

...Most early-day editors were from the printing trades

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only five editors since 1914.

The first editor was **H.B. Metcalf**, who held the job just two years. His union affiliation isn't known. Printer **H.G. Kundret** of Multnomah Typographical Union No. 58 came next. He left after three years because he'd been elected secretary-treasurer of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, which had been formed in 1902. Another printer, **R.A. Harris**, followed in the editor's chair, but his occupancy was short-lived because he supported Democrat William Jennings Bryan for president in 1908 in opposition to the labor council's choice, Republican William Howard Taft, who won.

Then came **H. J. Parkison**, a lawyer-carpenter who'd moved to Portland from California in 1905. He practiced law from an office in the Labor Temple and also was business manager of the Labor Press while Harris was editor. Parkison belonged to Carpenters Local 808, which later lost its identity in mergers.

Parkison once disguised himself as a hobo and succeeded in getting himself arrested for vagrancy in order to get an account of the conditions in the city jail.

After three years as editor, Parkison left the paper for other pursuits.

Clarence Mortimer Rynerson, another printer-editor member of Typographical No. 58, succeeded Parkison early in 1911, but ill health caused him to leave after only three months. However, he was to be heard from later. **William A. Marshall**, another printer, was the next editor. It was common in bygone decades for printers to also possess editorial skills. In fact, the International Typographical Union claimed organizing jurisdiction nationwide as being the logical union to represent the staffs of labor newspapers.

Editor Marshall was given the appellation "godfather of the state's workmens' compensation law" in recognition of his leadership in the initiative petition campaign that led to a ballot measure, approved by voters,

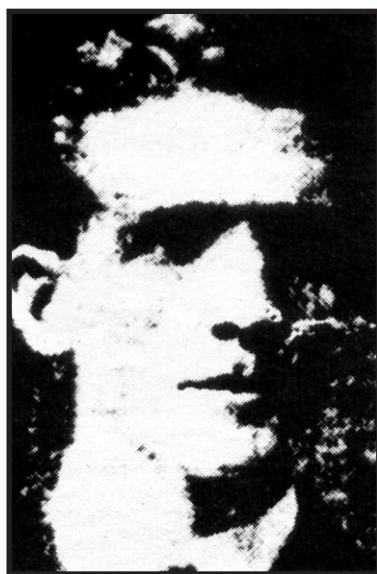
establishing an insurance system to provide financial benefits to injured workers and to the dependents of workers killed on the job.

In 1912, Gov. Oswald West, known for saving Oregon's ocean beaches for the public, appointed Marshall to the first State Industrial Accident Commission to administer the new workers' compensation insurance system.

Another printer, **Arthur Lawrence**, became interim editor in 1912 while doubling as secretary pro-tem of the Portland Central Labor Council. He also represented the printing trades unions on the Labor Press board of directors. Lawrence ran the paper briefly until **A.H. Harris** was appointed Marshall's successor. There is no indication that he was related to the earlier editor with the same last name. But Harris, a printer-editor, moved on in 1914 after only a two-year stint.

It was commonplace for earlier generations of printers, reporters and editors to move from city to city, working on one newspaper after another, as though they regarded life as one long job-hunt. In the parlance of the printing trades, they were "boomers." That probably accounts for some of the turnover among early-day Labor Press editors.

But the turnover was about to come to an end. In 1914, to succeed



H.J. PARKISON
Editor
1908 to 1911



W.A. MARSHALL
Editor
1911 to 1912



A. H. HARRIS
Editor
1912 to 1914

the second Harris, came the return of **C.M. Rynerson**, who'd served fleetingly in 1911. His health restored, "Ryney," as he was called, settled in for a long run.

Rynerson ran the Labor Press for 25 years — from 1914 to 1939. With him at the helm, the newspaper gained stability, weathering financial and labor political ups and downs. He kept the paper afloat during the Great Depression of the 1930s. A Republican,

he sought elective office without success, and also ran for president of the state labor federation. He left the paper in 1939 when Gov. Charles Sprague, publisher of the Salem Statesman, appointed him to the State Industrial Accident Commission.

Gene Allen, who succeeded Rynerson, was a college-educated Teamsters Local 255 business agent who, at age 24 was the youngest editor in the Labor Press's history. While editor,

Allen was elected to the Portland School Board, serving from 1942 to 1954. He chaired the Multnomah County Civil Service Commission, and was president of Office and Professional Employees Local 11. A year after leaving the editorship, he was elected, as a Republican, to the Oregon State Senate. He later went into the restaurant business.

Allen passed away in 1991 at age
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4275 NE Halsey St., P.O. Box 13150,
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Editor: Michael Gutwig
Staff: Don McIntosh, Cheri Rice

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