

UP and DOWN the MOUNTAIN

By JOE KIEFER



What's a Flag? What does it stand for? Maybe it begins with the love of country and the land itself.

Is it the fog rolling in through the Golden Gate and among the towers of San Francisco? Is it the sun coming up behind Mt. Hood throwing a shining glory on our valley and above the cascades?

Is it the mighty Columbia, rolling past Portland on its way to the Pacific? Is it just a flag waving in the wind on top of the world's highest mountain, Mt. Everest, but there by a group of brave men? Did you ever take time to think what our flag stands for?

It is the high Sierras, the glowing majesty of Arizona and the colorful Grand Canyon.

It is the men at work. It is the storm-tossed fishermen coming into Portinectown and Astoria.

It is the farmer riding his great machines in the dust of harvest.

The dairy man going to the barn before sunrise, the line-man mending the broken wire, the miner drilling for the blast. It is the servants of fire in the smoky splendor of Pittsburg, the trucks rolling and rumbling through the night, the pilot in the clouds.

It is the clerk in the office, the housewife doing the dishes and sending the children off to school.

It is the teacher, doctor and parson tending and helping.

body and soul, for small reward. It is the small things remembered, the little corners of our land.

We love our country because there was a little tree on a hill, and grass there, and a sweet valley below. Because a bench or a farm or a lane or a house that might not seem very much to others was once, for each of us made magic.

Remembered Voices
It is the voices that are remembered only, no longer heard.

It is parents, friends, the lazy chat of street and store, and office. It is summer and winter rain and sun and storm. These are flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone, blood of our blood, a lasting part of what we are, each and all of us together.

It is stories told. It is the Pilgrims dying in their first dreadful winter. It is the minute man standing his ground at Concord Bridge and dying there.

It is the army in rags, sick freezing, starving at Valley Forge.

It is the wagons and men on foot going westward over the Cumberland Gap, floating down the great rivers. It is Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg and Lee riding home from Appomattox. It is the thousands rolling over the great plains to a new and better land.

It is corruption and disgrace answered always by men and women who would not let the flag lie in the dust, who have stood up in every generation to fight for the old ideals and the old rights, at risk of ruin or of life itself.

Man Without Fear
It is a great multitude of people, common and ordinary people, living in a land in which a man can stand straight without fear, without rancor. Our land is a continent, the people of every race. Our flag is a symbol of what humanity may aspire to as free men.

It is your flag and my flag. Let us dedicate and consecrate it anew, to defend it with life itself if need be, but above all in friendliness, in hope, in courage to live for.

Long may it wave over the homes of the free and the land of the brave.
Congratulations to Judy Ellen Devecka on the awarded scholarship to attend Oregon State U. By the way Judy Ellen, I never did get my apple pie.

Welcome to the clan, Sheldon Ellwood, with your column "The Book Stall". I know it will be very interesting reading. Having you and Bob Roat of Government Camp in the clan gives me a boost and sort of even up the odds against our petticoat writers, the loveable little rascals.

Tall Tales
I am going to keep my promise to Lige Coalman and write another yarn about "Pegley" Wild Bill Taylor.

Pegley tells about the mosquitoes down in the Salmon River meadows. One time a group of sheep herders camped in the meadows.

They were preparing their supper when a swarm of skeeters swooped down on them.

One skeeter flew off with a can of beans. A little while later darned if he didn't return and swipe the can opener. But gosh darn, Lige, those varmints sure can bite. They are so big and bad that they carry a brick under one wing to sharpen their bills on.

Which reminds me of the story the old Negro told me back in New Jersey. "It so intified in da evenin' dat ah don give a cuss foh de skeeters, an den in mornin de skeeters is so intified dey don give a cuss foh me."

So there, Lige, the teller of whoopers or tall stories has finally kept his promise to you. Hoping you and all my readers get a laugh out of it. I'm scraming.

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