

The Adirondacker

Sky Pilot

By BILLY BURGER

One of the most amazing Adirondacker personalities is George Orin Webster of Essex-on-Lake Champlain. He has been minister of the Federated church for 18 years. Despite, or maybe because of the seventy-five years he's put behind him, he regularly conducts three services every Sunday and in the summer may stretch it to four or five.

Nor does he stop there. He's still writing songs, hymns, anthems, poems, Adirondacker history and folklore, raising prize gladioli, and when he gets a chance, casting the brooks in search of the ever more elusive Adirondacker trout.

The story of how he began his poetic career is fascinating. He thinks he was born with a love of poetry. He says there was some great poetry in the early school readers. As family gatherings were then the chief occasions of entertainment, he was asked to read the selections he liked. One day when he was 15 or 16, he saw there was company in the parlor as he slipped by on his way home from school. Sure enough his mother met him at the back door and told him Aunt Lucy was there. She was not a relative, but one of those community characters which flourished in small places before the movie and auto busted our intimate social groups into smithereens. Mrs. Webster said, "George, you must be like a gentleman because Aunt Lucy wants to read your bumps."

Like similar characters Aunt Lucy made some pretensions to acquaintance with the more or less occult science of phrenology. So George went in and knelt before Aunt Lucy while the trembling fingers explored his cranial protuberances. Sure enough Aunt Lucy found what she was looking for the poetic bump—and in no uncertain tones pronounced her opinion. (Maybe Mrs. Webster tipped her off.)

While Orly, as he was then called, must have writhed under the ordeal, the whole incident made a profound impression upon him. He presently found himself turning sentences to make them rhyme. But it was not until after the death of his mother, when a real aunt sent him some dried flowers from her grave that he wrote his first poem, a lovely little thing. It was the spring of '88 and he was 21.

Since then he's written thousands of pieces. At least 2,000 of his hymns have been published. Some of them have been sung around the world. The most famous being "I Need Jesus." One day a leading missionary from Burma came to tell him that this song was the most useful one in that great mission field. He said the boys sang it as they went to work in the fields. The people who heard asked, "Who is this Jesus? Which gave the missionaries their best chance to tell 'the old, old story'."

Just picture it. Here's a man without any musical training and with scanty general schooling, writing verses and even composing his own music for many of his songs. He's just a natural. His songs have already spanned a half century, as the first was published in 1892 by Dr. Uford, who himself wrote the famous "Throw Out the Lifeline." George is now working on what may turn out to be a book. He thinks he'll call it "The Baptist Contribution to Christian Song." He makes no pretense to writing great hymn poetry, just simple gospel songs, which plain people love to sing. The quality of his spirit is revealed in a little poem he read me from one of his "Children's Days" books. Read it aloud. Maybe the family would like to hear it. It won't do you or them any harm.

Conserving the Sunshine
If we could can the sunshine
As we do the fruits and berries;
If we could serve it up like tea
Like peaches, plums or cherries;
How fine, upon a dreary day,
To feel the sun's warm glow—
Just open up a sunshine can,
And let the sunbeams go.

If we could can the sunshine
Like asparagus or peas,
Or store it on the ice box shelf
Like potted meats or cheese—
But you cannot can the sunshine,
'Twasn't made to use that way,
And the only way to keep it
Is by giving it away.

If we could buy the sunshine
As we do our breakfast food,
In a sanitary package,
Guaranteed as fresh and good,
Cooked and ready for the using,
Needing only cream and sweet,
Costing but a little money,
And as nourishing as meat—
Ah, but who would want a sunbeam
Purchased at the corner store,
Or the wagon of the huckster

As it passes by the door?
If the way to keep the sunshine
Is by giving it away,
Then the only way to have it
Is to make it fresh each day.
Keep your sunshine plant so busy
You will need an extra shift,
If you cannot use the output
Let your friends enjoy a gift;
You will find that your investment
Is like lending to the Lord,
And in dividends of sunshine
You will reap a rich reward.

George Webster is a native Adirondacker. He was born in Port Ann, and has spent most of his life in the north woods. His father was a Baptist preacher and presently followed his flock to Indian Lake where many Baptists and others were migrating back in '75. George grew up in the North River region. As a young fellow he worked in lumber camps, ran logs down the Hudson, and worked a strip mine.

After his mother's death, which occurred soon after Aunt Lucy's visit, Mr. Webster went to a charge in Vermont and George ran wild. But not for long. Presently a famous lecturer and humorist, "Bob" Burdette, preached a couple of summers in the North River church. He got a grip on George, and this resulted in George's conversion. In January of 1886 the church sent for George's father to baptize him in 13th Brook, near North River. The ice was four feet thick. But George says it was nothing at all. He looks and acts as if he could go through it today without a shiver.

George now turned definitely to the Baptist ministry, in which he has served almost fifty years. Significant enough, although he says he can never be anything but a Baptist at heart, thirty of the fifty years have been spent in undenominational work. His Federated church at Essex contains Methodist, Baptist and Presbyterian groups and he is also Methodist minister at Whallonsburg.

Because of ill health of the present Mrs. Webster, he was forced to spend twelve years on a farm near Glens Falls. But the old farm just couldn't keep George out of the pulpit. Before he realized what he was doing he was conducting, with Mrs. Webster's help, four services a Sunday. The farm chores were sandwiched in between. This work had two important consequences. It resulted in the organization of the larger parish of the Glens Falls Presbyterian church and in George's being called to the Warrensburg Baptist church, where he cured a very sick situation.

His children and grandchildren are certainly worthy of mention and must be a great source of satisfaction. A son of his former marriage is Deputy Sheriff of Warren county and jailer at Lake George. He is also a gladiolus expert and judges at many exhibitions. A daughter of this son is society editor of the Glens Falls Post Star and as a fourteen year old girl showed marked poetic promise. As George says, she is a poet in her own right. We may publish some of her girlhood poems in this column if she and George are willing.

One daughter of his present marriage is assistant to the pastor of the Glens Falls Baptist church, and is a woman of wide culture, travel and reputation. Another daughter is a teacher.

George's children want him to write a book, the title of which would be "Story of an Adirondacker Boyhood." It would intimately reveal the inside of home and community life in the Adirondacks during the '70's and '80's. One thing George told me about the North River families indicates the possibilities. Twice a year there families would pack butter, maple sugar, meat and other mountain farm products in the wagon and start at midnight on the fifty-mile trek to Glens Falls. They would arrive early in the morning, spend that day and the next bartering for needed supplies, and return heavily loaded with staples, cloth and other goods.

Another recent project of Webster's is "My Story of the Adirondacks," which is inside stuff somewhat along the line of the foregoing paragraph. He says Donaldson's "History of the Adirondacks" is fine, but it was written by a city man who could never get down deep into Adirondacker folk. (I know that only too well from my own experience).

But some city people have been strongly impressed by our big rugged "Sky Pilot." For example, there was Mr. Fulton who had that beautiful place north of Essex where the Oblate Fathers now have their seminary. When he died, the family asked George to do the speaking at the funeral in Montreal, although the minister of the great Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church, of which the Fultons were members, was also

there.
As I rose to say goodbye in the study in the old brick parsonage in Essex, I noticed some badges pinned on a banner on the wall. Sure enough there were eight firsts, nine seconds, seven thirds, and seven honorable mentions for excellence in Gladioli. Then George showed a beautiful hybrid he has just produced. It was as lovely as any orchid.

As I went out, I asked about his hunting and fishing. He says he's tramped all the streams of which he knows. One spring day when he was in Elizabethtown he said to his wife, "I just can't think of a sermon subject." She suggested "I go fishing." Several times I was tempted to ask him about retirement. But I didn't dare. For with that big strong body, firm rolling gait, boyish eyes, square jaw, keen mind and going spirit, it would be an affront. Such men don't retire. They keep at it to the end.

DUCK HUNTING LAWS ANNOUNCED BY COMM. OSBORNE

Revisions on Migratory Bird Laws Released by Conservation Commission

Regulations governing the taking of migratory birds during the fall duck hunting season in New York state were announced Sunday by Conservation Commissioner Lithgow Osborne.

Because the state regulations are revised each year by the Conservation Department and conform entirely with those set up by the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service, Commissioner Osborne urged all duck hunters to become familiar with the full provisions of the duck law.

The open season for wild ducks, geese and coot, rails and gallinules covers 60 days in New York State beginning October 16 and continuing through December 14. There is no open season for snow geese, brant, Ross's goose, woodcock, swans and Wilson's snipe or jacksnipe. Because of a downward trend in the number of the last named species, federal officials have removed these birds from the list that can be legally taken.

Wild ducks and geese, for which an open season is provided, and coot may be hunted from sunrise to 4 p. m. while rails and gallinules (other than coot) may be taken from sunrise to sunset each day during the open season.

Daily bag limit and possession limit permitted each person hunting ducks is as follows: 10 in the aggregate of all kinds, of which not more than three of any one, or more than three in the aggregate, may be of the following species: redheads and buffheads; and any person at any one time may possess not more than 20 ducks in the aggregate of all kinds including not more than six of either or both of redheads or buffheads. Changes in the regulations have removed canvasbacks and ruddy ducks from the species limited to three in the daily bag limit.

Migratory game birds for which open seasons have been provided may be taken with a shotgun not larger than No. 10 gauge fired from the shoulder or with a bow and arrow. They shall not be taken with or by means of any automatic-loading or hand-operated repeating shotgun capable of holding more than three shells, the magazine of which has not been cut off or plugged with a one-piece metal or wooden filler incapable of removal through the loading end so as to reduce the capacity of the gun to not more than three shells. They may be taken from land or water with the aid of a dog and from a blind, boat or floating craft, but may not be taken from a sink-box (battery) nor from a power boat or sailboat, or craft or device towed by a power or sailboat, nor from an automobile or aircraft of any kind. These craft cannot be used to rally, drive or stir up waterfowl and coot. The use of cattle, horses or mules as blinds is also prohibited. Baiting of any kind is prohibited.

In addition to the extensive regulations governing the taking of all species of migratory birds, the Conservation Department called to the attention of all prospective duck hunters provisions of the law pertaining to transportation of wild ducks legally taken during the open season.

At the same time, officials pointed out that all persons engaged in hunting wild waterfowl must possess a federal duck hunting stamp in addition to a regular New York State hunting license. Duck hunting stamps may be purchased at any first or second-class postoffice or from postoffices located in the vicinity of duck hunting areas.

Never Repeated
Only once in history, during Lincoln's term, were five living ex-presidents of the United States known. This unusual number was a result, largely of the fact that no president elected between 1836 and 1860 served more than four years.

Ware of Suspicious Appearing Packages

Police Advise to Avoid All Mysterious Parcels.

ALBANY, N. Y.—Empire state citizens have been warned to be wary of suspicious-looking packages.

A special warning to residents said if a package is observed—whether the size of a cigar box, over-night bag, valise or satchel—lying in a place where it should not be, consider it as dangerous.

The police said "such a package might be found in the factory where you are employed, in a place of public assembly such as a church, synagogue or a movie theater, particularly if that theater is presenting a picture of controversial, political, racial or religious character."

"Railroad stations, trains, ferries, bridges, tunnels, river locks also may provide locations for planting of bombs."

Within the past few months state police said subversive and destructive elements "began instituting a reign of terror by placing, in various places, infernal machines, maliciously designed to explode and destroy life and property."

Residents were advised to be suspicious of all unordered and unexpected packages.

"Unless you are an executive of a manufacturing plant, a ranking government officer, a legislator, a journalist or writer active in the expression of your views on controversial subjects, it is very doubtful that the unknown package received by you will be a bomb," the police said.

A minimum distance of 35 to 50 feet was suggested as a safe distance from any suspicious package. Persons were advised not to investigate, touch, handle or attempt to open, such a box or container; not to put it in water, or throw a stream of water on it.

Pie Regular Army Dish At Northeast Air Base

CHICOPEE, MASS.—Soldiers at Westover field expect pie and they get it.

Maj. George DeGraff, post quartermaster at the new northeast air base, has no difficulty in supplying his 300 troops with pies for dessert. The mess sergeant keeps plenty of flour and shortening on hand, and the cook detail does the rest.

Roaming around the camp, the soldiers have access to an abundance of fruit that includes apples, blueberries, blackberries, grapes, elderberries and even cranberries, all of choice varieties.

Fresh pies are always on the menu, with pickled pears, elderberry juice cocktails and peach melbas also available.

Oregon Girl Proxy Bride Of English War Pilot

VANCOUVER, WASH.—While the bridegroom was fighting German air invaders thousands of miles away, Betty-Karlene Allen, 23, of Portland, became the bride by proxy of a royal air force pilot, Sidnes Ernest Andrews, 27, of Manchester, England.

The ceremony was performed by Superior Judge Carl W. Hall at his home. Miss Allen said she chose to marry in this manner rather than wait for the end of hostilities or until she could go to England. As the ceremony is legal as a civil contract, Judge Hall explained, a civil ceremony was used.

Sailor Plans Five-Year Globe Circling Trip Alone

JAMESTOWN, R. I.—Within a few weeks, Herb Benedict hopes to realize a lifelong ambition by embarking on a solitary, five-year, world girdling voyage in his 50-foot schooner.

Descendant of a long line of New England seafarers, Benedict has his ship in drydock here while scraping and painting operations are completed.

During the cruise on which Benedict will be both captain and crew, he will be accompanied by his pet dog that now is acquiring sea legs along the waterfront.

No Airplane Complete Without Its Clothespin

OKLAHOMA CITY.—Clothespins can be handy on swanky 1941 airplanes, at least in Oklahoma City.

NUMBER 13
By EDWARD BOYER
(McClure Syndicate—WNU Service.)

JACK HAVILAND earned the money for his college education in a maple sugar camp, where the sap was running all the time. He came up to Vendome as a freshman with a gorgeous new red plaid jacket, a weatherbeaten cap, and a bluish that rivaled those old-fashioned red flannel petticoats in color.

Jack went out for freshman football, but just couldn't seem to hang on to the ball. Jerry Bright, who was a sophomore, lent him a derby and told him to carry it around with him, which he did for a week, clutching it solemnly.

Jack couldn't remember signals, either. He used to go around the campus muttering: "1-9-7-4-2—hike! —1-9-7-4-2."

It was at the sophomore-freshman Halloween dance that Jack met his first co-ed. She was Edna Brown. That was the night that Jerry Bright and his sidekick, Herb Donovan, pledged Jack to a fake fraternity and his face redder than ever with pride, he showed Edna the supposed pledge pin which they had given him utterly unconscious of its insignia —S. A. P. And he asked to take her home.

It was that night, too, that the sophomores raised Christy's corpse. Christy Curley, they said, was an escaped inmate of the institute for the insane, and had been found the week before with his throat cut open from ear to ear. The room was in utter darkness when Herb Donovan told the story to the shuddering frosh.

As the hoarse tones of his voice whispered the ghastly words, there slithered in a long, white figure with a crimson gash across its throat. There was a howl of terror, and a gasping, shrieking figure hurtled through the room and out the nearest door. When the lights flashed on, the corpse was gone, and so was Jack Haviland.

He did not appear again that night, and Edna went home alone. Two nights later Edna Brown snuggled close to the caressing shoulder of Bull Jenkins. He was the star tackle on the team of Downtown Prep. And right now he was trying to persuade Edna that on next Saturday she ought to root for his team when they met the cubs of Vendome.

Edna would pet, but she wouldn't promise. "I'll tell you one thing, though," she cooed softly. "If that sap Jack Haviland gets into the game, all you have to do is yell 'Christy's corpse' in his ear, and he'll drop the ball like a hot potato." For any woman who is left to go home alone is like Edna Brown.

Saturday was one of those days fashioned for football and fall weddings. Jack was early on the field; the coach hadn't told him not to come. Twenty jerseys were provided and on the team Jack ranked 21. So he sat jerseyless at the far end of the bench and watched his team fight back the terrific onslaughts of Bull Jenkins and his Downtown Pounders. At the end of the third quarter the score was 0-0.

When the last quarter opened there were only three regulars on the field. Only two men beside Jack were on the bench. Bull Jenkins and his gang tore loose. After a tough line rush two substitutes were taken out for injuries. Jack sat on the bench alone.

The ball was on Vendome's fifteen-yard line, fourth down, two yards to go. Downtown was dead set on crashing through. With all his strength Bull hurled himself into the line plunge. When the heap was untangled, the ball was seven inches short of the line, and Steamy Douglas was sitting on the ground with his ankle turned under him.

"Get in there, Haviland!" rasped the coach. "Here, one of you guys, give him a shirt." The jersey hit Jack in the head; as he dragged it over his shoulders he looked for the number. It was 13.

As he ran, a little bewildered, across the field, Bull Jenkins marked him for his own. "1-9-7-4-2!" barked Howie James, the quarterback. "Hike! 1-8-13." At the number Jack sprang automatically into the air. That was his number. He'd have to get the ball. It was a forward pass, and as it sailed over his head, Jack gave a great leap into the air and came down with it clutched to his chest. The crowd groaned. Bull Jenkins was cutting across the field right for Jack. He circled behind him and shrieked, "Christy's corpse!"

With one yell Jack fled down the field, clutching the ball because he had nothing else to cling to. Bull Jenkins panted behind him; as those pursuing footsteps sounded louder, Jack clung closer to the comforting ball, shrieked to the heavens, and ran faster.

When at last his pursuer felled him, he was over Downtown's goal line. The stands went wild. And as Jack was borne grandly off the field he looked down at the girls who still sat, worshipping, in the bleachers. Among them, and without the escort of Bull Jenkins, sat Jack's co-ed. From his seat on the top of the world, Jack blushed and waved his hand at Edna Brown.

New York's Immense 'Port of Ports' Combines Waterways, Bridges, Tubes

All Merchant Ships of World Could Be Berthed Here; Record Traffic on Vessel and Vehicle Routes Is Aided by Rapid Communication

America's greatest seaport, that of New York, is really a "port of many ports." There are twelve of them in all in this great metropolitan area of 1,500 square miles, with 650 miles of waterfront, eight large bays, four rivers, four estuaries, and forty-two channels. These main ports are: Manhattan, chief passenger terminals; Brooklyn, the Bronx, and Staten Island, on the New York side; and Jersey City, Hoboken, Bayonne, Port Newark, Kearny, Port Raritan, Elizabethport, and Weehawken-Edgewater, on the New Jersey side.

The immensity of the Port of New York has been well expressed in the statement that it has suffi-



Busy piers of Lower Manhattan and New Jersey reach into Hudson and nearby waters to welcome world commerce. Meanwhile the Port Authority watches flow of vehicles through tunnels under river from communication centers (as below). Top: Bayonne Bridge between Staten Island and New Jersey.

cient berthing space to accommodate all the merchant ships of the entire world. Through this port the titanic total of 120 million tons of commerce, valued at 10 billion dollars, moves in a single year. This includes 40 per cent of the nation's entire salt-water tonnage and about 60 per cent of Atlantic coast shipping.

This vast movement of goods is handled by more than 100 steamship companies, a dozen railroad lines, 600 trucking companies, operating 5,000 trucks, scores of large warehouses, the world's greatest express depots, and thousands of auxiliary craft such as tugs, lighters, carfloats, grain elevators, and derrick boats, using nearly 2,000 piers, wharves and quays.

Transportation improvements have fostered the growth of the giant port. It began in a big way in 1825, with the opening of the Erie Canal across New York, giving sea outlet to the growing West. More immediate has been the building of great vehicular tunnels and bridges, linking the port's far-flung islands and peninsulas with the mainland.

The Port of New York Authority, created jointly by the States of New York and New Jersey twenty years ago, has solved many major problems of unification and transportation. It built the great Holland and Lincoln tunnels under the Hudson; it has spanned the river with the George Washington Bridge and linked Staten Island to New Jersey by the Bayonne, Goethals and Outerbridge bridges. More than 27,000,000 motor vehicle crossings were made by way of these bridges and tunnels in 1940. The Hol-

land Tunnel alone handled a record-breaking traffic of 13,331,000. Traffic on the motor ways has approximately doubled in six years. Rapid communication is, of course, indispensable in the smooth operation of the Port facilities, twenty-four hours of every day. This is well illustrated by the use of telephones in operating the vehicular routes. The Port Authority has about 410 telephones in the various communication systems serving the two tunnels, four bridges, headquarters and field offices, and aiding the work of some 1,200 employees. Many of these telephones are used by special police along the tunnel routes under the river, at toll gates, and in handling bridge traffic.

Supervision by telephone radiates from central communication "nerve centers." In the tunnel control rooms, huge boards with light signals visualize the operation of distant ventilating fans and other machinery along the subterranean routes, so that officers are able to act quickly in any emergency, send extra police or medical aid wherever needed, or dispatch a tow truck for a car stalled in the tunnel. The Holland Tunnel, with its force of 360 employees including 255 special police, is equipped with 159 telephones.

The metropolitan area, including the Port, is served by more than 2,200,000 telephones. These include some 1,740,000 in New York City and some 500,000 in nearby metropolitan New Jersey. Connecting these instruments are some 11,000,000 miles of wire, nearly all of it in cables safely underground or in underwater ways. Also by radio telephone, developed in recent years, hundreds of ships plying the port and nearby waters and far out at sea are within voice reach of land telephones.

HOW IT'S DONE
Right Answer to a Quiz Question, In Case It's Asked Again
Joe Kelly's "Quiz Kids," who rarely "muff one," missed what seemed to be a fairly easy question on a recent NBC program, suggesting that perhaps the public generally is not familiar with the subject. The question in substance asked how a radio program is sent to a number of broadcasting stations for simultaneous use.

The right answer is that the program goes over telephone wires to the various stations using it, and they "put it on the air" in their respective areas. Thus with a twist of the dial a radio listener may pick up a symphony orchestra in New York, the Quiz Kids in Chicago, a variety show in Hollywood, or a news commentator from abroad.

More than 67,000 miles of wires are maintained by the Bell System to carry radio programs to some 400 broadcasting stations. These wires are special circuits. Among the thickly packed wires in a long distance telephone cable there are usually six pairs of larger size, put there to carry radio programs from city to city.

Broadcasting networks vary in size from a handful of stations to more than a hundred. Some programs are local shows, some are regional networks and some coast-to-coast. To shift a program from one city to another, the Bell System has a series of control offices, the principal ones being at New York, Chicago, Denver and Los Angeles. These and subsidiary switching offices permit any desired combination of stations and quick changes from one hook-up to another.

In its state-wide services the New York Telephone Company has more than 600 central offices.

VISITING NAVAL OFFICERS CALL HOME FROM WARSHIP

Naval chiefs of staff from ten Latin American countries, during their inspection of the "U. S. S. North Carolina" at the Brooklyn Navy Yard recently, found that they weren't so far away from home after all. Using international telephone facilities, they took turns in chatting with their wives, families or naval ministries in the capitals of their respective nations.

Within thirty minutes these ten conversations, arranged by appointment, were completed between New York and Rio de Janeiro, Valparaiso, Buenos Aires, Lima, Montevideo, Asuncion, Bogota, Caracas, Mexico City and Havana. Arrangements were made between the United States Navy, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company, the latter company operating many of the telephone systems in Latin American countries.

The calls to South America traveled most of the way by radio telephone circuits of the Bell System. To Mexico City and wires were used and to Havana the voices traveled by submarine cable.

SAYS IT WITH MUSIC

A music recital timed to the length of a three-minute long distance telephone call, given by a 14-year-old piano student in an Ohio city recently, was the welcome present to the family of his aunt and uncle in a Connecticut town, more than 300 miles away. So that everyone in the distant home could hear, the boy played the piece twice. The total playing time was six minutes. Another minute was taken to say "hello," and one more to say "good-bye."

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