

Provincial New York

By Betty Kirk, '28

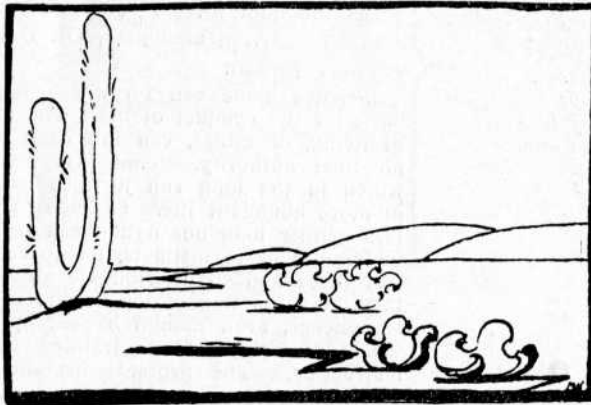
Illustrations by

Dorothy Kirk, '23

NO man is more provincial than the New Yorker and no where is the New Yorker more provincial than in his attitude toward the westerner.

That New York is the Alpha and Omega of American culture is one of the current myths. This is the belief of the majority of young artists throughout the United States but it is nowhere more devoutly accepted and touted than by the residents of Manhattan Island.

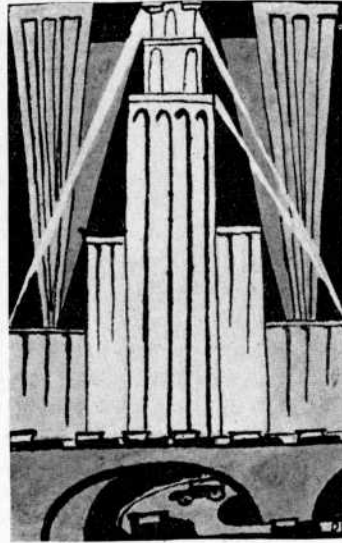
That this conception is false may



New York's Seekers Come from Land Like This

be seen from a brief review of the genesis of the "New Yorkers" who are proudest of the name. Herbert Asbury, author of "Hatrack" and "The Gangs of New York" is from Little Rock. "Bide" Dudley, dramatic critic of the New York Evening World, is from Kansas. Heywood Broun, accepted by many as the acme of Gotham sophistication made his name as a sports writer in Denver; and our own Burton Rascoe hails from Shawnee.

The list continues with birthplaces recorded as Podunk and Green Falls and Paris, Texas. Not only did the great spring from such sources however, they also remained within them until some degree of fame beckoned them out.



In Skyscraper Land

It is recognition which summons the "New Yorkers" to New York. Recognition in the form of checks and publishers and contracts.

Analyzed, this condition is simply that the "New Yorkers" make their names in the west and sell them in the east. With such an understanding Manhattan assumes its proper place in the cultural sphere. It is the market place and not the breeding place for genius.

The westerner himself is greatly to blame for this misplaced emphasis. His first action when he reaches the east is to "go native." His ac-

cent becomes what he supposes is New Englandish but what is in reality the New Englander's poor imitation of Oxford speech. His clothes lose their vigorous western colors and match the dun of the smoke grimed buildings of the Island. His contempt for the home town is only surpassed by the actual New Yorker's contempt for this pseudo metropolitan.

During an eight month's stay in New York among the two or three hundred persons I met only two were actual

Like Circe, It Attracts the Guileless American Who is Seeking to Sell His Name There

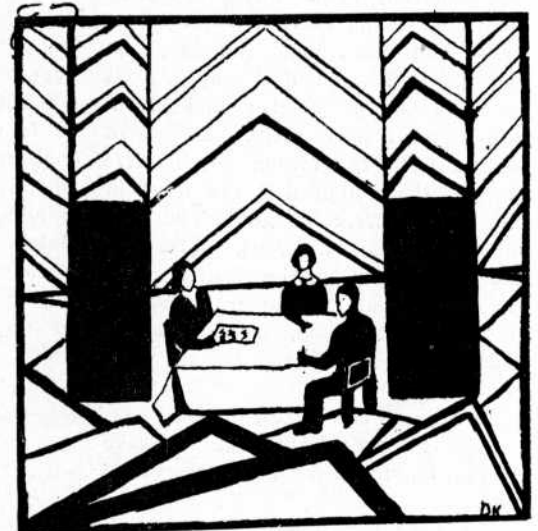
New Yorkers, born and bred in the city. In these two I found a sincerity and genuineness never found in the "New Yorkers" of from two to ten years. They were simple and unaffected and expressed a real curiosity in the west and a degree of appreciation for whatever wonders it might contain.

These two however were the exception and not the rule. The average resident of the northern Atlantic seaboard has curiosity only for England and the continent. He is sublime in his belief that any spot west of Albany, with the possible exceptions of Chicago and Hollywood are dull, dreary and exist only to send haphazard delegations to the city in order to furnish more "New Yorkers."

It is not the ignorance of these peasants that is annoying. Unconscious ignorance may be excused. There is no plea however for the wilful ignorance of college bred men and women who have studied at least the elements of geography. Theirs is a misconception which is colossal, stupid and unforfeivable.

To what extent this blindness reaches may be illustrated by a query

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The Real New Yorker Is a Rare Person

Provincial New York

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made at the information bureau at the Grand Central station. A woman called and asked at what hour she could get a train going west. The clerk asked how far west and she stated, "To Yonkers." To appreciate this remark we must recall that Yonkers is not only in Greater New York but is only a two hour's drive from Times Square.

For an unexplained reason Oklahoma is to the easterner the extreme point of "The West" as he conceives it. To such the state means but two things—Indians and oil. Moreover "Indian" conveys to him blankets and papooses and war whoops. "Oil" spells nothing but derricks and stained corduroys and tough dance halls. They are too complacent to look behind the term "Indian" and see such statesmen as Vice-President Curtis and Patrick Hurley. They refuse to view the products of petroleum in such a palace as that of E. W. Marland in Ponca City or such a resort as Frank Phillips' Woolaroc Lodge near Bartlesville.

That such a condition is to be deplored may be the viewpoint of our booster organizations but that it is to be encouraged is another and perhaps more constructive viewpoint. The isolation of our state for the next ten years will result in an eventual flowering which in due time may place it in the front ranks of American culture.

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FOR the wise Oklahoman is staying at home. He is staying at home to work and he realizes that his work is more individual and less hampered in his own familiar surroundings than in any other part of the world. The only essential which has been lacking in the past is the stimulation of co-workers and their products. To talk shop is necessary for any creative worker and at the present such an exchange is becoming more frequent and more stimulating. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that Oklahoma artists are placing the proper evaluation upon their own backgrounds.

The triple alliance of Evelyn Hall, Bruce Goff and Olinka Hrdy has already produced more modern art in Tulsa than may be found in any similar area in New York City.

The art department of the University of Oklahoma is a laboratory from which are emerging yearly students and teachers with a true conception of the necessities for beauty in this world and at least the rudiments of how to produce that beauty.

One of the chief products of the art department is the work of five Kiowa Indian boys who came from their reservation near Anadarko and are producing in the art laboratory a species of art which is rare, valuable and definitely individual.

About the office of May Frank in the journalism school at the university is a constant flutter of manuscripts and incessant plans for the improvement and sale of those pieces. The result of another such group working from a nucleus of which B. A. Botkin was the center was a poetry section of four pages which appeared in the American Mercury two years ago.

Walter and Isabel Campbell have remained isolated in their work for ten years and today are emerging not only as writers but as writers whose work is in demand.

These examples are only the minor ones of many groups throughout the state which are working and playing and creating a series of expressions essentially their own. At present they do not need New York nor eastern recognition. In due time New York shall need them and seek them. During the interval Oklahoma shall best serve her own cause by evaluating her artists at their own worth and giving them the encouragement which all creative workers must have.

Doctor Spier Resigns

Dr. Leslie Spier, for seven years a member of the University of Oklahoma faculty, and head of the department of anthropology here, has resigned his position to become head of the department of anthropology at the University of Washington and director of the Washington state museum. Doctor Spier had been granted a year's leave of absence for study in the Gilbert and Ellis islands. He is one of the best known American anthropologists.

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Look! Lionel Strongfor!

At last! Readers of this celebrated family journal will rejoice to know that a chapter has been formed on the campus to petition Sigma Psi, national scientific health fraternity. The object of this Greek letter organization is to study the fundamental principles of health. About the only fraternity not organized on the Oklahoma campus is one teaching people how to eat and sleep. And how to study! Alarums.

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Nadine Alexander, ex-'27, is teaching in Muskogee.

J. Wilkenson Hoover, '27 arts-sc., is a geologist in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

D. Edward Hodges, '27 law, is secretary of the Republican central committee of Kay county, Oklahoma.

H. M. Anderson, ex-'27, is an engineering draftsman for the Graver Corp. at Chicago.

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