

Robert Frost Does the Impossible

By W. R. HIGGINBOTHAM
United Press International

Bob Frost, you're in the book's a hit.
Your simple Vermont rhyming kit—
Those plain and cadenced lines—
Why, man, I'm frightened
A-bomb times
Your aged but ageless hand,
Across a needful land—
Too still too long—
Has led a song!



DOES IMPOSSIBLE — Robert Frost, the venerable Vermont poet the country saw in an enchanting moment on television during the Kennedy inauguration, has done the impossible. He has put a volume of quality poems on the hard-cover book best seller list. It is difficult to find out when that happened last.

Besides setting a literary record, Frost also may be doing something no other poet has succeeded in doing for half a century or more.

He may popularize the whole art of writing poetry and entire people back to reading it—which most haven't done seriously since school days.

Gambled on Printing

Alfred C. Edwards, president of Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Frost's publisher, gambled an unprecedented 50,000-volume first printing on "In the Clearing" for sale at \$4 a copy. It is Frost's first book in 15 years. It went on sale March 26, the poet's 88th birthday.

The advance sale hit 27,000 copies. Thirteen thousand more went in a few days. Edwards has ordered 25,000 more. He expects to hit 100,000 before the year is out.

Paperback publication is a possibility — and that could run in millions. But for a hard-cover book of poems, Frost has smashed all marks for poetry in records kept since 1895.

Only 11 volumes of verse have ranked as best sellers in 67 years and only four or five of those could be classed as what the literati would regard as "serious" poetry. The last best selling poem was Alice Duer Miller's 1941 war-time "White Cliffs of Dover."

Never Were Profound

But most others have been in the ranks of Edgar A. Guest ("Tukos a Hear o' Livin' To Make a House a Home") and Robert W. Service ("The

ism had left the public disenchanted with poetry.

"An art that has failed to strike roots into some sort of popular favor is an art self-doomed," Mowrer said.

As Frost's publisher, Edwards feels the old Vermont poet is leading the return of quality poetry to public favor.

"There is a public buying Robert Frost's poetry," Edwards said. "He is known out there, as a man of wisdom. The public knows him. Taxi-cab drivers sometime recite his own poetry to him. There is no question but that the reading of poetry is on the upsurge."

The question of what kind of poetry this might be is still open — whether the rhymers and the balladeers will be back with us, or the advocates of freewheeling forms used for many years by Sandburg.

Frost expressed one view of it from the poet's side in his new volume where he commemorated an event in a poem titled "On Being Chosen Poet of Vermont." He said:

"Breathes there a bard who isn't moved
When he finds his verse is understood
And not entirely disapproved
By his country and his neighborhood."

of several volumes of poetry, recently wrote in the New York Times book review section that 40 years of modern-

tage American Civil War 100 years ago, gave them the poetic measure in loose, flowing, unfixed verse forms.

With the advent of free verse, the sonnet — 14 lines of rhymed five-beat lines — fell in low esteem. Now and again a traditionalist broke through for a while but generally the rhymers were classed with Robert Service and the poets doing greeting card doggerel.

Starting from where Whitman said, "I sound my barbaric yawp over, the roofs of the world," (Song of Myself, 1855) imitators took free verse expression way out to a point where typography substituted for words — the poem was made by the way it was printed on a page.

Finally in recent years the yawp became a beatnik yap with devotees gasping at the magnificence of pure garble.

By this time nobody was reading poetry.

This Frost may change. His volume includes such lines as:

"It takes all sorts of in and outdoor schooling
To get adapted to my kind of fooling."

Paul Scott Mowrer, former editor of the Chicago Daily News and himself the author

ber rafts, kayaks and skindivers shot the rapids from Redside to Leaburg dam, while thousands viewed the parade. (UPI)

RAFT SPILLS — One raft spills and a second shoots by in swift McKenzie river rapids during the 24th annual White Water parade last week end. Some 300 boats, rub-

ber rafts, kayaks and skindivers shot the rapids from Redside to Leaburg dam, while thousands viewed the parade. (UPI)

Persons Still Working Can Receive Benefits

If an individual is waiting to retire completely before applying for social security benefits, Edward B. Jacobson, district manager of the Medford social security office, encouraged them to check with the local office.

He said a person does not have to retire completely in order to receive some social security payments each year. There are more than 1 million workers age 65 or over in this country who can receive some social security monthly benefits.

Before 1961, a person entitled to benefits who earned over \$2,080 and worked all 12 months could not receive a check for any month in the year. However, as a result of recent amendments to the law, individuals of retirement age can receive social security benefits even though their earnings are substantially over \$2,080 for the year, he said.

The 1961 amendments to the Social Security Law provide that \$1 of the total benefits payable to a family during a year be withheld for every \$2 the worker earns between \$1,200 and \$1,700. Deductions for earnings in excess of \$1,700 will be on a dollar for dollar basis.

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Medford Gross Product \$95 Million

While everyone in the country is interested in the gross national product (GNP), which is a measure of the economy as a whole, residents of Medford have a more particular interest in their gross local product (GLP).

It is a figure that reflects the amount of business activity in the city, since it represents the market value of all goods and services locally.

The bulk of this output, Government reports show, is created by consumer spending. It constitutes two-thirds of the total.

The remainder consists, for the most part, of expenditures made by Federal, state and local governments and of capital outlays for industrial expansion.

Nationally, according to the Department of Commerce, the GNP was running at the rate of \$516 billion annually at the close of the last fiscal year. This compares with the 1960 fiscal figure of \$504 billion.

Included in the new total is \$336 billion in consumer expenditures, with \$140 billion of it for services.

Medford's output of goods and services in fiscal 1961 was an estimated \$95,743,000, based on figures obtained

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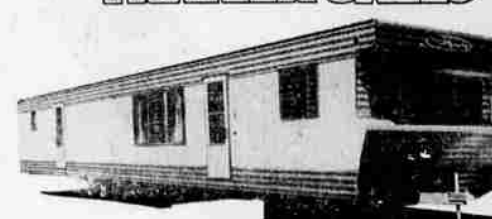
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Nine Medford Men Take Part in Race On McKenzie River

Nine Medford persons participated in the 24th annual White Water parade on the McKenzie river last week end. From Medford were Ken Lyons, city recreation director; Mel Jackson, YMCA organizer; Ted Lyons, Arne Harrang, Salli Reule, Chuck McNair, Mike Wickersham, Ron Gandee and Dr. Tom Upton.

The group had three boats and the parade length on the river was about 20 miles.

The boat in which Dr. Upton and Jackson were riding flipped upside down and the two hung onto the boat until they could get to shore several hundred yards downstream, losing the contents of the boat.

They reported that the river was about two feet higher than expected at this time of year, making the rapids more difficult for most of the participants.

It was learned after the group started down the river that in the Lyons boat they could not use the oars in the rapids so it was necessary for them to paddle the boat the entire parade route.

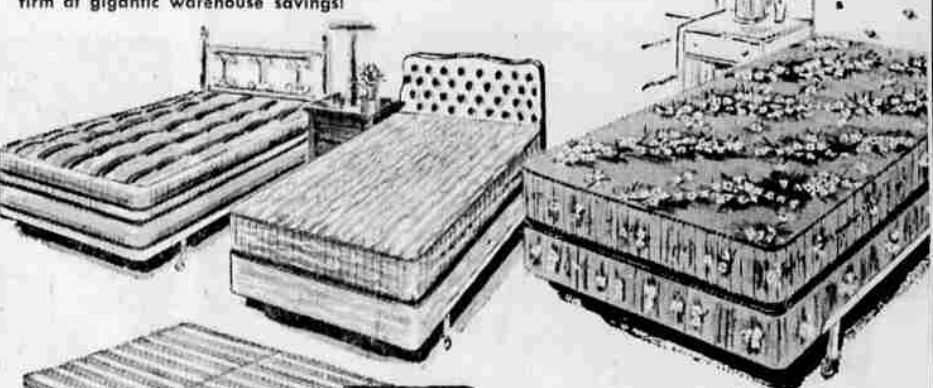
The McNair boat was operated with two men rowing and one man on a tiller at the back.

The group lunched at West's Bar where Sen. Wayne Morris was a guest.

Spectators lined the entire route, they reported.

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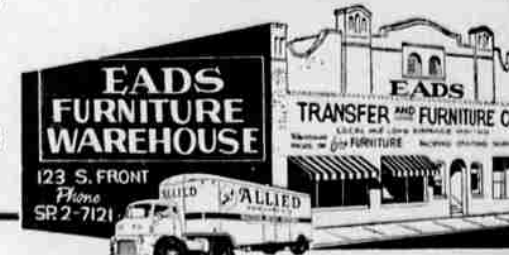
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