



Offbeat Oregon History

The Roseburg ‘Champagne Riot’:
Probably not what you’re thinking

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

It was Christmas Day in 1866. Officially, the Civil War had been over for a year and a half. Unofficially, though, not everybody agreed that its outcome settled things ... especially in Douglas County, Oregon.

At the time, Douglas County was like a microcosm of the United States. There was a Republican majority in the more populous and powerful northern part of the state, which had voted itself into full control of county government, much to the fury of the resentful, disenfranchised Dixie-friendly majority in the south of the state. And like Washington, D.C., between the warring North and South, the county seat at Roseburg was located almost directly between the two regions.

Approval or disapproval of the outcome of the war, and the subsequent reconstruction program in the South, split the Roseburg community right down the middle, with Southern Democrats bitterly resentful and Republicans (and pro-Union Democrats) gloatingly triumphant.

Douglas County wouldn’t really be at peace until the following year, with the outcome of an event that?’ been described — only partly in jest — as the last battle of the Civil War. It’s known today as the “Champagne Riot,” although it was more a drunken brawl than a riot, and there was almost certainly no champagne involved.

The Champagne Riot started out as a Christmas party — or, rather, two Christmas parties. Feelings were so sore in the Roseburg area that the two sides each threw their own. The pro-Southern citizens threw their “Christmas ball” at Goode’s Mill, near Roseburg; the Unionists had theirs at the home of Joseph Champagne, in the tiny now-long-gone hamlet of French Settlement, six miles west of Roseburg.

Everything was fine and jolly and festive until about 3 a.m., when the pro-Southern party wound its way to a close, and the dancers and revelers started heading home to bed. But a small group of them, young hot-blooded men from old Southern families, decided the night was still young enough for some more action. They further decided that the place to go for that action was Joseph Champagne’s place, where the damn Yankee sympathizers were celebrating their recent vic-

tories.

Armed to the teeth and well fortified with holiday spirits, these young troublemakers set out on horseback for French Settlement, four miles away.

The primary purpose of the visit was for one of the five, Solomon Culver, to settle a score with one of the Unionists, George Bennett. Culver’s cousin, John Fitzhugh, came along, and three of Culver’s friends — Abe Crow, Bob Forbes and John Hannon — rounded out the little war party.

Fitzhugh was a particularly interesting character. Reportedly a distant relative of Robert E. Lee, he was a prominent Democratic leader in Roseburg and the founder and former publisher of Roseburg’s first newspaper — the Roseburg Express, which he launched in 1860, just before the Civil War broke out. It didn’t last long; after the shooting started, federal authorities went looking for “copperhead” newspapers and shutting them down, and the Express — along with the Albany Democrat, Corvallis Union, Table Rock (Jacksonville) Sentinel, Eugene Herald and Portland Daily News — was suppressed.

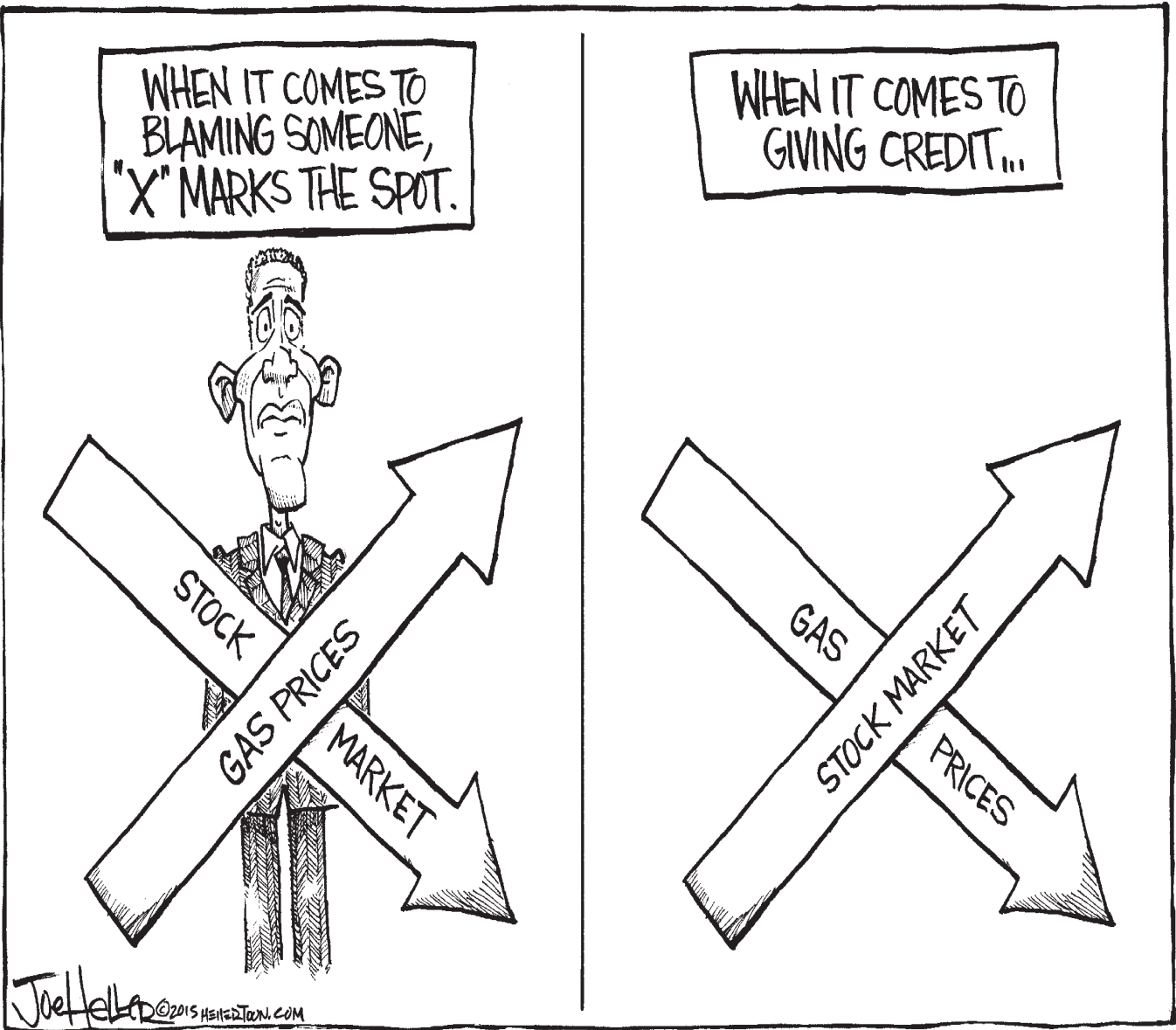
What the erstwhile journalist did after that, for the duration of the war, isn’t clear. But there’s one thing we know he didn’t do, and that’s give up on his pro-Southern beliefs.

Fitzhugh and his four comrades arrived at the rival gang’s party around 4 a.m. Upon their arrival, they got busy right away. Culver found Bennett, whipped out his Dragonov revolver and pistol-whipped him across the face with it, breaking his nose.

Then the party’s host, Frank Barringer, hurried to the scene, apparently to try to defuse the situation, and — presumably after a heated exchange of words, although the newspapers don’t say — Fitzhugh pulled a derringer and shot him through the heart. Barringer slipped to the floor and died without speaking another word.

Then fists, knives and pistols started flashing and flying as the fighting became general. The fiddle player, Ash Clayton, set down his instrument, grabbed a knife and used it to let some air out of Solomon Colver’s left lung. Abe Crow took offense to this and, pulling his revolver, shot Clayton twice with it (once in the leg, and once across the scalp) and then slashed

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Readership survey yields insightful info about Cottage Grove's news needs

Recently, the Cottage Grove Sentinel asked its readers to evaluate its work as the primary news source for this community.

Two recent editions of the Sentinel have included a readership survey consisting of nine questions aimed at delivering an insightful look at how readers access the newspaper, the other sources that deliver news that impacts their lives and their needs and desires for local news coverage — be they needs that the paper is currently filling or, in some cases, is not.

The Sentinel received 34 online responses to its survey and three handwritten submissions, and the staff wishes to extend its most sincere thanks for comments and suggestions that were at once informative, on-topic and polite. Our readers are the only reason we do what we do, and we appreciate the chance to know how we may do it better.

We’ve distilled the responses down to a few short

sentences where possible, to offer a straightforward and useful look at things, though we of course realize that the opinions of 37 readers do not a complete picture of our readership make.

According to the results of our survey, Cottage Grove Sentinel readers mostly receive their paper through an ongoing subscription. They are an older crowd, the majority over age 50 who generally read the newspaper to keep up-to-date on community happenings, to read about people they know or follow a particular issue.

In addition to the Sentinel, readers also utilize a variety of sources to get their news — many also read the Eugene Register-Guard; watch local television news broadcasts and occasionally national news broadcasts; listen to local radio and NPR and access a wide variety of Internet news sources. Readers also provided poignant comments regarding their news habits;

for instance, one reader noted that, “no news service is perfect, so I use several sources and try to read between the lines.” Another shared that “friends share the type of news that impacts me the most.” Many also access information through Facebook.

Sentinel readers would like to see more pictures and stories about interesting locals in their local newspaper, in addition to more crime and court reporting, detailed reports of meetings and opinion from newspaper staff and community members. More specifically, comments indicate a desire to read a more in-depth police and fire activities log, know about community events BEFORE they happen and read about more controversial topics. One commenter noted that, in situations where the individual had “first-hand knowledge of an event, I have found the Sentinel’s coverage to be a bit ‘thin’ and sometimes one-sided,” continuing that “It’s

not anyone’s fault ... you just need a few more reporters.”

Readers have also stated a preference for “hard-hitting news that adheres to the facts, however unpleasant they may be.”

We’re not sure how much the chance to win a raffle prize from a local business played into the decision of many of our readers to respond, but for those interested, we’ll be drawing the name of one lucky winner on Friday.

In many cases, it appears that the information received from our survey closely coincides with what we’ve already come to believe about our work and our readership. To wit, we’ll attempt to provide an in-depth response to many of the facts we’ve gleaned from the survey. It’s a process that promises to be a trifle wordy, so we’ll pick up where we left off in next week’s paper. Thanks again, and Happy New Year!

Are 'natural' and low-glycemic sweeteners healthful alternatives to sugar?

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Added sugars come in several forms other than sugar, evaporated cane juice and high fructose corn syrup. Calorie-containing sweeteners such as maple syrup, honey, agave and coconut sugar are marketed

as “natural” and often touted as healthier alternatives to regular sugar. Is there any truth to these claims?



Similar to sugar, these are low-nutrient concentrated sweeteners; they add substantial calories to the diet while contributing very little nutritional value. Maple syrup and honey elevate blood glucose similarly to sugar (sucrose), leading to disease-causing effects in the body. Agave and coconut sugar rank lower on the glycemic index but are still empty calories and may have other negative effects. Repeated exposure to these excessively sweet tastes dulls the taste buds to the naturally sweet tastes of berries and other fresh fruits, which perpetuates cravings for sweets and can undermine weight loss. Since some natural sweeteners undergo fewer processing steps than sugar, they may retain some phytochemicals from the plants they originate from, but their nutrient-to-calorie ratio is still very low, and they contain minimal or no fiber to slow the absorption of their sugars. The negative health effects of added sugar and high-fructose corn

syrup (HFCS) are well documented, including increased risk of weight gain, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and cancers.

Agave nectar is marketed as a low-glycemic sweetener due to its high fructose content (agave is approximately 90 percent fructose). Sucrose is half fructose and half glucose, made up of one fructose molecule linked to one glucose molecule. HFCS contains 55 percent fructose and 42 percent glucose. All sweeteners (and fruits) contain some combination of glucose, fructose, and the two bound together as sucrose. Maple syrup contains about 90 percent sucrose, so it is very similar to regular white sugar. Coconut sugar contains 70-80 percent sucrose, and honey contains 49 percent fructose and 43 percent glucose.

Fructose and glucose are broken down differently by the body. When fructose is absorbed, it is transported directly to the liver, where it is broken down to produce energy. Fructose itself does not stimulate in-

sulin secretion by the pancreas. However, much of the fructose is actually metabolized and converted into glucose in the liver, so it does raise blood glucose somewhat (although not as much as sucrose or glucose). Despite its low glycemic index, added fructose in the form of sweeteners still poses health risks. Fructose stimulates fat production by the liver, which causes elevated blood triglycerides, a predictor of heart disease. Elevated triglycerides have been reported in human studies after consuming fructose-sweetened drinks, and this effect was heightened in the participants who were insulin-resistant. Fructose, when used as a sweetener, also seems to have effects on hunger and satiety hormones that may lead to increased calorie intake in subsequent meals.

When you ingest any caloric sweetener, you get a mix of disease-promoting effects: the glucose-elevating effects of added glucose and the triglyceride-raising effects of added fructose.

Sweeteners, unlike whole fruits, are concentrated sugars without the necessary fiber to regulate the entry of glucose into the bloodstream and fructose to the liver. All caloric sweeteners have effects that promote weight gain, diabetes and heart disease, regardless of their ratio of glucose to fructose, or what type of plant they originate from.

Dr. Fuhrman is an author and board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. His newest book, The End of Dieting, debunks the fake “science” of popular fad diets and offers an alternative to dieting that leads to permanent weight loss and excellent health. Visit his informative website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to newsquestions@drfuhrman.com. The full reference list for this article can be found at DrFuhrman.com.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary. If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words. To avoid transcription errors, the Sentinel would prefer editorial and news content be sent electronically via email or electronic media. Hand written submissions will be accepted, but we may need to call to verify spelling, which could delay the publishing of the submission.