

Under Cover

By DAVID BURR, '52ba

ON PAGE 2 of this issue, eight alumni select the act, object or symbol that best characterizes the spirit of America to them. From a rural youth, the editor suggests the following as worthy representatives of the spirit of our nation.

1) Early in a winter of the late thirties, the old frame farmhouse became victim of a wayward flue. Within a matter of minutes, with Christmas presents burning merrily under a tree-borne angel, the house was reduced to ashes and its occupants to despair. A house in a neighboring community became home for the night. But the next day, a Sunday, the farm families from miles about gathered to expand and refurnish the garage near the burned house. In a day they created a new home for their neighbor because, "We didn't want you and your family to leave our community."

2) On the front lawn of the small church, badly in need of paint, the ladies of the community gathered one sticky summer night to raise money for the preacher.

Bowl Breakfast

An Oklahoma Orange Bowl breakfast will be held at 9:30 a.m. January 2 in the main ballroom of the McAllister Hotel for all Oklahomans in Miami for the Orange Bowl game. Sponsored by the Alumni Association, the breakfast will serve the dual purpose of providing a pep meeting and meal before the bowl kickoff.

Boyd Gunning, '37ba, '37Law, executive secretary of the Alumni Association, said, "The O.U. band will perform and many sports celebrities will be on the program. We expect to have an outstanding program."

Tickets for the breakfast are \$3.00 each and may be ordered from the Alumni Office. Since previous bowl breakfasts have all been early sellouts, early reservations are suggested. Send your order to the Alumni Office, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Forming a bank in front of them were ice cream freezers filled with banana, chocolate, strawberry and vanilla ice cream. Behind them were rows of lights. Out of the night came family and friends to buy a dish for 10 cents. Small boys, many of whom had turned the freezer cranks, ate until they were sick. But no one blamed them. "It was for a good cause."

3) The one-room country school is becoming a vanishing memory from the American scene. Yesterday it was the rule, rather than the exception. With its well-carved desks, complete with spindly legs and recessed ink wells, the school represented a challenge for any teacher's talents. Placed squarely in the center of the room was a huge, coal-fueled stove. Considering the fact that eight different classes met here, with only one teacher to lead them, it was an incredible feat that so many received so much instruction. Perhaps both teacher and student tried a little harder to give and to absorb, or perhaps neither was aware of laboring under hardships.

4) Nothing provided as much diversion to farm families as when a carnival came to town. Loaded for the "hicks," and most of the "hicks" knowing it, the game was played out. The con men and the shills luring the yokels to a foolish exchange of funds and both sides reaping immeasurable benefits. The carny crowd got the money and the farmers the satisfaction of foregoing their conservative, practical natures for a moment to become the daring, the fun-loving citizens that their second-natures cried out to be. Fleeced, down-to-earth, they could return home to spend another year wrestling with the ever-practical soil.

5) The street beggar receives a peculiar reception in America. To farm families and city-dwellers alike, there is a certain repulsion connected with the appearance of a beggar on the streets. It has little to do with his appearance, although he may be malformed, maimed or mutilated. It is more a revulsion of the spirit. Among many Americans runs a belief that there is no greater

loss than the loss of human dignity. Begging, per se, violates the sensibilities. Many who give to the beggar, and many do, turn their heads away as the coins reach the cup. There is a feeling present at this instant that a silent prayer has been said, invoking the furies to let them never know the loss of human dignity.

6) Strangely enough, the real compassion of America rarely shows itself better than when a death occurs in a rural family. Ladies of the community, to show their sympathy, bring mounds of food. Men gather in groups outside the house to talk and "just be there." Few violate the family circle, closed around death. The neighbors are there to show their concern for the living and their appreciation of the dead. From the concern and appreciation runs a strong current of strength to the family mourners that comes from no other source.

This may seem like a peculiar collection of memorabilia to indicate what America means to me, but then the strength of America is that it means so many things to so many people; it has so many facets. We have much to be thankful for as Americans this Thanksgiving Day.

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