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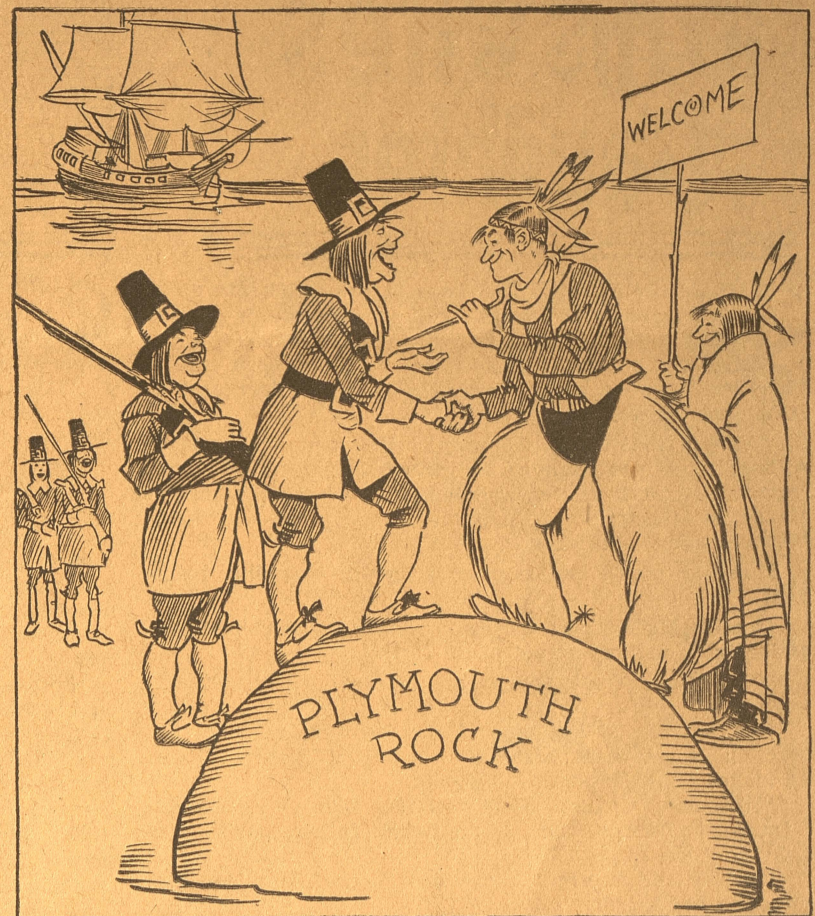
# Will Rogers' Funniest Wise-Cracks

## Examples of the Shrewd Philosophy and Homely Wit and Humor That Made Him World Famous



Of the Songwriters of "Tin-Pan Alley," Rogers Wrote That They Should Be Segregated and Made to Sing Their Songs to Themselves. (Illustration from "Will Rogers' Illiterate Digest." Copyright by Albert & Charles Boul.)

THE AMERICAN WEEKLY on this page presents nuggets of the odd genius that raised Will Rogers to the position of America's best-known humorist. Part Cherokee Indian and born in Indian Territory, he was for some years a small time actor until he and his twisting lariat joined the Ziegfeld Follies. As he spun his rope, Rogers "wise-cracked" to the audience and in a short time became the star of the show. Later he entered the movies, but always was best known for his newspaper articles, books and radio speeches, which had carried him to the peak of American humor when he, with Wiley Post, the equally famous aviator, was killed in an aeroplane accident in Alaska recently.



Rogers Was Part Indian and Proud of It. Once He said: "Maybe my ancestors didn't come over on the Mayflower, but they met the boat."

WE CALL Rome the seat of culture, but somebody stole the chair.

We are a Nation that runs in spite of and not on account of our Government.

I know Englishmen that have had the same well-bred butler all their lives and they are just as rude as they ever were.

A bunch of American Tourists were hissed and stoned yesterday in France, but not until they had finished buying.

I didnt know before I got there and they told me all this—that Rome had Senators. Now I know why it declined.

It is the open season now in Europe for grouse and Americans. They shoot the grouse and put them out of their misery.

As to Tourists: You can tell a Tourist after a long tour; they have held a Guidebook in one hand so long they have learned to do everything with the other hand.

I tried to find out who the Barbarians were. From the best I could learn, Barbarians were people who stole from you. If you stole from the Barbarians you were indexed in your History as a Christian.

About nine-tenths of the stuff going on under the guise of Art is the Banana Oil. They call it Art to get to take off the clothes. When you ain't nothing else you are an Artist. It's the one thing you can claim to be and nobody can prove you ain't.

Ziegfeld took Michaelangelo's statues, took some of the fat off them with a diet of lamb chops and pineapples, and he and a Confederate named Ben Ali Hagen brought the statues to life, only with better figures, and the only marbie about them was from the ears north.

About Goat Milk: The greatest gag over here anywhere (in Italy), is the Goats they have driving around the streets in place of milk wagons. You drink Goat's milk steady for two weeks and you can butt your way into a Bronx local.

It's why so many Singers and Tenors come from Italy. There's no voice advancement in Cow Juice. It's the shrill bleat of the Nanny that brings out all that is worst in a Tenor.

Concerning Senators: We got a lot of Senators that have been elected on nothing but a Slogan, but what have they cost us after they got it?

It ain't the initial cost of a Senator that we have to look out for, but his upkeep after we get him in there. He may be the deciding vote on an appropriation bill that will cost the country more than a hundred high-priced men would.

You take a fellow that has never juggled with real jack and he don't know the value of it, a billion and a million sound so much alike that he thinks all the difference is just in the spelling.

From "Letters of a Self-Made Diplomat to His President." Republished by Special Permission of the Saturday Evening Post Copyright by Albert & Charles Boul.

GRAMMAR and I get along like a Russian and a bathtub.

The Mongolians attacked and absorbed China until the supply of Mongolians gave out.

Concerning Lady Astor: Every time she comes to the show I try to get her to stand up and take a bow, but she won't. And over in the House of Commons they can't get her to sit down.

Americans are getting like a Ford car—they all have the same parts, the same upholstery and make exactly the same noises.

Russian men wear their shirts hanging outside their pants. Well, any nation that don't know enough to stick their shirt tail in will never get anywhere.

Any man that knows enough to say nothing always wins the admiration of those of us who feel that we can do the talking much better than he can anyway.

I see by the papers that they are going to change the name of Hoover Dam. That is the silliest thing I ever heard of in politics. They are going to take the name of Hoover away from that Dam. All right, if they feel that way about it, I don't see why they don't just transfer the two names.

War-torn Europe had a chance to chuckle in 1914 when Rogers, then in the Midnight Follies in New York, made

this comment on Ford's peace ship to Europe:

"If he'll take these girls we got right here in this show and let 'em wear the same costumes and march 'em down between the trenches, believe me, the boys will be out of the trenches by Christmas."

From General Sources:

I AM not so strong on art myself as a commodity. Athens, Greece, was mangy with art. Now they ain't eating regular.

Argentina exports wheat, meat and gigolos, and the United States puts a tariff on the wrong two.

The minute you read something and you can't understand it, you can almost be sure it was drawn up by a lawyer.

Proposing something in a debate is just about like writing a letter to your Congressman — nothing ever comes of it.

They got a great idea over there in Russia. They divide everything up—but nobody had anything to divide in the first place.

An aside to Mrs. Coolidge: Well, Grace, you can imitate Cal's voice better'n me, but look what you had to go through to learn it.

England has more money invested in dress suits and dinner jackets than America has plows and farming utensils.

While traveling on an English boat Mr. Rogers radioed: "I have misplaced my dress suit and letters of introduction, so haven't eaten anything or met any one."

The only real function of diplomats is in deceiving their own people after their own dumbness has got them into a war.

Reviewing Huey Long's all-night Senate filibuster, Rogers remarked: At that point he pulled the biggest and most educational novelty ever introduced in the Senate. He read 'em the Constitution of the U. S. A lot of 'em thought he was reviewing a new book.

To a sightseer at his California home: See those pretty, white fences? Every one surrounds a mortgage.

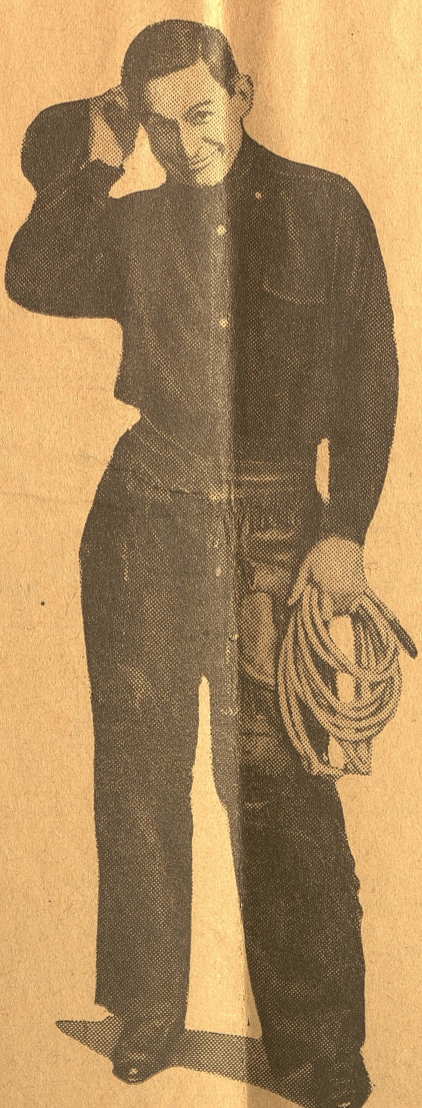
The first wise-crack that brought Rogers fame was in a Wild West show at the old Garden. He didn't mean to be funny, but while swinging his lariat, he drawled: "Swinging a rope is all right if your neck ain't in it." Everybody laughed and that started him off as a humorist.

Now about the gold standard—do you know whether you are on the gold or off the gold? If you don't know, feel in your pocket. If you are still in doubt, feel in your teeth. If you have none in your pocket and none in your teeth, Brother, you are off the gold, that is all.

People often ask me, "Will, where do you get your jokes?" I just tell them, "Well, I just watch the Government and report the facts, that is all I do, and I don't even find it necessary to exaggerate."



The Last Photograph of Will Rogers.



Will Rogers as He Was When Twirling the Lasso and Wise-Cracking in Ziegfeld's Follies.

IF the Father of our Country, George Washington, was Tutankhamened tomorrow, and after being aroused from his tomb, was told that the American people today spend two Billion Dollars yearly on Bathing Material, he would say: "WHAT GOT 'EM SO DIRTY?"

Regarding Luck and Work: It's the four-leaf clover that brings home the bacon.

George M. Cohan wore out more Flags than a war waving them to music.

I think they (Songwriters) are in a class with the After Dinner Speakers. They should be like Vice used to be in some

towns. They should be segregated off to themselves and not allowed to associate with people at all, and should be made to sing these songs to each other. That's the only way you will ever do away with the Songwriting business.

—From "Will Rogers' Illiterate Digest." Copyright by Albert & Charles Boul.

I WAS gonna write a book about the war, but I heard some fellow had already done it.

The Russians make mighty good husbands. If the wives raise anything, why, the husbands are perfectly willing to take it to town and sell it.

Now the President says we are going to recognize the Czecho-Slovaks. We may recognize them, but we will never pronounce them.

The President would have taken a Senator with him to the Peace Conference but couldn't find one that had a dress suit.

France wants to get in on the debt settlement. On account of them paying nothing, as it is, under the new settlement we are to start paying them.

The old dukes and duchesses can converse in a lot of languages, but they're not strong on making a living in any of them.

Depression ain't nothing but old man interest just gnawing away at us. It's been better if we'd let the first guy foreclose on us and shrunk instead of trying to expand.

I HEARD King George make a speech in 1930. I was over to the Disarmament Conference. I have a habit of going to all those—that is my pleasure. Some people go to baseball games, some go to other things, I go for my laughs and things just to the Disarmament Conferences. And I went there and the King made a wonderful speech. When he made his speech—here is something funny I'll never forget—he stood in front of a chair, and we all stood up during his speech. Then he walked out and we still stood, and then four men came in and carried this chair out. We didn't know what it was. Well, it was the Crown Chair. What had happened was, he saw the American delegation sitting there, he had gone out, and when he got outside, you know, he happened to think of this chair and think of this delegation and of the way Americans are always curio-hunting, and he says "Boys, go back and get that chair, will you, and bring it here?" I'll never forget that.

ROOSEVELT swept the country like a new tooth paste.

Congress is really just children that has never grown up.

Russia has a embassy in London; its kind of an unofficial one. They recognize Russia just enough to sell 'em something. It's a sorter "You can stay as long as we are doing business, but socially we have lost your address."

As to Progress: Speaking about that Century of Progress Exhibition out in Chicago. It is misnamed. I can't figure whether we made any progress in the last 100 years or not. I think they ought to call it "What the last 100 years has done to us."

For instance, you take in 1833, did you know that we only had 36 Senators, and the evil has grown now until we have 96? Did you know there wasn't such a thing as a stenographer in 1833. Every Congress-man could write them.

Then, did you know that 100 years ago we were still on the gold standard? Did you know that 100 years ago Europe didn't owe us anything? We were smart enough to owe them. I tell you, the older we get the dumber we get.

Did you know that there was no golf in this country? It was still in Scotland, and the Democrats got in and lowered the tariff, and the Scotchmen brought it over here. Since they have got it over here, now, the Americans have become just as stingy as the Scotchmen and just as big liars as the Irish.

These are a few of the things. Did you know that there wasn't any chamber of commerce or luncheon speakers 100 years ago? And a Jap then was a curiosity and not a menace. Then, you lived until you died and not until you were just run over.

Running a Mock Session of the Senate.

THE Senate of the United States will now come to order. It is fortunate that we are holding this session of the Senate in this beautiful hotel, to give a lot of you Senators a chance to get in here that never would have got in any other way.

To show you how the New Deal here is working, there must be 1,500 people in the hall here. It gives you an idea of the unemployed that are here now. Mr. John Nance Garner, you just stay sitting right where you are in the front row. You will have nothing to do with the running of this meeting. I am running this outfit here. I don't want you to go to sleep as usual, either, because this is one speech you haven't heard a hundred times. You have heard worse speeches but you have never heard this one. After this meeting is over, I have some very good news for you, you can get right back to your regular business. There's going to be a poker game as soon as this is over.

Order! I want order here in the House. Huey Long. Quit prowling around there. Sit down somewhere, sit down. Come on, Huey, find your place to rest. If you can't find your place to rest, I am sure there is people in your home State of Louisiana that will be glad to dig you a space to rest.

Order in the court. Huey, don't you even look like you want to make a speech here tonight? Wait a minute. I have just got a bill from the White House. We will have the usual procedure with it. We won't read it. Nobody knows what it is, and we'll vote on it in the usual way. All in favor say, "aye," all those opposed say, "no." The "ayes" have it.

No, wait a minute. We have just a small gathering of Republican Senators here. I'll fix a place over here for them in the pantry over here. Maybe a little later on there will be a few bankers that I'll have to put in with you Republicans, but you can watch them yourselves. You boys will set there and be quite, and I am sure that if you will behave yourselves, the management won't make any holler about your being here.

Order in the court. Wait a minute. I just received another bill from the White House. There's something the matter—they are coming awfully slow today. We'll vote on this bill in the usual way. It won't be read. I don't know what it is. All in favor say "aye," all those opposed say "no." The bill is passed.

From radio talks transcribed by the Gulf Refining Company for whom Will Rogers broadcast.

I know a lot of you will say—we must preserve the Union, you know. I have heard that. We must preserve the Union. Well, we say—the Union is well preserved right now. It's pretty near pickled.

His Self-Written Obituary.

WHEN I die my epitaph or whatever you call those signs on gravestones, is going to read, "I joked about every prominent man of my time, but I never met a man I didn't like." I am proud of that. I can hardly wait to die so it can be carved. And when you come around to my grave you'll probably find me sitting there proudly reading it.