

THE TWENTIES

WILL ROGERS on SLOGANS

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Jack Dempsey: boxing champion and celebrity of the 1920s

Newport News: Virginia city with major naval base

Old Point Comfort: resort near Newport News

Everything nowadays is a Saying or Slogan. You can't go to bed, you can't get up, you can't brush your Teeth without doing it to some Advertising Slogan. We are even born nowadays by a Slogan: "Better Parents have Better Babies." Our Children are raised by a Slogan: "Feed your Baby Cowlicks Malted Milk and he will be another Dempsey." Everything is a Slogan and of all the Bunk things in America the Slogan is the Champ. There never was one that lived up to its name. They can't manufacture a new Article until they have a Slogan to go with it. You can't form a new Club unless it has a catchy Slogan. The merits of the thing has nothing to do with it. It is, just how good is the Slogan?

Even the government is in on it. The Navy has a Slogan: "Join the Navy and see the World." You join, and all you see for the first 4 years is a Bucket of Soap Suds and a Mop, and some Brass polish. You spend the first 5 years in Newport News. On the sixth year you are allowed to go on a cruise to Old Point Comfort. So there is a Slogan gone wrong.

Congress even has Slogans:

"Why sleep at home when you can sleep in Congress?"

"Be a Politician—no training necessary."

"It is easier to fool 'em in Washington that it is at home, So why not be a Senator."

"Come to Washington and vote to raise your own pay."

"Get in the Cabinet; you won't have to stay long."

"Work for Uncle Sam, it's just like a Pension."

"Be a Republican and sooner or later you will be a Postmaster."

"Join the Senate and investigate something."

"If you are a Lawyer and have never worked for a Trust we can get you into the Cabinet."

All such Slogans are held up to the youth of this Country. You can't sit down in a Street Car after a hard day's work without having a Slogan staring you in the face: "Let the Bohunk Twins do your work." "Chew Wiggley's Gum: The Flavor Lasts." Now they know that it don't last when they tell you that. In two minutes after you start anybody's Gum you might just as well have an old Rubber Boot to chew on as far as any flavor is concerned. I know because that's all I have done for 20 years now is to throw Old Gum where somebody will step on it. I have to talk a great deal to the Public, and I use Gum just to keep my Jaws in good shape. If it wasn't for Gum my jaws couldn't go through a rigorous season of truth telling. So Gum has its place, but the Slogans are all wet.

Even if you want to get married a sign will stare you in the face: "You get the girl, we will furnish the Ring." That has led more Saps astray than any misinformation ever published, outside the Prize one of all, which is: "Two can live as cheap as one." That, next to law enforcement, is the biggest Bunk Slogan ever invented. Yes, two can live as cheap as one if you don't want to eat or wear anything during its lifetime. Two can't even live as cheap as two, much less one.

Then the Preachers say: "Let no man put asunder." And two-thirds of the married World is asunder in less than three months. Then comes the Furniture Slogan: "A dollar down and a Dollar a week." It's few wives that last with the same husband until the Cook Stove is paid for.

"It's cheaper to buy than pay rent." That's the next Bunk Slogan that attracts the love sick Boobs. Half the people in the United States are living on interest paid by people who will never get the last mortgage paid out.

Even Political Campaigns are run and won on Slogans. Years ago some fellow run on "The Full Dinner Pail" and after he was elected and they opened it there was nothing in it. Another Slogan went wrong. Then William J. Bryan ran on a Slogan "16 to 1." He was defeated, of course, because he didn't explain what the 16 meant. It meant 16 defeats to 1 victory.

"Full Dinner Pail": slogan of William McKinley in 1900

"16 to 1": Bryan's 1896 campaign slogan promoting the free coinage of silver at a ratio of sixteen to one

We even got into the War on a Slogan that was supposed to keep us out. After we got in we were going to "Make the world safe for Democracy." And maybe we did—you can't tell, because there is no Nation ever tried Democracy since. Our Boys went over singing: "Over There" and come back singing: "I am always chasing Rainbows."

The next President was elected on the Slogan: "Back to Normalcy." Back to Normalcy consisted of the most Cuckoo years of spending and carousing and graft we ever had. Another Slogan knocked crosswise. Last election, out come the Slogan makers again. Some Fool that didn't know American Politics has J. W. Davis run on "Honesty." Well, that had no more place in Politics than I have in the Harvard Faculty. It was one of the poorest selections of a Slogan that was ever invented, and I bet you as long as there are Political Parties in this Country you will never see another one make the mistake of picking such an absurd one.

John W. Davis: unsuccessful 1924 Democratic presidential candidate

Coolidge ran on "Economy" which is always good for the Boobs. It's like getting up at a Dinner and saying "I am proud to be here." "It's an old Gag but it always goes." Economy beat Honesty by 8 million, and as soon as he got in he raised Congress' and the Senate's Salary and redecorated the White House. So away goes another Slogan!

P. T. Barnum come nearer having a true Slogan than anybody: "There is a Sucker born every minute." And Henry Ford is right to take care of him the minute he becomes of age. General Pershing said: "Lafayette, we are here," and France sent him a Bill for the use of the Grounds.

Gen. John J. Pershing: commander of the American Expeditionary Force in Europe during World War I. It is said he spoke the phrase on visiting Lafayette's grave soon after the arrival of U.S. troops in France in 1917.

Kaiser Wilhelm's Slogan was: "Germany Uber Alles." I don't know what that Uber means, but whatever it means he was wrong, and it's too late to look it up now.

Kaiser Wilhelm: leader of Germany during World War I

Uber Alles: Over All

You see a fool Slogan can get you into anything. But you never heard of a Slogan getting you out of anything. It takes either Bullets, Hard Work or Money to get you out of anything. Nobody has ever invented a Slogan to use instead of paying your Taxes.

But they Will fall for 'em. You shake a Slogan at an American and it's just like showing a hungry Dog a Bone. We even die by Slogans. I saw an Undertaker's sign the other day which read: "There is a satisfaction in dying if you know the Woodlawn Brothers are to bury you."