

## School Teacher Puts Old Florentine Bridge in Italy Threatens Collapse

### Tourists in Gay Mood By Injun Act

Wisconsin Dells, Wis.—(U.P.)—A country school teacher with a dual personality is putting tourists in a romantic mood with Indian love songs this summer.

He is Chief Little Eagle, known to his grade-school pupils as Roger Tallmadge.

As Little Eagle, the dignified school teacher dons feathers and beads to preside over a "Sunset Tour" through the Dells of the Wisconsin river. Standing in the bow of an excursion boat, he chants Sioux legends and ballads with a beat that has prompted other guides to call him "the wild man of the river."

When the tourists leave, Tallmadge dresses up in his business suit and teaches a country school in Adams county, Wis. In addition to being teacher and principal, "Mr. Tallmadge" is a Sunday school superintendent and businessman.

In both roles, Tallmadge is proud of "his people" the Indians. Because of the long lapses between the short tourist seasons, the tribes "catch as catch can" and many live in near poverty through the winter months.

Tallmadge built a successful business in Denver, Colo., following his graduation from college 10 years ago. But the outbreak of the Korean war "killed the business" when he was recalled to the Marine corps.

After the war, he and his wife, a dark-eyed Winnebago beauty named Sah-nay-min-a-cha, decided to return to "their old stamping grounds" in Wisconsin to start over again.

The best and practically only business in the Dells area was entertaining tourists. Tallmadge reverted to his tribal name—"Little Eagle"—and signed with one of the tour companies as boat pilot, guide and singer.

His nightly "Sunset Tours" are crowded with honeymooners, TV-educated youngsters who are surprised to find there are "good Indians who don't shoot at the marshal," and their parents.

Come September, the feathers and beads will be stored away and Tallmadge will teach sixth graders at a country school.

#### HANDKERCHIEF SOS

Boston—(U.P.)—Massachusetts motorists have devised an improvised "SOS" to bring police aid when their cars break down on super-highways. The widespread idea is that police will stop and help if the motorist has a white handkerchief tied to his antenna or door handle.

Florence, Italy—(U.P.)—The old Florentine bridge, Ponte Vecchio, which has brought an atmosphere of the Middle Ages into modern times, is threatening to collapse into the swirling waters of the Arno River.

Sketched and painted by thousands of artists, written about by great writers, and cherished in the memories of millions of visitors to Italy's great art cradle of the Renaissance, the ancient bridge is now being harnessed together by the Italian army engineering corps as it has been showing definite signs of tiredness.

Specialized army workers, who have already saved hundreds of famous monuments older than the Ponte Vecchio, have started building iron supports to keep the upper structure of the bridge from caving in.

**In Two Sections**  
The bridge is built in two sections—a bottom support consisting of three arches based on a sturdy Roman foundation and a top part cluttered with shops and dwellings. This part of the bridge is topped by a passageway which is considered the real danger because of careless building in centuries gone by.

Among the ideas being studied now, is the old favorite of cement injections, which proved excellent in the cases of the Leaning Tower of Pisa, the Colosseum and many ancient arches which dot the Italian peninsula.

The basic part of the bridge, consisting of three graceful arches spanning the river, is sound enough and in no particular danger, according to superintendents of monuments in Tuscany.

They say that careless building, rebuilding and expansion work by the bridge shopkeepers over the years has seriously weakened the supports under the famed "Vasari corridor" a sort of covered passage running over the shops on the upstream side of the bridge.

This tile-roofed passageway leads from the Uffizi Gallery on the north side of the river to the Pitti palace on the south side. It takes its name from the famed man who designed it, Giorgio Vasari.

Historians say that Vasari, or the building contractor if he had one, didn't do the best possible job of construction. They said the work was carried out on a "fixed fee" contract with a specific deadline fixed by the first Cosimo of the Medici family, which ruled the city.

The upshot was that the builder, to save time and keep costs low, used whatever new or second-hand material he could find in the immediate vicinity.

Nobody accuses Vasari or the builder of doing a downright poor job. The fact that the corridor, built in 1560, has stood for almost 400 years on top of the 600-year old Ponte Vecchio is testimony enough.

But the constant remodeling of the shops of the goldsmiths underneath, plus the expansion of some of them to jut out over the river, has magnified the original shortcomings until today, when the "Vasari corridor" is threatening to cause the entire bridge to collapse.

Another reason for the weakening of the bridge dates back to the last war when the "treasure chest of Italian art" felt the sting of allied bombs.

But the real responsibility most likely lies on the retreating German army which, on Aug. 4, 1944, blew up all the bridges spanning the river but spared the Ponte Vecchio.

No official explanation was ever given for this act of clemency. The bridges were blown up in an attempt to slow down the Allied onslaught towards the northern industrial and keypoint cities of Milan and Turin.

The Florentines say that the German general in charge of blowing up the bridges felt the irresistible attraction of the beautiful bridge with its cuttershops of craftsmen renowned for their work of wrought gold and silver and embossed leather.

But the general did blow up everything at the approaches of both ends of the Ponte Vecchio, thus weakening it considerably.

**Morse To Stand By Decision of Voters**  
Chicago—(U.P.)—Sen. Wayne Morse says he "stands by the decision of the voters" in his choice for a Democratic presidential candidate.

Oregon Democrats supported Adlai Stevenson of Illinois in the May primary and the state's 16-member delegation is pledged to him. Morse, who is scheduled to speak tonight, told an Oregon Journal reporter by telephone from Washington, D. C., yesterday that "I feel, even though I am not a delegate, that I should stand with the voters of Oregon."

His statement ended speculation as to his stand in view of former President Truman's support of Gov. Averell Harriman of New York for the nomination.



WEARING "IKE PRINT" DRESSES and crying parasols, eight beautiful girls launch one of the Eisenhower "bandwagons" in New York. Six of these cars are touring the nation as part of the "Citizens-For-Eisenhower" drive. (International Soundphoto)

## Hodge Hospitalized By Shattered Nerves

Springfield, Ill.—(U.P.)—Orville E. Hodge, deposed state auditor who pleaded guilty to embezzling \$637,000 from the state with phony checks, was transferred to a hospital from a jail Monday night for treatment of shattered nerves.

Hodge was sent to jail to await sentencing Monday after he pleaded guilty to 48 indictments in circuit court here. He had been expected to spend most of the week end in jail, but was taken to St. John's Hospital shortly after being examined by a psychiatrist, Dr. Paul M. Caldwell.

Meanwhile, the former dapper businessman was stripped of all his possessions. Attorneys for Hodge, at a conference in the state attorney general's office, turned over assets totaling about \$563,000 in partial restitution for Hodge's estimated \$1,000,000 raid on the state treasury.

The Railway Express Agency has retired the last of its electric-powered trucks. The company used battery-driven vehicles since 1910.

## Good Money in Tips If You Have Know-How

Boston—(U.P.)—There's good money in "tips" if you have the know-how.

If you know that someone is going to try to smuggle something into the United States, you can go to the nearest U.S. Customs office, give the tip, and collect your reward.

The reward is 25 per cent of the amount the federal government realizes from the seized article, plus one-fourth of the fine levied against the smuggler.

A Boston tipster collected about \$11,000 not long ago for supplying information that led to the arrest at Logan Airport of a smuggler carrying contraband diamonds worth \$40,000.

## Boy, 9, Youngest To Climb Mount Blanc

Rome—(U.P.)—A nine-year-old boy was believed today to be the youngest climber ever to scale Mount Blanc, or any other peak over 13,000 feet high.

Emilio Stefanelli of Comacchi accompanied his father Dr. Giuseppe Stefanelli, and Alpine guide Attilio Lozza Monday to the summit of 15,680-foot Mount Blanc in three and a half hours.

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