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The Small Town Is Not Doomed

(By George B. Bowra, Publisher, San Juan Review, Aztec, New Mexico.)

We of the small town swallow twice, our hearts turn over a couple of times and we wonder what is becoming of our investments. Our minds drift to the story—"The Turtle"—we may be slow but we have not lost yet. We dismiss the thought as "bunk" and go on our way.

I am the exception to all rules, as long as there is anything to worry about I'll do my share of the worrying. Started this entertaining pastime several years ago and still at it. I picked out a number of small towns and centered my attention on watching the welfare of the chosen few. A few towns were in high gear and others appeared to be in reverse gear.

I have read that "Behind every business that keeps up with the times is an individual that keeps ahead of the times."

I applied this principle to the towns. If it was true of the individual, why would it not be true of the small town? My survey supplied me with a great deal of interest and kept my worrying cell working at full capacity.

The recent census enumeration of the picked towns did not in the least surprise me. I had watched the towns closely and had learned that the principle I was working on applied as much to small towns as to the individual.

Of the small towns under my observation only three have made any remarkable showing during the past six years. The three winning the medal are those that have kept ahead of the times.

One of the picked towns is just about to be patted in the face with a spade. Its citizens do not seem to worry over the future. They are contented with things as they are. The population has decreased more than half during the past ten years, according to government figures. The town is not modern, it is handicapped because of that. It has a tourist attraction but tourists do not linger long as they cannot be made comfortable while in town. Service at the stores is any thing but efficient. Stocks are incomplete—in fact the town is "doomed" because it does not keep up with the times.

Two hundred miles from the "doomed" neighbor is another town. It has no tourist attraction, has no railroad, no capital at hand to advance with, yet during five years it has more than doubled in population because it has kept up with the times. The citizens of this town are not contented with things as they are. They are continually shouting for better highways, better buildings, better schools, modern conveniences and the merchants are carrying larger stocks. They are not crying about chain stores or other competitors; they have united and are using cooperative buying and selling methods. Every citizen there is awake and fighting to keep ahead of the times.

Another town under my worrying survey has a tourist attraction one hundred miles away. The town advertises this fact and they reap a big dollar harvest annually from the tourist trade. In advertising the tourist "mecca" they bring forth the fact that visitors can get modern entertainment, stay at modern hotels and camp grounds, and buy supplies from large stocks. They extend a cordial invitation to tourists to visit the town. The invitation is accepted nine times out of ten.

Of course we all realize that tourists are not building small towns. They are seeing America First. It takes money to travel and many small towns with tourist attractions are

kept on the map with tourist trade. The foundation of a small town is built upon the number of people living there; how they make their living and what keeps the town going.

If it happens to be a small town in a farming community then its major revenue to the merchants must come from the farmers' trade. If the merchant is to receive the farmers' business he must compete with the larger towns and cities in variety of stock.

Price is not a big factor these days. If a farmer must go elsewhere for a certain article he will get other articles while buying the thing he needs and cannot get at home. This applies to every town and every customer, whether it is farmer, miner or manufacturer.

The buying public demands service and will shop where it can be received.

In the past few years I have asked hundreds of people why they did not trade at home. The answer has been unanimous: "I cannot get what I want."

It is trading away from home that is killing the small town.

Another serious situation I find in the small town is that loyalty is not practiced with the merchants. In the average town the hardware dealer does not buy his daily home needs from his grocer and dry goods neighbor. He buys them at wholesale or elsewhere and the grocer or dry goods dealer does the same thing when he wants hardware.

Walk down the street in any small town; drop in the stores and look over the stocks. It will be hard for you to recognize the hardware store from the drug store. The sign on the window may read: "Drug Store," and the first thing you notice upon entering may be a set of dishes, or perhaps a baby carriage. In the hardware store it may be a bar of soap. In the dry goods store the first article noticed may be an alarm clock.

Too many small town merchants are fighting foreign competition with jaw bone when competition at home is divided on every article carried in stock to where no merchants is making sales sufficient to keep the clerk busy four hours per day.

Loyalty begins at home. When the small town merchant carries a full stock in his particular line and forgets odds and ends in the other merchant's line, business will be better and stocks more complete.

In face of all this handicap I do not believe the modern small town is "doomed." People who have lived in a small town any length of time cannot forget the ease and freedom enjoyed during their life there. Memory is a great thing and absence makes the heart grow fonder. The call of the small town will be answered sooner or later.

In cities, to the small town person, there is a degree of lonesomeness that grows as the years go by. Whenever a small town citizen living in the city runs against a stumbling block he becomes discouraged and immediately looks back to his home town and chances are he will soon be drifting back. This is especially true of the older person who finds it hard to get a good job in the larger cities.

The small town has not lost its due respect for old age. It is the older person in the small town who holds the permanent jobs. In the city the young rule.

We are at a stopping point in an endless argument but investigation will show—it did show me—that a small town that keeps ahead of the times is not "doomed."

TURNER SOUTHERN PACIFIC TRAIN SERVICE
North Bound
No. 14, 4:36 A.M. (Stops when flagged.)
No. 32, 3:07 P.M. Regular stop.)
South Bound
No. 5, 11:10 A.M. (Stops when flagged to pick up passengers for points at which this train stops.)
No. 15, 9:23 P.M. (Stops on flag only, to pick up passengers for points south of Eugene via Cascade Line.)
No. 31, 8:45 P.M. (Regular stop.)
Following north bound trains stop to detain passengers coming from points south of Eugene: No. 16, due 5:36 A.M.; No. 6, due 6:06 P.M.
Office hours at Turner week days are 8 A.M. to 12 o'clock noon, and from 1:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.
Station is closed on Sunday and holidays. On these days passengers can pay fare and have baggage checked on trains.

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4:45 P.M.
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1:20 P.M.
5:10 P.M.
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7:25 A.M.
5:25 P.M.
Leave Salem for Turner
10:30 A.M.
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8:20 A.M.
1:30 P.M.
5:20 P.M.
Leave Turner for Mill City
5:15 P.M.
Jos. Hamman, Prop.


NOTICE OF FINAL SETTLEMENT
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned Lucy A. Mills and M. C. Brooks, executrix and executor of the estate of Narcissa J. Hinton, deceased, has filed their final account in the County Court of the State of Oregon for Marion County, and that Saturday, the 31st day of January, 1931, at 10 o'clock A. M. of said day at the court room of said court, has been fixed by said court as the time and place for hearing objections to said final account, and the settlement of said estate, and all persons interested in said estate may, at said time and place, appear and show cause, if any there be, why said account should not be allowed and approved, and said estate settled.
LUCY A. MILLS,
M. C. BROOKS,
Executrix and Executor of the Estate of Narcissa J. Hinton, Deceased.
WILLIAM H. TRINDLE,
Attorney for the Estate.
314 U. S. National Bank Bldg.
Salem, Oregon.
Date of first publication Jan. 1, 1931.
Date of final publication Jan. 29, 1931.

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