The Sentinel

A Weekly Newspaper With Plenty of Backbone

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Elbert Bede.....Editor

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FRIDAY, JUNE 17, 1921.

GEN LEONARD WOOD

With good chambers of commerce made up of thoughtful, broad-minded, intelligent men and women, we ought, with our natural resources, to be able to more than hold our own in the keen competition of the future.—Gen. Leonard Wood.

HAVE YOUR PEN FILLED AND READY.

Close to one hundred men and women will start out next Tuesday morning to sign up their fellow citizens in support of the chamber of commerce. They are and have been giving their time and efforts and in addition will themselves subscribe. So when they call on you have your pen filled and ready. Meet them with a smile and do your part. They are asking you to do no more than they themselves are doing, and in most cases not as much.

In these days of community competition every community must be organized. This is our opportunity to get strongly behind a big, democratic organization composed of the best and most representative citizens, each having a voice in its control. What it will do and how the money will be spent will be determined by the members. A live commercial organization is the best means yet discovered for promoting the welfare of a community, urban and rural. Through it the needs and desires of the community can be expressed and the entire weight of the community thrown into accomplishing things which will be a direct benefit to every person with business or property interests.

All men believe in cooperation. The chamber of commerce is our opportunity to prove that we believe in coperation.

In a community of this size the affairs of the town and country and so intermingled that the interests of one cannot be benefited without helping the other. The work of this organization will include several topics of distinctly rural work. It is therefore expected that the country people will join in this work and do their part to helping to build this organization and to determine its activities.

Can there be any doubt of what you ought to do when a member of the team organization asks you to sign a card? If you are a citizen with a vision, with ideals, with interest in the development of this you home community, there is but one thing for you to do—willingly, gladly sign your name.

We men often sneer at the foolish things which women allow to excite them—but, of course, we did not take the same point of view when as girls in their 'teens our evening visits produced that result.

Opal's Alleged Parentage

Fantastic, Amazing, Amusing Method Emlpoyed to Paint to Alleged Relationship to Bourbon Henri d'Orleans

By ELBERT BEDE.

II.

Is Opal Whiteley herself or is she someone else?

Often she is apparently not quite herself, regardless of what her parentage may be.

In my first chapter, dealing with the authenticity or lack of authenticity of Opal Whiteley's diary, as published in Atlantic Monthly, I presented what seemed to me conclusive proof of its production in later years.

Opal's foster parent fantasy, intricately, entertainingly, plausibly, yet fantastically, woven into the fabric of the diary, has an interest entirely its own, regardless of the alleged lack of authenticity of the six-year-old diary. Especially is this true in this section where Opal was reared, where the relatives (if the Whiteley parentage is accepted) are numerous and highly respected citizens.

Opal's own story, it will be remembered, contained in her introduction to the diary, is that she was substituted for another Opal Whiteley "who was the same size as I was when her mother lost her," to use Opal's own words, or in place of a child from which the mother had recently been separated, to use the language of Atlantic's editor.

A point of interest in connection with this "lost" or "departed" child is that Opal wishes it understood that her readers are in error in defining those words to mean that the child is dead. Such is not Opal's understanding of the situation. The other Opal was merely lost, may be living and may any day come forward with her diary and foster parent fantasy.

Opal says in her introduction to her diary that she has no idea as to who her real parents may have been, but it is quiet evident, from a careful reading of the diary itself, that when she wrote the diary, whether at six years or 20, she had very decided views upon the subject.

The frequent use of entire lists of names of rivers, of birds, of flowers, etc., apparently dragged into the diary by the nape of the neck, has been a puzzle, but their purpose has been discovered and in these lists is to be found a vivid demonstration of the fantastic vagaries of the mind which conceived the wonderful diary of an understanding soul. Here is how Opal points the way plainly to the parentage which she wishes to have accepted, quoting from the second impression of the American edition of the diary:

Page 108:***I did sing to the riviere a song. I sang it Le chant de Seine (de Havre, et Essonne et Nonette et Roullon et Iron et Darnetal et Ourcq et Rille et Loing et Eure et Audelle et Nonette et Sare.)

The initial letters inside the parentheses spell HENRI D'ORLEANS.

Page 139: We saw six birds and I did sing to Brave Horatius the bird song of grandpere, of (Roitelet and Ortolan and Bruant and Etourneau and Rossignol and Tourterelle and Durbec and Orfraie and Roussette and Loriot and Nonette and Sarcelle and Draine and Epeiche and Cygne and Hirondelle and Aigle and Ramier and Tarin and Rousserolle and Emerillon and Sittelle.)

The initial letters of the nouns inside the parentheses spell ROBERT D'ORLNS DE CHARTRES.

Page 187: *** I will sing them lullaby songs and the bird and fleur chant de fete de grandpere, of (Niverolle and Ortolan and Verdier and Etourneau and Nonufar and Eclaire and Ulmaire and Fraxinelle.)

The initials spell NOVE NEUF.

Page 196: And I did sing her the song of fleurs: of tante, of (Myosotis, Aubepine, Romarin, Gentiane, Ulmaire, Eglantier, Rosagine, Iris, Tulipe, and Eclaire.)

The initials spell MARGUERITE.

Page 199: I did sing *** all of them songs of Nonette and Irouaddy and more songs Angel Father did teach me to sing of birds of oncle what did have going away, of (Roitelet, Ortolan, Bruant, Epervier, Rousserole, Tourterelle, Farlouse, Ramier, Aigle, Nonette, Chardonneret, Orfraie, Ibis, Rossignol, Loriot, Ortolan, Ibis, Sansonnet, Pinson, Hirondelle, Ibis, Lanier, Ibis, Pic, Pivoine, Epeiche, Faisan, Etourneau, Roitelet, Draine, Ibis, Nonette, Aigle, Niverolle, Durbec, Aigle, Roitelet, Ibis, Etourneau,. Draine, Ortolan, Roitelet, Loriot, Emerillon, Aigle, Niverolle, Sarcelle.)

The initials spell ROBERT FRANCOIR LOIS PHILIPPE FERDINAND ARIE D'ORLEANS.

Page 207: *** I did sing him a song of fleurs de tante, of (Myosotis et Anemone et Romarin et Iris et Eclaire.)

The initials spell MARIE.

Page 225: I did sing to it le chant de fleurs that Angel Father did teach me to sing of (Hyacinthe, Eclaire, Nenufar, Rose, Iris, et Dauphinelle et Oleandre et Romarin, Lis, Eglantier, Anemone, Narcisse et Souci.)

The initials spell HENRI D'ORLEANS.

Page 228: Today I did sing him un chant des fleurs, de fete, d'oncle, of (Souci et Eglantine et Pensee et Tulipe et Quintefeuille et Ulmaire et Apalachine et Tournesol et Romarin et Eclaire.)

The initials spell SEPT QUATRE.

Page 245: *** I did sing a song of fleurs of grandmere, of (Fraxinelle, Romarin, Anemone, Narcisse, Cornope, Oleandre, Iris, Souci, Eglantier, Marguerite, Aubepine, Renoncule, Immortelle, Eclaire, Anemone, Myosotis, Eglantier, Lys, Iris, Eclaire, Dauphinelle, Ornithogale, Romarin, Lys, Eglantier, Anemone, Narcisse, Souci.)

The initials spell FRANCOISE MARIE AMELIE D'ORLEANS.

In the diary itself only the first quotation above was initialed in capitals. That probably was thought to be key enough to start students of the diary on the search for the clues to follow. The parentheses used are mine.

In this key the writer plainly refers to Henri d'Orleans as her father and speaks of the other relatives in a manner to indicate that she thought herself his daughter. The paragraph made up of the bird songs of grandpere spells the name of the father of Henri d'Orleans. In the paragraph referring to the birthday of grandfather the initials spell "Nove neuf" (November ninth) and Henri's father was born Nov. 9, 1840. The Marguerite of the cipher (song of aunt) probably refers to Marguerite Louise Francoise Marie, sister of Henri. The Robert Francoir Lois Philippe Ferdinand Arie d'Orleans is something of a puzzle, but the names (changing "Francoir" to Francois" and "Arie" to "Marie") are common ones in the Bourbon family. The Marie may refer either to Henri's sister or to a sister-in-law, Mary Isabelle, wife of Henri's brother John. Sept Quatre (September fourth) (song of the flowers of the birthday of uncle) probably refers to the birthday of Henri's brother John, Duke of Guise, born Sept. 4, 1874. Francoise Marie Amelie d'Orleans (song of fleurs of grandmere) was Henri's mother.

If this were not enough to firmly fix the diarist's idea of parentage, rivers named in the diary plainly refer to spots where the Bourbons have or had their being, pencil sketches of buildings on the back of sheets of the diary and references repeated in the portions of the diary not yet printed plainly indicate that the author was more than familiar with the history of the Bourbon family and knew many incidents that could only be familiar to one of the family or to one who had searched many obscure places to find them.

Opal is again apparently at work preparing for publication those portions of the diary not yet printed, indicated by the fact that inquiries are arriving here for the verification of dates and incidents almost forgotten by the principal actors. I have not the least doubt that many cross references to the Bourbon family will be found worked into the diary in the same fantastic manner as those already referred to. From the information in my possession I firmly anticipate reference to almost forgotten incidents in the life of the Bourbons and even possibly to heirlooms handed down from generation to generation. Such heirlooms were referred to in conversations held in California but as far as I can learn they never were actually exhibited.

* * *

While Opal was in Boston preparing the diary for publication, I received from her a letter dated two years before in California in which she told me her entire foster parentage story as later published in Atlantic Monthly, with some elaborations, among them being a suggestion that she was being watched by those whose care it was to see that she did not learn her real parentage and that her foster parents were to be well paid for their care of her. For some reason the money never was received. The two little copybooks referred to in the diary as the inspiration of her life also were referred to in this letter.

The motive for this letter to me was stated to be to correct statements made when, while attending the university, she wrote for me the story of her life (published in The Cottage Grove Sentinel May 15, 1915) in which she wrote as a daughter of the Whiteleys. In some way, so the letter states, those responsible for keeping her real parentage a secret, learned that she was writing for me the history of her life. They went to her and made her eliminate the true story and put in its place the story as printed.

Also, according to this letter, she had in her possession at that time letters from close relatives in which the relationship was admitted.

This letter in which the foster parentage was explained was found unmailed in one of the boxes which contained the fragments of the diary. I have not the least doubt that this letter was written upon the date claimed for it and that it had actually reposed for two years with the fragments of the diary. It bore the three-cent stamp in use at that time but not in use at the time the letter actually reached me. Other letters bearing stamps of the same denomination also were found in the fragments of the diary, apparently written at a time when the author was examining the diary and accidentally enclosed with the fragments and forgotten.

This is conclusive proof that Opal had open before her during her residence in California the boxes which contained the diary. What was the purpose of the examination which so agitated her that she dropped into them various letters written to Oregon friends?

Was she weeping at the bier of the mutilated written record of her own early life, into which she had put her own soul, her own heart, almost her very body, or were the boxes at this time filled with the shreds of a rewritten, reconstructed diary? If a reconstructed diary why was it reduced to shreds which made its consideration as a literary effort almost an impossibility except through the odd chain of circumstances which brought about its publication in Atlantic? If a reconstructed diary, as I have not the least doubt it was, was it destroyed at a moment when the author's spiritual nature rebelled at the deception the diary proposed, or did she destroy it because she thought it an unworthy offering to the literary world, or was its destruction part of a clever scheme, which, as it happened, combined with an odd sequence of circumstances, added much to the plausibility of the diary's authenticity.

To add mystery to mystery, during the course of my research to prove the authenticity or lack of authenticity and the truth or lack of truth of the foster parent fantasy, I received through the mails from an unknown source three pictures, one labeled "Opal's real grandfather," another labeled "Opal's real father" and the third labeled "Opal's real uncle." Evidently the pictures had been taken as much as 40 years before. The style of clothing would indicate that much. I have been unable to trace the source of these mysterious pictures. They were mailed in an envelope of a Walla Walla, Wash., hotel but the envelope was postmarked from Portland. I have been unable to learn whether or not they resemble the Bourbons to whom Opal seems to claim relationship, but an expert at the University of Oregon, who had recently arrived there and knew nothing of the characters of the Opal Whiteley mystery, said that there could be no question that the picture of Opal and that of the alleged grandfather were of persons of the same family, possibly as close as father and daughter. He could find no resemblance to Opal in the picture of the alleged father or in that of the alleged uncle.

* * *

At one time during Opal's attendance at the University of Oregon, while on a lecture tour, she was introduced as an orphan working her way through college. F. S. Minshall, who introduced her thus at Philomath, says it was the general impression at the time that she was an orphan girl. This information never reached Cottage Grove until after the publication of the diary. She never has been an orphan (with the Whiteley parentage accepted) so that this circumstance would indicate that Opal, at that time, was developing the foster parent fantasy. Three residents here have told me recently that Opal had made such statements before leaving here. In her letter to me, however, in which she disclosed her foster parent fantasy, she said that this was the first time she had related it to anyone.

* * *

Opal claims in the introduction to her diary that her Angel Father died in the farlands before she was five years of age. Henri d'Orleans died Aug. 9, 1901, in Saigon, Cochin China, which coincides with Opal's claim, as she was born in 1897. Opal also claims that she was being taken to her father's parents and was in some way transferred to the Whiteleys. The parents of Henri d'Orleans were alive at that time. The father is now dead but the mother was living in 1919.

Opal intimates in her introduction to the diary that her mother died by drowning. I have been unable to find that Henri d'Orleans ever was married, which somewhat complicates the claim to such parentage. Otherwise the setting for the Bourbon parentage claim could hardly be better arranged.

* * *

The incidents of the diary, published and unpublished, lead straight to Henri d'Orleans as the father of Opal. I have presented, so far as I am permitted to do so, all the information in my possession pointing to such a parentage. I am ready to give my own conclusions as to Opal's parentage and expect to have within a few days information which I wish to have in my possession before my conclusions are made public.

* * *

In response to a query which I have received, and in order that others may not draw an erroneous conclusion, I wish to state that "information which I am not at liberty to divulge" (statement in story of week ago) is not withheld at the request of Atlantic Monthly or at the request of anyone who would be interested in proving the alleged Bourbon parentage.

Read the editorials. You may not agree with them but they are likely to make you think, and that's worth while. ***

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