

# "BOY, Paōō Father Time!"

## Hotels, Past and Present, and a Yarn of Pioneer Days



NOTED HOTEL OF AN EARLIER DAY, OPERATED BY "MUCKAMUCK" SMITH.



THOMAS GUINEAN, MGR. OF ST. CHARLES HOTEL WHEN IT WAS A GORGEOUS PLACE.

By Earl C. Brownlee

FIFTY years ago a rugged pioneer, a modish little straw hat on his curly head, tilted his chair against the front of Portland's leading hotel and scraped a willow stick in the dust at the feet of the horses that drew the hotel bus—an old Concord reclaimed from a thrifty overland stage line.

The pioneer was owner, manager, bell boy, chief porter and "Greeter" at the hotel. His guests were the empire builders whose sowing the state today is harvesting.

But the old hotel is gone. In its place are sundry cliffs of masonry with sundry thousands of rooms where the newcomer and tourist first pauses to assemble his impressions of the city to which he has been welcomed by one or more of the 110 dapper young men who, as trained hotel clerks and members of the Greeters of Oregon, preside behind marble topped hotel desks in luxurious plush chaired lobbies.

In the new generation the cliff is owned by a group of capitalists; the furnishings of the elaborate hostelry are owned by another, and still another man bears the title of manager, officiating over the conduct of the hotel by several hundred other men and women from his place at a fine mahogany desk in a private office, with private stenographers to barricade the doorways against interruption.

To the Greeter of 1920, whose business it is to "sell" to the newcomer Portland's climate, commerce and charm, "Muckamuck" Smith would be a story-book character. Yet "Muckamuck" was a very real person in Portland's hotel colony not many years ago, notorious for his meals—or the lack of them.

Could S. N. Arrigoni step from out the past to resume the place he held in the '60's as the operator of the finest hotel in the city, the present-day Greeter would stare in amazement. Yet Arrigoni was known to thousands who had visited pioneer Portland and who had enjoyed the hospitality and friendliness of the Pioneer or Arrigoni hotels.

It was at the Pioneer hotel, said to be the ancestor of Portland's first-class hotels, that Captain Staples and Ferd Patterson met one night in the early '60's.

Staples, a mariner, had tied his little steamer at Portland's dock and dropped all care as, with two companions, he strode up the plank to the city's foremost stopping place.

The trio had remained overlong at its cups in the Pioneer barroom

when Patterson, gambler, gentleman and Southern states patriot, came into the place for his evening "nip," just before retiring.

A misshaped joke formed in Staples' befuddled mind.

"Hurrah for Honest Abe!" he shouted toward Patterson, and by way of adding sting:

"Pooh, pooh for Jefferson Davis!"

Those two exclamations were costly. With Patterson, "than whom," an historian says, "no finer fellow ever lived," the name of "Jeff" Davis was sacred; traducing the name was a cardinal sin. Patterson, it is attested, "played the game straight"—a gambler because gambling was, in a measure, sanctioned by custom; a gentleman because he had been reared as such, and a Confederate patriot because the cause of the Southland was in his heart and blood.

The odious salutation from Staples struck home. Patterson backed to the doorway before indignation completely overwhelmed him. Then he shouted out the glory of the Southern Confederacy.

That was the battle signal. Staples and his mates reeled after Patterson—the latter mounting the stairs toward his room to escape impending trouble. But trouble was inevitable, spectators declare. Staples' companions deserted him for the shelter of the stair casing, but the captain, screaming hate and avowing an intention to "riddle the rebel hide" of Patterson with bullets, followed, brandishing his gun.

"Stand your ground!" Patterson cried, "I'll have no more of your insult."

Warned, Staples scorned. A shot rang out. The mariner was dead.

Young Portland, alarmed by the first shot, was flooding into the Pioneer lobby.

Friends hauled out their shooting irons and the walls of that hotel, to the day it was razed, carried the marks made by 20 crashing bullets fired in the fusillade that failed to impel Patterson, or the companions who had deserted Staples for the protection of the stair-casing.

Witnesses comprised nearly the entire hamlet. The testimony of some of them helped to free Patterson from a charge of murder on a plea of self-defense.

That is a thriller from the days of the gunmen. The thrills of the tapestried lobbies of the twentieth century hotel are not even akin to those of the days of the frontiersmen.

Pompous gentlemen in expensive tweeds and imported felts sit mildly by as the warp and woof weave to-

day's narrative, and discuss politely the contest of favorite sons. Twelve cylinder automobiles transport guests to and from the railway station that half a century ago was dream stuff in the minds of idealists imported overland on a lumbering old stage coach.

Highly polished hardwood floors cover the brilliantly lighted dancing space in the glittering hotel grill, in contrast to the fir board floor that saw the merry parties at which Graham, colored barber to the Brummels of Portland in the '60's, shouted his square dance calls in famous stentorian tone that echoes still in memory.

And the new order of things is largely in the keeping of the Greeters of Oregon, of whose 175 members 110 are employed in Portland hotels.

The Greeter is a gracious young man, versed in the ways of travelers, advised as to every possible point of interest, conversant with hotel conditions in all parts of the world and full of the knowledge of the mysteries of train schedules.

He is charged with the duty of being an asset to the community through his reception of the day's guests, to whom he can impart a good or evil impression of the city that oftentimes will overcome "all other praise or scorn and bring or send away a possible citizen."

There is no checkered vest behind Portland hotel desks to shield from soil a purple shirt and green necktie adorned with a blazing diamond horseshoe pin. That type in hotelmen disappeared forever before the Greeters organized an Oregon chapter in 1911. The new clerk is a man of splendid ideals, if he is worthy of his organization, mindful that his work is to welcome every guest and make his hotel a home for the traveler.

The Greeters in 1919 spent \$8000 on a convention at which they entertained fellow workers from all parts of the nation. They publish a local and a national magazine; they have homes and families away from their hotels—gardens, friends and all.

They are characterized by Mayor Baker as the greatest group asset the city has. They can make or break the city by their reception to guests and thus are a powerful factor in the city's upbuilding. They are organized among themselves for the inculcation of high standards of character and efficiency, and to establish the calling in which they are engaged on as high a plane as possible.

Which, for all its laudation, does not detract one whit from the hotelman of the years now gone.

Stephen Coffin, who had an im-

portant part in a score of the enterprises upon which Portland's present business structure is built, was one of the city's first hotelmen. It was Coffin, "township proprietor," lessee of the penitentiary, etc., who owned the Canton house, one of the earliest hotels, if not the first, in Portland. The Canton house was purchased from Coffin by S. N. Arrigoni and his happy Irish wife after they had made a perilous cross continental trip from New York.

The Canton house became the Pioneer hotel and assumed a great dignity through the efforts of the Arrigonis. Ransom Clark kept the Columbia hotel, another early day establishment. Clark was one of Fremont's men, who came to the new world in '43.

After a successful career in charge of the pioneer, the Arrigonis bought the Metropolis, a prominent competitor, and renamed it the "Arrigon." The Arrigon was headquarters for years of the overland line to California and its roof sheltered scores of prominent persons of that day.

It was from the balcony of the Arrigon that Schuyler Colfax, then speaker of the national house of representatives, reviewed the just ended Civil war, and where other members of the Colfax party spoke. Colfax and his friends, a trio of Eastern newspapermen, made their way by stage overland to California from St. Joseph, thence up the coast to Portland.

The Western hotel, later the Occidental, was owned and personally operated by "Muckamuck" Smith, a noted pioneer of '53, about whose hotel experiences many amusing stories are handed down.

Thomas Guinean, first manager of the then sumptuous St. Charles hotel, was one of the most widely known hotelmen on the coast and made his house equally famous.

But it was the Clarendon house that took all praise in its time. The Clarendon was by far the most gorgeous thing attempted up to that time and was, it has been said, "real fashionable." The dignitaries of that day invariably were guests at the Clarendon, which was operated by C. W. (Charlie) Knowles and Al Zieber. The house occupied a site at First and F streets at the terminus of the old one-horse street car system the city then boasted about.

The daddy of them 'all, though, was the Whatshire house, predecessor of the Pioneer and like es-



RAY W. CLARK, SECTY.; H. W. MACAFFEE, TREAS.; G. O. MADISON, PRESIDENT. PRESENT OFFICERS OF GREETERS OF OREGON.

tablissements. The Whatshire first housed many of the men and women who were coming here to make Oregon history. It was conducted by O'Conner and Keagan.

The Esmond hotel deserves its measure of fame in more recent times, for it entertained, long before its recent destruction, men and women whose names are written indelibly in the history of the world, the nation and the state.

The fact that S. N. Arrigoni was the pioneer of pioneer hotelmen

entitles him to a big place in the hotel history of the city. A native of Italy, wedded to a delightful Irish lass in Dublin, educated in college in his native land, Arrigoni spoke six languages fluently and was a mariner of much experience when he arrived in Portland with his wife and twin daughters. Mrs. Arrigoni, aged 91, lives in Portland now and retains much of the personality that endeared her to pioneer Portland.

Joseph Gaston, Portland historian, says of Arrigoni's hotels, the

Pioneer and the Arrigon: "These were the first hotels of any size in Portland."

Arrigoni was an empire builder, good Samaritan, banker through the faith of his friends and a leader in the community. He first gave free office room to the telegraph and stage coach companies that were invading the territory and was a good-roads enthusiast with much action to his credit. He went from Portland to Astoria, and there, for 11 years before his death, in 1876, operated hotels.



GROUP OF SPECIALISTS BEHIND DESK AT MODERN HOTEL MULTNOMAH.



THE ARRIGON A FAMOUS PIONEER STOPPING PLACE.