# A GOOD BOOK TO READ

THE DAYS OF OFELIA—Gertrude Diamant—Houghton Mifflin (2.75).

**(Reviewed by Dr. Carey C. Dobbs, Professor of Chemistry, Washington College, Chestertown, Md.)**

One of the first questions asked about any book is "What kind of book is it?" **The Days of Ofelia**, by Gertrude Diamant, is extra ordinarily difficult to pigeon-hole. The only category into which it cannot possibly fall is fiction for it bears on every page the unmistakable hallmark of factual authenticity. Indeed, the vivid, underlying truth of **The Days of Ofelia** is its most satisfying quality.

However, it is not a guidebook. Rather ,it is a sensitive, sympathetic interpretation of one people to another—the Otomi Indians who live in utter poverty on the outskirts of Mexico City. The author, a New York ethnologist, went to Mexico in order to test the intelligence of the Otomis. Some of the most illumninating passages concern the Mexican Indian tribes and the efforts of the governments to "redeem" them from the utter misery to which they have been reduced by four hundred years of poverty.

Scientific research, however, is but a small part of this wholly delightful book. For one who, like myself, has been in Mexico, the author's descriptions of the markets, the boulvevards, and the very-hard-to-catch spirit of the Mexican people are particularly attractive. She makes them live again. Miss Diamant has a senstiive insight into the nature of things. Mexico is a land of contrasts, and the author does not judge; she contrasts the ways of the Otomis with ours, saying neither that one is good nor the other bad. In any book, such an attitude is commendable; in a book on controversial Mexico, it is almost unparalleled.

Ofelia is a ten-year old Otomi girl who was put into the author's service as maid, it being Otomi custom to send their children out to work at that age. It is necessary that they earn in order to live. The character of this child shines like an indestructible diamond throughout the book. It is she who makes of these essays a kind of novel. **The Days of Ofelia** possesses many of the qualities of a well-constructed novel. Ofelia's father, her mother, and her numerous relatives are also part of the story, but it's Ofelia herself for whom this book was written. She is by all odds one of the most exceptional children in recent literature. This ten-year-old is a symbol of the conflict within Mexico and a personal tribute to an ancient and honorable tradition.

The reader who is interested in hotels ,and Where To Go In Mexico, had better avoid **The Days of Ofelia.** But if he seeks the essence of a land, if he wishes a brilliant portrait of an unusual people, if he would spend a few hours reading a poetically sensitive prose in which the sunlight and shadow of Mexico come vividly alive, then **The Days of Ofelia** will richly reward him.

From my own persona point of view, highly colored with pleasant memories of Mexico, **The Days of Ofelia** is gripping and vital. It stands alone among the books I have read on Mexico because it is closest to the human fundamentals, and because it is among the best of its kind —a rare and very welcome kind.

**(Any book reviewed in this column will be sent to you postpaid by the Washington College Bookstore, Chestertown, Md., upon receipt of order accompanied by check or money order.)**

**Sacred Cats**

Cats were regarded as sacred in ancient Egypt. When they died, they were embalmed and buried in the Temple of Bast, the cat-headed goddess.


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# The Nation At War ★

**A complete coverage of the week's news on the all-out effort of the United Nation's fight for freedom.**

All motorists in the non-rationed areas of the country were asked by Price Administrator Henderson to observe the same rules in using their cars that are enforced in the rationed Eastern area, as a means of conserving rubber tires until a national gasoline rationing plan can be put into effect. He said it will be several weeks before coupon ration books can be printed to carry out the nation-wide gas rationing recommended by the Baruch Rubber Committee. Unless the nation's 27,000,000 motorists cut their driving "to the bone," Mr. Henderson said, "we're likely to coast right into Hitler's lap."

The White House issued a chart prepared by the Society of Automotive Engineers showing that the normal life of a tire is doubled when the average driving speed is reduced from 40 to 20 miles an hour ,or from 50 to 30 miles an hour. The President said he thought the chart should be brought to the attention of the country as a persuasive argument for slow driving.

The Baruch Rubber Committee recommended that motorists be curtailed to a general average of 5,000 miles a year. The Committee also recommended a national speed limit of 35 miles an hour and compulsory periodic tire inspection. Complete reorganization of Government agencies concerned with the rubber program and appointment of a Rubber Administrator with full responsibility for conservation and synthetic production programs were also recommended. Additional rubber must be released to fully maintain essential civilian driving, reclaiming operations must be stepped up, and to increase synthetic production, the Committee recommended immediate expansion of plant capacity for Buna-S, butadiene, neoprene, and alcohol, and elimination of any further substitution in plans for synthetic production. The President told his press conference virtually all of the Committee's recommendations except gasoline rationing will be pu tinto effect immediately.

**THE WAR FRONT**

Gen. MacArthur's Australian headquarters reported Allied forces have kept the Japanese thrust toward Port Moresby bottled in the towering Owen Stanley mountains while Allied aircraft swept the seas surrounding the island, bombing enemy supply ships. Gen. MacArthur announced September 14 that United Nations bombers attacked three Japanese cargo ships, apparently bound for New Guinea, and American Flying Fortresses bombed a Japanese cruiser off the southwest coast of New Britain. Earlier, the Fortresses hit two enemy destroyers in the same area. Japanese bombers continued to attack U. S. forces in the Solomons and the enemy has "reinforced and supplied" Japanese troops in the interior of Guadalcanal where U. S. Marines are engaged in mopping up operations, the Navy reported. The Navy said that 20 more Japanese planes have been shot down in three heavy bombing attacks—bringing to at least 143 the number of Jap planes officially reported shot down since operations began August 7.

U. S. Army headquarters in London reported American Flying Fortresses and medium bombers successfully bombed the Schiedam shipyards at Rotterdam, railway yards at Utrecht, an airframe factory and the St. Omer airdrome in Nazi-occupied France. Damage to intercepting enemy planes included 17 fighters destroyed, 25 more probably destroyed and 23 damaged.

Two Fortresses were listed as missing, the first American losses in 12 straight attacks on Nazi territory in Europe. The Navy announced the sinking of eight more United Nations merchant vessels by enemy submarines.

**WAR STRATEGY**

The White House announced that during July ,Army Chief of Staff Marshall ,Chief of Naval Operations King and Special Adviser to the President Hopkins conferred with high British officials in London and at these conferences certain vital military decisions directed toward taking the offensive were made. The President, in a radio address, said the power of Germany must be broken on the continent of Europe and "Preparations are being made here and in Britain toward this purpose." Under Sceretary of War Patterson, speaking in Muskegon, Mich., said that more than 600,000 men in the armed forces are overseas and his force "will be doubled and doubled and doubled to the limit of our manpower." W. Averell Harriman, Special Lend-Lease Minister to London, said the Russians "are determined to fight to the finish....alone with their own resources if need be. But they will fight on with even more strength and courage if we give effective aid."

**THE ARMED FORCES**

President Rooesvelt told his press conference he did not think it would be necessary to call up 18 and 19-year-olds before the first of next year because Army training facilities at present are only equal to the number of men being taken in, but he is discussing with the Army whether enabling legislation will be needed soon. Army Ground Forces Commander McNair announced the number of Army divisions in existence or being mobilized has more than doubled since January 1.

War Secretary Stimson announced the Air Transport Command will establish an experimental unit of 50 trained women aviators, the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron, to ferry smaller Army planes from factories to airfields. The Weather Bureau called for 75 women airplane pilots to take a course in meteorology. Mr. Stimson also said the Army expects to call most, and possibly all, student Reservists who have reached Selective Service age to active duty by the end of the college term beginning in September. The Coast Guard is forming a fleet of 250 fire-fighting boats, most of them embodying a new design in propulsion and fire-fighting machinery, to be used in protecting water-front facilities along U. S. coasts.

**TRANSPORTATION**

Office of Defense Transportation Director Eastman announced "No special train or bus service, including charter bus service, to football games or other sports events will be permitted. At the same time I am directing that steps be taken by my office to prevent the overcrowding of regular trains serving areas in which such events are to be held." The Interstate Commerce Commission ruled that for the duration all railroad carriers may disregard any present regulations governing length of trains when necessary to assure prompt movement of freight or passengers.

The ODT ordered all operators of commercial rubber borne vehicles except motorcycles to carry and show a "Certificate of Necessity" in order to obtain gasoline, tires or parts after November 15. The regulation covers almost 5,000,000 non-military trucks, 150,000 buses, 50,000 taxicabs and all ambulances and hearses. Applications for certificates, as well as other pertinent information, will be mailed about September 23 to all persons who registered last December 31 as owners of motor vehicles available for public rental.

**WAR PRODUCTION**

War Production Chairman Nelson asked war workers to stop taking an extra day off and to refrain from "quickie" strikes over minor grievances because such absences slow production. He said the nation's production record is not nearly good enough. The President by Executive Order prohibited payment of "penalty double-time" pay for work on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, but permitted payment of double-time for the seventh consecutive day's work and of time-and-a-half for all overtime work work after 40 hours a week. Under Secretary of War Patterson said U. S. plane production in August was greater than that of Germany, Italy and Japan combined and tank production, already at an impressive high, will be twice as great in December.

**LABOR SUPPLY**

WPB Chairman Nelson ordered a 48-hour work-week established in lumber camps and sawmills in the Pacific Northwest because log inventories are the lowest in five years. To relieve growing labor shortages, War Manpower Chairman McNutt ordered that workers in the lumber and nonferrous metal industries in Orizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Utah, Wyoming, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, New Mexico and Texas may not seek jobs elsewhere without obtaining "Certificates of Separation" from the U. S. Employment Service, and no employer in the critical area shall employ such a worker if he has no certificate. The industries affected employ approximately 200,000 workers.

**SPECIAL FARM POSTER**

*Promotes War Bonds.*—Urging farmers to purchase War Bonds every market day, this striking War Bond poster will serve as a constant reminder of the farmer's stake in the War, for it will be displayed generally in the rural areas during the next few months. Illustration is by John Steuart Curry.

**Louisiana Purchase**

The Louisiana Purchase, completed between the U. S. and France April 30, 1803, involved 1,172,000 square miles and a cash consideration of $15,000,000.


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**Fewer Farmers**

In 1840, agricultural workers comprised 77.5 per cent of all persons gainfully employed in the United States. Since then, the proportion has dropped steadily until in 1930 it was only 21.5 per cent.


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# JUNK needed for War

***In the barnyards and gullies of farms and in the basements and attics of homes is a lot of Junk which is doing no good where it is, but which is needed at once to help smash the Japs and Nazis.***

Scrap iron and steel, for example.

Even in peacetime, scrap provided about 50% of the raw material for steel. It may be rusty, old "scrap" to you, but it is actually *refined* steel—with most impurities removed, and can be quickly melted with new metal in the form of pig iron to produce highest quality steel for our war machines.

The production of steel has gone *up, up,* **UP**, until today America is turning out as much steel as all the rest of the world combined. But unless at least 6,000,000 additional tons of scrap steel is uncovered promptly, the full rate of production cannot be attained or increased; the necessary tanks, guns and ships cannot be produced.

The rubber situation is also critical. In spite of the recent rubber drive, there is a continuing need for large quantities of scrap rubber. Also for other waste materials and metals like brass, copper, zinc, lead and tin.

The Junk which you collect is bought by industry from scrap dealers at established, government-controlled prices.

Will you help?

First—collect all of your waste material and pile it up.

Then—sell it to a Junk dealer, give it to a charity, take it yourself to the nearest collection point, or get in touch with your Local Salvage Committee.

If you live on a farm, consult your County War Board or your farm implement dealer.

**Throw YOUR scrap into the fight!**

**JUNK MAKES FIGHTING WEAPONS**

**MATERIALS NEEDED**

**Scrap iron and steel.**
**Other metals of all kinds.**
**Old rubber.**
**Rags, Manila rope, burlap bags.**
**Waste Cooking Fats**—When you get a pound or more, strain into a large tin can and sell to your meat dealer.

**NEEDED ONLY IN CERTAIN LOCALITIES:** Waste paper and tin cans—wanted only in certain areas, as announced locally. **NOT NEEDED** (at this time): Razor blades—glass.

*This message approved by Conservation Division*
**WAR PRODUCTION BOARD**
*This advertisement paid for by the American Industries Salvage Committee (representing and with funds provided by groups of leading industrial concerns).*

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