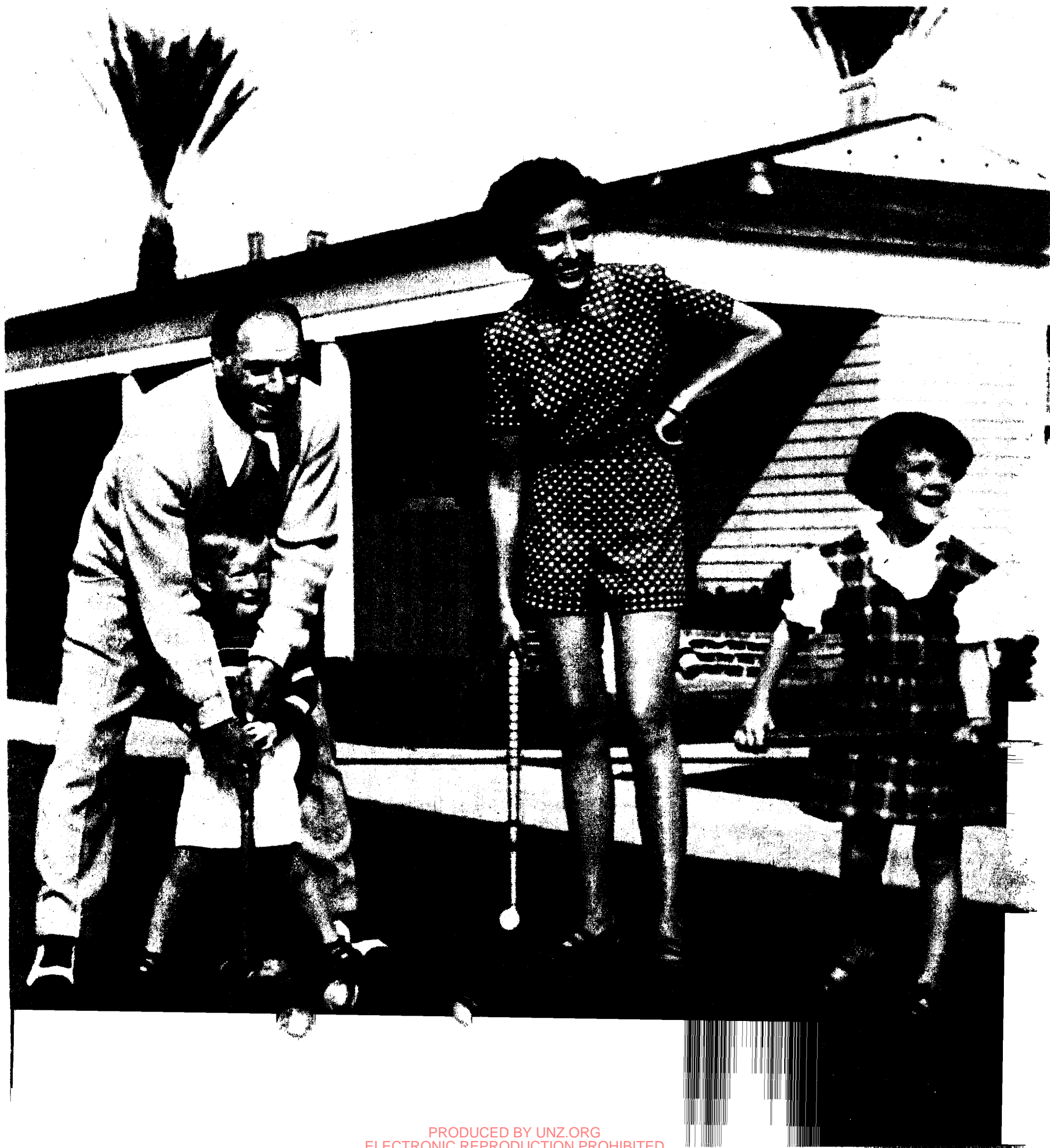


Laraine Taught Leo:

Always the manager, Leo pilots son Chris, six, through a delicate croquet situation in a preseason game at Phoenix, Arizona, where the Giants take spring training. Coaching from the side lines are Laraine and daughter Michele, eight. Both Durocher youngsters are adopted



NICE GUYS FINISH FIRST

By COLLIE SMALL



His critics may find it hard to believe, but Leo loves kids—especially his own



Durocher and son take the field. Leo once "suspended" Chris for breaking rule



Mrs. Durocher and son with third sacker Bob Thomson, whose homer won '51 race

Though the Giant manager's missus keeps insisting he's the same Durocher as before (sweet and gentle, that is), there are fans who think this represents a change from the old Leo

TOWARD the end of the historic 1951 baseball season, with the New York Giants in the midst of an electrifying winning streak, Miss Laraine Day, the wife of Mr. Leo Durocher, the Giant manager, walked into a ten-cent store in New York to purchase some inexpensive oddments for their daughter Michele. As she bent over the counter, she felt that someone was staring at her. Looking up cautiously, she saw three people in the next aisle bobbing their heads and pointing. She watched them out of the corner of her eye, waiting for their next move.

It was not long in coming. Gathering their packages, the three strangers detoured around several counters to get into position for their thrust. Then, as they walked past Miss Day, one of them said, loudly, "Why, Brooklyn couldn't possibly lose the pennant to those awful Giants!"

Miss Day was ruminating recently over this curious tendency of people to go out of their way to badger baseball managers and their wives. "I wonder," she said, wearily, "what they think we are."

Miss Day's weariness is understandable. When, approximately five years ago, love came to the National League and the beautiful motion-picture actress married the baseball manager (it was her second marriage, his third), some people tended to regard the union with the same sort of suspicion they would have felt in the event of a marriage between Florence Nightingale and Attila the Hun.

To this portion of the population, Leo was notable only for his combative instincts, and it was assumed that in the winning of Miss Day he had wooed her with a baseball bat. Exactly what had prompted Miss Day to undertake her role as Leo's Juliet was harder for them to define, but the conclusion was that a wisp of innocent loveliness was about to be abruptly disenchanted. Their feeling that Miss Day would last no more than one or two innings was heightened by the fact that she was on record as thoroughly disliking all sports, including baseball.

For the Durocher critics, it has been a confounding five years. So far as is known, Leo, Laraine, Michele, who is eight, Chris, who is six (both adopted) and Mischief, the dog, are sublimely happy. During the past season, baseball writers thought they detected strange outcroppings of hu-

mility in Leo and attributed the reformation to Miss Day, but she promptly denied there had been a reformation and said that Leo was no different than he had always been.

On the other hand, Miss Day is now as rabid a baseball fan as one would care to cross statistics with, and in the matter of second-guessing Leo she is also an uncommonly courageous one. "There really isn't anything to it," she said cheerfully not long ago. "I just play results. Of course, if Leo does something that turns out right, I'm left with nothing to criticize, but he does enough things that turn out wrong to keep me happy."

A striking instance of Laraine's nimbleness came during a series with the St. Louis Cardinals. With the Giants trailing in a late inning of one of the games, Leo called upon Jack Lohrke, a reserve infielder, to hit for Henry Thompson. Not only did Lohrke strike out, but he had the misfortune to make an error in the next inning and to strike out again in the last inning. In the car on their way home from the Polo Grounds, Laraine turned to Leo and asked, "How could you possibly have had the bad judgment to use Lohrke in that spot?"

Leo stared grimly at the street ahead. "You do the cooking," he growled, falling back on an old baseball expression, "and I'll do the hitting."

When the Pinch Hitter Made Good

The next afternoon, the game with the Cardinals went into extra innings. Having finally coaxed the potential winning run to second base, Leo again summoned Lohrke from the bench as a pinch hitter. From her box, Laraine glared at Leo. Leo glared at Laraine. This time, Lohrke slammed a line drive to center field and won the ball game for the Giants. On the way home, Leo turned to Laraine.

"Well, second-guesser, what do you think of Lohrke now?"

"Why, Leo," she said, sweetly, "you know I've always thought he was the finest player on the team!"

Such a rally from anyone else would constitute a serious strain on Leo's indulgence, since he has never been amused by digs at his strategy, but in the case of Laraine he is so pleased at the way she has grasped the science of baseball that it seldom occurs to him to be anything but grateful.

Leo's own knowledge of baseball has been acquired over a considerable span, both as a player and a manager, and he often expresses amazement that Laraine has learned so much about the game in such a short time. Her independence continually delights him; only once or twice, for example, has she bothered to consult him for guidance on her pregame television show on New York's Station WPIX, although it is a program of interviews in which she is often required to discuss the more technical aspects of the game with ballplayers and other knowledgeable people connected with the sport.

Laraine is inclined to minimize the accomplishment. "All I did was read a lot of books in self-defense," she said, recently. "After I married Leo, I had to learn about baseball. I read everything I could, with the exception of the rulebook. That was impossible. It was like trying to read a movie contract."

To those who know her, Laraine's determination to learn baseball after her marriage did not seem unusual. Miss Day is not only beautiful, but she is talented and energetic as well. She displays these characteristics in various ways. After each game in New York last summer, while she waited for Leo in their car in a parking lot near the Polo Grounds, she occupied her time by writing baseball lyrics to popular songs (unfortunately, when the Giants achieved the impossible and won the pennant, she was caught as far off-base as everyone else and had to rewrite most of the endings, since they had been predicated on a Brooklyn victory).

It is also typical of her that in California last winter, in addition to taking care of their two children, she managed to learn to play the piano, master the art of weaving, and, without telling Leo, write a book, *Day with the Giants*, which is scheduled for publication in April.

This sort of zeal has led to one or two contretemps. Not long ago, for example, Miss Day found a dictionary of baseball slang and proceeded to bone up on it. Since then, she has startled Leo on numerous occasions by unexpectedly talking gibberish. Although he has been in baseball nearly all his life, some of the terms she uses are hopelessly obscure to him, but Laraine has no difficulty whatever in defining a (Continued on page 60)

What You Don't Know



PIERCE

WASHINGTON

JACKSON

JOHNSON

GARFIELD
HAYES

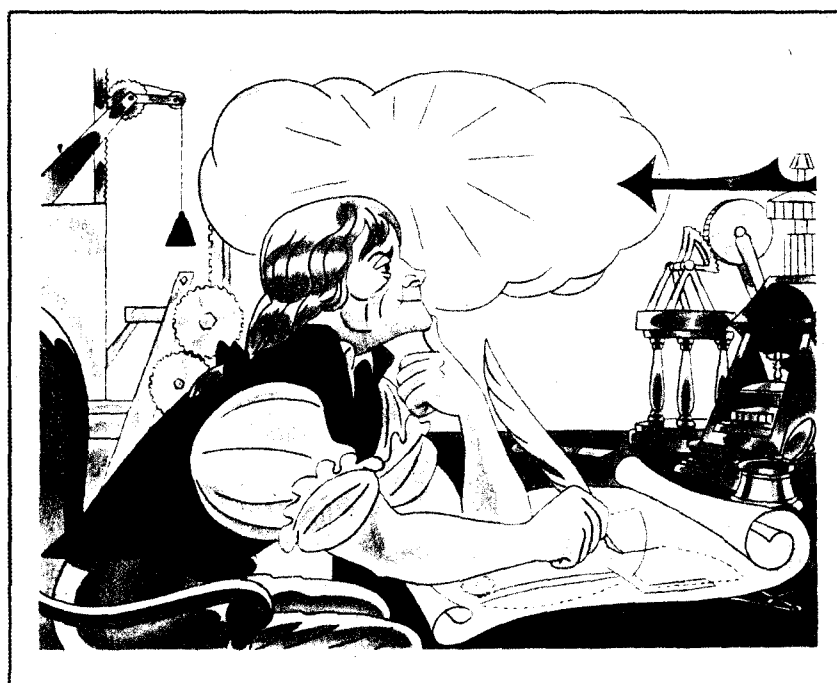
ARTHUR

TAYLOR

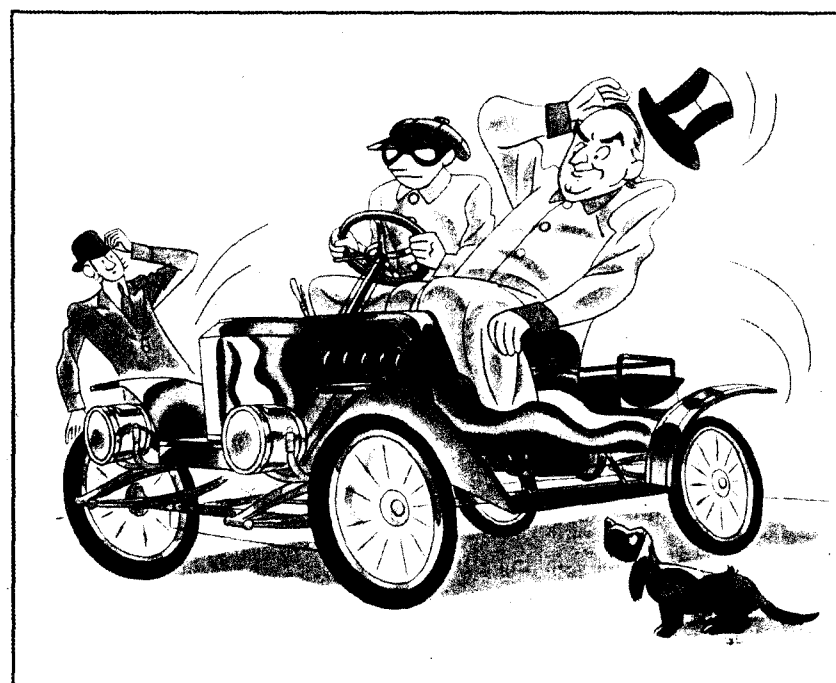
BENJAMIN HARRISON

GRANT

W. H. HARRISON



Jefferson led all Presidents in inventions, but he never patented one



McKinley's "first" was an auto ride in 1899—in a Stanley Steamer
Collier's for March 8, 1952