

# OUR WILL: *The Life Story Of Will Rogers* By Scott Cunningham

## EIGHTEENTH INSTALLMENT.

"The trouble with us in this depression is America is just muscle-bound from holding a steering wheel. The only place we are caloused from work is the bottom of our driving toe.

"We got everything, yet we are starving to death. We are the first nation in the world to go to the poor house in an automobile."

With sparks of wit like these, which he struck off in a radio broadcast the night of Oct. 19, 1931, Will Rogers lighted the gloom of the depression of the land. It was everywhere assumed the light of his wit would brighten our lives for many more years.

After a trip to Mexico City, where he played polo and visited Ex-President Calles, the cowboy actor went to Portland, Ore., and left with Floyd Gibbons on a steamer for the Orient.

## Will 'Very Long Distance Reporter'

"Ambassador Bill" was Will's picture then being released, and on arriving at Yokohama he made it a point to be a good ambassador. He complimented his hosts.

The Japanese were gobbling up Manchuria but he discreetly reserved comment. Asked what he had in mind to do in Manchuria, where he was headed, he told them, "If there is a war, to do some very long-distance reporting."

Will and Gibbons were soon in Dairen, Manchuria. After a quick survey of the country, Will took a boat to Tientsin in China. There he encountered some United States Marines.

"Marines are not soldiers; they are tourists!" Will exclaimed before moving on to Peking. He went thence by train to Shanghai, and after a series of plane-hops, arrived in London, England, to meet his wife. He took her to Geneva, to the 1932 "Disarmament Follies."

"There is a lot of nations here willing to throw away two spears and a shield for every battleship we sink," he wired home.

Will returned to making pictures, and was scheduled to appear in at least one film every three months.

His old producer, Ziegfeld, was trying to achieve a financial comeback by way of radio, and obtained Will for four broadcasts, starting May 8, 1932. Will's first talk was picked up from Hollywood and ran overtime so much it threw out of schedule the part of the show coming from New York. The second time he talked and didn't stop at the end of five minutes he was cut off.

"That's the last radio I do in a long time," said Will, who was properly peeved.

## They Won't Forget Convention Speech

On Oct. 4, 1932, he left California by plane, and in three weeks had completed an air tour of South America. At Buenos Aires he told a dinner audience:

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

In Rio de Janeiro he explained, "After all I might stay here, but Clara Bow has cabled me, asking me to rush home. She's lonesome."

In his next turn, at picture-making Will was filmed in "State Fair," probably the most popular picture in which he ever figured. Co-starred with him was a 900-pound hog—"Blue Boy."

Will reported both national conventions of 1932 for the McNaught Syndicate, beginning with the Republicans in Chicago. Of their liquor plank Will wrote: "It's dry in the morning and becomes wetter as afternoon wears on."

The Democratic convention followed in the same city. Will on a never-to-be-forgotten day was called upon to speak, and he kept the delegates roaring with laughter for half an hour.

"Now don't go away from this convention and say we nominated the weakest man," he

I, WILL ROGERS, hereby publish and declare my Will:

My wife's name is Betty Rogers; I have only three children now living, namely: Will Rogers, Jr., James Rogers and Mary Rogers.

I give, devise and bequeath all of my property, both community and otherwise, unto my said wife, Betty Rogers.

In the event my wife shall not survive me, I give, devise and bequeath all of my estate unto my said children who shall survive me, share and share alike; provided, however, that should any of my said children predecease me, leaving issue, the share to which such deceased child would have been entitled if living, I give, devise and bequeath to his or her issue.

I hereby appoint my wife, Betty Rogers, C. K. Beasley, of Beverly Hills, Oscar Lawler and James E. Blake, as Executors hereof; should my wife not survive me, I appoint my said son, Will Rogers, Jr., in her place as such executor, and direct that no bond be required of my said wife or son as such executor.

Dated August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1935.

*Will Rogers*

The foregoing instrument, consisting of one (1) page only, was, at the date thereof, by the said Will Rogers, signed, sealed and published as, and declared to be, his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who at his request, and in his presence, and in the presence of each other, have subscribed our names as witnesses thereto.

*Ewing Walcott*  
Residing at *Vimeta Okla.*

*L. W. Vail*  
Residing at *Jaloma Ranch Okla.*

A PHOTOGRAPHIC COPY OF THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF WILL ROGERS. THE will was filed for probate at Los Angeles Aug. 28. It was dated Aug. 3, 1935, and left everything to his wife, Mrs. Betty Blake Rogers.—Associated Press Photo.

laughed. "I don't see how we can get one that weak. All he has got to do is just live till November and he's in."

After the voting on candidates started, it lasted all night. At 6 o'clock on the morning of July 1 the cowboy actor, his son and Frank Murphy of Will's syndicate were half-dozing during a rollcall when a delegation chairman announced: "Oklahoma casts 22 votes for Will Rogers!"

"Wh-wh-what?" cried Will, awakening. It took him a moment to realize what had happened, and then, seizing on the opportunity to get a laugh from the situation, he hinted to the other candidates, "Well, I am open for offers."

## Presented Roosevelt at Los Angeles

In September Mr. Roosevelt visited Los Angeles, where Will introduced him to 90,000 persons in the Olympic Stadium. "I knew him when he first began nominating Al Smith."

On May 1, 1933, a year after his ill-fated broadcasts for Mr. Ziegfeld, the cowboy turned Sunday night commentator for an oil company, Mr. Roosevelt had just gone into office and Will said: "He is the Houdini of Hyde Park. Even if he only gets one hand loose, he is a fast worker."

Will was on the air in the Fall and Winter of 1933-34. On Sunday night, Feb. 25, 1934, he delivered his famous broadcast about the airmail controversy then raging. He said President Roosevelt and Colonel Lindbergh, up till then in disagreement, should "get together, because they would learn a lot from each other."

When he spoke of the crash of a United Air Lines plane in Wyoming his voice broke. Tears came to his eyes when he related: "I knew the pilot, Anderson, and the stewardess, Miss Carter, who were both killed. They flew me from Salt Lake City to Cheyenne last Monday, on the same trip that they crashed on Friday."

Listeners were on the edges of their seats when he concluded: "Anyway, I'm going to keep on flying."

The part of Nat Miller in Eugene O'Neill's play, "Ah, Wilderness," gave Will Rogers his first opportunity to do a serious job of acting on the legitimate stage.

## Gets Ovation in 'Ah, Wilderness'

George M. Cohan starred in the New York production of the O'Neill play. Will flew East and saw him, then opened in San Francisco the last night of April, 1934. The house was packed, and so successfully did Will play the part of the small-town father that after the play's conclusion he received an ovation rarely equaled.

Will's work in "Ah, Wilderness" definitely improved his picture acting. He became less the rural philosopher before the camera, and more the actor. The change for the better was evident in "Judge Priest," "The County Chairman," and "Life Begins at Forty."

Will took his wife and two sons to Russia in the Summer of 1934. When he passed through Claremore, Okla., on his way home, he had this to say about the Soviet land just visited: "They've got a great idea over there. They divide everything up. The only trouble is, they didn't have anything to divide."

On Nov. 25, 1934, Will and his wife celebrated their twenty-sixth wedding anniversary with a few intimate friends at their Santa Monica ranch house. Betty Rogers' mind that evening must have gone back to the time when she was Betty Blake and a tall young cowboy roped a steer in front of her brother-in-law's house in Oologah, in an effort to win her attention. The horse fell and his rider skidded almost to her feet. "Are you hurt?" she asked anxiously.

"Naw," said Will, rising. "Didn't get a scratch." He was happy because he had found he could gain her sympathetic interest.

Will attended Vice President Garner's dinner to the President in Washington last January. He also spoke at the Gridiron Club dinner, and took a rap at the project to make this country a member of the World Court. In a radio address a few days later he said: "If 50 countries can't make it work, it don't seem like 51 can."

## Then Came Flight With Wiley Post

In a radio address broadcast to England, he suggested that King George and Queen Mary visit the United States. "Maybe we can make some arrangements with you so we can get back with you," he said. "We Americans over here have bit off a little more liberty than we can handle."

Will made more pictures, continued steadily with his daily and Sunday newspaper articles and then in the middle of July talk was heard that he planned to join Wiley Post in a flight to Alaska, that might extend around the world. Will and Wiley took off together once, presumably for Alaska, and came down

in New Mexico. How much better if that practice flight with the new plane had been the end of the adventure!

But on Aug. 7 they really flew to Juneau, with Will telling reporters before he left: "You know, I've got to get a polo team going at the Matanuska colony. It's the only thing the Democrats haven't done for those colonists."

They reached the colony and Will reported his findings in his last daily dispatch.

They must have flown through considerable fog during that afternoon of Aug. 15. When they saw Eskimo tents they came down and Will stepped out to ask the way to Point Barrow. Nobody knows exactly what happened to the motor when they took off again. It could have been an air lock in the gasoline line.

The plane rose 50 feet and as Wiley banked it the engine died. The Eskimo witness said he could hear the click of the controls as the desperate Post worked to avert the crash.

Thus ended the lives of two brave men, sacrificed in the cause of aviation.

(THE END.)

(Copyright, 1935, by the McNaught Syndicate, Inc.)

SE FALL ...



ALL SIZES  
30 New  
Patterns  
to Choose  
From


Mail Orders Add 15c

**WALSH'S**  
DEPARTMENT STORE

**Mufti** 30c-40c  
all  
Druggists  
PERFECT HOME CLEANER

**TEETHINA** Moves My Bowels Gently - Softly

"Me and TEETHINA are mighty good friends because when I'm temporarily constipated, TEETHINA fixes me right up. It moves my little bowels without a wee bit of strain and cleanses my stomach of poisonous waste. My mama says a whole lot of other little folks like me also take TEETHINA for colic due to sour stomach and for diarrhea caused by improper feeding. TEETHINA goes down easily because it tastes pleasant. You can buy a package from your drug store man for just 30c."



VC-6

Compliments From Those We Serve

We treat compliments remarks voiced to us by persons whom we help gratifying services give satisfaction.

Many families for smoothness conducted by efficient, and personnel.



**HAR**  
m