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Pep and Progress Pages

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THE WEBB & CLOUGH COMPANY OF UNDERTAKERS RUNS BACK FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF SALEM AND ITS VICINITY

Mr. Clough Was in the Undertaking Business Here When He Was His Own Manufacturer—Times Have Changed Greatly in That Time, and the Service Has Changed for the Better—An Up to Date Undertaking Establishment These Days Requires a Large Investment and Means a Considerable Force of People.

Through more than 40 years of uninterrupted service, though not always under its present exact title, the undertaking firm of Webb & Clough has been before the people of Salem as a palliator, a helper in the time of the last woes. It began back in the days when Oregon was largely a wilderness; before the day of good roads, of electricity, of gas engines, indeed almost back to the coming of the first locomotive to the then interminable woods. There have been many changes in personnel, but even more in the physical appearance of the state. The gloomy forest has been lightened by clearings where hope blooms perennially. What were then little clearings, have broadened into splendid, sunlit prairies where the darkness never dwells. The Oregon of "Thamtopsis" was funeral; it did not look towards the sunshine, political or physical or social of today.

There has been almost as great an advance towards the light of day in the methods of funeral service over the departed, in these 40 years since the Webb & Clough firm came into incipient being, as there has been in Oregon in churches, or schools, or farm production, or any department of society, politics or business. The worshippers of "The Days of Old" ought to know what those days really meant, before extolling them to the derogation of today.

Made to Order Then The first Clough establishment had to make its own coffins, in a corner of the shop set apart for wood-working. There were no commercial caskets to be had here. A shop might have on hand a few hardware fittings, and maybe a few yards of cloth; but never a metallic casket, never a fine broadcloth lined casket, never a dream of the unobtrusive service of today. The coming of the dread angel was like the tramp of a steel-shod horse clanging over the cobblestone pavement; it was like the surgery of the same day, that held its victim by main strength while it sawed off a leg, or an arm, or explored the body for an experimental treatment of wounds that it could not well diagnose, nor palliate by anaesthetics. Brutal in its uncovered efficiency, the undertaking and the doctoring of those days krated cruelly on the nerves of all who perforce had to call on these professions for aid.

Following a death, the order would come for a coffin, made to specifications. Mr. Clough says that many a time the order has come to him in those early days, with the length and breadth of the deceased cut on a notched stick; then he would have to make a coffin to the required size, hammer and saw making a dismal din through the whole neighborhood and advertising the passing of one more unfortunate. Then the gruesome black coffin, and with stock handles screwed to the sides, would be carried to the home, or the church, where the services would be held. A horse-drawn hearse would convey the remains to the cemetery, a group of stout men would lower the box into the grave, fortunate if there was no stumbling or slipping that let it crash to the bottom, and the whole service was cruelly crude—like rubbing salt in a wound already feverish and palpitating with pain.

Changes For The Better There is one change vastly more important than the mere palliation of outward conditions. That is, the change in the age of mortality. Such a priceless boon as science, and education, has conferred on mankind in lowering the death rate for children! The change is almost unbelievable; it is almost like the miracle of the birth of a whole new race. Formerly, epidemics of typhoid, of diphtheria, of scarlet fever, of meningitis, took children almost by the whole family; one, two, three, half a dozen from a single family, in as many days.

Lowest in United States But now, there are so few children's caskets in the Webb & Clough stock, as to be hardly findable. The last figures on the state death rate showed only 62 deaths per thousand of children under one year of age; the lowest infant mortality in the United States. So few baby deaths occur nowadays that they don't need to carry many baby coffins in stock—thank God!

There used to be a casket factory in Salem, that was finally moved to Portland. The caskets first shipped in came from California; a traveling man, John P. Finley, began to cover this territory in the late eighties, and this made unnecessary the little home casket shops. A factory was established in Portland in the early days, that lived a precarious existence for several years; finally being sold to the California company and known later as the Oregon Casket Co.

A funeral today, from a first class house like that of Webb & Clough, is so quietly conducted that it seems to run itself; like the air, the sunshine, the Truth. The awesome silence, that made every sound seem so abnormal and so cruel, in the old days, does not prevail. The crude fittings of the undertaking service of 40 years ago, have given way to a sympathy and a sure efficiency that was not even dreamed of in the olden times.

A Fine Chapel The Webb & Clough Chapel is a real jewel of decorative art. It is designed in a general color scheme of blue, yellow and gray, with draperies and fittings in perfect accord. There is a reading desk for the speaker; a choir loft, curtained off, for the singers; a curtained room for the family, with private entrance and exit; and ample ground-floor room for the transfer of the casket and for the passage of the cortege, direct to the street under a covered portico. The holding of funeral services from such a chapel, has almost entirely superseded the older practice of a home funeral, where the home was "wring with grief for days and days that could have been mercifully modified by taking the



C. B. Webb, Manager

services to a specially prepared chapel. There is a beautiful electric fountain playing in the chapel, that gives a striking relief in its breaking up of the spell of dead silence. The splash of the water, the glisten of the sparkling drops, the motion as the little streams play upward, have a really wonderful effect upon an audience. Nothing, perhaps, can take away the solemnity of the occasion; nothing should or would be done to make it a gala occasion. But to make the passing of life seem more like a triumphant entrance into the life beyond, seems altogether fitting—and this little fountain, far more than the beautiful flowers grouped around the casket itself, seems to force this effect. Some "savage" peoples have had some of the same thought—to send the departed on their way as to a triumphal journey, rather than as a severance from all that is worth while. It is worth while. It is a great spiritual advance, to restore some of this feeling.

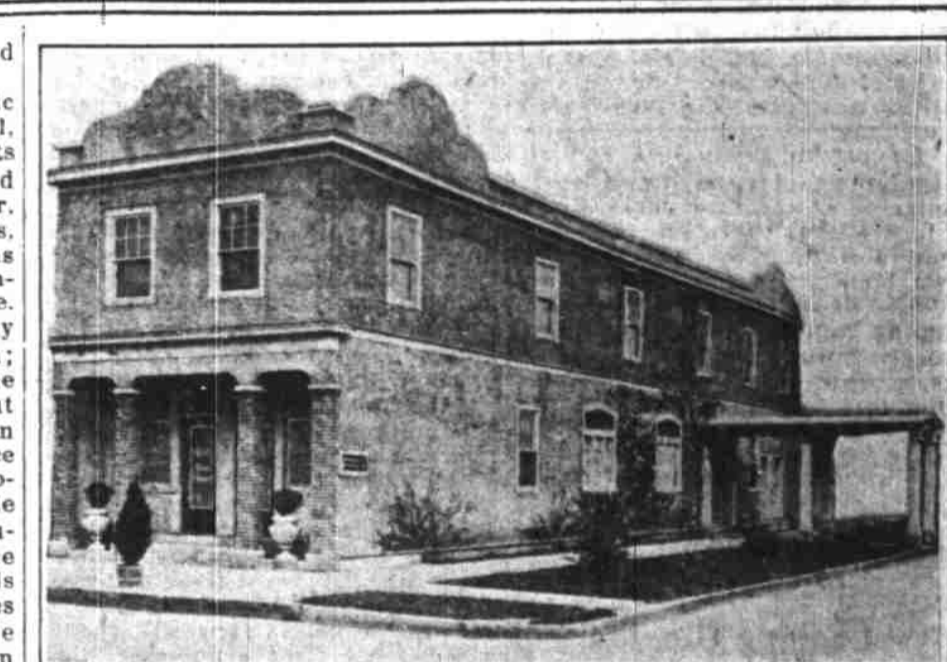
The Webb & Clough company keeps two auto hearses, both in grey, finely fitted and dignified in appearance. Their latest acquisition is from the Sayers & Scoville factory, at Cincinnati; there is only one other its equal on the Pacific coast. It is a real marvel of beautiful, massive wood carving, mahogany interior, gray Spanish leather upholstery, and cast aluminum disc wheels. They also have a pall bearers' car; all these cars are kept on their own premises, always ready for service.

More Room Needed When the company built its



Earl A. Paulsen

present commodious piece of business, at Court and High streets, it seemed adequate for all probable needs. Now, however, it is crowded for storage for all the stock of mortuary goods kept in stock. The upstairs is used for a display room, a morgue, and an attendant's room; the place is never closed, some one being always in attendance. Every department of the place is connected with the main telephone line, as well as each of the residences of Messrs. Webb, Clough and Paulsen. The stock of caskets, 100 caskets, in the display room and the store room upstairs, and the large quantities of silks, fabrics, embroideries, and the hundreds of boxes of metallic fittings fill the place to more than its originally rated capacity; some



Webb & Clough Building, Salem

extension of room is already planned for the future. The company carries such a stock as would warrant calling it a wholesale dealer, though it buys only for its own very large trade.

Carries Large Line The company carries a very extensive line of robes and suits, ranging up to the most elaborate creations of the finest materials. The demand for such habiliments is increasingly large; designed to be especially suitable for mortuary attire, they meet every need, and the company undertakes to do everything possible to be done, from the first call.

Wood Coming Back A rather curious reversion to the old-fashioned, is the coming back of many plain wood-finished instead of cloth-covered caskets. These come in a variety of beautiful woods. There are bizarre tastes to be catered to, even in the matter of funerals; sons of the least expected colors and designs are asked for. Almost the whole range of primary and a great many other shades, may be had in casket coverings, and some two-color designs are called for as well. If ever plain black or white were the customary habiliments of mourning, the present day demand goes far afield from that practice—as far as the exquisite chapel service exceeds the cramped service in the house, that used to be thought the proper place for a funeral to be held. The world is not more irreverent or careless of its lost loved ones; but the conventions of the two older mourning colors have been shattered and today carry little weight. Some wonderful bronze and metallic caskets are kept in stock, besides the polished wood and broadcloth creations.

The Personnel The officers of the Webb & Clough company are E. M. Webb, president; A. M. Clough, vice president; C. B. Webb, secretary, treasurer and manager. Mr. E. A. Paulsen is the capable assistant; Mrs. Julia Davis, the lady assistant; and Harold Lyman, night attendant.

A Large Investment The company carries a line of goods that would buy the stock for a strong community bank or a large manufacturing establishment; its investment runs up high into five figures. It rates as one of the largest, most capable mortuary institutions, in the state; almost certainly it is the second oldest under any part of the same management, only the Holman parlors of Portland antedating it.

How Methods Have Changed Illustrating how methods have

changed, one might compare the dignified, capable services rendered by such an establishment as the Webb & Clough company, with the window advertising carried many years ago by a Portland undertaker. He had several tiny coffins made, and dolls dressed as for burials to fit them; and the whole dreary pantomime of the last rites, displayed in his front street window, as a "fetching" advertisement. If he had advertised a raffle on embalming, or a guessing contest for the next free burial, it would have seemed hardly more grotesque or sinister. The Webb & Clough funeral records date back to 1888; no records are available prior to that time, though Mr. Clough was here for years before that date. He served as county coroner for more than 26 years. He is a member of the Artisans, the Odd Fellows and the Woodmen of the World lodges, and is also the oldest undertaker in Oregon, having been in the business more than 40 years.

Earl A. Paulsen enlisted in the United States navy hospital corps in April, 1917, and served for 11 months overseas; he was also for 10 months in charge of the naval morgue at Mare Island, Cal., a total service of 29 months. He had been with the Epperly Undertaking company of Tacoma, and with Chambers & company of Portland before coming here to Salem with the Webb & Clough company a year ago. He is a member of the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and also of Pacific No. 50, A. F. & A. M.

C. B. Webb purchased the business in 1913, known as Lehman & Clough, incorporating under the name of Lehman & Clough company, and later as Webb & Clough company. He has spent the greater part of his life in this line of work, having studied under his father at Medford, who began the undertaking profession in 1884. He was in business later in Washington, and was associated with Finley & Son of Portland shortly before coming to Salem. Since assuming ownership and management of the present establishment he has been made a member of the Rotary club, the Cherrians, the Commercial club, the B. P. O. E., the Illabea Country club and various other small clubs of this city. He has been a real Salem booster in every line, and was captain of a team in each of the five Lib.

(Continued on page 3)

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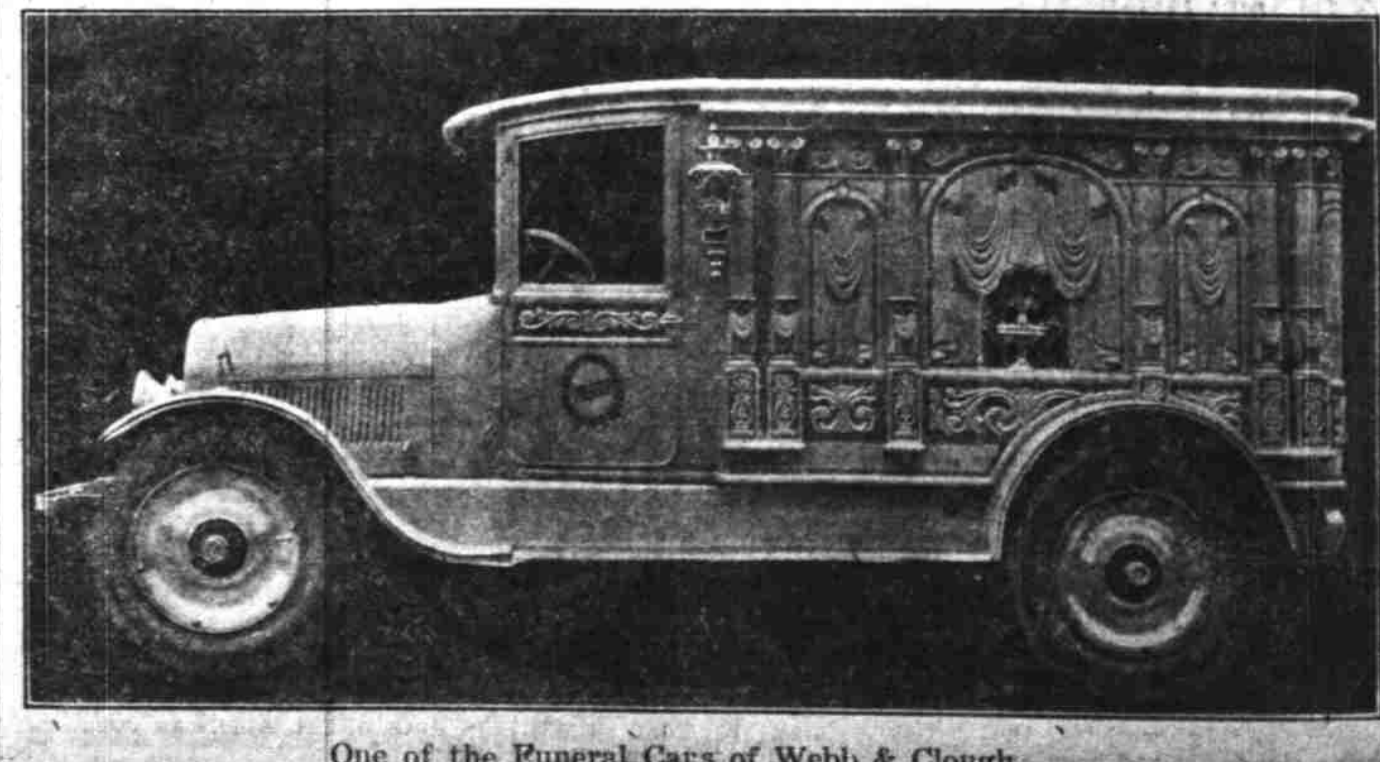
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