

# Silent Multitude Pays Last Respects at Bier of Rogers

By VINCENT MAHONEY

A pure democracy, the friends of Will Rogers, gathered yesterday on a high, sun-beaten hill in Forest Lawn and bade America's wise and gentle critic good-by.

There were the high and the low, the mighty and the humble, the socialite and cowboy, present and former Cabinet members and obscure studio technicians; high army and navy dignitaries and corner merchants; polo players and their stableboys; intellectuals and plodders; beautiful women and plain; Jew, Gentile, Cherokee, Irish and mixed.

There were those who had dined with princes and those who had slept in horse stalls. There were men who have their private barbers, and men who had shaved just for yesterday. There was Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr. of the Newport Vanderbilts and Stepin Fetchit of the Harlem Fetchits.

It was the Great American Melting Pot, such a cross-section as probably never had been gathered in one place.

It was a dramatic and convincing last proof that the plain, kindly man they had come to honor had chosen

his friends in high places and low, had grinned his way with all-conquering charm into the palaces and shanties, range camps and drawing-rooms, theaters, cabarets and executive mansions of the world.

**Those who gathered finally at the chapel were only a tiny fraction of those who came.**

From 7 o'clock yesterday morning, when the casket was laid, under its Star Spangled Banner of white and red carnations and blue cornflowers, on the catafalque just inside the gates of the park, until noon, when it was removed, 49,922 persons filed by to pay their last respects.

The scene was one of surpassing dignity, peace and beauty. A grove of small fir trees had been transplanted to the green knoll under the olive and eucalyptus trees, overlooking the little lake where the fountain played high in the sunshine and the swans sailed with slow grace through the filmy rainbows in the spray.

**On the knoll lay the catafalque, bearing the red, white and blue flowered casket. Seven enlisted men of the air service stood guard, flanked by one brown youth in the gray-blue of the flying cadets.**

The enlisted men wore black bras-

sards on their khaki sleeves. All stood at attention, motionless as statues, until they were relieved.

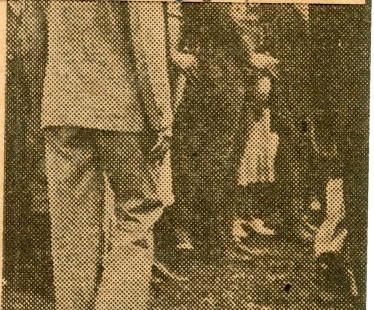
The guard was changed every half hour.

The honor guard of airmen was regarded as singularly appropriate in view of Rogers' deep conviction that the future of the country was inevitably bound in the future of its aviation, a conviction for which he laid down his life.

There were persons there Wednesday night, dozing in blankets until yesterday's dawn, and at 7 o'clock they were massed three blocks deep in the streets. Automobiles extended far down San Fernando road and Los Feliz boulevard.

For five hours they filed steadily

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and a bugler sounded "Taps"

# Sorrowing Friends From Every Walk of Life Mingle Tears

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through, pausing a moment before the catafalque, then moving out to make room for those behind.

**A**MONG the thousands who passed in silent and reverent tribute before the bier of Will Rogers yesterday were mothers and children from every walk of life, softly sobbing out their grief for a beloved friend.

At 12:30, 40 airmen formed in lines of four before the bier. Ten of their fellows slid the casket from its base and wheeled to take their places behind their comrades.

They marched, half-time, to the waiting hearse, and the procession wound slowly up the hillside to the Wee Kirk o' the Heather.

**Amon Carter, Fort Worth publisher, and Oscar Lawlor, Beverly Hills attorney, both Rogers' close friends, brought up the rear of the procession.**

At the little chapel, the cortege moved from the road into the sacristy through a gantlet of uniformed deputies, at salute, as the organ softly rolled out "Old Faithful," Rogers' favorite song, later sung at the services.

## FLOWERS AND FLOWERS

Inside the chapel and out were the flowers, such flowers as few had ever seen. They filled the sanctuary and sacristy and overflowed onto the lawn. The path was lined with them.

On the sward was a brave and beautiful cross of blossoms, 50 by 30 feet, made of smaller wreaths, topped by flaming dahlias.

There was everything from the five-foot-tall Grecian urn of gardenias, to the little spray of sweet peas bound with a dingy lariat and bearing the card: "To Bill, from Omar; just passing through."

All, rich and poor, had brought their offerings.

There was an almost-life-size polo pony in white carnations, complete with saddle and stirrups, riderless and with drooping head, from the Uplifters, Rogers polo club.

## FLOWERS—MORE FLOWERS

Riviera Polo and Country Club sent a great horseshoe of white carnations, gardenias and lilies of the valley. Charlie Chaplin had sent a great mound of gladiolas, golden Talisman roses and chrysanthemums. Colleen Moore sent orchids. The Soviet government sent a great shield of gardenias.

Inside, the casket lay just before the altar. At its right was a wreath of lilies of the valley, sent by Mrs. Wiley Post, who was bereaved with the Rogers family when her husband's plane failed last Thursday and crashed into the frozen Alaskan tundra.

Next this was a huge sombrero and lariat in carnations, under a huge broken column of gardenias. At the left of the altar lay huge wreaths, above it the insignia of the flying corps, the center worked out in cornflowers, the wings in silvered leaves.

## TOKEN OF TRIBESMEN

The Cherokee Indians, of whom Rogers' great-grandfather was one, had sent a great mass of gardenias, roses, orchids and dahlias, and this was placed near the casket.

The last Rogers' gesture was this: At Mrs. Rogers' request, the wreaths were disassembled immediately after the funeral and sent out last night to the hospitals and shut-ins over all the city.

By 1:30 yesterday afternoon the invited few began filing into the Wee Kirk o' the Heather for the final rites. They included:

Gen. H. H. Arnold, Postmaster-General James A. Farley and Rear Admiral William P. Tarrant, representing the President; Dorothy Arzner; Tex and Mrs. Austin; "Snowy" Baker, the polo player; Frank and Mrs. Borzage, Joe E. and Mrs. Brown, John Mack Brown, Billie Burke, David Butler, Eddie Cantor, Harry and Mrs. Carey, Leo Carrillo, Charlie Chaplin, Irvin S. Cobb, Walt Disney, Henry Duffy, Amelia Earhart, Stepin Fetchit, Clark Gable, Samuel and Mrs. Goldwyn, Sid Grauman and his mother, Raymond Griffith, William S. Hart, Will Hays, Jack Holt and Rupert Hughes.

Carl Laemmle, George McManus, Rabbi Edgar F. Magnin, Louis B. and Mrs. Mayer, Mary Pickford, Lyle Puckett, Chic and Mrs. Sale, Joseph Schenck, Harry F. Sinclair, Fred Stone, Mrs. Stone and daughters, Irving Thalberg, Spencer Tracy,

Cal. and Mrs. Roscoe Turner, Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr., Rob and Mrs. Wagner, Walter Wanger, Sol and Mrs. Wurtzel, Darryl Zanuck and Patricia Ziegfeld.

The family arrived shortly before 2 o'clock and were escorted down the gantlet of officers, whose bodies formed a close screen against cameras. Mrs. Rogers was bowed, but calm, as she walked in on the arm of Will Rogers Jr., followed by other members of the family.

Services began with soft organ music, followed by prayer and invocation by the Rev. J. Whitcomb Brougher, Glendale Baptist minister and Rogers' close friend. He read:

"I am the way and the life. I am the resurrection. He that believeth in Me shall live, though he be dead. He that believeth in Me shall never die. . .

"In my Father's house are many  
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## Arkansas Recalls Aid of Rogers

LITTLE ROCK, Aug. 22.—(U.P.)—Gov. J. Marion Futrell proclaimed a state half holiday today in honor of Will Rogers, who gave days of his time last year to raise relief funds for Arkansas drouth victims.

State offices closed at noon and the capitol flag was half staffed. "Arkansas can never forget the kind acts of Will Rogers during the trials and tribulations of the drouth of 1930," the Governor said.

"He came into our state and gave his time to help raise funds to relieve our suffering."

"Arkansas' grief for him is poignant and sincere."

## Claremore in Last Tribute To Son

CLAREMORE, Okla., Aug. 22.—(U.P.)—Claremore today paid final tribute to Will Rogers, who carried this Oklahoma town to international renown as his home.

Thousands of persons gathered at Will Rogers Airport, where Congressman Josh Lee delivered a eulogy.

Many relatives, near and distant, of Rogers were there.

A move was under way to erect a memorial to Rogers here. Donations and offers of funds are pouring in on city officials. The City Council will meet tomorrow to name a committee to handle the offers.

All business was at a standstill for the memorial services.

Late today the Memorial Park chimes in Tulsa tolled for five minutes in memory of Rogers and Post.

A special detachment of 75 Tulsa police was on hand to handle the immense jam of traffic on highways leading into Claremore, the greatest traffic crush the city has experienced.

## Arizonians Join Naming Move

KINGMAN, Ariz., Aug. 22.—(U.P.)—A resolution, urging that U. S. Highway No. 56 be named for Will Rogers as a "lasting tribute to an American who made Americans happier," was passed today by the Mohave County Chamber of Commerce.

The resolution, indorsing the suggestion of J. D. Underwood of Tulsa, Okla., sponsor of the plan, was to be sent to other Chambers of Commerce in cities along the highway.

Claremore, Okla., Rogers' home town and his California ranch are on the highway.

# Children Sob At Bier of Rogers

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mansions. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again. . ."

A quartet sang "O Gentle Presence" and Dr. Brougher gave his eulogy.

John Boles' soft, full voice rose in, "Old Faithful," a song as unpretentious and warm-hearted as the man lying under the flowered flag. Tears sprang to a hundred pair of eyes. He sang:

"Old Faithful, we rode the range together,

"Old Faithful, in every kind of weather.

"When your round-up days are over

"There'll be pastures white with clover

"For you, Old Faithful, pal of mine."

Followed the last prayer and benediction, and it was over.

The organ softly sounded "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and the friends of Will Rogers, a stricken fraternity, stepped down the flagged walk and into the barren sunshine.

And in the line were Eddie Cantor, Irvin Cobb and Joe E. Brown, men who had made fortunes out of laughter; and William S. Hart and Guinn

(Big Boy) Williams, who had made their fame as "toughs."

And their faces were stained as from inner weeping.

## Rogers, the Man, Extolled by Hughes

Will Rogers' amazing hold on the affections of his countrymen was shown hundreds of times yesterday, but nowhere more intensely than in the Hollywood Bowl memorial service.

Nearly 10,000 persons trudged into the broiling amphitheater to hear kind words intoned and brave songs sung in tribute to their ideal American.

Rupert Hughes, the author, interpreted the mourning spirit in this way:

"A national deluge of eulogies has poured out upon this man to an extent probably never equaled in the history of the world, because never before were there such facilities for pouring out eulogies and never before in the history of mankind has a human being gained and held so large an audience."

**WORDS WING OVER RADIO**

While Hughes spoke, radio was taking his words to listeners on an eastern network.

In explaining why Will Rogers was the force he became in America, Hughes went to the Declaration of Independence for "that old statement that we are created equal, which every man makes fun of."

"That feeling," he said, "actuated Will Rogers. He always felt he was as good as anybody, as good as any king, as any millionaire, as any man of high social position, and any man as good as he.

"He rode through the world, through life, a cowboy, yipping at dignity, throwing his lariat on anyone riding a high horse, dragging him off his high horse into the dust. But he dragged himself into the dust with the rider and he was always laughing when he struck the dust, and they were laughing with him . . .

"That is the greatness of such a man as Will Rogers. He was a soldier in times of peace.

**LAMENT OF EULOGIST**

"God help this country when it has no horseplay comedian, nobody who lacks respect for those high up; nobody who is willing to dress shabbily and shuffle into a distinguished company and put it where it belongs, which is right down on earth where we all came from."

Conrad Nagel paid his tribute, too, and Lawrence Tibbett his in music, a solo, "By a Bier Side."

The Hollywood American Legion band played "Nearer My God To Thee," "Funeral Dirge" and "The Land of Kingdom Come."

The Rev. Cleveland Kleihauer spoke a benediction; a mysterious small, white airplane came out of somewhere, circled over the Bowl, and flew away back into somewhere.

And then the crowd—that composite of folk to whom Will Rogers' voice was that of a neighbor—went home.

# 'He Was of Us, for Us'

**"T**HERE are many echoes, but only now and then an original voice . . ."

"Measured by any one of a half dozen standards, one of the very greatest men America ever has produced. . . ."

"Like a rubber ball bounding on a clean wall, he threw out his thoughts and they rebounded to you without taint or soil upon your heart and soul. . . ."

"He could forgive our sins while he made us laugh at our mistakes. . . ."

"His place in the hearts of the people of our nation is secure, because of his sacrificing spirit and helpful ministry to the various needs of mankind. . . ."

These phrases, from the eulogy of Will Rogers spoken by Dr. J. Whitcomb Brougher, went home to those who sat yesterday in the Wee Kirk o' the Heather.

Dr. Brougher, a close friend of the Rogers family, spoke with deep emotion of Will Rogers. His voice broke when he said:

"Our loved one and friend has gone on a little while ahead of us.

"Will Rogers loved people. He loved the things that people loved. He loved to make people happy. He loved to help bear the burdens of his brother.

"No wonder people gladly heard and read what he had to say. No wonder they flocked in crowds to see him when he appeared upon the stage or platform, for they wanted to know more intimately the man whose voice and writings had cheered them out of their depression and inspired them with higher hopes and ideals. . . ."

"He was of us all and for us all, and so in turn we were all for him, and his passing wrenches the chords of every heart."

## Arlington Burial For Rogers Blocked

WASHINGTON, Aug. 22.—(U.P.)—Bertrand H. Snell, Republican leader, received a thundering ovation in the House today when he blocked a resolution to authorize burial of Will Rogers in Arlington National Cemetery.

Snell said it "hurt and embarrassed" him to object to the resolution.

"I was a friend of Will Rogers," he said, "but, so far as I can find, such a thing has never been done before.

"It is true that Lincoln's little boy was buried there, but that was during the time Lincoln was commander-in-chief of the U. S. Army.

"If we make an exception now, there will be other requests later as other great men die. The soil of Arlington is hallowed ground, reserved exclusively for those who have served in the nation's armed forces. I am forced to object."

Democrats joined Republicans in applauding Snell when he concluded.

## Governor Tingley Represented by Maj. Moss

As the personal representative of Governor Clyde Tingley of New Mexico, Major Todd R. Moss, former public relations director of the LACRA, came here yesterday to attend the funeral of Will Rogers.

Major Moss is chief of the legal department of the New Mexico Emergency Relief Administration.

"Will Rogers was a close friend of Governor Tingley," Major Moss declared. "Shortly before Will started on his ill-fated trip to Alaska, he called on the governor. Governor Tingley regretted deeply that it was impossible for him to come to Los Angeles for the funeral."

Major Moss will leave tomorrow for Santa Fe.