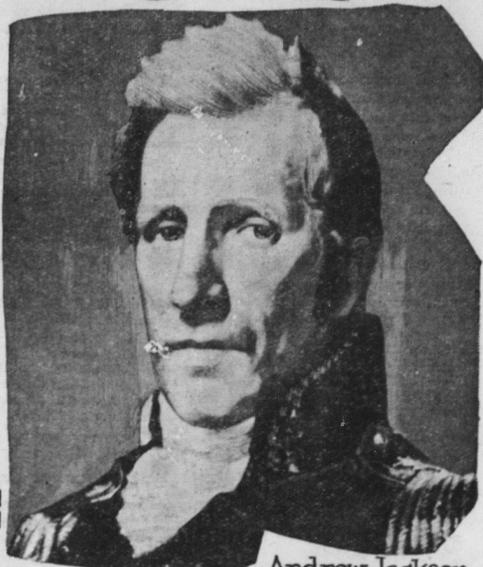


# Who Put "O.K." in Our Language?



Pushmataha



Andrew Jackson

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

**Y**OU hear it everywhere you go, for Americans have almost forgotten how to say "Yes!" Instead they say "O-kay!" It has become an almost universally accepted symbol of assent. It has also become a similarly accepted symbol of approval. When we say anything is "O-kay" (or "O. K." or "Okeh") we mean that it is good or satisfactory. Not only has this triple-spelling, double-meaning expression already become common currency in our language (or "slanguage," if you prefer!) but it has also already undergone both abbreviation and inversion without, apparently, changing its meaning. If you don't want to take the time to say "O-kay" or "Okeh!" just cut it down to "Oke!" (accent on the "o") and any American will understand at once what you mean. So much for the abbreviation of an expression so short that a further shortening seems impossible.

As for the inversion: Consider now the hypothetical case of an Englishman coming to an American with this inquiry: "I say, old fellow, what do you Americans mean when you say 'K. O.?' " "Oh, that!" replies the helpful American, "is an expression from the prize ring. When a boxer is knocked out, we say the other fellow wins by a K. O." "But," says the Britisher with a puzzled look on his face, "This was a little boy I heard answering a playmate who had asked him to come across the street and play with him. I heard him shout 'K. O.' very plainly." "Oh, that!" replies the American. "He meant 'All right!' You know we use the term 'O. K.' to mean all right or yes. It's pronounced O-kay. Well, some of the boys just turn it around and use K. O., which is pronounced Kayo and it means the same thing. That's clear enough isn't it?" And the baffled Britisher murmurs "Stordinary!"

But the Briton is no more baffled by this illogical example of our illogical every-day American speech than is the etymologist who tries to run down the origin of the expression and to determine who put it into our language. Here are a few of the theories:

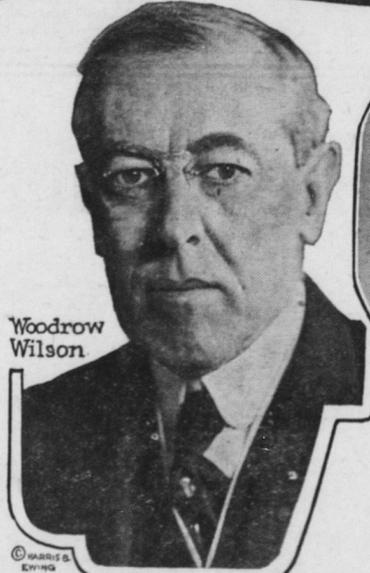
1. Olga K. Nevskoff was a fascinating Russian woman who is believed to have had an important influence on English history as a friend of the famous premier, William E. Gladstone. It is said that Gladstone used to submit many important matters to her for her opinion and these papers were generally returned to him with her initials, O. K., penned upon them.

2. In Santo Domingo is the town of Aux Cayes (pronounced o-kay) from which, in Colonial times, the best tobacco and rum were imported. Clerks, it is said, in billing goods to retailers made use of the phonetic letters O. K. for the sake of brevity in indicating that these goods came from Aux Cayes and were therefore of the best quality.

3. Keokuk was a famous chief of the Sac and Foxe Indians in Iowa. He was affectionately referred to by the whites as "Ole Keokuk" because he was a "good Indian." Being unable to spell his name, he made his signature by using his initials "O. K." and any paper which had his "O. K." was "all right."

4. Back in Civil War days Orrin Kendall was a member of a battery raised among the Board of Trade in Chicago. He was also head of the baking firm of O. Kendall and Sons, which furnished bread and crackers for the army. On the crackers were the initials of "O. K." for Orrin Kendall. These crackers are said to have been the only ones the soldiers relished and their expression "These crackers are O. K." soon developed into meaning "These crackers are all right."

5. In 1840 during the famous "hard cider and log cable" Presidential campaign of Gen. William Henry Harrison, there was a Whig rally at Urbana, Ohio, which was addressed by a number of prominent Whigs, including General Harrison himself. The farmers were largely represented at the gatherings and one of them had brought his farm wagon on which was constructed a platform for the accommodation of his neighbors. The farmer was an ardent Whig and, wishing to convey the impression that the farmers generally were Whigs, he hung a banner above the platform. On the banner were these words "The farmers is Oll Korreet." There was also a hotel at Springfield, Ohio, operated by an ardent Whig who placed the letters "O. K." over the entrance, explaining that it meant his hotel was all right, or "Oll Korreet"—taking those words from the banner on the farmer's wagon. In this same campaign Harrison's opponents made much of his alleged illiteracy and they circulated the story that Harrison, while a commander in the army, endorsed his papers "O. K." under the im-



Woodrow Wilson



Keokuk

colloquialism meaning "that's me" or "that's what I said," and as Pushmataha pronounced it, it sounded like "O-kay" or "Okeh." In rendering it into English and in using it as a symbol of approval, Jackson is said to have translated it into the literal "O. K."

Similar evidence to support the Indian origin of the term is contained in Hyington's "Grammar of the Choctaw Language" which gives "o-keh" as meaning "it is so and in no other way."

If, as it seems most highly probable, the expression did originate in the Choctaw language and Pushmataha was principally responsible for its gift to the white man, he is worthy of more than passing comment. In fact, he is worthy of being remembered much longer for other things than for the mere accident of his using an expression which became a common Americanism. For Andrew Jackson frequently expressed the opinion that he was the greatest and bravest Indian he had ever known and John Randolph of Roanoke, in pronouncing a eulogy on him in the United States senate, uttered the words regarding his wisdom, his eloquence and his friendship for the whites that were afterward inscribed on his monument.

Pushmataha's Indian name was Apushim-ah-taha, which means "the sapling is ready, or finished, for him." According to the biography of him in the "Handbook of American Indians," issued by the Bureau of American Ethnology, he was born in Noxubee county in Mississippi in 1764. Before he was twenty years of age he distinguished himself in an expedition against the Osages.

Young Pushmataha disappeared early in the conflict that lasted all day and on rejoining the Choctaw warriors he was jeered at and accused of being a coward, whereupon he replied, "Let those laugh who can show more scalps than I can." Saying this, he threw down the scalps of five of the enemy whom he had slain by himself.

Later he became head of the Oklahannal or Six Towns district of the Choctaws and exerted his powerful influence in promoting friendly relations with the whites. In 1811 when Tecumseh, the great Shawnee leader, visited the Choctaw to persuade them to join in his conspiracy against the Americans, Pushmataha opposed him so strongly that the Choctaws remained loyal to the United States. During the War of 1812 it was Pushmataha's influence which held them loyal to the Americans when the Creeks tried to persuade them to cast their fortunes with the British.

In a council held to decide what course the Choctaws would pursue, Pushmataha made an eloquent speech in which he said "The Creeks were once our friends. They have joined the English and we must now follow different trails. When our fathers took the hand of Washington, he told him the Choctaw would always be friends of his nation and Pushmataha cannot be false to his promises. I am now ready to fight against both the English and the Creeks."

And fight he did! At the head of 500 warriors he served under Jackson in the Pensacola campaign, taking part in 24 battles and skirmishes. In 1813 with about 150 warriors he joined General Claiborne and distinguished himself in the attack and defeat of the Creeks under the famous Weatherford at the Battle of Holy Ground in Alabama. While aiding the American troops he is said to have instituted such a rigid system of discipline among his warriors that they made a fine record as soldiers and won for Pushmataha the title of "the Indian General."

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## Formal Modes in Glittering Array

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



**J**UDGING from appearances, Dame Fashion does not know that there is such a thing as "depression" in the world of affairs these days or if she does she is not letting on, or perhaps this arbitrary dictator of the mode has determined to cheer us up a bit by brightening the style picture with all the gleam and glitter at her command.

At any rate the new fashions fairly scintillate with the sparkle of sequins and beads and other pretty tinsel effects together with a lavish use of metal cloths and weaves which dazzle the eye with their glint of "silver threads among the gold."

While, of course, these glamorous metallics are making their biggest showing at formal night affairs, let the daytime program be by no means without the glittering note. The newest woollens, likewise knitted effects, are many of them enriched with interweavings of metal threads while tissue-like lame weaves for the making of the new blouses, are loomed in colorful patternings.

It is significant that this interest for metallic effects extends to the realm of accessories as well as to the field of dresses and wraps. Daytime costumes are enlivened with quantities of metal buttons, nailheads, clips, and gold, silver or bronze belts and fancy girdles, with millinery showing up tinsel cloths and ornaments in endless intriguing ways. The advent of the

dressy dinner hat and the favor for formal evening headwear stimulates the vogue for things glittering.

Stripes are the "last word" when it comes to metal cloths for formal evening wear. The handsome gown pictured is of gorgeous black and silver lame. This same idea of stripes is also interpreted in silver-worked taffeta such as blue silk with silver patterning.

For evening wraps designers are showing a keen interest in matelasses with metal uch as white matelasse its indefinite motif picked out with gold or silver.

Now that the social season is on, the most fetching little sequin embroidered caps and jackets are making their debut at theater, opera and the dance. The ravishing little cape which rests on the shoulders of the pretty debutante standing in the picture is composed of tiers of tiny tulle ruffles which are worked solidly with steel gray sequins. The velvet gown has a cutwork design of huge flowers.

Another favored way of injecting glitter into the evening mode is that of sleeving the dress of velvet or satin, crepe or taffeta as the case may be with sequin-covered tissue or with georgette laced with metal patternings. Then too, crepes shot with gold or silver thrills which sometimes trace a delicate design are made up into the dress entire.

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### STRIPED VELVET

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Here is a dress good to look upon. It is just the sort every woman is sure to covet. It is made of one of those lovely new striped lustrous velvets which are so extremely smart this season. The combination is beige and brown. The designer realizes how effective stripes are when worked together cunningly. The belt is of antique skin set with steel nailheads. The swanky beret is of brown velvet.

### New Browns

For the most part the new browns, which, by the way, will be very good this winter, are very dark. One dark brown is called "Zaffra." A lighter shade is known as "ruim."

### Evening Wraps

Waistline and hip-length velvet evening jackets are extremely good for fall. White with dark fur or black with white fur are favorite combinations.

### BRONZE IS LATEST STYLE IN COLORS

Bronze is one of the new colors for winter. Or, rather, it is a whole series of colors that begin with brownish-greens and go through a whole gamut of changes of greenish-browns. It appears in all types of clothes—coats, wraps, dresses, evening clothes, hats, bags and shoes.

Bronze kid shoes are shown in several fashionable dressmaking establishments as the correct evening slippers to go with dresses of all colors and types.

The bronze greens are practically the only greens that have any fashion importance in Paris this year. They are handsome colors—most of them dark, and becoming to women of most all types. They look especially well when combined with black, with gray, beige and other pastels.

### "Essential Ensemble"

#### New Idea in Economy

A new "essential ensemble" designed to satisfy the demands of both economy and elegance is Paris' latest offering.

It takes its name from the practicality of its design, built as an all-round costume ready for any affair from breakfast to dinner.

Its fabrics are a score of new soft wools in the autumn shades of rust, emerald green, haze purple, olive green and gray. Its lines are generally modeled after the design of the three-piece suit or the design accompanied by a hip-length jacket.

Fur—both flat and fluffy—are applied part of the essential ensemble's design. Black astrakhan is applied in a flat bib on the bodice of one frock, black galyak makes patch pockets on a suit, and brown shaved lamb is used as incrustations on the shoulder line of a frock.

### Evening Gowns Are Now

#### Made With Cape Effects

Cape effects mark many of the new evening gowns. One chic model is designed of rose colored velvet with a scarf attached to the shoulder and worn draped around the arms to give a cape effect.

The costume is completed with velvet gloves and slippers to match.