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CHARLES V. STANTON Editor EDWIN L. KNAPP Manager

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PRESERVING HISTORY

By CHARLES V. STANTON

We have just completed reading Martha Ferguson McKeown's new book, "Alaska Silver." To be released next week by The Macmillan company, "Alaska Silver" is the third and last book in Mrs. McKeown's story of the life of her uncle, Mont Hawthorne. It is a complement to two previous stories, "The Trail Led North" and "Them Was the Days."

"Alaska Silver" is the story of the Pacific coast's salmon industry — the transition from salting to canning salmon, the exploration for sites, the growth of the independents, the formation of canning corporations, the war between independents and corporations, the invention and development of machinery to replace "Chinaboy" cannery crews.

But the story is more than a narration of the growth of an industry. It is a history of exploitation of a newly-acquired, rich territory, its resources and its people, by greedy industrialists and a negligent inefficient government. It is a history told in the salty, vigorous language of Uncle Mont, whose itchy feet could not rest while there was a place he had not seen; Uncle Mont who combined philosophy and psychology with his skill as a mechanic and a leader of men; who had a keen insight into the emotions of people, white and Indian, with whom he made friends quickly and easily.

Colorful Experiences Related

We have a personal interest in Mrs. McKeown's books. It just happened that we were close at hand when she received word that her first work had been accepted. She simply had to "unload" on someone and we had the wonderful and most pleasurable experience of sharing the almost hysterical joy of an author achieving success—a measure of success that has proved so much greater than even dreamed of at that time.

But even without that personal experience we would find the life story of Mont Hawthorne "must" reading.

We read in our histories of the reconstruction following the Civil war, the westward immigration, the Alaskan gold rush, the development of Pacific coast industries. But we can't really understand and relive those days until we have their intimacies revealed by someone who actually experienced them and who, with excellent ability for observation and understanding, makes us acquainted with history as it affected human life.

We know that we purchased Alaska from the Russians, but Uncle Mont tells us of the helplessness of the Alaskan natives who, having lived under the strict rule of the Russians, were the forgotten people after our government took over. How they had no schools, no churches, no employment. How our government moved them from their villages. How destruction of their totem poles was ordered, to be followed later by orders to collect those poles and preserve them as exhibits of native art. How polygamy, to which natives resorted when rigors and dangers of the North critically reduced the number of men in the tribes, was banned and tribes thereby virtually destroyed. How Indian fishermen vied for places in the Salvation Army band. The sorry plight of the large half-breed population, shunned by whites and Indians alike. The failure of our government to permit agricultural settlement of territorial land. The employment of drunken young Indians by pelters to slaughter deer for hides.

Need Preservation Of History

We do not learn of these things in our history books. Yet it is the intimate knowledge that best enables us to better understand the events of the past.

We have allowed too much history to escape. The West is full of historical romance. Every pioneer had interesting tales to tell—tales that reflected the nation's policies, economy, enterprise and independence. We have permitted too many pioneers to carry this knowledge with them to their graves without their records being preserved for our information and guidance today.

Here in our own county we have a wealth of tradition little of that tradition has been written into history. A few valuable contributions have been made. We have part of the Applegate story. George W. Riddle left valuable memoirs. Wilfred Brown recently brought out a book of essays. Annie Kruse is doing a fine piece of research and soon will publish her history of Umpqua county. But we have lost a valuable store of intimate history and are losing more daily.

Martha Ferguson McKeown has accomplished far more than successful authorship of three exceedingly interesting books. She has preserved for all time the correlative history of an empire, woven around the life story of a lovable character who made valuable contribution to that history.

Scraps From the **MENDING BASKET**
Vahnett Martin P.O. Box 874, Drain, Or.

Isn't it nice that each locality has its own boosters? In a charming letter from out Dixonville way, the writer asks if I have ever been out there. The group of rolling hills, she says, "is lovely any time of the year. I believe it still belongs largely to the Dixon family. This whole area is a lovely place to live in. The hills are not high enough to shut out much sun; rather they seem to reflect it."

"In the fall the short grass turns gold and the hills are like giant haystacks. I think they pasture sheep there, which accounts for the shortness of the grass. In the spring the road from Dixonville to the North Umpqua highway is thickly lined with wild bachelor buttons, and later, good old California poppies. Even the fescue lining the fences bears purple blossoms resembling sweet peas but

smaller and more luxuriant. We love our community. Most all the residents own their places, or are buying as we are. We aren't famous for truck gardens like Melrose, Dillard or Garden valley, own use."

Isn't that a description that makes one want to head the car that way the very next free time? We shall do so, and shall also be sure to look up the writer who included directions for finding her but we have large gardens for our home. How I do enjoy letters like that one, don't you? I'd like to quote it all.

Speaking of golden hills: back of our new place is, of course, a rise covered with short grass that makes me think some way of the ocean, with its suggestion of illimitable space. I never before understood exactly what there was about the rolling prairie that

'I'll Race You!'



Fulton Lewis Jr.

WASHINGTON REPORT

(Copyright, 1951, King Features Syndicate, Inc.)

WASHINGTON — Edward W. Barrett, assistant secretary of state for public affairs, has challenged the integrity and reportorial skill of a Scranton (Pa.) newspaperman named Frank Stout.

Stout got fed up after working for Barrett's international press and publications division for eight months. He quit. He wrote a series of articles for the Scranton Tribune, charging that government waste is hopeless, that State department spies snoop around Congress and that in general the Voice of America is timid, inefficient and wasteful.

Barrett came up with the usual State department denial but later decided he would investigate his own department. He ought to. Stout did for eight months and left holding his nose. But just to keep Barrett and his hatchmen from making a bum out of Stout, let's take a look at the newspaperman's appearance and record.

Stout is a studious appearing reporter, who has been in the business since 1940. He started as a sportswriter for the Fitchburg, Mass., Sentinel, then worked for the Associated Press in Boston for three years. For four years he was news editor of the Portland, N. H., Herald, where he won five New England Press association awards. During the war he was a combat correspondent with the Third and Fifth U. S. naval fleets.

Barrett will have a hard time labeling Stout a disgruntled hack, but he's already trying. When informed of Stout's series of critical articles, Barrett sent an arrogant telegram demanding that the reporter leave his job and appear before State department high lammas immediately. The wire read:

"I have sent a telegram to Frank Stout today, asking him to come to Washington immediately and report personally on his serious, but unsubstantiated charges against the international press and publications division. Neither when he was in the department of State, nor after his severance from the payroll, did he make any complaints of the sort that he is now writing as an employee of the Scranton Tribune. If he felt that any such complaints were justified, he was derelict in failing to report them to me or to other responsible managers of this program."

Robert J. Arthur, editor of the Tribune, promptly telegraphed Barrett to dunk his puerile arrogance in a cup of tea. He said Stout's charges are well documented but that Barrett could not order any of his staff men to report to Washington forthwith.

Stout listed at great length in his series the goodness he found in Barrett's shop during his eight-month stay. He charges that government waste is hopeless and that he "met only one or two men who

charms some people so much. It is their "ocean." I can understand now just what they mean. I stand and look up where the gold and the sky meet, and there is something about it that is deeply satisfying. But I am glad that off to the west and across the highway to the south there are trees. And a stone's throw from the highway is Elk creek, really a little river. But I shall always remember Seelye creek. . . and hear it in my heart. How glad I was that it began to murmur its song after that hard rain we had just before we moved. I had missed it all summer.

and Lake Mead, and this lent itself to recreation of all sorts, including fishing.

But there has been DROUTH in the Southwest — and when I say drouth I mean drouth. Elephant Butte dam is now practically empty of water, and no water no fish. Fishing requires tackle and selling the tackle brought plenty shekels to Main Street, Now — no fish, no tackle.

This is the principal reason why the population of Hot Springs has slipped since it changed its name to Truth or Consequences. Knowing fishermen, I'd say they'd be just as willing to fish in Truth or Consequences as in Hot Springs. I doubt if they'd even know the difference if the fish were biting.

Up to last week, precipitation in the Hot Springs (excuse the slip, I meant T or C) area had totaled just two inches since January 1, 1951. Came then a day when it rained for a day and a night and slopped over into the second day, and the grand total of it all amounted to just under an inch.

You'd have thought they'd close the schools and declare a holiday. Did they? They did NOT! The grouching was something to hear. The several oldtime residents are reported to have declared disgustedly that if this state of dripping saturation persisted for another day they were going to pack up and get the hell out of the rain-soaked place.

That gives you a faint idea of the

Reader Opinions

High Quality Athletics Seen As Morale Booster

ROSEBURG — Your editorial of October 29 stating a policy of the community on producing high quality athletic teams gives a boost to higher morale for all boys and their contributing followers. A well balanced and properly controlled athletic program will benefit in many ways in which the community can be proud. It is a beginning if taken from here that can give the community more pride and growth for its youth. Whatever is accomplished in the athletic program can be paralleled in the field of youth conservation. Why not furnish the same facilities to produce participation in citizenship, leadership, public morals, use of leisure time, and avocations?

Plenty of criticism is directed at the country's youth and millions are spent lavishly providing entertainment for them. The thinking is based upon the premise that youth will be satisfied with a pacifier. I can assure you that today's youth, when given an opportunity to assert leadership and work on a job where final achievement can be viewed and judged on its merits, will be a credit.

The kids are full of energy; they are bright eyed and eager and steady nerved. In fact, they have the qualities necessary to do a good job. But if not given the opportunity these same qualities many times become directed into channels that do not produce desirable results — results that we are not proud of. And we find ourselves repeating the old worn out alibi, "what are the younger generations coming to."

Again I wish to commend your good word on the athletic growth and desires for the people of Roseburg.

J. H. TUMBLESON
Vice Principal
Roseburg Sr. High School.

store Southwesterners set by their sunshine. They don't mind it when the dust sifting through the windows grits in their teeth when they eat their meals, but TWO DAYS OF RAIN.

That cooks their goose.

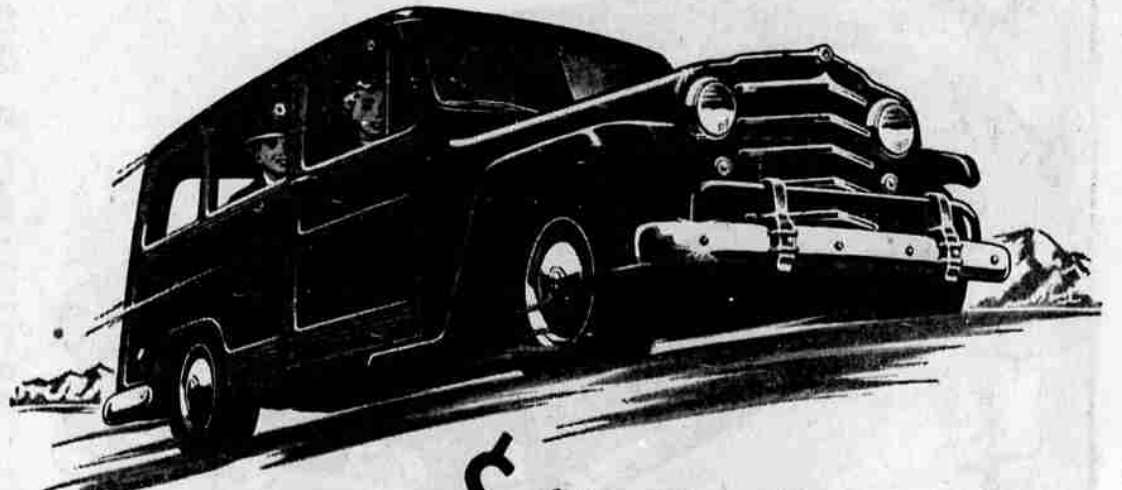
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In the Day's News

(Continued from Page 1)

case of arthritis. Many people come for treatment, and that also makes customers for motels. Then the town is on Highway 85, which is a main through route from Canada to Mexico City. And it is about halfway between Albuquerque and El Paso, which makes it a natural stopping point.

It was the hot springs that gave the town its start. Old Geronimo, the big Apache chief, knew of them, and when age began to creep up on him and arthritic pains would cramp the free swing of his scalping arm, he'd come here and boil himself out. Tradition has it that in practically no time at all he'd be all limbered up and back in perfect scalping form.

The biggest of the springs is right in the center of the town, housed under a pagoda that prevents occasional raindrops from thinning out its health-giving waters.

Elephant Butte dam on the Rio Grande is in the suburbs of Truth or Consequences (see Hot Springs) and until the federal government went on the binge that resulted in Hoover Dam, Shasta Dam, Bonneville Dam, and so on, Elephant Butte was one of the world's biggest water holders. A beautiful lake was stored up behind it, all same Lake Redding