

H. W. SCOTT, THROUGHOUT CAREER, AMONG FOREMOST AMERICAN EDITORS

Eminent Journalist, Whose Death Occurred in 1910, Left Impress of Scholarship, Remarkable Mentality and Broad Vision on Editorial Page of The Oregonian, Which He Directed for 40 Years.

DURING practically all of his existence as a daily newspaper editor, the editorial page of The Oregonian has been the verbal imprint of the wisdom, foresight and literary attainments of one man—the late Harvey Whitefield Scott. Fashioned of that brawn and endurance that enabled the Western pioneers to subdue the wilderness and of that strong mentality that is never turned backward by any obstacles in the pursuit of knowledge, Mr. Scott brought to The Oregonian in 1855 a physique, a perseverance, an ambition, a grasp of daily problems and a literary style that have had few parallels in modern journalism. He schooled his subordinates along the same lines of endeavor, so that today the recognized editorial standard of The Oregonian is a lasting monument to him who passed away in Baltimore on the seventh day of last August.

Mr. Scott came to Oregon in 1852, then a stalwart boy of 14 years, driving an ox team for his father, John Tucker Scott, over the rough Oregon trail from far away Illinois. He reached Oregon with an education that would be considered meager for a boy of 14 years in the present day, but with a knowledge of hard work and an ability to accomplish it such as are found among few youths in these later times.

The boy's first work in Oregon was in aiding his father in clearing land in Yamhill County. The family remained there but one year, however, and then moved to what is now the State of Washington, settling near the present town of Shelton, on what is still called "Scott Prairie," about 20 miles northwest of Olympia. Four years were occupied in arduous toil, with intermittent attendance at the primitive schools of the day, and broken once by service with the white settlers in quelling the bloody Indian outbreak of 1855 and 1856.

From early boyhood Harvey Scott exhibited a thirst for education. In 1857, hearing of the pioneer school which then ranked as an academy but held the title of Pacific University, he determined to pursue his studies at Forest Grove. The means of communication between Puget Sound and the Columbia River at that period were over rough trails that led through dense forests and across the largest streams only where they could be forded. The boy, then 19 years of age,

made the journey overland on foot, swimming the streams that intervened and carrying his clothing and books on his back for nearly 300 miles. He had sufficient money only for a few months of schooling, and when his funds were gone was compelled to leave the university and go to work. In 1859 his father returned to Oregon and settled on a farm at the foot of Gales Peak, three miles west of Forest Grove. On this place there was a sawmill and the younger Scott worked there at times, and on other occasions helped clear the lands belonging to neighbors. His earnings became a fund to be used in further prosecution of his studies, which were pursued at both Forest Grove and Oregon City, but mainly at Pacific University at Forest Grove. Often he was the only student in his class at the pioneer university. He was finally graduated from the institution in 1863, becoming its first alumnus.

In addition to manual labor on the farm his early work included school teaching, and shortly after graduating he went to Idaho, remaining there a year during the gold mining excitement of the early '60s. Mr. Scott returned to Oregon in 1864 and took up the study of law in the office of Judge E. D. Shattuck in Portland, and later was admitted to the bar.

During one period The Oregonian, after it had been acquired by H. L. Pittock, was without an editor, and Mr. Pittock was in Salem filling the office of State Printer. Judge Shattuck occasionally contributed to the editorial columns of The Oregonian and under pressure of private business at one time recommended Mr. Scott for that work. The latter undertook the task of writing editorials for a few days or until Mr. Pittock could send a man from Salem to take editorial charge of the paper.

The temporary work of Mr. Scott impressed Mr. Pittock and the readers of The Oregonian favorably, and when, in 1865, Samuel A. Clarke retired as editor of The Oregonian, Mr. Scott was offered the permanent position. He gave up entering a legal career and accepted the offer.

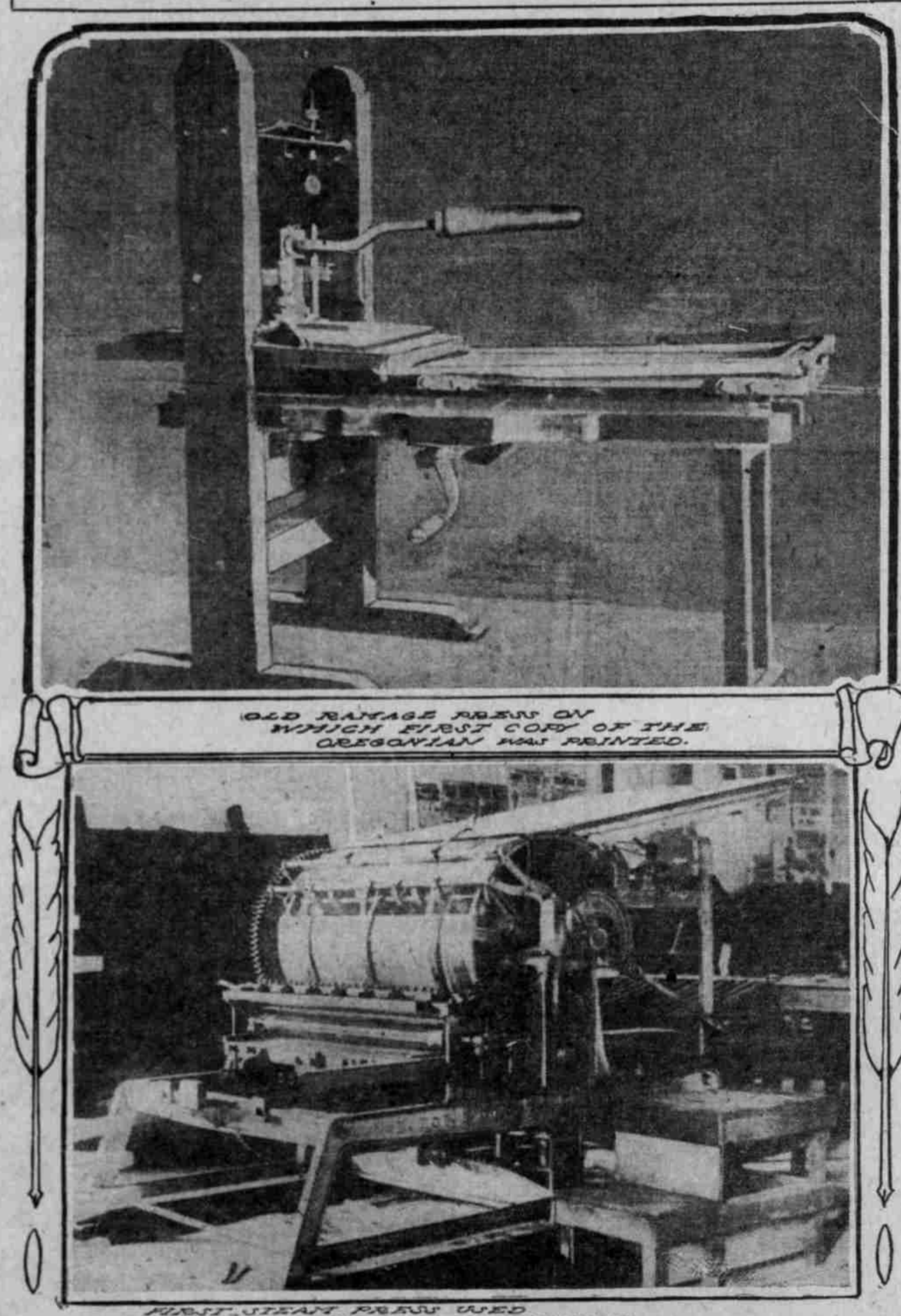
Mr. Scott was editor of The Oregonian from 1865 to 1872. Following the sale of a controlling interest in The Oregonian to H. W. Corbett, Mr. Scott severed his connection with the paper. He was appointed Collector of Customs for the Port of Portland, and at the

of the Portland Water Board that built the present water system, and of the State Text Book Commission; he was president of the board of trustees of the Pacific University at the time of his death. He assisted in drafting the present charter of the City of Portland; he aided in the reorganization of that great news-gathering medium, the Associated Press, and was one of the directors of the organization; he was offered by President Taft, but declined, the post of Ambassador to Mexico; he took a deep interest and a considerable part in politics but was not a seeker for office; he attended as delegate many Republican state conventions, and was a delegate to the Republican National conventions in 1876, 1880, 1884 and 1894.

Mr. Scott died at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Md., Sunday, August 7, 1910, at the age of 73 years, leaving a vacancy on The Oregonian that will probably never be filled in the complete sense of the word. Services in memory of his death were held at Pacific University, Forest Grove, September 15, 1910, presided over by his intimate associate, Mr. Fenton, a well-known character sketch of Mr. Scott was given in the course of an address by William D. Fenton. Mr. Fenton said in part:

"And what of this man? What were the strong lines upon which he built his character? Physically he was a man of splendid proportions, of a fine, strong, and courageous face, and massive head. He was diffident, somewhat blunt and direct in manner, and disinclined to mingle freely with his fellows. He had lived much of his life in the study and surrounded by his intense associates. His early life was passed in the fields, the forest, and the freedom of a sparsely settled country. His student life was singularly free from the diversions that attend modern university life. He had no opportunity for anything beyond his own studies, and his mental discipline. This, indeed, gave color and scheme to his whole career. Goethe has well said: 'Talents are best nurtured in solitude; character is best formed in the stormy billows of the world.' He was the most remarkable English scholar this state has produced. His knowledge of the English classics was absolute. He thought as Shakespeare and Milton wrote and every hedgerow of England was his playground. Nor did his knowledge of English literature limit his other tastes. He was a student of the principles of general justice and benevolence too far—farther than a cautious policy would warrant, and farther than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain and sorrow, in depression and distress, he will call to mind this accusation and be comforted." It has been said of him

FIRST PRESSES USED BY THE OREGONIAN STILL EXIST



ACOMPANYING this article are pictures of the first and third presses that were used in printing The Oregonian. The smaller machine was taken from New York State to San Francisco by Thomas J. Dryer. There, early in July, 1859, he met William W. Chapman and Stephen Coffin, who had come to California from Portland to arrange for the publication of a paper in this city. Mr. Dryer came to Portland and was the editor of The Oregonian, and the press, one of the old Ragage models, arrived here in November, 1859.

More than 30 years ago, namely December 4, 1881, the first issue of The Sunday Oregonian was published. It consisted of four pages. The issue of December 4, 1910, consisted of 82 pages. These figures tell part of the story of its growth. Like The Morning Oregonian, the Sunday paper was a development. It was conceived and nurtured before it was born as a seven-day paper had been voted. As in all other matters which contribute to the intrinsic value of a newspaper, the founder of this journal kept ahead of the procession. When publication of The Sunday Oregonian began Oregon had only 175,000 inhabitants, all told; Washington, Idaho and Montana had not been considered. Not a single train left Portland on Sunday in 1881, nor for more than a year thereafter. Steamboats to Astoria, to the Cascades, to Klamath in connection with the Northern Pacific, which operated a line to Tacoma, did not run on Sunday. There was no way for out-of-town subscribers to get their copies. In 1882, The Morning Oregonian received the Sunday issue on the day it was printed. These conditions did not deter the owners. They set out to make a paper go good in every way that a considerable number of people throughout Oregon and Washington would want it even when it was one day behind time. The Sunday Oregonian was an instantaneous success from the financial point of view. It was established without flourish or trumpet. Thirty years ago the art of publication as practiced in the 20th century was unknown. Enterprising newspapers just did things and trusted to the reading public to appreciate reward thereon. No canvassers were sent out to secure subscriptions nor solicitors for advertising. On Monday, November 28, 1881, six days in advance, the leading editorial announced the coming of The Sunday Oregonian. Among other statements the prospectus contained the following promise:

"The Sunday newspaper is a necessity in every considerable community. Such newspaper, properly conducted, fills a large and widening field. It not only supplies the news—the staple of the true newspaper, but touches or treats a great variety of matters for which large numbers are accustomed to look into a paper on the day. As a separate and independent paper The Sunday Oregonian will occupy a special domain of its own, and while it cannot yet be metrical, it will be equal to its opportunities and to the business which its field will afford."

Whether The Sunday Oregonian has in every way been equal to its opportunities let the Pacific Northwest people testify. In the first issue the only reference to itself was contained in this paragraph: "On the 4th of December, 1880, the first number of The Oregonian appeared. This day, December 4, 1881, just thirty-one years later, we begin publication of the paper every day in the year. The coincidence is accidental, and therefore perhaps the more worthy of notice."

well known by his connection with the pony express across the plains.

When Ben Holladay came to Portland he thought he should have a paper to support his project and was not satisfied with the papers here. So he concluded to have one of his own, with James O'Meara as the editor. O'Meara had published a weekly here years before, called The Standard. That was in the '50s. I was reluctant to go into a competition that would doubtless cost us all heavily, and I offered to edit the paper for \$25,000. He said he didn't want to interfere with me, but preferred to establish his own paper. So he issued his paper, putting out both a morning and evening edition and selling both for 25 cents a week. The greatest trouble was that the railroad men would go to merchants and tell them if they didn't advertise in the railroad paper they could not have the railroad's patronage.

The Oregonian made things a little harder for Holladay than he expected. After awhile he grew somewhat tired of his paper, as he had a very extravagant man. He and his men were all working by the piece and a printer would make \$100 a week. Everything was made "fat" or double leaded, and they were all working by the thousand ems. O'Meara drew his \$100 a week, and most of the other German money was running low, was getting short of funds. He called a meeting of the people on the Bulletin, Oregonian and Herald and we all went up to his house and had a conference.

O'Meara was a lousy fellow and he wanted in with us, and that we put through an agreement under which Holladay agreed to stop his morning paper, and print only the evening edition, leaving us in the morning field. That suited O'Meara, because he didn't want to work for us again, and was making money in about nine months after that I made \$4000 running The Oregonian. But the money I made I put right back into the paper, improving it.

About that time H. W. Corbett and John H. Mitchell were struggling for the senatorship. Mitchell had the benefit of Holladay's influence and money, and Corbett had money of his own. Corbett wasn't satisfied with The Oregonian, so he offered to buy the paper for \$100,000. He was offering to buy it, but he would start a paper of his own.

I couldn't make money with another paper in the field, so I sold out a three-fifths interest to Corbett on a valuation basis for the paper of \$40,000, retaining two-fifths interest at that time in the corporation was organized. The sale to Corbett caused the severing of H. W. Scott's connection with The Oregonian, and W. Lair Hill came in. Mr. Scott went over to the Bulletin, Holladay's paper.

The war became more furious than ever. Holladay got into the morning field, and we both issued on Sunday. It was hard work for me. But Holladay's money was getting shorter all the time. He had to call on politicians for money to keep up his paper. Then came hard times. The Bulletin finally became so hard up that it couldn't get the news as the owner couldn't pay for it. I had a difficult time keeping them from stealing my news. It was not easy to get out The Oregonian without giving the Bulletin boys a chance to get a copy. They would steal the Oregonian and then put all their men at work setting up the Bulletin from The Oregonian.

Before Holladay became so embarrassed, the three papers bought the news together. I made a mistake in not shutting them out in the first place. The result was that I was forced to pay to me and I was responsible for the whole bill. Tony Noltner, a Democratic politician for 40 years, who published a paper in Corvallis which was supported in war times by the Bulletin for two years, at my expense. The other newspapers were supposed to pay to me and I was responsible to the California State Telegraph Company. I finally secured exclusive telegraphic service, and then worked hard to keep the other away from it. The result of it was that I bought the Bulletin office at Sheriff's sale. H. W. Scott, in the meantime, had become Collector of Customs. After the expiration of his term of office Mr. Scott bought part of Mr. Corbett's interest in the paper. The mistake in interest in the paper was H. W. Scott, H. W. Corbett, W. Lair Hill, Barney Goldsmith, Dr. Wilson Bowley, Alanson Hinman, H. Y. Thompson and myself. The Bulletin went out of existence in 1875. Gradually Mr. Scott and I acquired all The Oregonian stock, and were sole owners at the time of his death. The association with Mr. Scott from 1877 to 1910 was close and uninterrupted, though I did not always find myself in full harmony with his attitude or policies on public questions.

In 1880 we had considerable opposition from the Northwest News. It was started by Eastern people. It was a very good paper. But after a year or two it failed. The next one was the Morning Sun.

In the early days when opposition came in it divided up the business. I had always aimed to build up the paper. Having no capital, I spent all the earnings in buying news and aiming to make The Oregonian the equal of any one of the California papers. So when an opposition paper came in, it took off all the profits. Yet that very thing killed the opposition, so to speak. The reason I could not make money was the reason they failed. One after another they went out of existence until the town grew large enough to support two papers.

In the '80s we were making money; in fact, we were doing so well that we thought we would put up a building of our own. We had always rented before that, and being near the water front, the floods bothered us. At one time the flood from the river was so bad that the boys in the press room had to wade about in the water. It kept rising until at last it struck the web of the paper. We printed enough copies for the city edition on the job press upstairs. I think that was in February, 1896. We didn't get the papers to the country on time that day.

After this experience we made up our minds we would have to move, which we did before the present Oregonian building was really finished. At first the composing-room as well as the pressroom was the cellar. In 1884 the biggest flood of all came, and to keep the water out of the new building we had to use pumps. The water backed in from the sewers, and except for the pumps, the water would have

been four feet deep on the cellar floor. It was so bad that we thought the flood of '76, which came up on Front street about four feet deep, would be the highest water mark.

It was fortunate for us that we left the water front when we did, as the flood of 1894 would have prevented us from issuing the paper at all. The water was ten feet deep on the floor of the building we had formerly occupied.

When we went into the new building, the Marquam block was just being started, and the Portland Hotel was under way. There was no business at all on Sixth street.

In the hard times of 1892 we suffered like everyone else. We were then putting up the present building, and like every other new building, it cost about twice as much as originally planned. To finish it we effected a loan with the Equitable Life for \$200,000. We paid the money before it became due, but after we recovered from the depression was still left. But the hardest time I ever had, not excepting the hard times of '92 and '93, was in the '70s, when Ben Holladay was after me.

In any newspaper experience the only personally disagreeable thing I ever had to meet was when I came near having to fight a duel. It was in early war times. General Alvord was at the time stationed at Vancouver, and Major Francis was commander of the Oregon troops. We had a meeting at Lieutenant W. T. Welker for disarmament from the Army for disability. We published the story the same day, and on the second day Welker walked into my office with Captain John C. Alinger, and they had a fight unless I publicly apologized within two or three days—I have forgotten which—he would call me out. I immediately wrote to General Alvord about it, and he sent me the official acquittal of Lieutenant Welker's discharge with them, and they were allowed to stay in the State of Washington, settling near the present town of Shelton, on what is still called "Scott Prairie," about 20 miles northwest of Olympia. Four years were occupied in arduous toil, with intermittent attendance at the primitive schools of the day, and broken once by service with the white settlers in quelling the bloody Indian outbreak of 1855 and 1856.

Another time I saw some of the boys at the time we sent Alfred Holman to Seattle, to write up the riots there. They thought so much of him, that from that experience he was made editor of the Post-Intelligencer. The election that year hinged on whether or not Governor Sawyer should have a Chinaman wash his hands.

In the Spring of 1893, when Coxey and his army were in the public eye, we were again threatened by a mob.

Three times we came near being burned out. In the big fire of 1857 we were on the river bank. The fire came down Washington street. Then at another time, when the Cosmopolitan Hotel, on the river front, across the street from us, caught fire, we very nearly burned out, too. Our building caught fire several times.

At another time sparks from the ferryboat set our office on fire. Sparks fell in cracks of the boards at the rear of the building one Sunday and burned the edges of the paper on which we were to print The Oregonian next morning. We sent out the paper with the edges of the paper on fire. When we moved our things out, and moved them back again after the fire. The hotel fire was in the '70s.

That was the hotel where B. G. Whitehouse had his stage office. It was called the Arrigon Hotel before that and was named for the proprietor. At one time I had the better of Arrigon. Cider was shipped in to him from the country in barrels. The similarity between his name and that of The Oregonian caused one barrel to be sent up to my house. Some of the country people couldn't spell my name, and well, so I supposed somebody had sent down a barrel of cider to me as a sample, and I used it. Arrigon traced it up and found it was sent to my house. But by that time I had treated all the boys at the office.

Dr. O. P. S. Plummer, who conducts a drugstore at Third and Jefferson streets, at one time manager of the California State Telegraph Company, and used to put in a bill to me every Saturday night for the telegraphic news of the week. If I didn't pay it I didn't get any more news that time I had to pay \$12.50 every week in telegraph bills. Sometimes it would run higher than that. At one time I came very near being shut off. Mr. Davidson, who was looking after the office while I was in Salem, refused to pay the bill, because he said it was too high. So they kept the bill to me with the assurance that the news would be promptly stopped if I did not pay.

Many people do not realize that it costs The Oregonian more for its telegraphic news than it does the Chicago dailies. The telegraph bills are drawn upon a scale according to the distance. Chicago is nearer the great news centers, hence has to pay less in telegraph bills.

When I took charge of The Oregonian I determined to enforce cash payments for subscriptions and of weekly payments to my printers, employees and other creditors. I have gone home many a Saturday night without a dollar in my pocket, but with the comforting feeling that the men in my office had been paid. In 1866 I cut off the non-paying subscribers, and while this very materially reduced the circulation, at that time it paid in the circulation. If The Oregonian has succeeded where others have failed, it seems to me that it is largely because it has been conducted on business principles, and not as a sort of public gratuity. It has from the first been the fundamental policy of The Oregonian to get the news at any cost and to print it fully, accurately and impartially. The Oregonian has been aided much by good fortune, but I think I may fairly say that it has always seen and met its opportunities.

Valuable Historical Data Preserved.
Through the Oregon Historical Society, which occupies rooms in the Portland City Hall, much is being done to collect and preserve information concerning Oregon history. This organization was formed on December 17, 1894, after several unsuccessful attempts to organize had been made. The first president was H. W. Scott, and other officers were: Vice-president, C. B. Bellinger; secretary, F. E. Young, and treasurer, L. B. Cox. The society now has a large and important collection of Oregon relics, including early newspapers and other publications.