

# Rogers, Will

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	X
NIGHT MESSAGE	
NIGHT LETTER	
Patrons should mark an X opposite the class of service desired; OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE TELEGRAM	

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Form 1206A

NO.	CASH OR CHG
CHECK	
TIME FILED	

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

Miami Beach, Fla., Jan. 7, 1925.

Will Rogers,  
Berkley, Cal.

Better leave California at once as they may have a few earthquakes this month Stop We don't want any crippled comedians Stop Have large number of special Pinkertons in Jacksonville examining all suspicious looking visitors into Florida but I will do best I can to get you thru without delay Stop One of Fred Post's loan horses book visitor yesterday right into the ocean Stop We are doing all we can think of to frame you for a blush at least Stop You will stop at the Nautilus while here as my guest Stop Understand everybody in California has a bad cold.

Carl G Fisher

CGF\*JJG.  
Pd. & Chg. Alton Beach Realty Co.  
W.U.-Day letter.

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
NIGHT MESSAGE	
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Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

Miami Beach, Fla., Dec. 26, 1925.

Will Rogers,  
~~██████~~, Beverly Hills, Cal.

Happy New Year Stop Date all arranged for January 29th Stop Come down early so we can go fishing and have some polo Stop I have two dogs that I want to loan you and if you like them you can keep them Stop Letter follows.

CARL G FISHER

CGF\*JJG.  
Pd. & Chg. Alton Beach Realty Co.  
W.U.-Day letter.

December 28, 1925.

Dear Bill,

We have everything all set for your appearance on the 29th of January. The newspapers are rarin' to go but we have no dope yet from your manager to publish. We are going to turn you out a helluva crowd and I have all the brains working in this locality to heckle you and see if it is possible to make you blush.

I suppose it's wet and chilly out in California now with a lot of rain or lack of rain, which makes conditions even worse so I understand. We are enjoying immense prosperity in Southern Florida. You can drop a quarter on the streets here at Miami Beach and it'll stay there two or three days before anybody picks it up. We're having some good polo every day. Sorry you are not here. I certainly want to loan you one of my horses that nobody else can stop.

I ordered 25 of your books for Christmas presents but there is so much freight and express coming to Miami that they haven't arrived up to this time, which leaves me in a hole.

Wish you would arrange to stay here long enough for me to take you over to Nassau, in the Bahamas, and give you an outing. I also want to take you fishing. I want to show you what a real fish can do when you get it on a half-inch Manila rope; being well aware of the fact that the cat fish you have caught in Oklahoma do not produce much thrills.

Best wishes and a Happy New Year.

Yours,

CGF:JJC.

Mr. Will Rogers,  
Beverly Hills, Cal.

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	BLUE
NIGHT MESSAGE	NITE
NIGHT LETTER	N L

If none of these three symbols appears after the check (number of words) this is a telegram. Otherwise its character is indicated by the symbol appearing after the check.

# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	BLUE
NIGHT MESSAGE	NITE
NIGHT LETTER	N L

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The filing time as shown in the date line on full rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

Received at Western Union Bldg., 801 Fifth St., Miami Beach, Flo. ALWAYS OPEN

MZA 101 91 NL 1/61

1926 JAN 7 AM 8 51

LOSANGELES CALIF JAN 6

CARL G FISHER

029

MIAMIBEACH FLO

*Gene*

AM LEAVING HERE ABOUT THE FIFTEENTH WILL ARRIVE THE NINETEENTH AS  
THERE CANT BE AN EMBARGO ON COMEDIANS OTHERWISE HOW DID THEY FILL UP  
THE STATE I PLAY DAYTONA THE TWENTY SEVENTH AND WILL HAVE THESE  
FEW DAYS TO SEE FLORIDA YOU ENGAGE COTS FOR US AT SOME HOTEL MY TOUR  
IS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE CALIFORNIA REALESTATE BOARD AM

SYMBOL	
MESSAGE	NITE
NIGHT LETTER	N L
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# WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM



NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	BLUE
NIGHT MESSAGE	NITE
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ALWAYS  
OPEN

1926 JAN 7 AM 8 50

A 101 SHEET 2/30

BRINGING MAPS OF LATEST SUBDIVISION JUST TO LET IN A FEW FRIENDS  
 YOU FRED AND JESS HAVE YOUR TOP HORSES SADDLED NOT VISITORS HORSES  
 REMEMBER DOGS THAT WILL STOP REGARDS

WILL.

CLASS OF SERVICE	SYMBOL
TELEGRAM	
DAY LETTER	BLUE
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NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

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Received at Western Union Bldg., 801 Fifth St., Miami Beach, Flo. ALWAYS OPEN

MZA 55 37

UD ELPASO TEX 16 945A

CARL FISHER

195 REAL ESTATE AND YACHTS MIAMIBEACH FLO

WE ARE PASSING THROUGH THE FLORIDA OF THE WEST ARRIVE TUESDAY  
MORNING BARING EMBARGOES PUT THREE DAYS BINDER ON ROOM AND BATH  
JACK DEMPSEY WITH ME TO FIGHT OFF SALESMEN WE HAVE WHOLE TRAIN  
TO OURSELVES SYMPATHY

WILL.

1926 JAN 15 PM 12 42

Richard P Neil



## CLASS OF SERVICE

This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its character is indicated by a symbol in the check or in the address.

# WESTERN UNION

## SYMBOLS

BLUE	Day Letter
NITE	Night Message
NL	Night Letter
LCO	Deferred
CLT	Cable Letter
WLT	Week End Letter

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

**Received at**
 9N KN 50 NL

ALBANY NY 5/3

CARL G FISHER

BOAT OWNER SOMEWHERE IN PTWASHINGTON NY

AM BOOKED AT HERSHEY PENNSYLVANIA ON THAT DAY AND IT IS MY LAST DATE OF  
THE SEASON NOW NOTHING WOULD TICKLE ME BETTER THAN TO BE OUT THERE AND  
MEET ALL THE OLD EX FLORIDIANS I WILL SEE WHAT I CAN DO CERTAINLY THANK  
YOU FOR THINKING OF ME YOUR

WILL ROGERS

830AM

# The Hotel Pancoast

On the Ocean Front at 29th Street

MIAMI BEACH  
FLORIDA

FLORIDA  
ALL THE YEAR

J. ARTHUR PANCOAST  
Proprietor

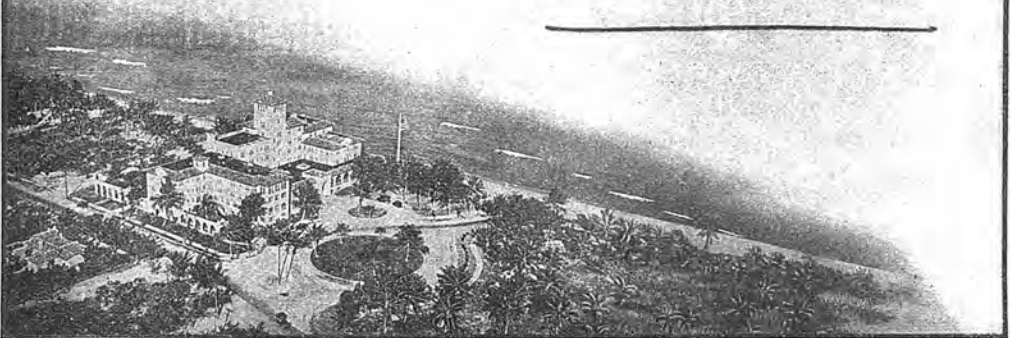
LESTER D. SPRAGUE  
Manager

Will Rogers, Esq.  
New York City

Is there anything in rumor that Rogers boom  
is on verge of bursting & Understand great  
mental anguish in some northern banking  
circles because of enormous number people  
withdrawing money from banks to go to  
New York and pay inflated prices to  
hear you talk & Persistent propoganda  
to effect your talk is not worth what  
people are spending on it & If you are at  
the end of your rope ~~wire~~ wire me collect and  
will send you ticket to Florida &

Carl G. Fisher &

---



# The Hotel Pancoast

On the Ocean Front at 29th Street

MIAMI BEACH  
FLORIDA

FLORIDA  
ALL THE YEAR

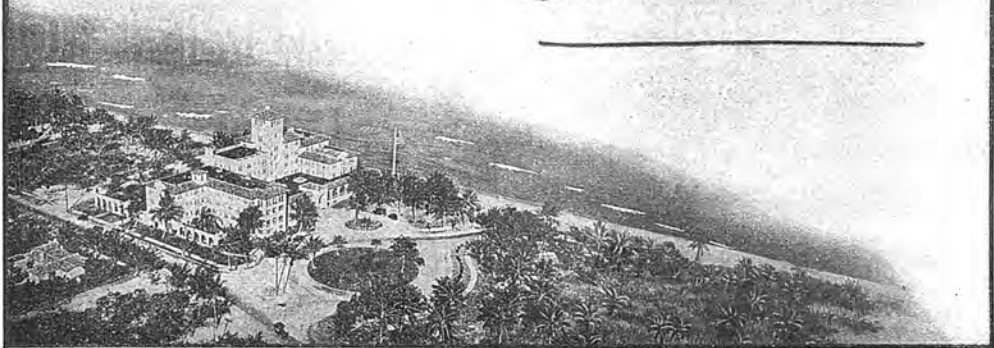
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hear you talk x Persistent propoganda  
to effect your talk is not worth what  
people are spending on it x If you are at  
the end of your rope wire me collect and  
will send you ticket to Florida x

Carl G. Fisher x



# Will Performs Down Among the Alligators

BY WILL ROGERS.

I LEFT old Broadway last September. I thought, "I have been hanging around there so long I better go out and dig me up a new audience to listen to the old wheezes." Well, like everybody, sooner or later I bust into Florida, and as I do I meet Broadway face to face, again.

My perpetual Boss, Flo Ziegfeld, has a Midnight Frolic at Palm Beach that is as big and as elaborate as lots of his regular Follies shows are; 40 of his prettiest Girls and a big bunch of principals including Ukalele Ike and Art Hickman's California Band.

They had the old "Balloon Number" from the original Midnight Frolic on the roof. That was the show I started in with Ziegfeld, the original Midnight Show. People used to have all they wanted to drink in those days. I mean at moderate prices. Of course they didn't have any more than they do now. In fact, they didn't seem to require as much. Ziegfeld used to always say that I was a good act for people whose mentality was kinder fogged; that was why he

kept me up there. Well it seems that every time Zieg feels insomnia coming on him he puts on a Midnight Show. The same old gang was at the front row Tables, bursting the toy balloons with Cigarettes—Tony Biddle, Gurnee Munn, Replogle, The Countess Salm (formerly one of the Rogers family).

We opened our Intellectual Lecture Tour, Spring Edition, at Miami Beach, and you would have thought it was a Follies first night. Carl Fisher of Montauk Point, Long

(Continued on PAGE 10, Column 3)

## Rogers thinks he'll visit Ringling.

Island, come down on some of his Yachts just for the opening. We were playing in his big beautiful Casino, so he got in on a pass. Everybody had changed from their Subdivision Clothes, which is knee breeches. I always thought that makeup was for Golf, but it's not. It's a badge, showing you belong to Florida's National Industry.

Well they all changed to their Monkey Suits. Tuxedos were unearthed, all good Pre-War Suits. Jessie Andrews, whose rural address is West Point, Indiana, but now Genial Proprietor of Miami Beach's newest Hotel, the King Cole, slept in a nearby seat. O. O. McIntyre, that most entertaining of Writers and the man that I will bet is the most widely read Syndicate Writer in America today, was an uninterested spectator. He is one of our typical Ex-New York first nighters. He claims Gallipolis, Ohio, but St. Joe, Missouri is where he broadcasted his first yell. He and the Pony Express both started from St. Joe. One went east and one went west. You can see which one has survived. He winters in Florida and writes of New York, "of the cold, bleak stormy nights with mad throngs rushing and shoving for steam-heated taxis." You would think he was freezing as he wrote it, and it makes you shiver to read it. Well, he is doing it under an Electric fan, dressed in a bathing suit.

Also seated near enough to him was Gene Buck, the Frank W. stearns of the Ziegfeld Administration. Ziegfeld can't go out in the morning and buy Billy Burke a new Rolls Royce without consulting Gene. He is the Col. House of the Follies. He was accompanied by his beautiful wife, and they were guests on the Yacht of Salling Baruch.

The Baruchs, as you know, are very rich. Everything they go into makes money. They have never invested in but one losing financial enterprise, and that was the Democratic Party, and they may realize something (maybe 10 per cent.) on that, as soon as it is liquidated. The Stockholders can't seem to get together and agree on anything definite.

## Abe Martin was There.

I spied an uncomfortable figure in one of the cheaper seats. I could tell he was restless among City people. In describing his Dinner Jacket (which he wore with the nonchalance of a mule with chain harness) I will say this much for his suit, it was black. I wondered what plebian could be in such a gathering. On close scrutiny who do you think it shed off to be? Kin Hubbard, in an Abe Martin makeup. You all know Kin Hubbard's Abe Martin,

ner Avenue. From St. Louis, Hornsby Boulevard. If you are from

SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES.

ENTER MONEY

and writes of New York, "of the cold, bleak stormy nights with mad throngs rushing and shoving for steam-heated taxis." You would think he was freezing as he wrote it, and it makes you shiver to read it. Well, he is doing it under an Electric fan, dressed in a bathing suit.

Also seated near enough to him was Gene Buck, the Frank W. Stearns of the Ziegfeld Administration. Ziegfeld can't go out in the morning and buy Billy Burke a new Rolls Royce without consulting Gene. He is the Col. House of the Polles. He was accompanied by his beautiful wife, and they were guests on the yacht of Helling Haruch.

The Haruchs, as you know, are very rich. Everything they go into makes money. They have never invested in but one losing financial enterprise, and that was the Democratic Party, and they may realize something (maybe 10 per cent.) on that, as soon as it is liquidated. The Stockholders can't seem to get together and agree on anything definite.

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A very distinguished ringside guest was Jimmie Cox of Ohio, resplendent in habiliments of well-worn keynote addresses. He has a paper in Miami that is bigger and thicker every day than a Sears Roebuck Catalog. Some of the ads are bigger than the lots they advertise. Jimmie has a beautiful home on the beach for inheritance tax purposes. Mayor Ed Romph, the World's richest Mayor since Jim Couzens retired to private life in the United States senate, was also a bored spectator.

Gene Tunney, who started in life as a youth with but one object in view, that was to find the man that had hid the Boxing Championship of the world away. He has finally found it, but there is one stipulation. The possessor, Mr. Dempsey, offers to risk the crown just as soon as they find Captain Kidd's Treasure, and offer it as a prize. Gene was host to a party of the younger sparring partner set.

John Golden, representing the drama, was another unintentional Spectator. He is in Florida during the royalty season. "Lightnin'" on its world record had to "Turn to The Right" to make way for "Able's Irish Rose," the Iowa Agricultural College's prize play. John was counting up the house and wondering how he could send out companies with no scenery and no trunks and No actors.

To add an International flavor, we had the English Polo Team, who I had assisted in winning a game the day before, by playing against them. Among them was a real Lord. Even higher than a Lord. He was a Marquis. Not like Gloria's. He comes from Ireland, and when you are a Marquis in Ireland it's got to be on the level. He is getting some ideas in Florida. He is going back home and subdivide his Estate. By the way, Gloria had just been down there. She still has a "Dinder" on the Marquis.

I never did find out just how our Concert went in Miami. They charged \$5.50 and I had a fast Automobile standing at the Stage door, and the minute I got off the stage I was gone. Conscience, even if you haven't got much of it, will creep out if the motive is strong enough. I raced to Sarasota to get away from the angry mob. Sarasota is the town where John McGraw trains his Giants every year till last year, when they sold Real Estate instead of training. It sure is a live Burg. Every man has a Map. There is two maps in every toothbrush in the Town, and Pennant Park (that's McGraw's Subdivision) is the place of all the sales. The streets are all named after famous Ball Players. If, for instance, you are from Pittsburgh, you can live on Han Wag-

December 7, 1926

Mr. Will Rogers  
c/o Ziegfield Follies  
New York City

Dear Will:

We will have about twenty-six polo players down here in the next three or four weeks. Wish you could get down and be with us for a couple of weeks. I think it would do you a lot of good in connection with your date here in connection with the theatre.

Yours,

GGF:JD

December 20, 1926

Mr. Will Rogers  
c/o Ziegfield Follier  
214 W. 42nd Street  
New York City

Dear Bill:

I havn't any idea what your address is, so I am sending this letter as usual, c/o Ziegfield.

Leo Carrillo started in with the stage and the stock company idea here for our auditorium, but I expect Leo got busy and forget it. At any rate, the stage was held up for several weeks. It will be about five weeks now before we get it. We certainly want you down this winter. In the mean time, do you know of a good stock company we could get?

I sent a copy of your picture to Fred Post to keep for you until you return to New York. I shipped the original here and returned it to Allison. However, it got banged up in the shipment, and may have to be repainted in some spots, so after all you probably have the best one. I wrote Russell a long letter asking permission to present copy to you, but it arrived a day after his death, or a day previous, I don't know which.

Will be glad to see you later in the season. We are all cleaned up after the storm and going in good shape.

George Ade spoke over the radio the other night, and received the following telegram from California, which you can use in your "Worse story you ever heard" column:

"WE HEARD YOUR FAULTERING VOICE ON THE RADIO. YOU ARE NOT AN ADE TO ANYBODY. THERE IS NO USE IN TRYING TO BOLSTER UP A DOWN AND OUT STATE. IF YOU WILL COME TO CALIFORNIA, WE WILL EMPTY THE CONTENTS OF OUR CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE UPON YOU.

B. QUAKER"

Yours,

CGF:JD

# Holiday Greeting

WESTERN UNION



1926 DEC 24 PM 8 02

XB310 50 NL BEVERLYHILLS CALIF 24

CARL FISHER.

4159

MIAMIBEACH MIAMI FLO.

BEEN HERE THREE DAYS IT RAINED TWO AND SNOWED TODAY WHAT AM  
 I OFFERED FOR A POLO FIELD IN CALIFORNIA I AM COMING DOWN  
 ALONE THIS YEAR NO SINGERS I AM DOING MY OWN SINGING THIS  
 SEASON PRETTY NEAR ANY KIND OF SINGING IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR  
 FLORIDA MERRY XMAS.

BETTY AND WILL ROGERS.



January 21, 1927.

Hon. William Rogers,  
Beverly Hills,  
California.

Dear Bill:

I wish you would let me know just when you think of coming down here. We have a new stage that will be completed by Saturday night and we hope when you arrive to fill the house.

Yours,

CGF:T

Charge to the account of \_\_\_\_\_

KARL G. FISHER.

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
TELEGRAM	FULL RATE
DAY LETTER	DEFERRED
NIGHT MESSAGE	CABLE LETTER
NIGHT LETTER	WEEK END LETTER

Patrons should check class of service desired; otherwise message will be transmitted as a full-rate communication.

# WESTERN UNION

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

NO.	CASH OR CHG.
CHECK	
TIME FILED	
1.30 PM	

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

April 22, 1927.

MR. WILL ROGERS. CLEVELAND, OHIO.

CAN YOU AND LEO COME TO INDIANAPOLIS TO THE BIG RACES ON  
MAY THIRTIETH AND YOU BE HONORARY REFEREE OR JUDGE WILL  
INTRODUCE YOU TO HUNDRED FORTY THOUSAND PEOPLE.

CARL G. FISHER.

CGF:T

## CLASS OF SERVICE

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# WESTERN UNION

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

## SYMBOLS

DLR	Day Letter
NITE	Night Message
NL	Night Letter
LCO	Deferred
CLT	Cable Letter
WLT	Week End Letter

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Received at

7N RO 46 NL

LOSANGELES CALIF JUNE 23 1927

CARL G FISHER

MONTAUK LI NY

WILL IS MUCH IMPROVED TODAY HE WILL HAVE TO REMAIN IN HOSPITAL SOME  
THREE WEEKS BUT DOCTORS ASSURE ME HE WILL BE STRONG AND WELL HE DID  
APPRECIATE YOUR KIND TELEGRAM AND ASKED ME TO SEND THIS WIRE AND LOVE  
TO YOU AND ALL HIS FRIENDS

BETTY ROGERS

727AM

Telephone No.	125
Time Deliv.	Miss Rensch
By	To No. 910 am
Attempts to	Go
Deliver	

June 27, 1927.

Hon. Will Rogers,  
Beverly Hills,  
California.

Dear Bill:

I was certainly glad to have a wire from Mrs. Rogers telling that you are improving and I hope you will soon be well and back in this country.

If you had stayed in this country you would not have gall stones. Breathing all that sand and dust you get in Los Angeles and Okiahoma is the cause of gall stones. You are old enough now to know better; you ought to live in God's country -- which is either Montauk or Miami Beach.

Jack has been here for some time but he must go home tomorrow. Some of his sheep have been eating eulay grass.

Yours,

GGF:T

Miami Beach	Assessed Valuations
1915	\$ 224,000.00
1916	385,120.00
1917	647,500.00
1918	822,745.00
1919	2,579,600.00
1920	3,935,700.00
1921	5,540,115.00
1922	6,226,639.00
1923	8,222,456.00
1924	12,260,250.00
1925	44,094,950.00
1926	66,765,465.00
1927	90,000,000.00

MIAMI BEACH  
*Chamber of Commerce*  
Miami Beach, Florida

President  
THOS. J. PANCOAST

Governors  
F. LOWRY WALL  
C. W. CHASE, JR.  
A. H. PATTON  
S. GROVER MORROW  
W. F. SHEEHAN  
W. B. LEDDY

Secretary  
CHAS. W. CHASE, SR.

July 23, 1927

Mr. Carl G. Fisher,  
Port Washington, L. I.,  
New York.

Dear Mr. Fisher:

When I wrote my son the question that he talked to you concerning the use of the auditorium, I had in mind the fact that it is the largest auditorium in Greater Miami and the possibility of using it for any of the conventions that might come here, but as Miami is now contemplating the erection of a convention building, it would probably be useless to consider it further.

If, however, any suggestions for its use should come to my attention, I shall be glad to refer them to you for your decision.

I have learned that Buffalo, N. Y., is endeavoring to secure a section of land as a Free Port. Have you ever considered the use of your Peninsula Terminal island as a Free Port? It appears to me to be admirably suited for such purpose and if it should be your desire to use it as such, I should be glad to endeavor to have the United States Government take the matter under consideration. Please advise your views upon this matter.

Rest assured that as long as I am Secretary of this Chamber of Commerce your best interests will always be served to the best of my ability. ✓

Very truly yours,

*Chas. W. Chase Sr.*  
Secretary.

P.S. It has been suggested that if you would write to Will Rogers asking him in one of his daily letters to suggest that now that Miami has secured the Shrine and Elks Conventions, it might be a good idea to suggest that the Democratic Convention be held in Miami, in order that some of the delegates might have an opportunity to visit Miami Beach and cool off in the ocean after some of the over-heating debates. Such a letter would make good publicity for Miami Beach.

C.W.C.

WEATHER REPORT. 8 A.M. Today 82°. Yesterday, highest 84 °; lowest 81°. YOU CAN LIVE LONGER HERE. "The healthiest spot on this continent, if not in the world"--Dr. Scott Edwards.

*Will Rogers*

August 1, 1927.

Mr. C. W. Chase, Sr.,  
Chamber of Commerce,  
Miami Beach, Florida.

Dear Mr. Chase:

Replying to yours of the twenty-third:  
Our Mr. W. E. Brown took up the contention  
of a free port as much as seven or eight  
years ago and we had this up with the  
government. We never made much progress.  
Just what our privileges would be, I am not  
at this time clear.

We have asked Will Rogers for so  
many favors and he has extended so many  
favors for us that I don't like to sug-  
gest at this time anything in a new  
charity from him. We can always depend  
upon him in a big pinch where we really  
need an eight inch gun shot.

Very truly yours,

CGF:T

*Handwritten signature and scribbles*

THE WORLD'S GREAT...  
YOU CAN HAVE...  
...YESTERDAY...  
...TODAY...  
...TOMORROW...

THE WILLARD  
WASHINGTON

My dear Mr Fisher:

I'm sure will  
tell you how much  
we appreciated the  
copy you had made  
of me of Charey Russes  
pictures, but I want  
to send this note  
any way to tell you  
how good we think  
it was of you to do  
this for us. and

How proud we are to have it.  
Miss Gioseio is really very clever,  
it would be difficult to see  
this copy from the original.  
Mrs Post shipped it out to us  
some time ago, in fact it  
came just about the time  
Wise returned from his tour, as  
you know he was taken ill  
right afterwards, and while  
that is not much of an  
excuse it really is one of  
the reasons I have not written  
before to tell you how pleased  
and proud we all are to have  
it - Miss is here trying to get



a few scenes for "The Texas  
Steel" a picture he is  
doing - we arrived last  
Wednesday, and it has  
rained every day, indeed  
it is raining now - So it  
looks like we are here  
for a spell. Will wants  
to run up to h. g. for a day  
if he can + will probably  
see you all.

With best wishes to you  
& Mrs. Fisher for Will I am  
Sincerely yours  
Betty Rogers

(Mrs. Will Rogers)

# The Story of Painting

Rogers

WILL ROGERS is as much of a connoisseur of western art as he is a humorist and in proving such he has provided an interesting little story about the life of the late C. M. Russell, the famous artist. The story comes from Mr. Carl G. Fisher, intimate friend of the cowboy humorist.

More than a dozen years ago, when he was struggling as a vaudeville player and had little reserve cash, Rogers was in Chicago. In an art shop, he noticed one of Russell's paintings on display. He wanted it, because it depicted a scene that was very dear to his heart. The art shop owner advised him that the price of the painting was \$500. Rogers didn't have that much to invest at the time and so he passed it up, intending to call later and make the purchase.

Two years passed and Rogers came again to Chicago. He went to the art shop. He had \$500 he could spare for the picture. The painting was no longer in the window. Will shuffled into the place and in a corner of the shop he noticed the Russell painting, dusty and decorated with cobwebs. He chuckled inwardly. To the art shop, he thought, the picture was a fizzle. Probably they'd take \$200 for it now.

"I see you haven't sold that Russell painting yet," he said. "I guess you'd be glad to get \$200 for it."

"The price of that painting now," replied the owner, "is \$1,500. We are beginning to value that painting very much. It is so true to the life of the old west."

Mr. Rogers was amazed. He was startled. He gulped. The price was preposterous. He asserted with true western venom. But would the owner sell him the picture for \$1,500 if he came back within a year?

"Yes," replied the owner. "I will let you have it for that price, if you come back within a year—provided it has not been sold. But if you come back after more than a year has passed and we still have the picture, the price will be \$5,000."

Will went out, whistling.

Out on the range in the "cow country" of Oklahoma, Mr. Rogers had known the life that was depicted in the Russell painting. He had ridden herd over the vast plains of alkali that stretched far on into the distant, blinding glare of the sun. There had been romance and adventure—in his native, "wooly" west and Will loved the reminiscences that were brought to mind by the Russell canvas.

He had known Russell and he had encouraged him. As a young fellow, he had felt that here was another Remington, whose deft fingers would wield a brush that would put the colorful life of the "old west" onto canvas.

Some day, Rogers felt, the "old west" would pass out. Caravans of colonists would come to the plains country and the land would be irrigated and cut up into farms. The great herds would pass into history and the huge ranches

would become homesteads instead of grazing lands.

The Russell painting would become a valuable piece of art because of this, he reasoned—and artists who put the romance of the west into oils were few and far between. So few of the cowboys were born with artistic ability. So few of them appreciated the beauties of the fantasies that were conjured up by lightning sparking from the horns of five thousand herd of cattle on a stormy night.

Power was contained in this Russell painting, which depicted a gun battle in the street fronting a saloon in a sparsely populated western town. The paintings of the horses were remarkable, giving vivid and truthful detail to muscles and proportion. The countenances of the men, strained in battle, were true to life—a picturesque, colorful life that fast was fading from America.

Never, in all his life, had Mr. Rogers wanted a painting as much

as he wanted this one which he had coveted for so many years.

Stoughton Fletcher, Indianapolis financier, noticed the Russell painting in the Chicago art shop several months after Rogers had viewed it. He was a fancier of horses and he liked the Russell canvas. He bought it for \$3,500 and added it to his famous collection.

Rogers returned a third time to the Chicago art shop. He had \$1,500 he could spare for the painting. But it was gone. Rogers, during the time that had elapsed since he first saw the painting, had taken a part in the Ziegfeld Follies and was prosperous. He learned from the art shop owner that Mr. Fletcher had purchased the picture and he went to Indianapolis.

Unavailing were his efforts to purchase the painting from Mr. Fletcher, although he offered \$5,000 for it. It was one of his most cherished possessions, Mr. Fletcher told Rogers. The cowboy artist, Russell, had become recognized as one of the masters—the equal of Remington, some critics said.

Years went by and the fame of Rogers became more widespread and his fortune continued to mount. He was a wealthy man when he visited the Long Island home of Mr. Fisher several years after Mr. Fletcher had declined to sell him the Russell painting. On the wall of the Fisher home, he noticed the painting he cherished so much.

"Where," asked Mr. Rogers, "did you get that painting? It is very nice."

"That was given to me by Jim Allison," replied Mr. Fisher.

(James Allison was a partner with Mr. Fisher in the Indianapolis Speedway and constructed

Allison Hospital in Miami Beach. He died several months ago.)

"Stoughton Fletcher, the Indianapolis banker, sold his art collection to Jim," continued Mr. Fisher. "That picture was in the collection. Jim knew that I was fond of horses and so he gave me that painting. I treasure it very highly. As a matter of fact, it is the prize of all my paintings."

"I've been trying for twelve years to buy that damned painting," said Rogers. "Fletcher knew I wanted it. I offered him \$5,000 for it. By God, I'll give you \$10,000 for it right pronto."

"But, Will," replied Mr. Fisher, "I couldn't sell that painting. It was given to me by a friend and I want to keep it."

Rogers went his way—making the world merry. A year later, he again visited the Fisher home. A surprise awaited him. Mr. Fisher had employed a promising young artist to make a duplicate of the picture, with apologies to the immortal C. M. Russell. He hastened to place slips of paper over the signatures of both paintings.

"Will," said Mr. Fisher, "there are two of those western pictures hanging there. One is the original and the other is the duplicate. I am going to let you take your choice and the one you select is a gift from me."

Rogers pondered. He looked long and studiously at both paintings. He sparred for time. He didn't want to make a hasty decision.

Finally, he made his choice. He selected the painting that was the duplicate. He is almost as proud of it as he would have been of the original.

The original painting hangs over the fireplace of Mr. Fisher's Miami Beach home. It is valued today at \$35,000.



—A Frank Norris Portrait for The Pictorial.

MR. CARL G. FISHER is as much of a lover of original oils as he is a developer. In his home he has some rare originals and one of his hobbies is the collection of paintings in which pirates and horses are concerned.



—A Frank Norris Photograph from a C. M. Russell Canvas.

IT WAS in Texas or Oklahoma that the actual scene of this "wild west" gun battle was witnessed by the late Charles M. Russell, immortal "cow country artist." The original painting is owned by Mr. Fisher.

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Rogers

February 18th 1932.

My dear Will:

I am as hard up as the devil for cash! We are having a very poor season here, and not making any sales. Do you know somebody among your friends who will buy "SMOKE OF THE FORTY-FIVE"? You would do me a favor if you would dig around and find me a buyer.

I also have a marvellous copy of a Remington, the tital of which is "SELECTING A POLO PONY" I want to sell it, and will take \$1500.00 for it. I refused \$15,000 for the original, and when I thought I was very rich I presented it to the Detroit Athletic Club. The duplicate however, is a better picture than the original and has been so stated by a lot of experts.

Yours,

Mr. Will Rogers,  
Beverly Hills,  
California.

CGF-HM