

"FDR Hears Todd Records" Newspaper Article, between 1940 and 1941

FDR Hears Todd Records

Dinner guests at the White House in Washington last week heard recordings of California's newest folklore when Lafe Todd, son of Mrs. I.P. Browne of Santa Paula, played the results of his summer study here for President and Mrs. Roosevelt and 10 other guests.

The evening at the executive mansion, mentioned soon after in Mrs. Roosevelt's "My Day" column, came after the former Santa Paulan told results of his research in a New York Times article of Sept. 21.

The article related the story of (unreadable text) festival near Porterville (unreadable text) weeks ago while he was on leave of absence from his post on the University of the City of New York faculty doing research for the Library of Congress.

More than 3,000 migratory workers took part in the festival, recording their folk songs and dance music for the library.

"These recordings are going to be historically interesting," Mrs. Roosevelt said in her column, "but the inspiring thing to me is that people can live through such hardships and still have music in their souls and have the ability to express themselves hopefully."

"Mr. Todd told me that when they have a dance, or are happy over the prospect of work or some small event in their daily lives, these people apparently seem able to enjoy themselves with complete forgetfulness of the past and future. They have learned what so many of us do not learn — that the present is the only thing we really possess."

A clipping sent to Mrs. Browne now recuperating from an illness in Glendale sanitarium, from the Dunkirk Observer in the educator's former New York home also carried the story of his White House visit.

"His interest in the 'Okies,' [a native or inhabitant of Oklahoma] migrant workers of the west, aroused during recent visits to western states when he visited his mother, at Santa Paula, California," the New York paper explained.