

Ko Tun Oo's Four-Week Visit In County Gives Hosts Better Understanding of Home Land

(Editor's Note: The John Ousterhout family, Dutton rd., has been host for the past four weeks to Ko Tun Oo, of Myaungmya, Burma, who is in this country through the International Farm Youth Exchange program. The following story, about Ko Tun Oo's visit in Jackson county, was written by Mrs. Ousterhout, a former member of The Mail Tribune staff.)

BY EVELYN OUSTERHOUT

It is interesting to welcome a friend, and the farther he has traveled the more welcome the visit. It was with such a thought that we looked forward to the four-week stay of Ko Tun Oo from Burma.

We were both willing and curious when we told the county agent we would take the Burman, who with three others, was coming to Jackson county under the International Farm Youth Exchange program. The agent said it would be a "two-way street to understanding a 'way of life' of others . . . to learn by living it with you."

Study Youth Activities
Each of the four would spend four weeks working with a "typical farm family" with emphasis on youth activities of 4-H clubs and Boy Scouts, as all are prospective scout executives for Burma. They would be away from home for eight months, each spending four months on four different American farms, with the remaining months training in scouting, studying farm life, and traveling completely around the world.

Our's was Ko Tun Oo's first American home. Maung Thein Nyun stayed in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Don Minear of Medford; Maung Thein Lwin, Mr. and Mrs. Emerson Wilken, Murphy; and Maung Nyi Nyi, Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Stone, Provolt.

The four fast weeks were indeed a two-way street to understanding. We learned many things, not only about Burma and the Burmese, but about people in general, and about Ko Tun Oo in particular. What he thinks of us and what is the impression of them all concerning America may change during their several months' tour, but to date Ko Tun Oo has found rural America "friendly and hard working."

Everyplace they went, the Americans showed a serious interest in everything about their homeland, asking many questions on every conceivable subject. We discovered that Burma is equal to most countries in almost every respect, for she has great natural resources, such as timber and oil, and almost every type of vegetable, grain and fruit is grown someplace in Burma.

Many Automobiles
America was found to be quite different in at least one respect, for all four Burmese commented on the automobiles, which were inevitable and in great numbers everywhere they stopped. The super-markets also were new, but business for the most part is carried on in Burma as in the United States, we were told.

Ko Tun Oo enjoyed a Sunday afternoon baseball game (Burma has a similar game of "rounders" played by children) and both he and Maung Thein Nyun were enthusiastic over the hard-fought races, although they shivered under coats and blankets in the "cold" night air.

Television has not arrived in Burma, but most homes have radios and telephones. Electricity still is not in general use in small towns, although there is enough for lighting, and an extensive government power program should bring much more in the near future, he said. Residents in the small towns worked free and for long hours to bring electricity to their homes, according to Ko Tun Oo.

It took little time for us to realize that Ko Tun Oo was not identical to every other Burman, any more than we could be de-

scribed as like every other American family. But having been born and raised in Myaungmya, Lower Burma, he was Burmese and represented a way of life very different from ours in many respects, although exactly like ours in most others.

Independence Recently Won

Burma, a moderately populated country which the leaders feel is full of promise, has not yet recovered from the excitement of its recently won independence from Great Britain. Much of Ko Tun Oo's discussions on his homeland was related to the fight of the young Burmese leaders who first chased the British, and then the Japanese from Burma. Ko Tun Oo and Maung Nyi Nyi were leaders in Burma's famed guerilla fighters and Maung Thein Nyun worked with army intelligence.

It was a thrill hearing their personal stories of the struggle to win freedom from imperialism. Twice Ko Tun Oo escaped the enemy with bullet tears in his clothing, and many times took part in underground operations preparing for Burma's fight for freedom.

In Myaungmya, a town of about 20,000 population, Ko Tun Oo lives with his wife and four children, two sisters, and his mother. Most Burmese families remain together, even after marriage, with one householder often assuming responsibility for many relatives. The Burmese names, which first sounded strange and unpronounceable, became household words, and we were soon telling friends of his children, Maung Chit Swe, Maung Myint Swe, Ma Nyein Swe, and Maung Tint Swe.

The Burmese have no family names, so each child receives a name entirely his own. Each person also has a title, the males from birth to age 25 being called Maung and past 35 Ko. The term "U" is used for men of great age or distinction. Women are addressed as Ma until of an older age, when Daw is used.

Ko Tun Oo, who often made comments revealing his individualism, said that he chose to name all four of his offspring similarly, adding "Swe" to each name and relating it to his own legal name of Ko Tun Swe. He adopted the name Ko Tun Oo when leaving on the present trip explaining that he would then know by the name he was called just where he had met the friend. In his home he is called Ko Tun Thoun, a name which stuck while fighting the Japanese and British.

We told him that in America he would be called an "activity man" and a "rugged individualist," to say nothing of "entrepreneur," for he is president of the district farm association, leader of the town militia, president of the local gymnasium and bazaar union, and also takes part in many sporting activities, traveling to many parts of the country.

Built Hospital

He joined with a friend, who is a doctor, to build a 200-bed private hospital (Burma has socialized medicine, also), and then he established a pharmacy. He and his wife, whose exotic name of Ma Khin Tint intrigued many Americans he met, operate the "Duwun" book and stationery supply shop in Myaungmya. All this was in addition to operating a 50-acre rice farm a short distance from the city.

The way in which Ko Tun Oo fitted immediately into the Ousterhout mode of living amazed us! His short height of five feet, three inches, and his dark color were quite different from the six feet, four inches of his host, and the skirt-like longyi and velvet sandals were quite new to a blue-jean and work-shoe household. But he appeared greatly at ease from the time of his arrival.

Our three meals per day were different from Burma's for they eat only at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.,

with the exception of tea and toast early in the morning and at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. Ko Tun Oo, however, did not miss the tea, for unlike most Burmese he did not "take the tea," and drank milk with his meals.

Preparing food for our Burman presented its problems, not because Ko Tun Oo was difficult to please, but because we wanted to learn exactly how the Burmese cook a meal. Curry—with meat, with vegetables, and with eggs, is a Burmese standby. And chili powder also is a favorite spice, although Ko Tun Oo admitted the "world is upside-down" when people in the hot climate of Burma prefer a highly-seasoned diet while those in a moderate zone cook their food with little spices. Out of deference to his American acquaintances, Ko Tun Oo directed the amount of curry to be added to a chicken dish be less than that in Myaungmya. The end of more than one meal, however, found a number of strong American males asking for water and wiping away the perspiration!

That the children in their hosts' homes were "a great consolation" to the somewhat homesick Burmese was a happy relief to their hostesses, for so interesting and exciting a houseguest as each Burman was, brought much running and shouting and theatrics by the youngsters.

On a particularly trying evening, after the third attempt to "clasp" the two and four-year old in bed, I threw up my hands and exclaimed to Ko Tun Oo, "Are your children EVER like this?" "Yes, yes," he laughed, "Just the same."

We discovered that family recreation in Burma is very much the same as here, without the automobile, which is mostly a luxury in his country. The children are read stories in the evening before bed, are taken to ball games and picnics, and Ko Tun Oo's four are most fortunate in having a city park across the street. To picnic, he said, his family often goes by ox-car or bicycle.

Burma also has a national

Debbie, Eddie Fisher In Week End Rendezvous

Hollywood — (U.P.) — Debbie Reynolds admitted today she and Eddie Fisher had a secret week end rendezvous and "we still plan to be married."

Fisher slipped into town unnoticed Friday night. The pair spent the week end at her uncle's desert home in Palm Springs. "There's been no change in plans. Everything is the same," Debbie declared. "I love Eddie and he loves me and we're going to be married. We still haven't set the date."

recreation program which promotes all sports, from badminton to boxing, and the government provides gymnasiums and instructors throughout the country. As president of Myaungmya's gym, Ko Tun Oo oversees the sporting program and construction and improvement of facilities. He travels over many parts of Burma during the year at his own expense participating in or watching the extensive sporting activities.

Plan San Francisco Meeting

When Ko Tun Oo left, we were reluctant, as were the other host families, to see the Burman go, for the four weeks in our home had brought us a close and treasured friend. We have plans to see him again in December, after the American visit is over and he is in San Francisco en route by air to Tokyo, Hong Kong, Bangkok, and home. By then we should understand each other with little trouble, and Ko Tun Oo should have a sound and studied view of America.

Whether or not we actually meet again, the newly-found friendship will always remain and we cannot erase the feeling that men really are brothers, as the philosophers say, no matter how different the outward appearance and background.

For what could look more dissimilar than the short, dark man in the green-plaid longyi, traveling by steamer up the Irrawaddy, compared with the tall, sandy-haired jean-clad American speeding to town in the station wagon? But we discovered that they are so much alike, the differences are mere "conversation pieces" and what remains is a fine comradeship and respect for each other which will last a lifetime.

Back Stairs: Many White House Dishes

By MERRIMAN SMITH

United Press White House Writer

Washington — (U.P.) — Back stairs at the White House:

Lo the busy White House dishwasher. The last inventory at the executive mansion showed 2,427 items of glassware, 10,114 dishes and 6,201 pieces of silver.

Although automatic dishwashers do most of the work, a number of the White House glass, crystal and Chinaware items are too fragile and valuable to trust to a machine. These pieces must be done carefully and by hand.

In Mrs. Eisenhower's cupboard also are 2,200 tablecloths and napkins.

Mr. Eisenhower's snappy new summer hat caused a lot of comment recently at West Point. The hat is cut along Homburg lines in charcoal straw with a wide white band.

When the President first appeared in his new skimmer, some of the staff thought it was a class reunion hat as the old grads sometimes love to wear. This, however, turned out to be decidedly not the case.

Mr. Eisenhower was quite proud of his new hat, and more important, Mrs. Eisenhower thought he looked fine in it.

Probably the most anonymous member of the White House staff is the mild mannered housekeeper, Mrs. Mable Walker. She has been in this post since the Truman administration and she shuns publicity like the plague.

Her attitude toward publicity has the full approval of the Eisenhowers. The less their personal life is exposed to public view, the better they like it. And they consider the work of their housekeeper to be their private affairs; not the subject of magazine articles and radio interviews.

Mr. Eisenhower's shoulder bursitis must be better. He waved his right arm a good bit during his recent three-day visit to the U.S. Military Academy. In previous weeks, he favored his ailing right arm noticeably and did most of his waving with his left arm.

Notes from Gettysburg:

The President insists on retaining the ancient, rusty and creaking windmill on his farm. He says it reminds him of his boyhood.

At last count there were 21 ducks on the Eisenhower pond, these are not to be confused with the two mallards that took up temporary residence in the White House fountain. There would have been more ducks on the farm this spring if it had

not been for marauding raccoons which ate the duck eggs.

Secret Service guard booths around the farm house look like sidewalk telephone booths. The

framework of each booth is painted a brilliant green, but most of the booths consist largely of glass panels to give the agents warmth at night and freedom of vision in all directions.

Washington — (U.P.) — President Eisenhower will not hold a news conference this week because he

will participate in Operation Alert, the three-day Civil Defense exercise.

Dead line for Sunday Classified is at noon Saturday

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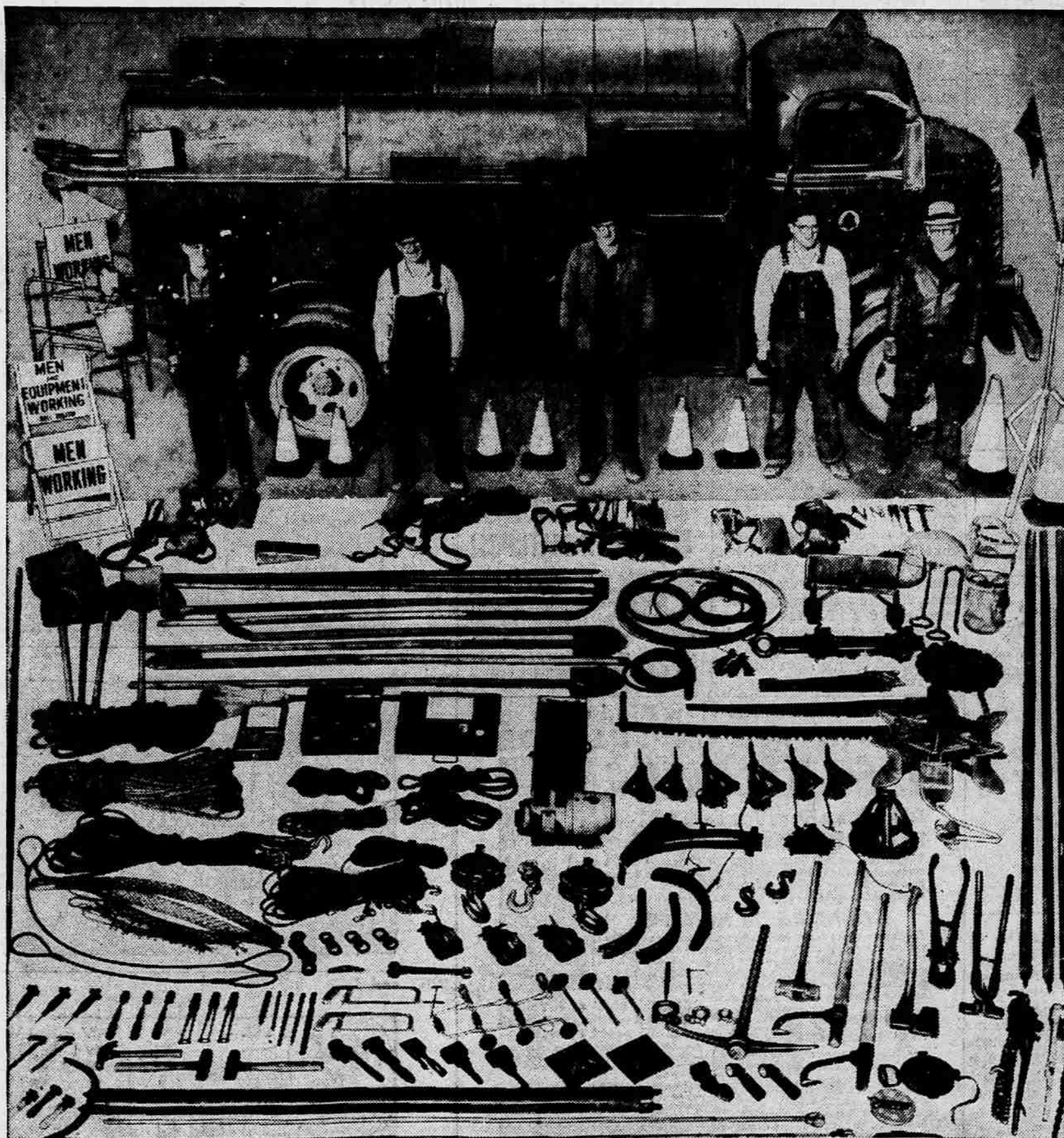
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