

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

SYNOPSIS: While playing golf with Dr. Thomas, Bobby Jones discovers a man lying injured at the bottom of a chasm. The doctor does for him, and while he is gone the man mutters "Why didn't they ask Evans?" and dies. Bobby has promised to play the game for his father who is near at Marchholt, and when a pleasant afternoon shows up he glacially relinquishes his sign and ships for the chasm. But he has seen a photograph in the man's pocket, the face of which has a strange, haunting beauty.

Chapter Three ENTER FRANKIE

"SORRY, Dad," Bobby broke in, speaking cheerfully and breezily as was his habit no matter what the subject. "Not my fault this time. I was keeping guard over a corpse."

"You were what?"

"Keeping guard over a blighter who stepped over the cliff. You know—the place where the chasm is, by the seventeenth tee. There was a bit of mist just then, and he must have gone straight on and over."

"Good heavens," cried the Vicar. "What a tragedy! Was the man killed outright?"

"No. He was unconscious. He died just after Dr. Thomas had gone off. But of course I felt I had to squat there—couldn't just push off and

11:25, dashed down the subway, emerged on No. 3 platform just as the train was moving, and hurried himself at the first carriage he saw, heedless of indignant ticket-collectors and porters in his immediate rear.

Wrenching open the door, he fell in on hands and knees, picked himself up, the door was shut with a slam by an agile porter, and Bobby found himself looking at the sole other occupant of the compartment.

It was a first-class carriage and in the corner facing the engine sat a dark girl smoking a cigaret. She had on a red skirt, a short green jacket and a brilliant blue beret, and despite a certain resemblance to an organ-grinder's monkey (she had long, sorrowful, dark eyes and a puckered-up face) she was distinctly attractive.

In the midst of an apology, Bobby broke off.

"Why, it's you, Frankie!" he said. "I haven't seen you for ages."

"Well, I haven't seen you. Sit down and talk."

Bobby grinned. "My ticket's the wrong color."

"That doesn't matter," said Frankie kindly. "I'll pay the difference for you."

"My main indignation rises at the thought," said Bobby. "How could I let a lady pay for me?"



Bobby fell in on hands and knees, leave him. And then another fellow came along, so I passed the job of chief mourner on to him and legged it here as fast as I could."

"The Vicar sighed.

"Oh, my dear Bobby!" he said. "Will nothing shake your deplorable callousness? It grieves me more than I can say. Here you have been brought face to face with death—sudden death. And you can joke about it! It leaves you unmoved. Everything—everything, however solemn, however sacred, is merely a joke to your generation."

Bobby shuffled his feet.

If his father couldn't see that of course you joked about a thing because you had felt badly about it—well, he couldn't see it! It wasn't the sort of thing you could explain. With death and tragedy about you, you had to keep a stiff upper lip.

But what could you expect? Nobody over fifty understood anything at all. They had the most extraordinary ideas.

"I expect it was the War," thought Bobby loyally. "It upset them and they never got straight again."

"Sorry, Dad," he said with a clear-eyed realization that explanation was impossible.

The Vicar felt sorry for his son—he looked so abashed; but he also felt ashamed of him. The boy had no conception of the seriousness of life. Even his apology was cheery and impudent.

They moved towards the Vicarage, each making enormous efforts to find excuses for the other.

The Vicar thought, "I wonder when Bobby will find something to do..."

Bobby thought, "Wonder how much longer I can stick it down here..."

Yet they were both extremely fond of each other.

Bobby did not see the immediate sequel of his adventure. On the following morning he went up to town, there to meet a friend who was thinking of starting a garage and who fancied that Bobby's cooperation might be valuable.

After getting things to everybody's satisfaction, Bobby caught the 11:30 train home two days later. He caught it, true, but only by a very narrow margin.

He arrived at Paddington when the clock announced the time to be

"It's about all we seem to be good for these days," said Frankie. "I will pay the difference myself," said Bobby heroically as a burly figure in blue appeared at the door from the corridor.

"Leave it to me," said Frankie.

SHE smiled graciously at the ticket-collector, who touched his hat as he took the piece of white cardboard from her and punched it.

"Mr. Jones has just come in to talk to me for a bit," she said. "That won't matter, will it?"

"That's all right, your ladyship. The gentleman won't be staying long, I expect." He coughed tactfully. "I shan't be round again till after Bristol," he added significantly.

"What can be done with a smile!" said Bobby as the official withdrew. Lady Frances Derwent shook her head thoughtfully.

"I'm not so sure it's the smile," she said. "I rather think it's Father's habit of tipping everybody five shillings whenever he travels that does it."

"I thought you'd given up Waives for good, Frankie."

Frances sighed. "My dear, you know what it is. You know how moulty parsons can be. What with that, and the bathrooms in the state they are, and nothing to do and nobody to see—and people simply won't come to the country to stay nowadays! They say they're economizing and they can't go so far. Well, I mean, what's a girl to do?"

Bobby shook his head, sadly recognizing the problem.

"However," went on Frankie, "after the party I went to last night, I thought even home couldn't be worse."

"What was wrong with the party?"

"Nothing at all. It was just like any other party only more so. We had dinner at the Savoy, and we went on from there to the Marlborough—till I tell you, Bobby, it's not good enough."

And Monday there will be an inquest in Marchholt.

URGE EARLY PAYMENT OF STATE INCOME TAX TO AVOID FINAL RUSH

PORTLAND, Feb. 6.—(AP)—Earl Fisher of the state tax commission urged today that income tax returns be filed as early as possible to avoid the rush and long hours of waiting in line the final few days.

For the convenience of the public, officials of the commission will spend a day or two in a number of the principal cities of the state and help persons making reports.

Besides the regular offices at Portland and Salem, branches will be established for short periods at Klamath Falls, Medford, Grants Pass, Roseburg, Eugene, Astoria, LaGrande, Baker, Bend and possibly a few other cities, Fisher said.

The deadline for filing returns is April 1. There is a penalty for any payments not made by that date.

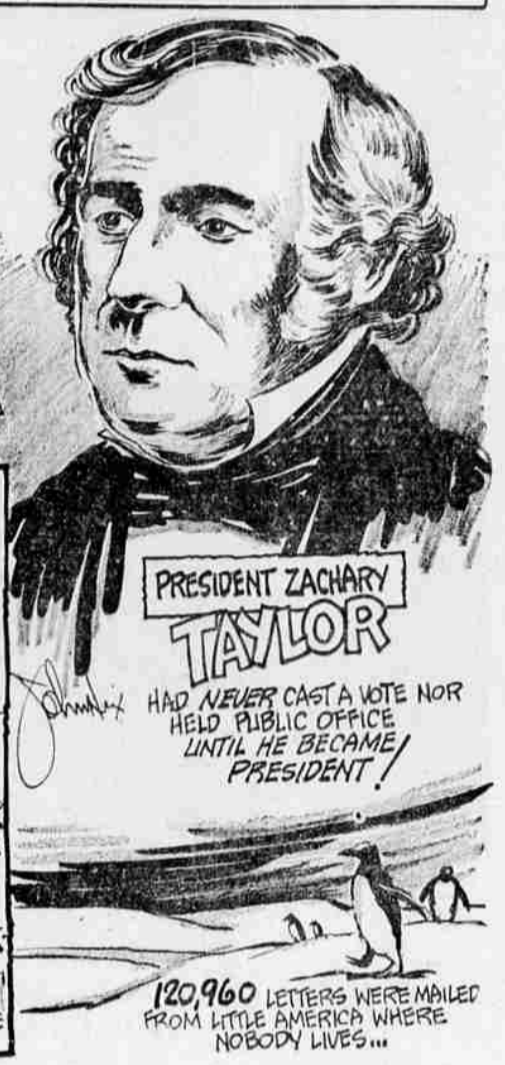
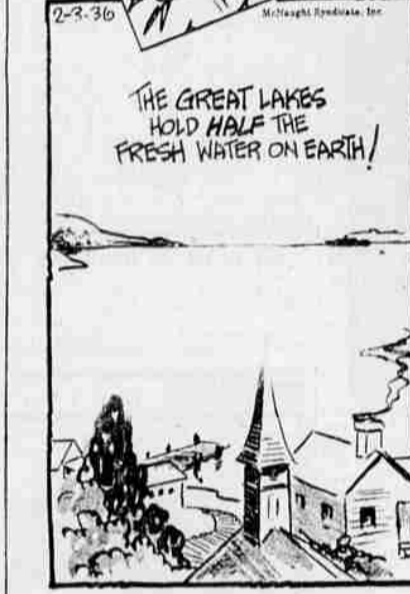
All single persons with incomes of \$800 or more, and all married persons with incomes of \$1500 or more must file returns, even though they have other exemptions. Single persons with incomes of \$500 a year from intangibles, and married persons with \$800 income from intangibles must file returns.

The Portland office handled 4,000 tax reports the final filing day last year.

Use Mail Tribune want ads.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



The first, last, and only public office that Zachary Taylor ever held was the presidency. And strange as it seems, up to the time of his election to the nation's highest office, he had never cast a vote in a public election.

Zachary Taylor came to the White House from the army. As the outstanding hero of the Mexican war, he rode on a wave of popular acclaim to the presidency, in spite of the fact that his political experience and learning in statesmanship were entirely lacking.

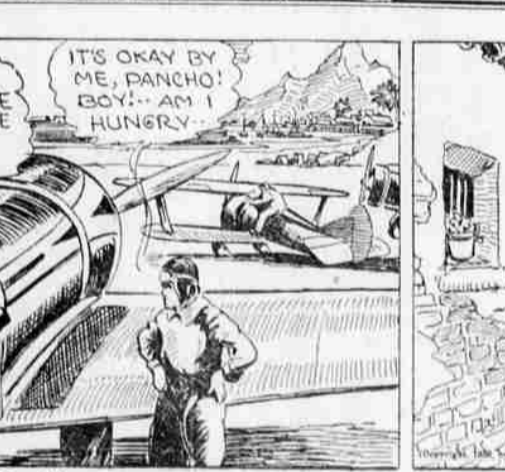
He was born in Virginia in 1784, the son of a Revolutionary war officer. Young Taylor had no formal schooling, but followed in his father's footsteps in an army career. Three of his four brothers also joined the army.

In the national war scare that preceded the war of 1812, Taylor was appointed lieutenant, later captain, in a new regiment that was formed by congressional authorization. When war was declared, Taylor won fame and a major's rank for defeating Tecumseh's Indians, who were allied with the British.

He resigned later from the army when his rank was reduced to a captaincy, but was reinstated as a major. Following this, through the Black Hawk war and other Indian engagements, and in the war with Mexico, Taylor distinguished himself. He was chosen as a popular presidential candidate and elected over Lewis Cass in a close but lusterless and needless election.

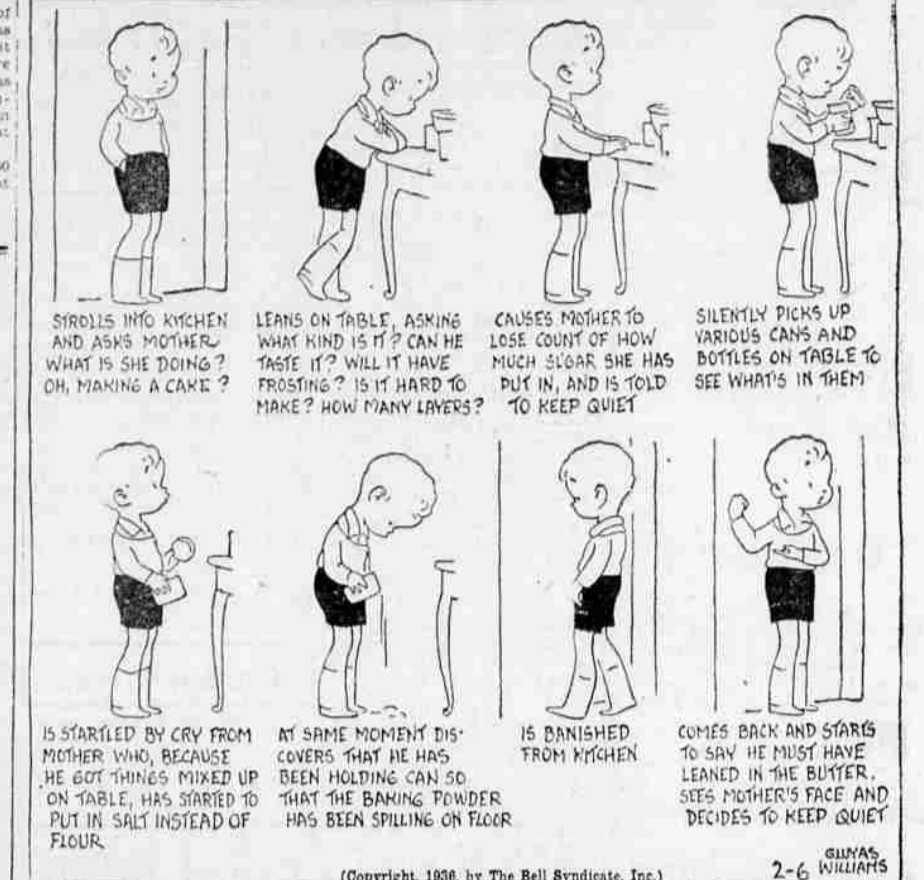
As President, Taylor—himself a political novice—surrounded himself with carefully chosen advisors. He died after 16 months in office.

Tomorrow: Saint by Chance.



THE SPECTATOR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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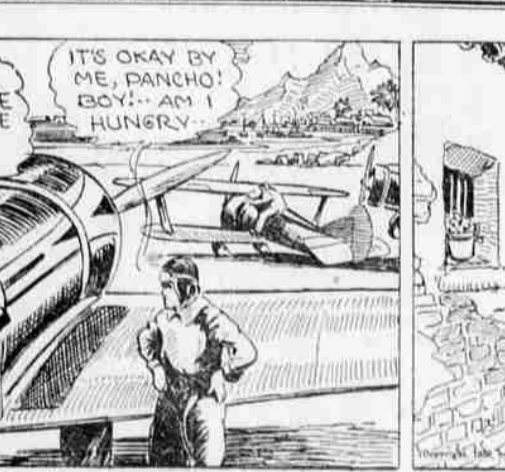
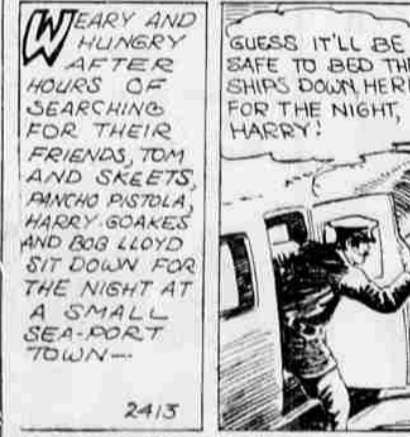
S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



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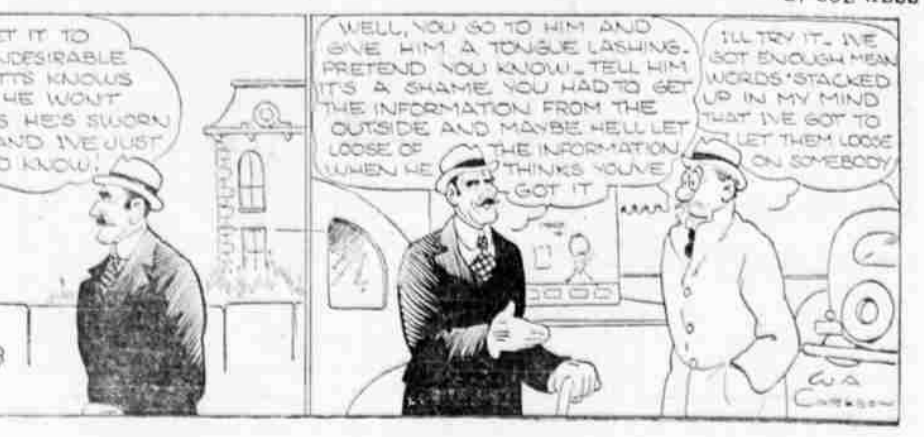
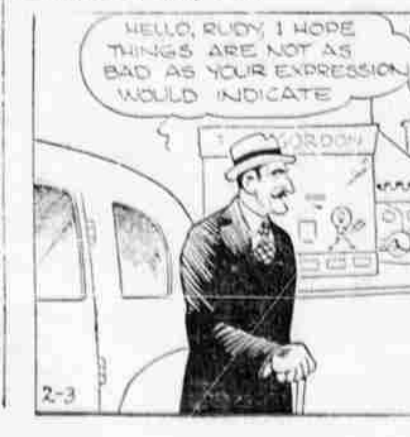
TAILSPIN TOMMY—The First Clue!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—A Grand Hunch!



THE NEBBS—Foxy Flint



U. S. POPULATION NOW 127,621,000 BUREAU GUESSES

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6.—(AP)—The 1935 population of the United States today was officially estimated by the census bureau at 127,621,000.

The official count is taken as of the middle of the year—July 1.

The new figure represents a gain of 0.71 per cent from 1934, and of 4 per cent from 1930 when the last actual census was taken.

"If the increase should be continued at this rate until the end of the decade," the bureau said, the

nation's population in 1940 would be around 132,000,000."

Indicative, however, of a slowing up in the nation's population growth, was the fact that the average annual increase since 1930 was 0.64, which is only a little more than one-half of the 1.29-1.30 average of 1,668,000."

The rate of gain in 1935 was the highest since 1931 when the population that year gained 3.8 per cent over 1930.

The total births between April, 1930, and July 1, 1935, included an allowance for under-registration, was 12,420,000. The number of deaths in the same period, likewise allowing for under-registration, was 7,420,000. The number of persons leaving the country during the 5 1/2 year period exceeded the number coming in by 281,000.

Subtracting the number of deaths and the net emigration from the number of births an increase of 4,746,000 between the 1930 census date and July 1, 1935.