

### ASCS News

By H. O. WEST  
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### Modern Tent Erects Easily For Campers

The first tent of portable shelter probably came into existence when prehistoric man had a few complaints from his wife about spending all her time in that dark, damp cave.

To keep peace in the family, he took her away from it all during the summer months and stretched an animal skin between two trees to provide protection.

We have American Indians to thank for the first portable shelter. Their conical tent made of skins had all sorts of refinements including flaps for regulating draft and escape of smoke.

Another legendary tent is the pup tent of World War I fame which put a roof over the heads of our doughboys and a word in our vocabulary. Hardly spacious, it afforded a minimum of comfort. Now the young camper under ten who wants to set up house-keeping in the backyard tries it.

Along about the time wall-to-wall carpeting became popular on the home front, the wall tent sheltered World War II GI's on the fighting fronts. Although this tent furnishes unobstructed standing room, the wall tent is bulky to carry, difficult to put up and hardly a happy choice for a camper who likes to camp without bringing along his own construction crew.

Today's camper will find a wide variety of tents to choose from — some shaped like umbrellas, others that pop into shape and look like igloos, and there's even one inspired by the covered wagon.

Although we haven't any record of how many Eskimos own Pop-Tents, this igloo-shaped tent would be ideal for them since it sets up easily on ice, snow or rock without stakes. Campers in more temperate climates will be happy to know it's every bit as effective in grassy knolls, wooded glens or on sunny beaches. Even a beginner finds this tent easy to manage.

### Tweetsie Railroad Visitors Witness Cowboy's Death

**BLOWING ROCK**—Twelve times a day, a loud-mouthed cowboy wanders around interrupting a show at a saloon—and winds up dead at the hands of Diamond Lil.

He's not a bad guy, really—just the sort of fellow who wants to mix with the crowd, and who likes to talk a lot.

And Diamond Lil isn't a bad gal, either—just the sort of woman who wants a quiet audience to sing to.

The cowboy is Albemarle's Ron Blalock, and Diamond Lil is Donna Rowland, just a couple of years out of a convent in Toledo, Ohio.

It all takes place at Tweetsie Palace.

For regular visitors at Tweetsie Railroad, Blalock has lost any identity he might have had except as the cowboy. He's been at it for going on four seasons, and people have come to expect to see him.

One little girl's reaction was typical. "I saw him last year," she said. "You'd better cover your ears when he shoots that gun."

Blalock wound up at Tweetsie four years ago, when the manager of the Tweetsie Palace show needed a tuba player. "He asked me to take the job," says Blalock, "and I agreed. That year I wanted to do the cowboy act, and the following summer I got a chance at it. That's what I've been doing ever since."

For Miss Rowland, it happened a little differently.

After spending five years in a Franciscan convent, she left and went to Europe. There she met a professor from Appalachian State University in Boone. The professor invited Miss Rowland to come and live with her and go to school.

Then came the chance for the job at Tweetsie.

"Not being a music major," she says, "but loving theater and music, I thought it would be a real challenge to apply for the singer's job. I enjoy people tremendously and wanted to stay in the mountains for the summer."

Both Blalock and Miss Rowland have had some interesting experiences.

Blalock particularly remembers one little old—very old—lady. While the band was playing, she called him over and insisted that the folk group do "As the World Turns," an Eddy Arnold number.

More to escape her clutches than anything else, he told her he'd get the group to do the song. But he forgot, and as usual he was shot and killed by Diamond Lil.

As he lay there on the floor, eyes closed, he felt someone grab at his holster. It was the little old lady.

"She straddled me," he said, "clicked the gun and pointed it at me and told me she wouldn't let me up until they sang the song."

But the roughest treatment he gets is still at the hands of Diamond Lil, who gets a little extra kick out of shooting him because he's the show manager and boss.

"I just love it," she says. "It makes my day."

After the death scene, she wanders through the crowd singing "Bill Bailey" and occasionally draping an arm around the shoulder of a man in the audience or sitting next to him and running her fingers over his hair.

"Some of the men want to bounce you in their laps," says Miss Rowland. "It's mostly the little old men... I just love them. But some of the wives get mad and tell you to leave their husbands alone."

For Blalock, who will leave at the end of the season and play in an Army band at Uncle Sam's request, "It's been a real blast and a great experience. I'm a big ham, I guess, and it's the first time I've had a chance to manage anything and have people

working under me. Miss Rowland wants to continue her art and English studies, but she'd also like to return to Tweetsie next year.

"I like the tourists," she says, "because they come to have fun. I have yet to meet a tourist I didn't like."

"I'd like to be the marshal," she says. "I'd love to ride the train and shoot bandits and Indians. However, I have trouble growing a mustache and looking big and strong."



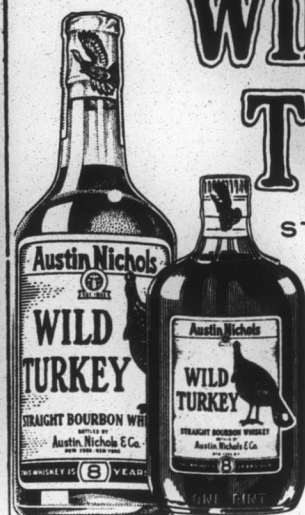
Tweetsie Diamond Lil Gets Her Man



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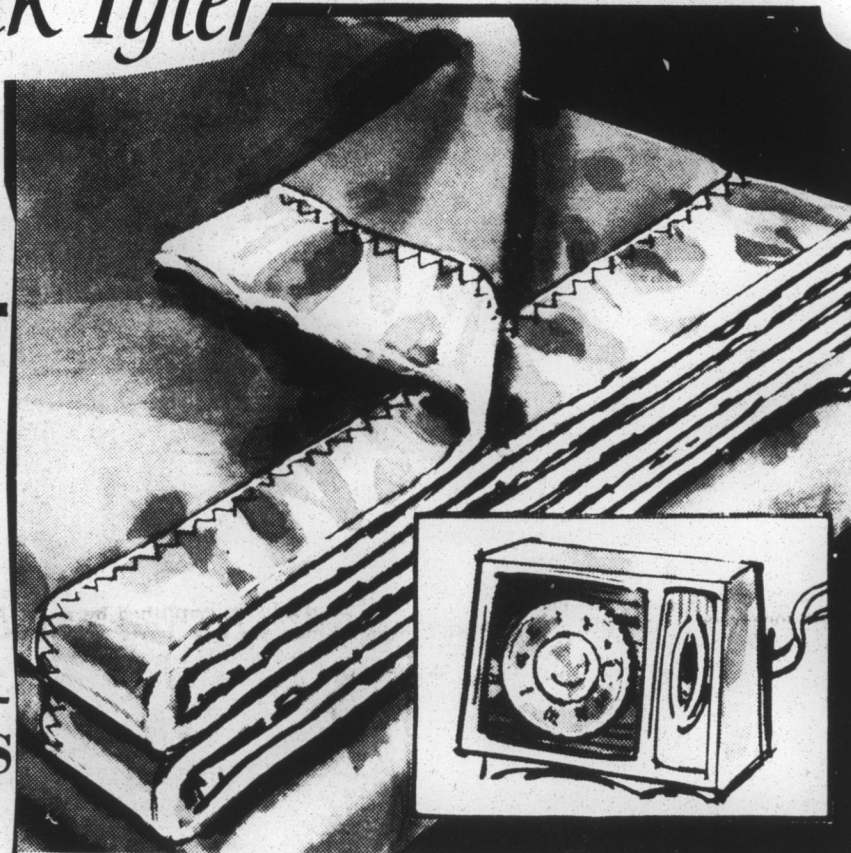
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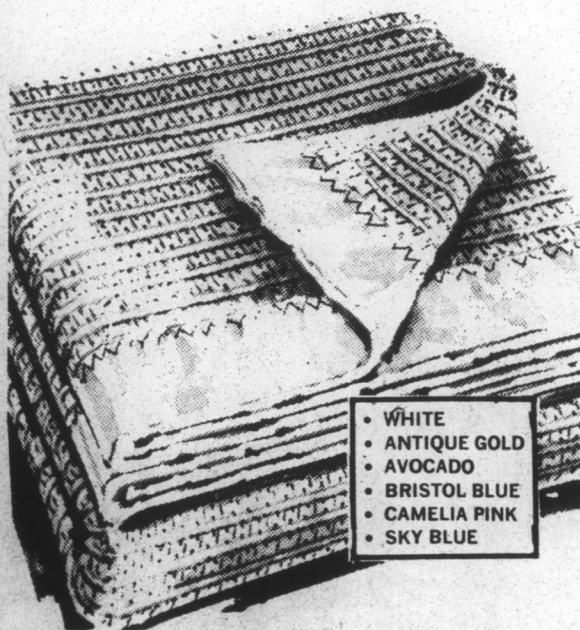
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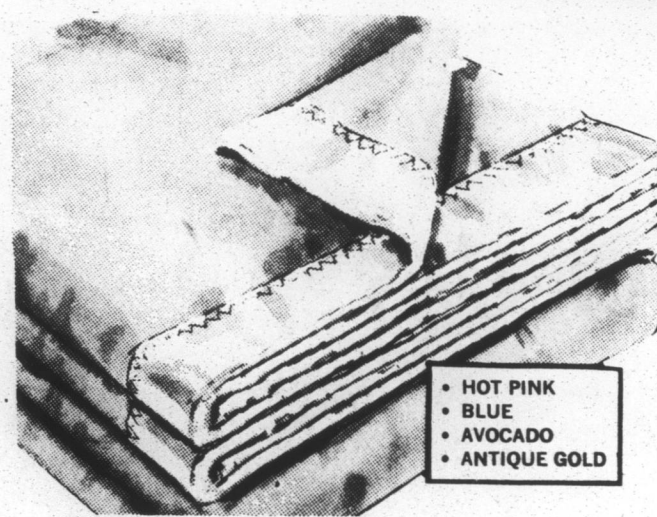
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