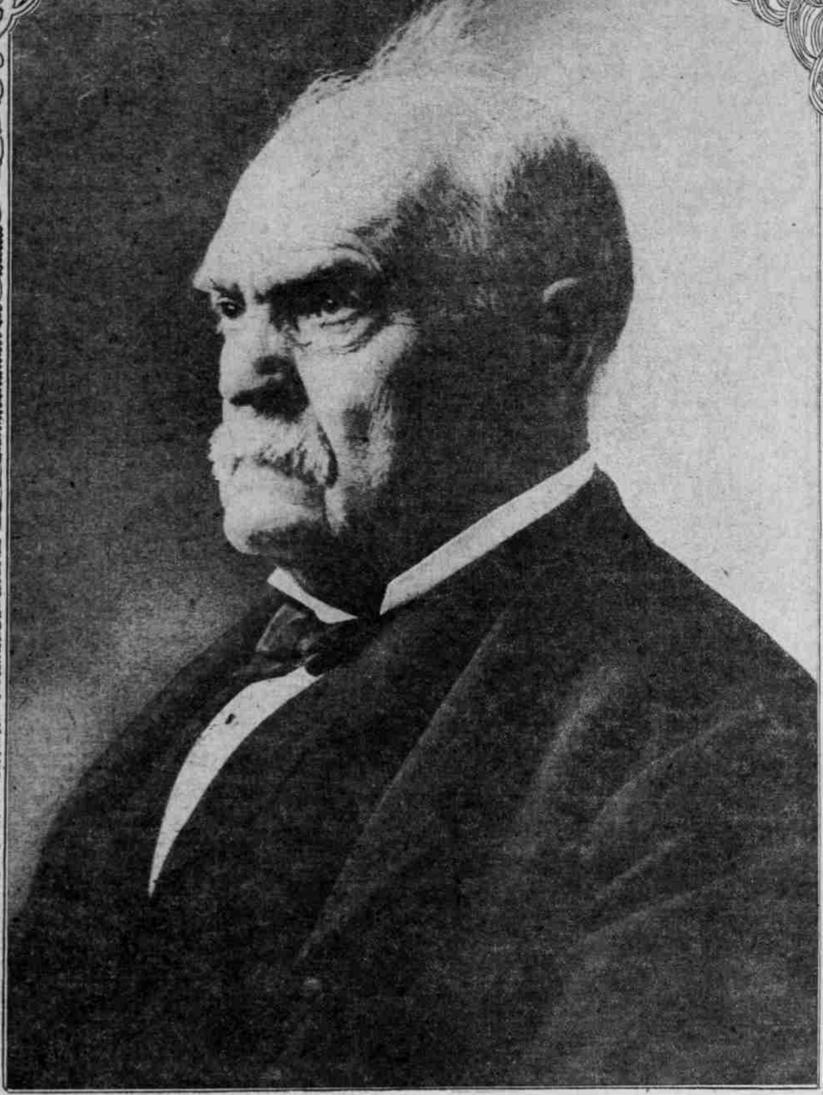


STORY OF THE DAILY OREGONIAN TOLD BY ITS FOUNDER

NEWSPAPER THAT HAS FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TODAY ENCOUNTERED AND OVERCAME COUNTLESS HARDSHIPS AND STUBBORN OPPOSITION



H. L. PITTOCK.



THE LATE H. W. SCOTT.

By H. L. PITTOCK.

It has been suggested to me that a personal narrative of the founding of The Oregonian and of my part therein is justified and even demanded on this the fiftieth anniversary of the entrance of the Oregonian into the daily field. I am induced, therefore, to relate some of my experiences. The story, it seems to me, to be complete should begin at a date when The Oregonian was a weekly newspaper. While I personally founded The Oregonian as a daily, it was already in existence as a weekly at the time I arrived in Portland.

The first idea I had of coming to Oregon was aroused by articles published in the newspapers of Pittsburg. In 1852, descriptive of the country and written by members of a missionary colony of United Presbyterians then established in Oregon. I had also read with interest letters written by Edward Jay Allen, who had come out here in 1852 and had rafted down the Snake River. My brother, Robert Pittock, and I decided to seek our fortunes in the West. I had no definite plans as to how my own fortune would be sought and, as I now remember, no thought of entering the newspaper business came into my head.

I had had some experience in the printing business in Pittsburg, but I would hardly be said to have worked at the printers' trade. My father was a printer and I picked up typesetting, as I was about the office a good deal. I could set type very well, but it was mainly "straight" setting of long primer. My first real work as the printers' trade was in the Pittsburg Post at setting up a part of President Polk's message to Congress. Now-a-days the President gives out his message in advance and it is all in type and ready to be released at the proper time. But in those days the message was sent out in printed form by means of a printer's press. I remember there was great competition among the newspapers to be first in the field with the message. I recall that we had a banquet and celebration after the work was done.

We left Pittsburg April 1, 1853, and by steamer to St. Louis, and then by another steamer as far as St. Joe. We left St. Joe May 4, of the same year, putting all our possessions upon the prairie schooners behind the trusty oxen. Our train was known as the Love & Stuart train. It consisted at first of five wagons, but after the start was made it was joined by others.

We had but little trouble with the Indians on our way out, although on the Platte River we encountered the Sioux and they took 'till in allow us to pass. We sent many travelers turning back who reported having had trouble with the Indians, but we kept on until we found ourselves approaching a great camp of Indians by the road. The toll demanded consisted of sugar, flour and other provisions, which we voluntarily gave them for the privilege of passing on. Not very far away was a Hudson's Bay post, so that we could have sought aid had it been necessary

and have avoided, perhaps, the payment of toll. But we gave of our provisions and came on.

Then, again, in the Snake River Valley we had rather a narrow escape. Some of our young men were foolish enough to start shooting at marks for anything the Indians would give them. While they were at this one Indian took a loaf of bread and our boys fell into a dispute with the redmen over it. The next morning when we left the Indians tried to cut off some of our men in the rear of the train. There was no shooting and we drove them off. Then they drove off some of our cattle. This was at Fort Boise, a military post at the mouth of the Boise River. We lost a good many cattle on account of the Indians. We killed a few buffalo on our way West; in fact, buffalo was the only fresh meat we had. There was a plenty of antelope, but they were very hard to kill.

At Boise we were obliged to ferry ourselves across the Snake River, and to swim our cattle. At Malheur we met a party from the Willamette Valley who tried to induce us to cross the mountains farther south. Our teams divided. Part went up the Malheur Valley and crossed the mountains into the Willamette Valley through the pass north of Klamath, where the railroad is now being built. My brother went with them, but I kept with the main party. The others lost their way in the mountains and were forced to abandon their outfits, but were finally rescued by people going east on the trail through Tugh Valley and via the road which now goes around by the base of Mount Hood to Oregon City.

We arrived in Oregon City about October 15, having had a continuous tramp from the first of May until that time. We ferried ourselves across the Willamette where the White House stood until recently, went over the hills to the edge of the county line, on what is now the Boone Ferry road, and those of the party who were old enough took up claims. I wasn't 21 years of age and I couldn't. I was the youngest lad in the party, however. One of the Stephenson boys was in the party, and was about my age.

I remained there at the claims for two or three weeks, helping to build a loghouse and to split rails. Then I went down to Oregon City to visit the woods to find a job. It was very hard because every Fall people went into town and there was not enough work for them all. The place was over-settled. Upon arriving at Oregon City it was natural that the first thing I should do would be to visit the only newspaper office, The Oregon Spectator, and try to find a position, but the quest was unsuccessful.

About the middle of November, 1853, I secured employment on The Oregonian. The paper was started by T. J. Dryer, December 4, 1850. I went down to Oregon City, country barefooted and without a cent, and, after looking around town for a situation, went into the Times office, then

the only other paper published here. It was located on the bank of the river at First and Stark streets. After I had made two or three efforts I went to work on The Oregonian for my board and room. I ate at Dryer's house, adjoining the office, and slept on a cot in the office between the type cases. I slept in the printing office for two or three years. That bed was all right. I never slept more comfortably in my life than I did then. It was better than sleeping on the ground as I had done when we came across the plains. The cot for the "printers' devil" was a part of the office equipment.

At that time only four were employed on the paper. They all boarded and roomed with Dryer. I was there as a boy and did a boy's work. I used to mail the papers and carried the mail to Oregon City to catch the boat which carried the mail weekly to all points on the river.

The circulation was then about 1500. William Davis Carter was at that time the foreman of The Oregonian.

He had been part owner of the Times with Russell D. Austin, and had sold out just before I went to work on The Oregonian. A new outfit had been purchased and the outgoing foreman took the old outfit to Olympia, where he started a paper known as the Olympian. We had in the office then an old Ramage press, with which it was necessary to take two impressions to get a sheet. It is now in the University of Washington as a curiosity.

Mr. Carter didn't stay on The Oregonian long. He went East and then came back and went to work on the Times again. None of the men who worked there then are now alive, although a son of Mr. Carter is now at work on The Oregonian, as is also a son of Mr. Austin.

Soon afterwards, I was made foreman and had charge of the paper.

In 1857 or 1858, E. T. Gunn, a young man working in the office, went into partnership with Dryer and myself. This arrangement lasted for nearly two years, but proved unsatisfactory.

We then went to work for wages again. Mr. Dryer was a politician and traveled about while we printed the paper. The great trouble was that he did not collect money, and we had nothing with which to work. So we gave it up.

In 1860 Dryer was nominated as a Presidential elector and I took the paper under contract and published it for what I could make out of it. When the Presidential canvass was over, Dryer and his opponent came to Portland. Both of them were soon sick abed from overwork. The Democratic elector (Delazon Smith) died, but Dryer recovered. While he was sick I took over the office and when he recovered he went to Washington and was appointed Commissioner to the Sandwich Islands. He had mortgaged the office to me for what he owed me and never returned to redeem the property, so it left me in possession of the paper.

In December, 1860, I went to California to purchase a press and other materials with which to publish a daily. The trip was made on the ship

Constitution, an old vessel which had been used as a relief ship by the Pacific Mail Company. She was pretty well dried out and leaked badly. We struck a storm going over the Columbia bar and were seven days in making the voyage to San Francisco. The rain came through the decks and the cabin was flooded. Fortunately, I had the middle berth, which was the only dry one in the cabin. The men above and below me were soaked. The storm was a terrible one. It was so bad that the folks at home gave us up for lost. The first fair weather we found on the voyage was off Point Reyes, near where the Chinese tramp steamer was struck by the Beaver a few weeks ago and lost.

I was seasick all the way down the coast, and, when the storm was over and I went on deck and saw the sun shining on those bare brown hills, it looked pretty good to me. At that time there were two other dailies in the field in Portland, and I believed it imperative to meet this competition. I intended to issue the first daily January 1, as I thought I could get back in time. But I was away a month and there was no way to get back, as there was no other steamer to travel on than the one on which we had come down. I don't remember the exact date when I reached Portland again, but it was in January. We brought the news of our safety with us. The storm had washed out the bridges and roads, so that there was no land transportation, causing the people at home to believe we had gone down at sea. I had been married in June and for 30 days my bride did not know whether I had been lost at sea or not.

For the time being my trip to San Francisco was unsuccessful. I could find nothing except a second-hand press which had been thrown aside after being used on the dailies there. At that time the San Francisco dailies were all printed in one pressroom, separate from the composing-rooms. Each paper took its forms to this pressroom and had them printed. I declined to take the old press and came back to Portland without one; but I left an order for a press which arrived later.

We started The Morning Oregonian on the old business. In the meantime, while I was gone the Times discovered I was planning to establish a daily and started in ahead of me, so I had three papers in the field to compete with. The Commercial Advertiser was printed by E. J. McCormick, then a bookseller. The News was printed daily and carried a weekly edition besides. Then the Times started a daily along with its weekly. So The Oregonian was the fourth daily in this little town of 3000 people.

By close work I drove out all competition. My policy was to get all the news I possibly could. From California I received the news overland. The news went as far as Yreka by telegraph, thence to Jacksonville by pony express and from there to Portland by stage. In the meantime, McCormick had

sold out and war times were coming on. Lincoln was inaugurated March 4, soon afterward. The Commercial Advertiser became a semi-Democratic secession paper. In that way it lost its hold in the community, which was in favor of the Union. The Times people didn't attend closely to business. One of them played the violin and the other the bass viol at social functions. I played neither the violin nor bass viol; but I kept at work.

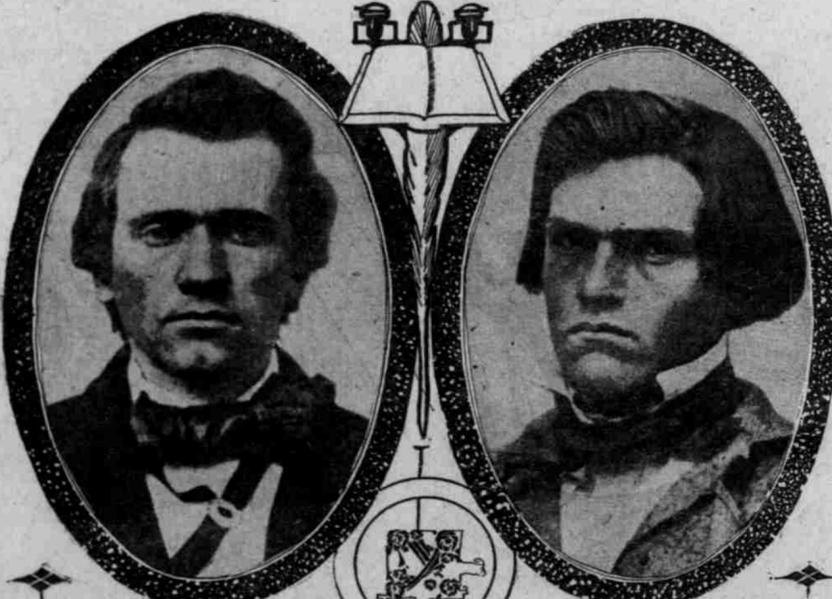
The press for which I had left an order in San Francisco came in 1863. A pressman named Louis F. Chemin came with it. We ran the new press by hand; it was of the flat bed cylinder type and is used in a printing office at Hillsboro now. Jimmie McCamant, the man who furnished the power, is now working at St. Vincent's Hospital. Chemin had been a Philadelphia fireman, and was a 90-day volunteer in the United States Army. After he had served his 90 days, he returned to Philadelphia and had a printing office of his own there. One day he went to New York with the firemen on some holiday aboard a steamer bound for Panama. Later he went to San Francisco, where he began to look for work and found that this press had been sent out to go to Portland. So he followed the press. His family came out and joined him afterward.

The first editor of the daily was Simon Francis, an old newspaperman. He had run the Springfield Journal, at Springfield, Ill. In 1862 Francis was appointed Major and Paymaster in the Army, and went over to Vancouver, Wash. Francis had conducted The Oregonian while I was away on the trip to San Francisco.

The other papers which were started in Portland didn't seem to see the necessity for getting the news, so they lost ground. After the Commercial Advertiser and the Times suspended publication a great many papers were started. I don't remember all of them. One of them was a Democratic paper called the Herald. It began with a great flourish and was patterned after the Chicago dailies. It happened that the Legislature was Democratic at that time, and it passed an act naming an official advertising paper in each county. The Herald was made the official paper in this county, so it took from me all the legal advertising. The publisher of the paper was also State Printer, and had all this backing to build him up. He spent \$75,000 on the paper and then weakened. Then it fell into the hands of Sylvester Penoyer, afterwards Governor of Oregon.

Next an association of printers started a Republican paper under Governor Gibbs and W. Lair Hill. That lasted for six or eight months. Then the hardest opposition I had was that of Ben Holladay, the railroad man. He came here to build the railroad to San Francisco. His line of steamers was then running between Portland and San Francisco. It was Holladay who had made his name

EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS OF FOUNDER AND OF LATE EDITOR OF THE MORNING OREGONIAN.



H. L. PITTOCK AS HE APPEARED JUST AS HE BEGAN TO START THE DAILY OREGONIAN

THE LATE H. W. SCOTT, EIGHT YEARS BEFORE HE BECAME EDITOR OF THE OREGONIAN