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THE VOTERS tumbled out of the trucks, made their way to the little table, got their pieces of paper and formed in line to the polling place. The line moved quickly

As in the Reconstruction Period after the Civil War, carpet-baggers are going after the Negro vote. Here is an account, by a distinguished Negro woman, of what recently happened in Florida

**M**ILLIONS OF AMERICANS no doubt harbor the illusion that the Period of the Reconstruction ended in the 1870s, and in dying out took all of its symptoms with it. No more herding of the Negro vote by greedy Carpet-baggers and their allies, the opportunist-minded southerner who came to be known as the Scalawag. No more prostitution of the purposes of free election by packing the polls with Negro voters who balloted as they were told without understanding what any of the commotion was about. Those days were gone forever.



SAWN

THE AUTHOR, Zora Neale Hurston, is the daughter of an Eatonville, Florida, minister. Studied at Morgan College, Howard University and Barnard College. Is a distinguished novelist, anthropologist, sociologist and writer, former head of drama department, N. C. College for Negroes

Those, like myself, who held that delusion, were never so mistaken. In the Florida Primary election of May 2, 1950, I saw Negro votes being peddled on a big scale. Single-shooting was the order of the day.

To those who might not be familiar with the term, single-shooting in an election means to go into the booth and pull down a single lever, ignoring everything else offered for public consideration. This erratic behavior on the part of a voter is a dead giveaway. First, it signifies that the voter is unprepared in his own mind to comprehend, even vaguely, the contested issues. Second,



# NEGRO VOTES PEDDLED"

By ZORA NEALE HURSTON

it betrays the fact that the ballot-wielder has been coached. The instructor does not trust the voter's mind to retain but so much, so no risk is taken by trying to teach the whole ticket. Just go in and pull down lever

Number 2, for instance, then come on out. Lever Two, you know a 2 when you see it, don't you? Pull 2, t-w-o, and come on out and get your pay. That or these, are the mechanics and the explanation of single-shooting.

It was while registration was going on that a murmur reached me that this was going to be a hotly-contested senatorial fight between the incumbent, Senator Claude Pepper, and his challenger, Representative George Smathers, and that an organization from the north was going to come into Florida to organize and deliver the Negro vote in a lump. From historical background, I did not believe that an outside agency would dare to interfere in a southern election, nor did I believe that the Negro vote could be handled as a dark, amor-

phous lump. Then and there I made up my mind to be in Florida for this struggle at all costs, and to be in Miami, Florida's largest city and the seat of Dade county, which from rumor was slated to be the hottest battleground.

So I planted myself there and saw the intense and well-organized drive to get the mass of Negro voters registered for the polls. I heard about the payment of a dollar to each prospective voter, because you cannot keep secret what thousands of people know. It was a dollar for each person who registered to vote, and twenty-five cents a head for the bush-beaters who rounded up the people and delivered them to the registration centers. By all accounts, this was the heaviest registration of Negro voters in the history of the State, and perhaps many years will pass before it happens that way again.

Whether (Continued on page 54)



DESPITE powerful backing Claude Pepper lost his seat in the Senate to ex-Marine George Smathers

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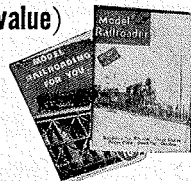
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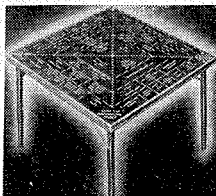
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lifeline crept aft. Strain came into it. "Bill," I asked, "how goes it?"

The phone was dead. Then the line was swinging forward to straight down. It could mean but one thing. Holmes' voice croaked, "Virg! Virg! I'm comin' up!"

I yelled and jumped for the lifeline. Jerry cut the motor. The three of us hauled in like mad. Holmes was coming up under the boat and he was ready to break the surface before we fought him clear. It was not the diving helmet that rose above the sea, but the ugly pear-shaped body of the octopus. He was perched atop the helmet, all eight tentacles twined about Holmes's body. I grabbed the pike pole and with a single smash drove it, spur and all, completely through his head and a yard beyond.

We got the helmet off and stripped away the suit. He'd been sick inside the helmet several times. He stretched out on deck, eyes shut, and drew in great gulps of air. He'd been down three hours.

At last he muttered, "That pull broke him loose, then he climbed on top of me. I—I thought I was a goner."

An hour later he was all right. His left leg was sore but that was all.

Holmes's experience proves something I've thought a long time. It's the diver's panic that licks him. The octopus had actually done nothing more than hold him. If Holmes hadn't speared him, the octopus would not have attacked.

I'm convinced the octopus is one of the biggest cowards in the sea and his fearsome reputation is more fiction than fact. I've often had a pair for company while working fifty or a hundred feet down inside a trap. But the octopus is no salmon eater if anything else is available, so an armed truce exists between us. He keeps as far from me as possible and I make no war-like moves. His first grab at a diver, I'm sure, is simply exploratory. When the diver becomes panicky so does the octopus. He continues to hold on through fear alone.

In nine years of searching I have found not one verified case of an octopus having killed a man. If the occasion demanded, I would not hesitate to meet him with a sharp knife and predict the outcome. Which doesn't mean I feel at ease in his presence. I will still walk a long way around to avoid this "Karloff of the Deep."

THE END

## "I Saw Negro Votes Peddled"

(Continued from page 13)

there was an organization behind this intense drive was answered for me positively by a Negro schoolteacher who was part of the movement.

"You were correctly informed," she told me with assurance, and even a touch of pride in her voice. "They are really here. That is no rumor at all. It is a positive fact. They are our friends from up North here helping us out and they are doing a wonderful job. The Negro vote holds the balance of power, and the way we are organized now, I can't see any way in the world for our candidate to lose. Not with the help we've got. It's in the bag!"

That was the way it was. Under the promise of gain, if you can call a dollar bill gain, the inert section of the Negro voters were needed into action and registration. The Negro bush-beaters herding the prospective voters in, and the organizers in the shadows directing the bush-beaters.

But all of the Negroes did not hurry to register for the sake of a dollar. There was a sector of the socially-conscious, who already knew something about the organization from the inside, and saw in the election a beautiful Trojan horse. They were on hand to open the door and let out the warriors on the State. The long-delayed capture of the South by the left-wing was at hand.

Estimating that at least 50 percent of those Negroes who had been pressured to register would forget all about the whole thing in a few days, I watched to see the inertia set in. But the organizing experts had thought about that too. For that section of the voters who could be appealed to through their desire for political power, the FEPC issue was kept at white heat. It was going to do everything for them, down to frying the breakfast bacon and hanging out the wash on the line. For those indifferent to such things, a kind

of voter's soup kitchen was provided. With the proper credentials, those pleading poverty could go to certain addresses and draw groceries. Here they were exhorted to hold firm and to spread the good gospel wherever they went. Vote right, and there would be a lot more free things besides groceries. That was the kind of government that poor people needed, and that was the kind that they would get if they voted right.

Then there were those post-primary promises. They gave unthinking voters visions and made them dream dreams. One young woman worker told me with a confident smile that the day after the election, she would be driving a Cadillac. Just like that! A drab middle-aged woman told me about the groceries that she had already got, and how she had been promised plenty of sheets and towels for her house, which she needed badly. She only wished that she had thought to ask for some new wool blankets too. Her next door neighbor had put in for some. Nice, new, pink-colored blankets and all. Still another settled woman was glowing over the promise of two new inner-spring mattresses for her beds. She was very excited about the prospect. The wishes of many years coming true at last. Oh, no, she answered my doubts. She was not going to be fooled. She had told the white woman whom she did day-work for twice a week about it and asked her please to go down to the party headquarters the day after election and pick out her two mattresses for her and have them delivered right away.

This voting for what-you-could-get was making me feel sick and sad. The right to vote, to express the will of the individual in the affairs of the community, the commonwealth and the nation, was nowhere to be found in this general talk that was going on all around me. The

concept was entirely missing. The exercise of the franchise, the most potent, the most sacred thing that man has conceived and strived for since humans began to live in communities, was counted as practically nothing.

I am only too aware that corrupt politicians buy white votes, and that unthinking white voters sell them, and often very cheaply. But this right ought to be

**WALLY**

I hate to tell you, but your wife is waiting outside with a bunch of "Ladies Artillery" for you to drive home in your nice new car!!



(From October, 1936 A.L.M.)

held in higher regard by Negroes than any other citizens in the United States. For us, this prized symbol of citizenship has a long and somber history. It commences with the very inception of the United States. There have been more public debates, more moral preachments, more laws proposed and passed, more contention, and yes, more human bloodshed, to bring us to the place where we can cast a ballot, and thereby express our will in the affairs of our country, than anybody else in America. It is positively astounding that any adult Negro could look upon the right to vote as a small thing, let alone regard this highest right in civilization in such a way as to put a price upon it. In the establishment of human rights and the importance of the individual from Greece to Rome to England and to its elevation in the United States by fundamental law, it has been a long, terrible and bloody road. Americans held it so sacred that they laid down their lives on the field of battle that we too might share this right. It struck me as ironical that what others thought worth giving their lives to gain for us, some among us could think so little of that we could sell it for a dollar and think that we had gained something.

The polls opened at seven o'clock on the morning of May 2nd, and I was on hand to see what would happen. Observing as carefully as I could, I went through the colored neighborhoods from one polling precinct to the other. Except for minor human-interest details, the scene was the same everywhere. The organizers were on hand at every place, carefully setting up their pitches the required three hundred feet from the polls. There was somebody seated at a little table. The turnout in the early hours was tremen-



# From where I sit by Joe Marsh

## I Have A "Close Squeak"!

*Spent last Saturday morning wandering all over the house. Wherever I went—upstairs or down—I kept hearing a "squeak." Couldn't find out where it was coming from until noon-time when the missus came home from her weekly shopping.*

"Listen," I says to her, "hear that squeak?" I started quietlike across the kitchen and there it went again! "Joe Marsh," she laughs, "that is nothing but your suspender clips rubbing back and forth when you walk!" And darned if it wasn't!

*From where I sit, I'd been letting a little thing become a serious problem. Like some little difference of opinion or taste will start off a great big argument. I may prefer a temperate glass of beer with my dinner—while the missus likes tea—but we figure that no two people have exactly the same likes and dislikes. So, why get all "het up" about it?*

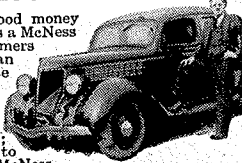
The moral is, check your suspenders—and check your temper when it comes to little things.

*Joe Marsh*

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dous, for the most part arriving in trucks, forty to fifty to a load.

The voters tumbled out of the trucks, made their way to the little table, got each a little piece of paper and formed in line to the polls. The lines moved in and out of the polling-place with astonishing speed and smoothness. They knew exactly what they were to do and they did it fast. Pull down one lever and come out of there so that as many as possible could do the same thing before they had to report to their jobs of work.

When these voters came out of the booth, they all did the same thing. They went back to the little table and were handed another piece of paper. With it in hand, they hurried back to the truck and it sped away to bring in another load.

Even if somebody had not told me, my intelligence would have informed me that those pieces of paper passed out after the vote could mean but one thing: That these men and women were being paid for their votes. I further learned that the piece of paper was worth two dollars to the holder when presented at the proper place. But just to pile things up, I got around among the party workers who were handing out literature to voters headed for the polls. One snarlingly refused to give me any answer to my question. But several others gave me an answer, and their phrasing was so identical in every case that it could not possibly be by accident.

"That is a lie. We are not paying anybody to vote. These are poor working people, and we are giving them two dollars apiece to pay them for their time to take off long enough from their jobs to cast their votes. You can't make nothing illegal out of that. No law against it at all." Then they grinned in a way to let me know that they had all the answers.

Standing around in the warm Miami sun, I suffered from a number of thoughts. During slavery, a healthy Negro slave brought anywhere from seven hundred to two or three thousand dollars on the

block. That was trading in Negro bodies. Now, here Negroes were selling something supposed to be infinitely more precious than our bodies at two bucks a throw. My mind flashed to that big scene in Uncle Tom's Cabin, where Uncle Tom declaims, "My body might belong to you, but my soul belong to God!" Then I smiled. This election certainly was a big joke on poor old Uncle Tom.

From Uncle Tom's Cabin, I passed easily to the Reconstruction, what it had meant to Negroes; what it had meant to southern whites, and what it portended in later years for both races.

The over-simplified accounts of those days, heard in my childhood, made it an age of splendor for Negroes. Nobody ever connected up the awful decades that followed for the Negroes with those ten years. I was a freshman in college before I came upon any details of the Reconstruction. Then an elderly and very scholarly Congressman from Virginia described for me the political mechanics of that time in the South.

The Carpet-baggers were in power in the South. Not being citizens in southern states, they could not vote. The newly freed Negroes were citizens, and had the vote. Some southern opportunists hurriedly took the oath of allegiance, and between them and the Carpet-baggers, the Negro voters were exploited to political advantage. An election went something like this: The candidates and their supporters contracted for Negro votes. Naturally, few could read or write, but there were no voting-machines in those days. Come the day of election, anywhere from a hundred to five hundred Negro voters could be found locked in a barn, with plenty of corn liquor promised to them as soon as the voting was over. Also, they would get a whole dollar apiece to spend.

At the first call, a sort of foreman would unlock the door and march out his herd of voters in their shirt-sleeves and to the polls. After voting, they would be



AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

taken back to the barn to put on coats, then back again to the polls to vote again. Later they put on hats and the candidate "voted their hats." If necessary, they were scrambled up and brought back to the polls from another direction and voted again. All that a white man needed who yearned for place and power under that system was a few hundred dollars and a tough conscience, and he was in. With the long and bloody struggle for Negro freedom in mind, many of those Scalawags must have laughed a-plenty to themselves. At a dollar a head, and voting each man three times, a Negro that during slavery would have brought at least seven hundred dollars on the block, he could now buy for thirty cents. And the Scalawag could profit infinitely more by the cheap vote than he could from the voter's sweaty labor, and he did not even have to feed and shelter him.

The measures of Rutherford B. Hayes brought to an end the golden picnic of the Carpet-baggers and Scalawags. Before the fury of the re-enfranchised South, they scattered in every direction. The men who had reaped the harvest from the conquered and prostrate South were gone, but their naive tools, those Negro voters, were still around. And the scars of those Reconstruction years remained. Negroes had repeatedly voted their shirts, their coats and their hats, but had nothing to show for it but empty hands and eyes to cry with. Yet they were called upon to pay for what their exploiters had done. In those dark after-decades arose the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, disfranchisement of the Negro through the three disabling clauses, the Grandfather Clause, the Property Clause and the Literacy Clause. There came the habit of lynching, and later segregation in every state in the South.

Those Negroes, fresh out of slavery, cannot fairly be held responsible for what went on during the Reconstruction. They were illiterate. They had no background for making decisions, even to small ones that concerned their daily lives. The scoundrels who took advantage of them are the most reprehensible in all history. And to make it worse, they had brought off this monstrous villainy under the cloak of "friends of the Negro." But where, oh, where were these "friends" while the terrible decades rolled in? Unlike the turtle, their voices were not heard in the land.

But this is A.D. 1950. I am standing on the corner in Miami, Florida. It is a southern city with hundreds of very modern and comfortable Negro homes, lived in by Negroes of many professions, from the finest colleges and universities in the United States. Among them are physicians, dentists, lawyers, morticians, pharmacists, teachers, registered nurses, ministers, journalists, and the like. A Negro judge presides over a municipal court, and Negro policemen patrol the streets. Free public schools available for Negro children are ably staffed by Negroes. Negro business men control into the millions in wealth. Yet, here is the saddening picture of hundreds of Negroes, no thousands, being herded to the polls just as in 1870, and paid two dollars for votes.

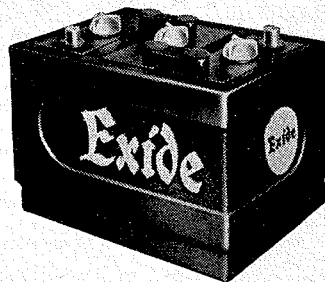
(Continued on page 59)

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(Continued from page 57)

To me, it represents an incalculable loss of prestige to the American Negro. There is something ironical about peddling your vote for two dollars, then calling yourself a "Race champion" fighting for more Civil Rights. There has to be an overload of self-pity and insufficient self-confidence and respect to cause a Negro with a ballot, the most potent weapon in a republic, to make him feel that he needs to be led to the polls to express his convictions on public affairs. It has to be a lack of something to cause him to sell his vote, then look for some "friend of the Negro" to look out for his advancement. It is like a man in a jungle facing a tiger and throwing his high-powered rifle away, then



"What did you expect - belches?"

AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE

calling for some friend to come help him.

Why so many of our so-called leaders spend so much time and energy hunting up "friends of the Negro" is more than I can understand in this day and age. It is self-evident that these persons who talk so loudly and so much about rights and things like that have no appreciation of their present status. They have not yet conceived of themselves nor the mass of Negroes as American citizens, with the same responsibilities towards the nation as others here. To them, Negroes are still wards of the nation, to be done for, but with no responsibilities for the welfare of the United States. We are just here like tourists. Therefore, it is not up to us to fight for able, impartial executives, legislators and jurists. We get carried away by anybody who comes along and claims to be a "friend of the Negro."

Like voracious bluefish swarming around a school of menhaden, this type of politician has been fattening off of us since 1865, and most of them have done very well for themselves by their insincerity and our credulity. But even so, these political craftsmen cannot claim credit for originality. This "taking the heathen" gambit is only a variation of the

old missionary game. For nearly three hundred years the English boasted that the flag followed the missionary. The routine is, finding the competition too keen among your own kind, you fit out a clipper and set sail for the "heathen." Appoint yourself his pitying partisan until you can land enough force to take him. Variations of this racket have been worked out and succeeded all over the world, even right here in these United States. Sell dope to the heathen. The dope may be beads, lengths of calico, whiskey, opium, friendship, or some other stupefying stuff. It is a good way to make a big man out of yourself in a hurry. The old game is still good as long as you can buy their votes for two dollars and put them to single-shooting.

But no fairly intelligent Negro has any right to be deceived by any political "friend" who offers to buy his vote. The fact that he offers to buy it tells you what he thinks about your character; and the petty amount gives you his estimate of your intelligence. Lumped together, you are two dollars worth of integrity and brains.

Nor need the Negro leaders of the vote-selling, single-shooting Negro electorate hope for legislation in our favor. They do not seem to realize that when the candidate has paid them off at the polls, he has no further obligations. Nor has he any cause to wish to further our interests out of respect. Under our Constitution, there is no royal ruler. That quality is distributed among the citizens of the United States. Every American is part of the king that rules over this nation. To sell your vote is to abdicate your part of the throne, and that is that.

And how can the Negro leaders who hailed these outside organizers so loudly, and the voters who so slavishly followed their counsel, reconcile their "friendship" with the fact that they neglected the twelve-and-a-half-million-dollar school bond issue at the polls? A generous slice of this was earmarked for the improvement of Negro schools in Dade County. If these organizers had really been our friends, they would have stressed the improvement of Negro schools over the senatorial race. But this was certainly not the case. I sampled 164 voters as they left the polls and asked if they had voted for the Bond Issue. Many of them behaved as if they were hearing about it for the first time. Thirteen stopped and told me that they had voted for it. Two of the others told me that it was not important. What they needed to do was to get the right man in the Senate. That school business could be looked after later on. What can be clearer proof that, no matter what they said about being "friends of the Negro," it was not true. The Negro vote was thought necessary to elect the candidate they were here to put over, and that was all.

Negro participation in the southern primaries has only just now been restored after generations of being outlawed. So the Smathers-Pepper race is, or was, of the greatest importance for Negroes. It does not gain its significance for us and the nation half so much from what the candidates said about Negroes, and how

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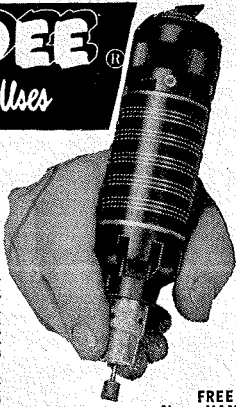
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they said it, as from our own concept of the value of the franchise as expressed by our behavior at the polls. Evaluations of Negroes as participating citizens are certainly being made. Serious and analytical minds will search out whether we see it as our responsibility to serve the common good by supporting men of high caliber for important offices, or whether, ignoring such qualifications, we rally around "good masters" from the Negro point of view. That will determine whether we are slave-minded mobs or reliable citizens.

One very successful professional Negro man observed, "This FEPC is not the big bonus that our people are taking it to be. In the first place, it is unworkable, and if it could be made to work, it would be a two-edged sword. These Negroes don't seem to realize that. If it could be enforced, what would hinder white office workers, insurance agents and executives, morticians and the like, from penetrating Negro business and throwing thousands of us now gainfully employed out of work? Don't fool yourself that none of them wouldn't do it if there is a good living to be made at it, and there is. White teachers could then man our schoolrooms. We had better learn to think before we yell so much."

"Man!" A pastor of a large Baptist church shouted. "You got something there. You've got cold chills running up and down my back. Supposing this law passed and a white preacher who has been struggling along for years with a little charge of around a hundred members made up his mind to take over my five-thousand-members church! And that mob is out there single-shooting for him right now. I'm watching out for these 'friends of the Negro' from now on."

Whatever the issues might be at any given time, it is certainly high time that the Negro voter took his responsibility seriously. It is time for us to cease to be the single-shooting herd. Let us vote our heads instead of our hats and shirts. Each voter approaching the polls fired by his own well-considered convictions and performing this most sacred civil duty in the way that it was intended. It is time for us to cease to allow ourselves to be delivered as a mob by persuasive "friends" and become individual citizens. In other words, turn our backs upon the concepts of the Reconstruction and not keep turning back the clock. To take a look at the calendar and read it right. Find out that this is the Year of our Lord 1950, and not 1865.

THE END

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## How Can You Get A Job For Six Cents

(Continued from page 15)

paragraphs," advise the majority of the personnel managers queried in the nationwide survey. "Every word must count, linking your experience, education and abilities to the job you want. Keep it brief and to the point. We're human, too, and we tire easily. Most application letters are too long."

Since your first aim is to win the personnel manager's attention, you can start on this task by addressing him by name, rather than by title alone. "If the sweetest sound in our language is a man's own name, as psychologists claim, you'll be wise to use the employment manager's name when you write him," suggests the personnel manager of a Cincinnati company. "I admit that I like the salutation 'Dear Mr. Jones' far more than the impersonal 'Dear Sir.' More important, your use of my name tells me at once that you have done some investigating of our company."

The majority of the 178 personnel managers agree that you increase your chances of employment when you apply for a specific type of job instead of writing vaguely, "I'd like to work for your firm."

"When you apply for a specific job—for instance, as a junior accountant, clerk, handyman, or office secretary—you show me that you know the kind of work you are best equipped to do," comments a New York executive. "It also shows me that you have some knowledge of our company's employee needs."

You should tell the personnel manager why you are applying for a job with his company, why you want a particular job, and what you hope it will eventually lead to. "The applicant's long-range job aims are so important to me that they often determine whether or not he is hired," the

employment manager of a Southern public utilities company points out. "I want to know a man's vocational plans so that I can tell if he will fit into our organization and grow as it grows."

Your big task is to make the personnel manager interested in you as a prospective employee. The secret? "You can set a personnel manager to considering you as a man worth hiring only if you take his company's viewpoint" is the consensus of the executives queried in the survey. "You must play up those features of your training, education and job experience that will help you be of some value to his company."

The 178 personnel managers agree that you should not write: "I'm anxious to have a job because I want security"; or "I need a job because I'm a married man with three children to support." That is the selfish "I" attitude. When you use it, you are thinking only of yourself.

Instead, you must take the company's viewpoint. Then you will have the "You" attitude so essential to successful salesmanship. Personnel managers report that they are impressed when you write: "Your organization should be able to make use of my experience in . . ." Or, "My specialized training should help me be of service to you as . . ."

But there is no need to go into the details of your training and experience. "Detail in the letter is unnecessary if your training and experience are listed on the data sheet," says the personnel manager of one of America's largest corporations.

If you are a young college graduate with no job experience, don't be disheartened. "Neither I nor any other personnel manager expects the average 'recent' graduate to have any jobs to his credit," a St. Louis executive writes. In fact, with some com-

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