

Leavenworth Opus No. 1

By Richard English

If the war lasts long enough Mr. Zang's patriotism will get him into trouble. Or put him back in jail

ON THE day he graduated from Leavenworth, Nicky Zang was undoubtedly this country's most patriotic citizen and, as such, he frowned when he saw the crowd and the reporters waiting at the station. Before he could even leave the train, they were surging in on him with their cameras and floral tributes, as if this were still a world in which people were looking for two cars in every garage instead of two Japs under every bed. He sighed. He had hoped his homecoming would not be that of the nation's outstanding Public Enemy (Varsity 1925-26-27-28) but that of a dignified character who, having foresworn the idle fancies of his youth, would be free to take up his war work without a lot of coppers butting in.

"What about the war, Nicky?" asked

a reporter. "How long is it going to take us to whip the Axis?"

Nicky was flanked by those leading torpedoes of happier days, Cousin Capazola and Charlie Schwartz, whom he had thoughtfully ordered to meet him at the prison gates that morning. In outlining their new careers he had made it plain they were only to muscle people in a matter of direst necessity and now they permitted the reporters to crowd in around him.

Despite his understandable weariness at such a hemmed-in feeling, Nicky made the effort at politeness that is always expected of a public figure. He had the cozy dimensions of a small safe as he rocked back on his heels, regarding the reporters with a face that would have sent Gargantua skipping right home to his mother.

"I don't know how long it'll take us to whip 'em," he said. "I'll have to check into things before I go around shootin' off my mouth. Besides, you gotta knock a guy off before you start worrying about when you'll bury him."

He smiled a little, thinking how surprised they would be when they learned

BLACK VALLEY
CALM & FEARLESS
IS OUR
NICK
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SICK
WELCOME
COME
TO
ZANG
FROM HIS
LA GANG!



Nicky took his place in the procession, and the parade made a triumphant march through the station

Nicky Zang was going all the way on this patriotic business. During his fourteen-year course in better citizenship he had realized he owed his country a great deal. Never a narrow-minded party, he would have been the first to admit that his sudden retirement from the beer industry had undoubtedly saved his hips. His three successors had all been tossed over bridges while absent-mindedly reclining in cement barrels, and the more he thought about it the more he was sure this patriotism was for him.

"You just tell the public," he said, "that Nicky Zang will be right in there pitching."

Some of his loyal followers were crowding in now, presenting him with floral horseshoes, and several night club and tavern bands—combined for the homecoming party—now burst into Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here. Nicky winced at this onslaught and, always on cue, Cousin and Charlie turned ominous frowns on the band.

Only they knew that Nicky Zang had emerged from Leavenworth a true music lover, a man who could no longer take his sonatas or leave them alone.

His warden had been extremely partial to good music and as the cell-block radio conveyed only what the warden personally enjoyed, Nicky had, under such constant exposure, blossomed into a man of considerable culture. One addicted to Wagner and Gershwin, and even taking occasional fliers on Sousa and Ravel.

"How about a picture of you leading the parade, Nicky?" asked a camera-

man. "There's going to be a parade, you know."

Nicky grinned and took his place at the head of the noisy procession that was forming on the platform. Led by the band, the parade made a triumphant path through the station, when the rude hand of the law intervened.

The hand belonged to Lieutenant Bert Tilden, formerly of the racket squad, and it rested heavily on Nicky's shoulder. "Not so fast, big-shot," he said, savoring the consternation he caused as the procession halted. "I always like to welcome the tough boys home. They change so much. If they're not Bible-pounders, they're patriots."

Nicky's face had congealed. Despite his high intentions the mere sight of Lieutenant Tilden was enough to make him wish for the good old days when he had such punks sent so far out in the sticks they had to use a sickle to find the station house.

"Hello, flatfoot," he said coldly. "Still slugging people with that roll of nickels?"

Tilden frowned. "If you want to find out, all you have to do is try making a pitch at the old stand." He was making the faces in the crowd and only after seeing Cousin and Charlie did he relax. Such a trio must sooner or later end up on the wrong end of a beef. That thought eased the regret with which he released Nicky now.

"I'll keep in touch with you," he promised. "You never looked like no Patrick Henry to me."

Nicky wasn't even aware of him. The band was already into the first chorus of

one of the latest popular war songs, and this added insult to his recently acquired culture caused him to make with a well-bred shudder. It was becoming more and more obvious that he had been released in the nick of time. Not only was the great war song still unwritten but indeed, our country was going into battle armed only with a lot of punk tunes.

"You hear what I said?" Tilden snapped. "I said you don't look like no Patrick Henry to me!"

Nicky regarded him with aesthetic distaste, knowing that the Tildens of the world would never appreciate his patriotic plans for becoming a songwriter himself. Notoriously narrow, the forces of law and order would never make allowances for the fact that knowing from nothing about writing down music himself, he would naturally have to snatch himself a composer. A copper wouldn't even understand there was nothing personal in this: it simply stood to reason that no classy composer would agree to working with an unknown and so steps had to be taken.

"I heard you, sweetheart," Nicky said. "Well, see you at the symphony."

"YOU'RE sure he's the best we can do?" Nicky asked doubtfully. They were assembled in the library of his estate and at the moment he was plainly distraught, circling the applicant with the dubiousness of an underslung St. Bernard. "An associate conductor don't sound so big-shot to me. If we gotta put the sneeze on a conductor to write my song, what's wrong with Stokowski?"

Cousin Capazola shrugged the twin

peaks that concealed his shoulders.

"Stokowski somebody would miss," he said. "With cousin here, it's different. Who misses a guy who just rehearses a band?"

Nicky sighed. Cousin had never been too heavy in the upstairs department, dwelling as he did in a lovely world where everyone was either a cousin or a blood enemy. Cousin was beaming with the honest pleasure of one who had resumed his old trade, gladly consigning his florist shop to the limbo of legitimate enterprises. "For a panty-waist, he didn't want to come at all," he said gaily. "He got real tough, Cousin did."

Edgar Snodgrass rolled his eyes fiercely but said nothing. He had been busily occupied with his storage plans when Cousin and Charlie had appeared at his apartment and he was still highly indignant about the whole thing. He was a slender young man but not willowy, and his haircut was as conventional as his suit. His whole appearance filled Nicky with reasonable distrust. He was not one to entrust lightly his country's destiny to just any blond punk with a snub nose.

"Snodgrass," Nicky said bitterly. "Could someone named Snodgrass write The Star-Spangled Banner or maybe even the Bolero?" Again he regretted he had been forced to bundle himself a guy just to write down the song that was always bursting in his head. When a man stuck his neck out that far he deserved something better than this punk.

"It's a pity that Irving Berlin guy ain't in town," he said morosely. "If he was, we wouldn't be messin' with such yaps."

"Jerks," Charlie Schwartz said apologetically. "They call 'em jerks now, Nicky." He was a small, sober party, addicted to somber clothes and even more somber tactics. At the moment he was polishing his glasses with the delicate touch of one who always carried his implements in a violin case. "On the record this Snodgrass is the best of the local talent. I had him taped."

Nicky's face opened like a flower in the sun. "Yeah?" he said hopefully. "An inside job, hunh?"

"Well," Charlie said comfortably, "I had my sources."

HIS narration, while hardly in the Deems Taylor manner, was still very soothing to any music lover. Mr. Snodgrass had been the associate conductor of the local symphony for the past six years, during which time he was known to have composed several pieces that the long-underwear trade regarded as killer-dillers. Due to the fact that the conductor, Stanislaus Jurich, was too gracious a man ever to deprive his public of its childish pleasure in observing his swaying figure on the podium, Edgar had been more or less under wraps all these years.

"Not being well known," said Charlie, "he oughta make you a real nice collaborator. People won't miss him and if they do, they'll just think he's gone to visit an aunt or something."

"Well," said Nicky, turning a patron's kindly beam on the young man, "that's more like it. When you get through writing this song I got hummin' in my ears you'll be famous all over the world, Edgar. Think how you'll feel when our boys are marchin' into Tokyo to our music!" Swept with emotion, he turned on Mr. Capazola. "Take that gag out of his mouth. You got no manners?"

Edgar's first words would hardly serve as a model for what the grateful young artiste should say to his sponsor. "Mr. Zang," he cried sternly, "the F.B.I. shall hear of this! This is not 1928. When the proper authorities learn of your gangster tactics—"

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With the roaring take-off of a four-motored bomber, Nicky gave Edgar a preview of the melody that was to save the United Nations

ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY BECKHOFF



COOK'S Day Out

By John F. Cogswell

North woods or back yard, cooking outdoors has its points, like bean-hole beans and toasted franks, and chowder from those fish you caught. Here's to more of the same

LAST summer, more people than ever before spent their vacations in the north woods. They crowded the sporting camps, pitched tents in the national forests, rode canoes down lonesome rivers, fished in remote lakes. The North Country claims a still bigger incursion this summer. War industry workers have been urged to take outdoor vacations to re-create vigor, insure top production. Sea trips are out. The tire shortage and gas rationing prohibit countrywide touring. So the forests not too far from industrial regions are overrun with folks from the cities, out for rest and recreation.

"They'll have a lot of fun and go home full of pep—if they know how to cook in the woods," observes C. Ross McKenney, nationally famous woodsman, so good in the forest that Dartmouth University jerked him off the trails, put him on the faculty, made him the first "outdoors technician."

Good cooking is essential to enjoy a camping trip. The legions who hit into the timber with licensed guides to look after them will have no worries, for these vacation-country woodsmen are acknowledged to be the best woods cooks in the world. City folks, going camping for the first time, can live well, too, if they'll take some tips from the professionals. Out by themselves or under the wing of a guide, they'll bring home recipes that will astonish and delight guests around the back-yard fireplaces that are so popular. Or they can get the same results, without stirring out of the back yard, by following the recipes herewith.

One sun-spattered noontime, Ross McKenney, who is a superlative outdoor chef, unshouldered our canoe, deposited it beside the pile of duffel at the top of the carry around Grand Falls, on the famous East Branch trip into the Maine wilderness.

"That carry took a lot of meat off our frames," he remarked, as we sat resting, puffing our pipes. "But hang onto your appetite a while and I'll stir up a mess of corn bread that will put it back."

In twenty minutes the corn bread was ready, steaming, butter melting into it. Corn bread, bacon and beans, hot coffee! There's food that will stick to your ribs. Here's how Ross McKenney puts it together:



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Corn Bread

- 2 cups corn meal
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 tablespoonful shortening (optional)
- 4 tablespoonfuls sugar
- 1 teaspoonful salt
- 1 moderately heaped teaspoonful soda
- 2 moderately heaped teaspoonfuls cream of tartar
- 1 egg
- 1 can evaporated milk, diluted

Sift dry ingredients together, add one cup of milk, the egg and melted shortening. Stir until partly mixed. Add milk or water to make easily beaten batter. Beat well, the harder the better. Bake quickly.

A Big-Woods Cook's Outfit

Good johnnycake can be conjured out of even a depleted food box. Put in the shortening or leave it out; without it, the bread will be easier to butter without crumbling. Use plain water instead of evaporated milk. The egg isn't absolutely necessary, either. Three teaspoonfuls of baking powder can replace the soda and cream of tartar.

Experienced guides don't believe in much fried food in the woods; city sports, they say, overeat anyway in the open, and hard-to-digest food would wreck them. Bert Quimby, Ross' old partner, himself a peerless trail chef, says that any camping party would be a lot better off if its cook lost his fry pans

the first day out—all but one small skillet, to use in browning onions and bacon or salt pork, before they go into the stew kettle or baking pan. Fish chowder is about the only dish on their menus into which onions go unbrowned.

Give a big-woods cook his one fry pan, a set of three nested kettles, a wire broiler and a reflector oven, and he'll turn out a bewildering and toothsome variety of stews and broiled and baked foods. A reflector oven is a triangular-shaped contrivance, made of tinned sheet metal, with a shelf inside to hold a bake dish. You can probably still find one on your hardware dealer's shelf. It costs, perhaps, a dollar; weighs but a couple of pounds. Setting one before an open fire, a forest chef can work wonders with it.

These are enough cooking utensils for any trip into the woods. The food list needn't be long, either. Long canoe trips into the wilderness are not made without a licensed guide; he does the worrying about the food list, packing, everything. Most vacationist campers, out on their own, drive their own cars or take bus or train to a state or national forest campground, pitch tent, hike out from there on day-long trips. Many a vacation state boasts a tenting place, with trees for shade and good water to drink, near-by streams and lakes in which to fish, within an hour's drive from any location in the state. Fresh meat and fruit are usually obtainable not too far from such spots.

Any man of the house can don a chef's cap and cook a woodsman's meal in a rustic spot near home—as Denis Regan of Scarsdale, N. Y., does for his wife and guest (right)

Many of the items that every housewife must have on her pantry shelves may well be dispensed with in the big woods. With the following list of staples anyone can get along; quantities for one person, one week:

Flour, 3½ pounds; corn meal, 2 pounds; potatoes, 14 medium-sized; onions, 7 good-sized; butter, 1½ pounds; evaporated milk, 2 tins; bacon, 2 pounds; salt pork, 2 pounds; sugar ½ pound; coffee, ¾ of a pound; tea, ⅛ pound; dried prunes, apricots and pears, 1 pound; beans, 1 quart.

These staples should be backed up by one-meal-size cans, for entire party, of fruit, fruit juices, and vegetables, soups, corn beef hash, ham products, beef stew, etc. (Figure assortment on basis of 1½ cans per day, per person.) Dehydrated vegetables may take the place of fresh and canned, if weight-saving is an object. Put in two or three packages of prepared noodles, a can of molasses, one of sirup, a box of shaker salt, a tin each of pepper and mustard, for the party. Boxed soda crackers and cookies are a luxury item. Pork drippings supply shortening, lighter than

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