

TEHACHAPI BOY NOW COMPOSER

*Walter Smith is Recalled
There as "Peculiar"*

*Dedicates New Song to Old,
Sympathetic Friend*

*Mountain Town is First to
Get Popular Tunes*

(EXCLUSIVE DISPATCH)

BAKERSFIELD Oct 14—When the popular foxtrot, "Hindustan," was published, a large package of copies of the song found their way to the mountain town of Tehachapi. Likewise, "While Incense is Burning" early became a favorite among the natives, as the song enjoyed a large circulation from a mysterious bundle of gift copies. And when "Havana Moon" is published, Tehachapi is sure to be one of the first towns in the United States to become familiar with the number.

That is because the composer of these three selections, Walter Smith, spent his boyhood days in Tehachapi, and is still remembered by old-timers there as "kind of a peculiar kid, always caring more for nanging around some old piano, banging out dance tunes, than for hunting or riding with the other boys." His father was "Honey" Smith, a famous Kern county mountain character in the old days.

When Smith was a child, he had only one friend who really believed in him and encouraged his musical aspirations. She was Mrs. Kate Bonestell, and it is to her that "Havana Moon" is to be dedicated. When young Smith began his roving career on leaving Tehachapi a number of years ago, only she kept in close touch with him, and it was to Mrs. Bonestell that copies of his musical successes were sent, after he had dropped out of her ken for five years.

Smith was only 16 years of age when his father, tiring of his "good-for-nothing" disposition and roving habits, ordered the boy to leave home. He drifted. Then he joined the Navy and lived for a time in the Orient, where he undoubtedly found inspiration for the dance numbers that made him famous. Periodically he wrote to Mrs. Bonestell, sending her several of his own poems. Her encouragement was continuous, until it was learned that he had, indeed, "arrived" as a composer.

During the war Smith served overseas as a singer and entertainer.