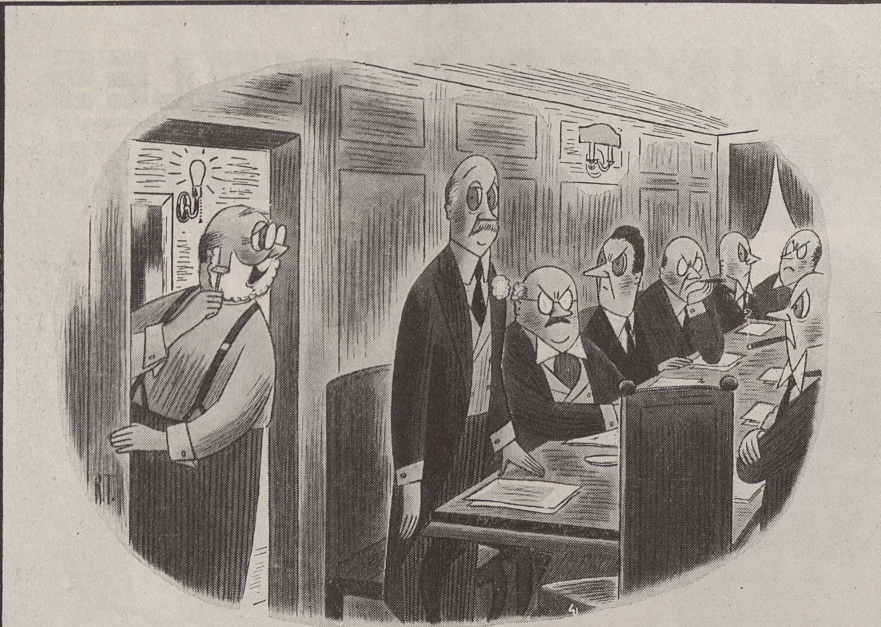
Pinch-Hitting in Baltimore

EVEN with another \$10,000,000, there were times when Maryland seemed doomed. Gloom filled its spacious marble lobbies. "It was like a crypt," says an Evans aide of this period. Almost the only person who refused to succumb to melancholy was President Evans. Although his company was to all intents busted, he launched a widespread, full-page advertising campaign in expensive magazines. He ordered policies printed in gay colors and wrapped in Cellophane. He fired fifteen vice-presidents and installed an able crew of experts, new and old, in their places. When the company reached its fortieth birthday, he hit upon the idea of hiring Walter Pitkin, author of *Life Begins at Forty* to write pep pamphlets and give talks to clubs across the country. Today the current crop of Maryland officials swear that it was Silliman's unquenchable optimism, buttressed by the \$17,500,000 from his fellow-Texan, Jesse Jones, that put Maryland back among the leading U. S. casualty firms. In 1937, the year he resigned as president, gross premiums were \$29,964,000, a gain of nearly \$10,000,000 above the low of 1933.

When Silliman collided with Nashville early in 1937, that genteel, many-pillared city was going along complacently under such titles as "Athens of the South"—because it has the only exact reproduction of the Parthenon outside Greece—and "The Southern Vatican"—because it is headquarters for several Southern religious sects. These were not exciting enough to suit Silliman, who was brought up in the great Texas tradition (Continued on Page 86)



Silliman, here giving Amon Carter a light, once was the famous publisher's ace reporter, expense account unlimited. He obviously remains grateful.



"You boys better play tic-tac-toe—I can't let ANYTHING interrupt the enjoyment of my MENNEN SHAVE!"



A challenge! Men... compare Mennen Brushless Shave with any other brushless. See if it isn't different. It's a cream—not a grease! Pleasant to handle. No stickiness, no mess, no razor-clog. And how it wilts whiskers! No yank. No pull. Try it once... and you'll always say "MENNEN BRUSHLESS for mine!"

Mennen makes a swell Lather Shave, too.

THE 3-STEP SHAVE OF GENTLE-MENNEN:—① SHAVE CREAM, ② SKIN BRACER, ③ TALCUM FOR MEN

THE ONLY PIPE WITH ALL 5 "SWEET SMOKE" FEATURES

All real briar root
Over 60 hand-
some models
Latest Finishes

L.H.S. Purex
"Smokes Sweet for Life"

\$1.50

NO BITTERNESS, NO BREAKING-IN—because the bowl is Vita-cured

NO BITE, NO JUICE—because of the Filter Cleaner

NO BREAKING—because of the patented air-tight metal Safety Lock

NO SOGGINESS—because of the patented non-porous Stem Lining

NO HEAVINESS—because the briar is properly matured

PUREX SUPERFINE for pipe connoisseurs
... Briar specially selected for fine grain

CERTIFIED PUREX—compare with any pipe at any price—\$3.50

AT YOUR PIPE DEALER'S. Made by L. & H. Stern Inc., 52 Pearl St., Brooklyn, N.Y. Makers and designers of better pipes for over 40 years. Write for profusely illustrated folder of pipe models

FLOWS FREELY at 50° BELOW

MOTOR RYTHM

1. An anti-freeze for the crankcase.
2. Instant lubrication, quick starts.
3. The product that cleans as it lubricates.
4. Removes and prevents sludge, motor varnish, carbon.
5. Cuts gas and oil bills up to 15%.

Add it to your motor and transmission oils today. At Car Dealers, Garages, Service Stations.

ALSO—
Whiz Radiator
Cleaner and Rust
Preventative

R. M. HOLLINGSHEAD CORP. CAMDEN, N. J. TORONTO, CAN.

note on the dock. Bill heard, recognized the voices, and laughed too. Then he saw a sail lying astern of the Firefly. "Fiss!" he cried.

Crunch caught the sound. He saw Sari. He beamed and waved. Quite suddenly, however, his expression changed to one of suspicion. "Say, Des," he said softly, "do you think Sari knew about those lice on the

Minerva? Think she sent us there on purpose? I wouldn't put it past —"

Sari was standing in the sunset, smiling, knowing that all was well. Des whispered to his skipper from a deep intuition, "Even if she did, don't ask her! Women like to think they get away with those little schemes! Like to think they can handle men. And Sari's a girl in a billion."

"SILLIMAN—HE'S A WONDER"

(Continued from Page 13)

of Amon Carter and Fort Worth. He has set out to make Nashville and Tennessee into something the Tennessean recently described as "The Ruhr of America." The main part of this scheme is to move all of the new and a good share of the old defense industries into Tennessee, between the sheltering Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River, and operate them on Government-produced TVA power. Silliman got his first chance to do this in 1938, when his good friend, Victor Emanuel, executive of many-branched Aviation and Transportation Corporation, flew down to see him in Nashville. Emanuel remarked that his private pilot had flown around for hours looking for Fort Knox, but couldn't locate it from the air.

That gave Silliman an opening. "If the Government's gold is that safe in Tennessee, why don't you build your new Stinson plant here?" he demanded.

At the time there was no aircraft plant in the South, and Emanuel thought the idea was silly. "There isn't a hundred to one chance," he told Silliman, but Silliman kept on arguing. He flew around the country, badgering other directors of the company, escorting delegations of Nashville boosters.

"We finally gave him the factory in self-defense," says Emanuel.

Nashville's—and the South's—first big aircraft plant began operation last winter. This August, Vultee Aircraft, of California, bought control of Stinson and immediately began to enlarge the Nashville factory for the production of thousands of military planes. "Nashville is now off on the wings of the twentieth century," cried the Tennessean, launching a new campaign to nab an \$8,400,000 Government aeronautics laboratory and a \$1,000,000 Naval Reserve base for the "TVA defense area."

For what he gets from the New Deal, Silliman is grateful in a practical way. During the recent campaign, the Tennessean bought a page of space in every other Sunday paper in the state to present "The Case For Mr. Roosevelt."

As an exponent of the joys and beauties of Nashville, Silliman is at his best at home, where he is now the master of Traveler's Rest, a celebrated Tennessee estate once owned by John Overton, law partner and political crony of Andrew Jackson. Here he has introduced the Texas style of large-scale outdoor entertainment, with certain mid-Tennessee refinements. Here he throws mass barbecues for visiting celebrities like Jack Dempsey, Eddie Rickenbacker and Jim Farley, personally concocting a hellish-hot Southwestern barbecue sauce that calls for oceans of beer the same night, and plenty of Southern comfort the next morning. Southern comfort, as defined by Silliman, consists of a sprinkling of sugar and clove on the bottom of a tall

glass, a sizable jigger of mellow corn whisky and a filling of boiling hot water. Sipped before a seven-o'clock breakfast, it is a great help to a feeble appetite.

Silliman's barbecues have set a new standard for Nashville. When Jim Farley visited Traveler's Rest last spring, for instance, squads of airplanes dipped overhead and movie cameras accompanied the party through the gates. Silliman had ordered an agent in Canada to buy the late Lord Tweedsmuir's state carriage to transport Jim from the Franklin Pike along a quarter mile of graveled drive to the house, but the Canadian government declined to sell, and he had to be content with an old barouche loaned by a wealthy French family in Quebec. An enormous billboard tastefully decorated with pictures of Farley and Andrew Jackson, labeled TWO GREAT DEMOCRATS, had been erected on the Evans' front lawn for this occasion; during the night, when everyone else was asleep, Silliman had this taken up, trucked sixty miles, and hung on the side of a courthouse where Farley was to make a speech the next day. Little attentions like these are appreciated by Silliman's friends.

Silliman has acquired horses, sheep, cattle, chickens and all the appurtenances of a country gentleman. His own bedroom is the one where Jackson slept when he came down to visit Overton; it is now decorated with canceled checks of Silliman's numerous winnings on elections and prize fights from friends like Farley, Garner and Sam Rayburn.

In 1937 he bet Jack Garner \$1000 to \$10 that Garner could not name the Democratic nominee for 1940. When Garner took him up, he hedged by betting \$10 to \$1000 that he could name Garner's choice. When the two envelopes were opened recently, it was found that the Vice-President had chosen Jim Farley as the most likely Democratic candidate, while Silliman had written the name of Henry A. Wallace. The bets canceled out, but Silliman's was a lot closer to the mark.

Silliman was born April 2, 1894, in Joshua, Johnson County, Texas. Local tradition says the town got its name because the sun stands still there all summer long. Silliman's father, the Rev. Columbus Asbury Evans, was a frail but high-spirited Methodist pastor, known throughout Texas as a fiery crusader for prohibition. No sooner would he be assigned to a town than he would stir up a violent local-option campaign, importing such celebrated Texas exhorters as J. H. (Cyclone) Davis, Mrs. A. C. Zehner, and others.

"He hated whisky as much as I love it," says Silliman.

Once when Silliman was small a group of his father's parishioners, after listening to Mrs. Zehner for two hours, marched to town and smashed every

(Continued on Page 88)

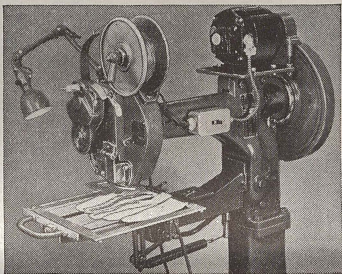


"MY BUSINESS INCREASED 8 TIMES"

"The Bostitch hammer has played an important part in helping us speed up production in the stucco business. Our figures show a definite saving of at least 25% by using this modern method of applying tar paper."

TIME-SAVING SUGGESTIONS

This Bostitch Self-feeding Hammer—with one hand, one blow—drives two-pointed staples as fast as you can snap your wrist. It is just one of 782 time-saving Bostitch machines for stapling, tacking, stitching. If you nail, tack, tape, weld, glue, rivet, etc.,—write today for "Bostitch Fastens It Better With Wire."



"COATS OF MAIL," TOO!

Another unusual Bostitch application. An automatic stitcher, making its own staples, reinforces workmen's gloves with rows of steel stitches for greater protection and longer wear.

The broad Bostitch line allows you to select the right machine . . . and to progress economically from the simplest to the largest because of liberal trade-in, budget, and rental policies. 18 Research Engineers and over 300 representatives specializing exclusively on fastening problems will help you adapt these Bostitch machines and methods to your needs. Send samples for fastening.

BOSTITCH

fastens it better with wire
STAPLING • STITCHING • TACKING

BOSTITCH, 44 Division St., East Greenwich, R.I.
Bostitch - Canada, Ltd., Montreal

Send free copy of Folder, "Bostitch Fastens It Better With Wire," containing fastening facts for my industry.

Name

Company

Address

My industry

(Continued from Page 86)

his saloon in the place. In Sweetwater, Texas, the elder Evans was knocked down by a bartender while praying outside the swinging door; the incident stirred up sympathy and turned the town dry at the next election. Silliman himself participated in some of these campaigns. While he was going to school in Fort Worth he would take a trolley into Hell's Half Acre around Jones Street and join in such hymns as:

*To the breeze we fling our banner,
Prohibition is its name;
And we'll follow where it leads us,
'Tis our glorious oriflamme.*

*Though the conflict rages fiercely,
And the foe is bold and strong;
Let our motto be forever,
No compromise with wrong!*

Silliman's unusual first name comes from his mother; she was descended from a distinguished Connecticut family that founded a Silliman chair of geology at Yale. The Evans family shifted from town to town every few years; often they scarcely had cash enough for a moving cart and their tickets; for months they subsisted on the "poundings"—gifts of food, clothing, wood—that came to them from their tiny congregations. But before Silliman was twelve he had read through eight huge volumes of sermons and hymns of John and Charles Wesley in his father's library; and this special erudition was directly responsible for landing him his first newspaper job. The Rev. Dr. John A. Rice, of the fashionable and wealthy First Methodist Church in Fort Worth, delivered in 1913 a series of sermons on the Pentateuch—first five Books of the Old Testament. Rice was suspected of modernism, and after the first sermon, he attended a ministerial meeting buzzing with angry charges of heresy. He defended himself on the ground that the Fort Worth Record had failed to report his statements correctly. The trouble, he said, was that no reporter could cope with words like Septuagint, pseudepigrapha, Peshitta, Megilloth and Hexateuch, which abounded in his sermons. Silliman's father was there; he told Doctor Rice that his son was not only the star shorthand pupil of Brantley-Draughon Business College but deeply versed in Bible terms. The next Sunday Silliman took down an entire Rice sermon without a break, and then wrote a short news account for the Record. Soon afterward the Record hired him as a reporter at \$12.50 a week.

A One-Man Newspaper

Unfortunately for the Reverend Evans' peace of mind, the Record was the wettest newspaper in Texas. Over in Waco, a group of prohibitionists led by the Rev. H. D. Knickerbocker—whose redheaded boy Hubert was to become pretty well known as a reporter himself—was starting a new daily paper that would be 100 per cent bone-dry. Silliman's father invested \$100—out of a \$300 annual salary—in this enterprise, and got Silliman appointed managing editor. Silliman was nineteen and thought he should be editor in chief at least. He went to Waco and walked into the office of the new editor, a clergyman who is now an official of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Well, this is the ——— hottest town I was ever in," he exclaimed, mopping his brow.

"Why, Brother Evans," said his startled superior, "I thought you were a religious man."

"I'm a member of the church, but I don't see what the ——— that has to do with newspaper work," said Silliman, who soon found himself the sole reporter, news writer and copyreader for the new sheet, whose ministerial backers were much more interested in battling the liquor traffic than in getting local news. When Silliman was able to get some specially juicy item into the presses, he would pull an old cap over his eyes, grab an armful of papers, and hurry out into the street selling them, just for the fun of watching people read his own stuff. After a few months of Waco, he moved on to a better job in Houston, and then to Chicago, where he cubbed in the U. P. office with the late Webb Miller and the late George Holmes. In 1916 he was back in Fort Worth as managing editor of the Record at thirty-five dollars a week.

At the time the celebrated Fundamentalist preacher, J. Frank Norris, was preaching hellfire and brimstone from a Fort Worth pulpit; one night his church burned and Silliman wrote a series of articles intimating that Norris knew more about the origin of the fire than he would tell. Word spread that Norris, who carried a pistol, had threatened to kill Silliman; the paper gave him an armed bodyguard. Some time later Norris did kill one D. E. Chipps, a hot-tempered businessman, but Silliman came through this episode unpunctured.

Rolling Stone

A change of ownership at the Record caused Silliman to shift to the Dallas News, where, sitting around on dog-watch one night, he lent Stanley Walker forty dollars to go to New York and take a job. Evans enlisted at the declaration of war in 1917, but after he fainted three times while drilling on the Dallas Fair Grounds, the doctors found he had an "enlarged heart" and discharged him. Silliman rushed to Washington and landed a job as legation secretary in Copenhagen, where he spent the next year. Denmark had little effect on him until he came to leave in 1918. An attaché in the legation wanted to send home a china plate to a friend; Silliman agreed to carry it, and had it wrapped in diplomatic ribbons and seals to take it through customs. He sailed on the Helgoland in the summer of 1918, unaware that United States agents in Sweden had sent word that the Germans had seized the Russian crown jewels and were smuggling them to the States on the Helgoland, to finance spies and terrorists. In New York, Silliman was first off the boat and dashed through customs without any examination, brandishing his diplomatic credentials right and left. Three days later he reached Dallas. He was talking to his old boss, Editor J. P. Toomey, of the News, when a weary and distraught Federal agent walked in and arrested him "for questioning." Silliman was still toting the Copenhagen plate; the agent confiscated this, with an air of mystery, refusing to open it until "higher authority" arrived. Gradually the story unfolded—all other passengers on the Helgoland had been searched without discovering the Russian jewels, and someone in Washington had decided that Silliman had brought them in under diplomatic immunity. Agents had followed him on a broken course from New York to



At last! Daddy gets a break! Turn Dolly on her side and she cries "Mamma." Turn her on the other side and she cries just as loudly for "Papa." Fifteen-inch size, dressed in white organdy with a flutter of dainty pink ribbons, she's a beauty!

YOURS— Either Doll!

TAKE YOUR CHOICE . . . a lovely Sonja Henie Skating Doll or the "Papa-Mamma" Baby Doll! You'll receive either, absolutely without cost, by sending two 1-year *Saturday Evening Post* subscriptions, new or renewal, which you have sold at the full U. S. price, \$2 each, to persons living outside your home.

Or win either for four 1-year *Ladies' Home Journals*, sold at the full U. S. price, \$1 each.

We cannot accept cash orders for these dolls and they will be sent in U. S. only. Your own or your personal gift subscriptions, or subscriptions sold at special Christmas prices, will not count.

Pin subscribers' names and addresses to coupon below. Then mail with check or money order for full amount.



This Sonja Henie Skating Doll is the year's sensation. Dressed in white taffeta with marabou trim, she stands 15 inches tall on her tiny skates.

CURTIS PUBLISHING COMPANY
783 Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.

Here are.....subscriptions with remittance. Send my.....doll, all charges prepaid, to

Name.....

Street.....

City.....State.....

Washington—where he took a different train from the one he had bought tickets for—to Cincinnati—where he got off to take a walk, and missed his train—and on through St. Louis. These erratic movements had turned suspicion into virtual certainty. Silliman was a "prisoner" for one night in his hotel room; the next day word came to release him and all was forgiven.

Shortly after this Silliman took a trolley car from Dallas to Fort Worth, thirty miles away, and went to work on Amon Carter's booming Star-Telegram. During the next nine years he became the best known and most influential political reporter in the state. A friend who watched him in action says he was "the all-time, all-American Diesel engine of Texas reporting." The Star-Telegram gave him unlimited expense accounts and a free hand on assignments. The likes and dislikes of Publisher Amon Carter are among the most vehement in Texas or, for that matter, North America; Silliman functioned effectively as Carter's hatchet man. When Amon took a notion to remove the hide from some annoying politician, Silliman's was the knife that performed the operation; and when Silliman had some special ax of his own to grind, Amon and his paper did the grinding. One day, for instance, Silliman took exception to a remark about reporters in general made by a circus man named Gentry, in an Austin hotel bar; the next day the Star-Telegram came out with an exclusive exposé of a bill which Gentry was lobbying through the legislature to exempt his show from Texas' \$1000-a-day license fee for traveling circuses. The bill was quickly killed, and Silliman's revenge was sweet.

Neither Amon nor Silliman thought much of Earle Mayfield, who was elected U. S. senator from Texas in 1922, with the support of the Ku Klux Klan. One day in January, 1923, just before Mayfield was to leave for Washington, Silliman broke a story in the Star-Telegram stating that Mayfield, before resigning his state post as member of the railroad commission, would repay a campaign debt by granting a certain firm a permit to operate a carbon-black plant near Amarillo,

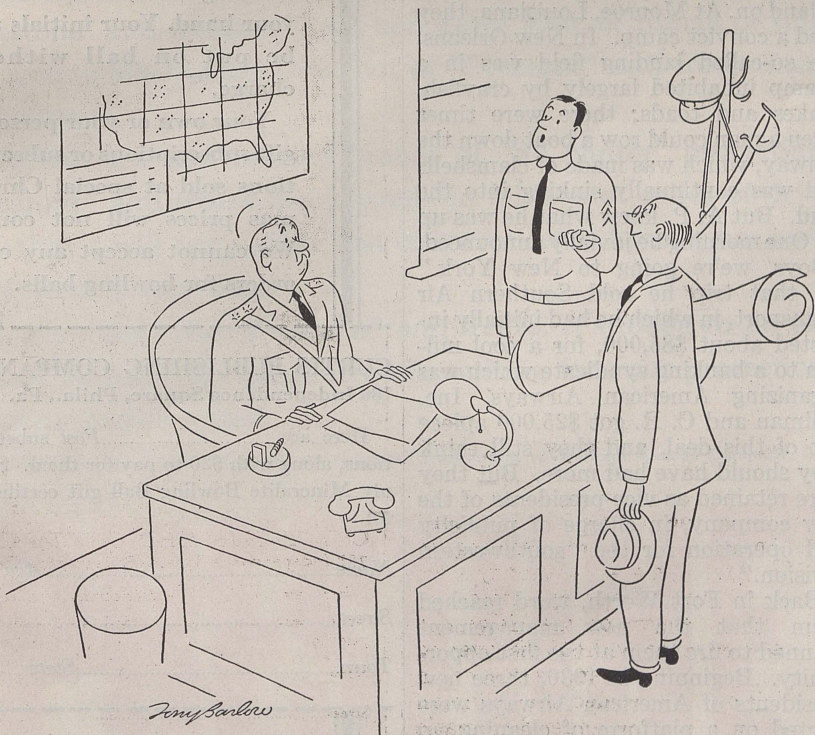
Texas. Carbon black is a by-product of Texas natural gas, which is under state regulation. That noon Silliman walked into Mayfield at the elevator of the Driskill Hotel, in Austin. "Why, you ——" shouted the senator-elect, swinging at Silliman's jaw. The two swapped some hard blows before they were pulled apart. That afternoon the carbon-black permit was granted, true to Silliman's prediction. And shortly afterward Silliman ran, in the Star-Telegram, a picture of Tom Connally, of Marlin, as the man who would beat Mayfield for the Senate in 1928—nearly six years away. In October, 1928, Mayfield was defeated for renomination by the present junior senator from Texas, Tom Connally.

Another hotel fracas had more serious results for Silliman. During the highway scandals of Ma Ferguson's administration in 1925, he stirred up a pitched battle with a highway commissioner named John Cage, who hit him flush on the chin and knocked him to the floor. Silliman suffered a slight skull fracture that kept him in bed for weeks.

Old Jim Ferguson was one of the most talented backwoods statesmen that Texas ever knew; but while he was governor in 1917 he was impeached for misappropriating state funds and forever barred from becoming governor again. In 1922 he attempted a comeback by running against Mayfield for the senatorial nomination. Mayfield was a sure winner, but the Star-Telegram and Silliman were for Ferguson. One day Silliman went along with the old man to a boarding-house in tiny Penelope, Texas; he watched him take off his long alpaca coat and lie down on the bed with his shoes on. The coat had been ripped in an automobile door and patched by Ma. Before entering politics, Ferguson had been a prosperous small-town banker. Jim remarked that he had sixty dollars in his pocket, and that was all he had in the world.

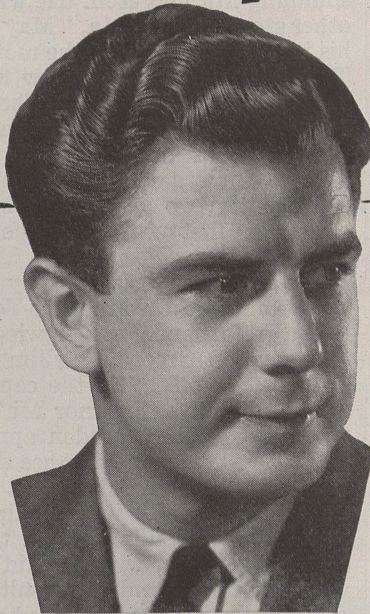
"Do you know the Klan is putting up a million dollars for Earle Mayfield?" asked Silliman.

"Yes, but I'll get some as I go along—a dollar or two here and there—about two hundred dollars a



"He has a novel way to defend our airports, sir; it's an adaptation of the old flypaper idea."

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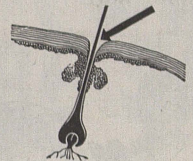
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meeting," mumbled Jim, drifting off to sleep. Silliman went back to his typewriter and banged out what he still calls his masterpiece—a tear jerker beginning, "James E. Ferguson will finish his campaign for the United States Senate with neither script nor purse."

A few days later he went to Temple, the Fergusons' home town, and watched the fashionable ladies of the town flock to greet Mrs. Mayfield, while shunning Ma Ferguson. He wrote another story quoting Ma, "May God in his infinite mercy spare the mothers of Texas such waves of sorrow as have rolled over this home!" These two yarns started a wave of sympathy for the Fergusons all over Texas, and although Jim was defeated in his try for the Senate, two years later Ma was elected the first woman governor in the United States.

She had been in office only a year when rumors reached the Star-Telegram that a graft scandal was brewing in her highway department. Old Jim had set up his "law office" in the capitol directly adjoining Governor Ma's; contractors, salesmen, pardon applicants and others who wanted to see the governor had to pass his desk first. Moreover, the Fergusons were feuding with Amon Carter. Silliman went to work on this situation, with the aid of private detectives, and the resulting exposé blasted the Fergusons out of office once more. But they came back in 1932. In the process, the Star-Telegram and Silliman acquired a new hero—Attorney General Dan Moody—who prosecuted the guilty officials. Naturally, Moody was the next governor of Texas.

The opening of the Star-Telegram's first Washington bureau was a direct outcome of Silliman's courtship of Miss Lucille McCrea, of Cisco. They first saw each other on a muddy oil-field road in East Texas; Silliman was in the mud, trying to pry his car loose, and Lucille was driving through. She noticed especially his light blue overcoat with an orange lining. One evening they were riding together when Silliman announced in dead earnest, "I've never told any girl I loved her, but if I did and she didn't say she loved me, I would kill her. I love you." Shortly after this he persuaded Jimmy North, his long-suffering managing editor, that the Star-Telegram should open a Washington office and install him in it. The opening, by a strange coincidence came at the same time as his honeymoon.

The Sky Recruit

In Washington, Silliman engaged in profitable all-night poker games in the old Wyatt Building, and spent a good deal of time in Speaker Jack Garner's rooms at the Capitol and the Washington Hotel. "He would take a drink with me," says Mr. Garner, "and I would take one with him." He made no attempt to burn up Washington with Diesel-engine, Texas-reporting technique—in fact, he played what some Washington correspondents call "the Southern game" of making friends with leading politicians and sending home flattering stories about whatever they did.

Around 1928, Silliman came into contact with one A. P.—Alva Pearl—Barrett, a genial, snuff-dipping promoter who controlled some Texas utilities and oil wells. The nation was beginning to go air-crazy and Barrett sniffed a profit for early birds in the new industry. He persuaded Silliman

and two other young men from Fort Worth—C. R.—Cyrus Rowlett—Smith, now president of American Airlines, and Tom Hardin, recently with the CAA—to join him in operating the insignificant Texas Air Transport Company between Fort Worth, Dallas and Houston. T. A. T. had a fleet of ten mail-carrying Stearmans and Travelairs with a total passenger capacity of nine. Old A. P. Barrett would arrive at his office every morning waving his arms stiffly and singing at the top of an unmelodious voice:

*My old fiddle,
She's tuned up good,
Best old fiddle
In the neighborhood.*

*Ting-a-ling-a-ling,
Ting-a-ling-a-ling,
Tee-dee.*

He had an idea that if he sang this formless ditty at least once a day, he could never go broke; and he would line up his staff, including Silliman, to join in the chorus before opening the morning mail. Silliman was hired as "vice-president in charge of public relations"—a job that included selling tickets for five-dollar thrill flights on Sunday mornings at the Fort Worth airfield—one of T. A. T.'s principal sources of cash income.

Million-Dollar Wings

Barrett worked on hunches; he would rush into the office in the morning singing My Old Fiddle, and announce without a pause, "Come on, boys; we're going to Atlanta," or to New Orleans, El Paso, Los Angeles—as his impulse led him. Silliman's particular job was to "engage" lawyers and butter up mayors and editors wherever A. P. wanted to acquire an airport lease; in a year he hired enough lawyers to bail out the Gulf of Mexico, and bought enough drinks for city-hall and state-house politicians to fill it again. Barrett soon enlarged T. A. T. into Southern Air Transport, and held airfield leases—often without a dollar's cost—in every important Southern city between Los Angeles and Atlanta. Some of the "airports" were pretty funny by present, or any, standards. At Austin, for instance, T. A. T. simply cut away the weeds in a field and painted a big white circle for its planes to land on. At Monroe, Louisiana, they used a convict camp. In New Orleans, the so-called landing field was in a swamp inhabited largely by crayfish, snakes and toads; there were times when a man could row a boat down the runway, which was made of clamshells and was continually sinking into the mud. But A. P. knew what he was up to. One morning he jovially announced, "Boys, we're going to New York." On that trip he sold Southern Air Transport, in which he had initially invested about \$85,000, for a cool million to a banking syndicate which was organizing American Airways, Inc. Silliman and C. R. got \$25,000 apiece out of this deal, and they still think they should have had more. But they were retained as vice-presidents of the new company, in charge of publicity and operation for the "southwestern division."

Back in Fort Worth, word reached them that the new management planned to fire them at the first opportunity. Beginning in 1930, three new presidents of American Airways were elected on a platform of cleaning up the southwestern division, but whenever one of them turned up at Fort

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Worth, Silliman and C. R. showed them such a fine time that they went home vowing the southwestern was the most efficient division in the whole company. At that time Mississippi had a seven-cent tax on gasoline. One of American's new presidents told Silliman, "If you're so good, why don't you get that Mississippi gas tax taken off airplanes?" Silliman flew to Jackson, located the head of the road-building lobby, explained what he wanted, had dinner that night with the right members of the legislative committees, and within forty-eight hours a bill was passed exempting airplane fuel from the state gas tax.

His most celebrated feat of lobbying has entered air-line history as The Battle of Arizona. Arizona was the only state with a clear-cut law requiring a certificate of convenience for all transportation companies traversing—that is, flying over—its territory. American Airways had a certificate; E. L. Cord's Century Airlines, which also operated from Los Angeles to New Orleans, did not. Cord applied for a certificate, and Silliman was sent to Arizona to make sure he would not get it. A battle royal ensued, with both sides hiring as lawyers the sons of members of Arizona's corporations commission, but Silliman had a decided margin when it came to throwing midnight parties at Nogales, just over the Mexican border. When the Cord application reached a vote, it was rejected 2 to 1. The strategy of Silliman's employers then came to light; Cord bought them out for a greatly increased price.

The 1932 campaign was getting under way and Silliman, as an intensely loyal Texas Democrat, had charge of national publicity for Speaker Jack Garner's pre-convention drive for the presidential nomination. This didn't prevent him from dropping in often at the Biltmore Hotel, where Jim Farley was running Franklin D. Roosevelt's campaign. When the convention finally came, Silliman and his congressman-pal, Sam Rayburn, kept communication lines open between Farley and the rabidly pro-Garner Texas delegation, as well as with Garner himself. When it became apparent that Roosevelt had a large majority—though not the two thirds necessary for nomination—both Silliman and Rayburn saw the wisdom of Farley's suggestion: a Roosevelt-Garner ticket. The crucial moment came on the fourth ballot, when California and Texas were released by Garner and swung to Roosevelt. This was Silliman's introduction to national politics—and the reward he got at first was not overpowering. In fact, he seriously debated whether he should become Fourth Assistant Postmaster General at all. But looking around Washington, he saw plenty of Texas faces in high places, and had visions of better things to come.

Glorifying the Post-Office Pen

During his year in the Post-Office Department, Silliman toiled without inspiration on reports of mail bags repaired—2,644,552—post-office leases negotiated—710—and blueprints made—41,031—in the course of a year. But his biggest contribution to Post-Office Department history was a master stroke of press-agentry. Everyone knows that the most worn-out, chewed-off pens in the world are found in post offices and florists' shops. Soon after Silliman was inaugurated he issued a general order directing that "an adequate supply of penholders, pen points and ink . . . be furnished

for the use of patrons in all post offices." That made the front pages of papers across the country.

Silliman knew, of course, that his sojourn in the Post-Office Department and later in Baltimore as president of Maryland Casualty could only be temporary; his real aim in life was to own and run a newspaper. Even before going to Maryland, he had looked over the field. First definite possibility was the Memphis Commercial Appeal, a famous, substantial, old Southern paper which had also been owned and left financially adrift by Luke Lea. In 1935, Silliman persuaded R. W. Morrison, a wealthy Texas oil man and rancher, to help him finance the Commercial Appeal, but while they were negotiating, James Hammond, a former Hearst executive, came along and snapped it up. Later it developed that Hammond was acting for Scripps-Howard, which also owns Memphis' other newspaper, the Press-Scimitar.

Sneaking Up on Nashville

Badly disappointed, Silliman now decided to act alone, and turned his attention closely to the Nashville Tennessean, concerning which an embarrassing storm had just broken around the head of his good friend, Jesse Jones. Jesse and the RFC had pledged themselves never to buy control of any newspaper; nevertheless, early in 1935, the RFC did buy from the liquidator of a closed New Orleans bank—Canal Bank and Trust Company—with whom it was arranging a loan, a \$250,000 block of bonds representing the balance of control of the Tennessean. There were \$500,000 more of the bonds outstanding; \$210,000 were owned by the American National Bank, of Nashville, headed by Paul M. Davis, brother of Roosevelt crony and Ambassador-at-large Norman H. Davis. The rest were scattered ineffectively among North Carolina and Tennessee investors.

The RFC purchase was not made public, but Paul Davis knew about it. So did James Hammond, of the Commercial Appeal, who wanted very much to buy the Tennessean. Hammond, in fact, offered \$200,000—the market value—for the bonds to both the New Orleans liquidator and the RFC. But one day the RFC announced it had resold the bonds to Banker Davis. From Publisher Hammond in Memphis came loud cries that Jesse Jones and Davis were trying to keep control of the paper for their Administration friends. The name of Tennessee's elder statesman, Cordell Hull, was dragged into the argument, because of his close friendship with Paul and Norman Davis.

At this point Jesse's thoughts naturally turned to his little ex-reporter friend who was doing such a good job with Maryland Casualty. He knew Silliman wanted a paper badly. "We sort of sicked him onto it," is the way Jones expresses it now.

But Silliman did not go to Nashville merely to please Jesse Jones. He knew this was the biggest jump of his life, and he planned to land right side up. He made dozens of unheralded "exploratory" trips to Nashville, sitting around hotel lobbies and absorbing stray talk. He paced the city night and day, and picked a spot—off Broadway, over a railroad spur—where an efficient new newspaper plant could be built. Later it turned out this was the exact telephonic center of the city. He subscribed for the Tennessean in



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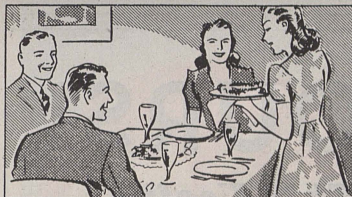
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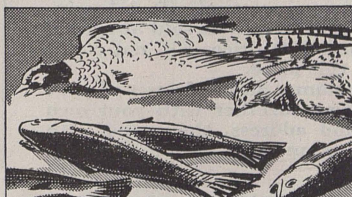
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the name of his secretary, Tom Mc-Nicholas, so folks in Baltimore would not catch on. He had long talks with Paul Davis, who was not at all sure he wanted Silliman to own the Tennessean. Davis is more than satisfied now. Just how much Jesse Jones had to do with convincing him is a matter for interesting speculation. Most important, he talked things over with Mr. Jones. Then came January 7, 1937, when, by court order, the good will and assets of the Tennessean newspapers were to be sold at auction on the courthouse steps in Nashville. Paul Davis stepped up and bid \$850,000. In a room in the Carlton Hotel in Washington, Silliman was pacing up and down in front of a telephone. Only one old reporter friend was with him. The phone rang; Silliman picked it up and listened for a moment. "Well, I've got a baby," he announced, in perhaps the most flustered moment of his life.

For weeks few in Nashville or elsewhere knew the real purchaser of the Tennessean. When Silliman finally took over in April, all the financial details had been ironed out. Many have wondered how a one-time, harum-scarum reporter could swing an \$850,000 deal. Here is how it was done:

Jesse Jones had insisted that \$800,000 in new bonds be issued, to replace the \$750,000 in old ones with their accrued interest. In addition, he asked for \$150,000 in new capital. Silliman, it will be recalled, had once made \$25,000 in a lump on the sale of Southern Air Transport. His salary for ten years had been between \$5,000 and \$15,000, and he had always saved 20 per cent of it. He had some excellent chances to make money in the stock market before 1930, and he did. He was able to put \$75,000 cash into the purchase without seriously straining his resources. The other \$75,000 came from the widow of John M. Branham, long the national-advertising representative of the Tennessean, and owner of Man o' Night, one of the most famous stallions in the United States. The Branham estate, which still sells advertising in the Tennessean and makes good commissions at it, had a special stake in seeing the paper back on its feet. For her \$75,000, Mrs. Branham received a minority of the common stock, which, to date, has paid her handsome dividends. The rest of the stock is owned by Silliman and Tom McNicholas.

Sharing Printer's Ink

The Tennessean has retired \$75,000 of its bonds in the last three years. The outstanding bonds are now owned as follows: one third by the American National Bank, one third by Paul M. Davis, one third by Evans and his friends.

One reason the Tennessean does well is the joint office and printing plant which Silliman and James Geddes Stahlman, of the evening *Banner*, put up in 1938. This is perhaps the outstanding example of joint newspaper operation in the United States, and it has reduced mechanical and maintenance costs for each newspaper enormously. The two papers have a single composing room and pressroom which works twenty-four hours a day. Their editorial departments are so completely separate that they hardly recognize each other's existence. A visitor entering the front door steps into a central lobby; if he turns right he enters the *Banner* and the offices of energetic, carnation-wearing Jimmy Stahlman, who almost

every day prints a column of free verse under his own name on the *Banner's* front page. If he turns left he enters Evans' morning *Tennessean*. So strictly is the border line observed that the two publishers have called on each other only twice in two years.

Silliman's first all-out newspaper battle in Tennessee came in 1938, when he declared war on Gov. Gordon Browning's campaign for renomination. Browning was also opposed by Boss Ed Crump, of Memphis. One day Mr. Crump sent a message to Washington, and Congressman Walter Chandler, an obedient Crumpette, announced he would run against Browning. A few days later Chandler called on Silliman to ask for the Tennessean's support; he supposed the newly arrived publisher would willingly go along with Crump, at least the first time. Silliman quickly disillusioned him. "I'm going to oppose you and Browning too," he told Chandler, who hurried back to Memphis and withdrew from the race.

Making a Governor

Meanwhile a serious, somewhat bashful young state senator named Prentice Cooper walked into the Tennessean offices one night and handed famed Political Reporter Joe Hatcher a sheet of paper. As he started to leave, Hatcher saw it was an announcement that Cooper would run for governor. He hurried after him and brought him back to see Silliman, who took an immediate liking to him. The Tennessean became Cooper's principal supporter, and recently helped him land a second term. Governor Cooper thinks well of Silliman.

The Tennessean under Silliman has also fought for state civil service, abolition of Tennessee's pernicious poll tax—out of the 250,000 population of Nashville and surrounding Davidson County, only 20,000 to 25,000 vote in a national election—and broke up rackets among justices of the peace and state-highway police. Silliman has plenty of critics, and one of their principal complaints is that sometimes his left hand does not seem to know what his right hand is publishing. For instance, during the recent battle in Congress over President Roosevelt's shift of the Civil Aeronautics Authority to the Commerce Department, the Tennessean appeared with a strong editorial praising CAA's independence and insisting it remain so. Next day Sen. Bennett Clark spotted Silliman busily lobbying among Tennessee congressmen for the President's plan. When this was spread on the Congressional Record, Silliman had to explain that the editorial was written while he was away, and that he did not approve it—an embarrassing moment for any publisher.

On the whole, so far as Nashville and his own pocketbook are concerned, Silliman's conduct of the Tennessean is a decided success. But those who know him believe it is only a starter. Having jumped from reporting to air lines to politics to the Post Office Department to insurance and back to newspapers, Silliman is now heeled and eager for another leap. What he is thinking about is more newspapers—especially in the South. Jesse Jones declined to help him buy the neighboring Knoxville *Journal*, because it is a traditionally Republican paper in Republican East Tennessee. But someday, if Silliman's calculations hold, he will be going back to Texas—and it won't be to Joshua.