

Cairo Gals Take Mama Along When They Date G. I. Cowboys

YANK's CAIRO BUREAU

CAIRO – American soldiers here are finding it hard to swallow the local custom of bringing mama, papa, and sometimes brother and sister in on a date with the girl friend. Cairo families – and Cairo girls, too – wouldn't think of permitting an unchaperoned date before the first few months of an acquaintance have elapsed. It just isn't done, and to the average Yank, who's used to getting things on a pretty clubby basis in an hour's time, this custom has become a pain in the neck. A few still persist in trying to break it up, but most of the boys have given it up as a bad job.

Sgt. Clyde Jacob of Norfolk, Va., was cured early. He went to a dance, met a smooth number, and became interested right off the bat. Getting into form, Sgt. Jacob suggested that they sit the next one out over a drink. She agreed. As they went to a table he noticed a crowd following them and asked the girl what was up. "They are my mother and three sisters," she replied. Jacob had to shell out for five drinks, plus his own.

Another case: T/Sgt. Jim McKnight, a tall Texan, had finally singled out the babe of his choice, called on her, and made a date for the movies. The picture was new and the movie house was classy, so he reserved a couple of seats and got everything set. As they left her house, two strange young men put on their hats and joined them. They were the girl's two younger brothers. McKnight took the three of them to a Western doubleheader.

In other respects the girls are more or less up to the minute. They go in for jitterbugging and assume that every American is a past master at the art. If you happen to be one of those few who can't cut a rug, they consider that you're a cowboy and expect you to sing "You Are My Sunshine," accompanying yourself on the guitar.

They get these ideas, of course, from our movies. From their U.S. screen fare they've deduced that American are either cowboys or gangsters, and residents of New York, Hollywood. or Washington. If you don't live on the range, as far as they're concerned, you live in a penthouse with a blonde and an automatic potato peeler.

It takes a week, more or less, for the average U.S. soldier to get the hang of Egyptian currency. He's on a rather firm footing to begin with, as the currency has a decimal basis. The Egyptian pound is worth a few cents over \$4 and contains 100 piasters, which makes the latter worth a shade over 4 cents. The piaster is divided into 10 milliemes, which aren't good for much besides newspapers and street-car rides. The big thing to contend with, in Egyptian currency, is that most of your money is in midget bills. Besides the pound note, the paper family includes notes for 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5 piasters, ranging in size from, roughly, our dollar bill to a Kool cigarette coupon.

The local beer – a lager – has the OK of most of the boys, but they'd still rather have American beer. The local brand is "Stella." and a doublesized bottle costs six piasters (24 cents). Regular canteens and PXs haven't penetrated this sector of the Middle Eastern Theater as yet, so we're having to pay city restaurants and stores from 32 to 36 cents for a can of U.S. beer and as much as 48 cents for a pack of American butts.