

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Awe"

From First Statesman, March 23, 1851

THE STATESMAN PUBLISHING CO.

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"On His Way"—Out

THE voters of Oklahoma have voted to be saved from their late savior. It was only four years ago that Alfalfa Bill Murray came forward as their savior. He was to redeem the distressed and downtrodden. He thumbed his way across the state and the tales of his hitch-hiking gained him favor. Oklahoma farmers were in dire circumstances as a result of drought and low prices; and they hailed Murray as a man to bring them out of their troubles.

Alfalfa Bill was colorful at the start of his term. He had a grand ball, or else he didn't have one, we have forgotten which it was; anyway it was something different, and launched his term on a sea of publicity. He made some eloquent gestures with Texas by calling out troops to patrol a bridgehead and prevent Texas doing something or other with a bridge across the Red river which divides the two states. That was something to make him appear a real hero. Then he called out the guard to shut down the oil wells until refiners paid a dollar a barrel. This made a monetary disturbance, but the East Texas pool gushed and gushed and oil sank to two-bits a barrel or was it 10c?

In the heyday of his fame Alfalfa Bill decided to run for president. He made a big start, and some state, North Dakota wasn't it?, voted for him or against him (we're writing this the day after the Fourth and our memory is a bit vague. All went well until he decided to invade Oregon and a big party was arranged for him here. Oregon was regarded as ripe for his conquest because it had just voted haywire in 1930 and was supposed to be inhabited by populists of the Arkansas river variety. But something happened and Alfalfa Bill faded out, went back home; his campaign collapsed; and nothing much has been heard from him since.

Now E. E. Marland has been nominated for governor and gives out this statement:

"My chief ambition was to stamp out Murrayism in Oklahoma. It is apparent that has been definitely done."

So does the meteor-like flash of Alfalfa Bill hit the ground with a dull thud. Oklahoma is pretty much the same as it was when he went into office. He joins the long line of popular vote-getters who fizzled when they got the job. The people once deluded now reject him and turn to an ex-oligarch who is coming back in the political world, serving a term now as congressman.

Murray is not without brains, and is said to have a fine library and to be an authority on constitutional law. Either he turned out or the people of his state have been won by another political siren.

Assessing the Blame

WELL, we see the Portland Journal has found the wicked genius of the longshoremen's strike: it is the San Francisco employers. We're glad that's all settled. The Journal had a difficult time sidestepping the issue of assessing any blame in the strike. It wrung its hands and shed tears over the naughtiness of men that they would engage in any contention here in the beautiful Willamette valley. It urged them to be good and settle their differences; but threw no light on the questions of responsibility or of obduracy.

Finally the Journal worked itself out of its dilemma by making the San Francisco employers the goat. That was a stroke of genius: its home town employers are innocent of guile, as are all Portland people in comparison with the rest of the world; and blaming the strike on the San Francisco employers will result in no loss of circulation!

The Journal conveniently forgets that the longshoremen rejected the settlement which their own leaders approved; the San Francisco longshoremen rejected the Portland plan settlement whose slight modifications were not unfavorable to the workers. It is the wicked employers, not in Portland or Seattle, but in San Francisco, who are responsible for prolonging the strike.

Maybe they are, but it took the Journal a long time to make the discovery. Joseph P. Ryan, president of ILA, gave up attempts at reconciliation in despair and went back east. He is now quoted as saying the strike will never be settled until "employers refuse to recognize Harry Bridges and his strike committee". This committee has been active on behalf of the unions in San Francisco. Ryan says the employers can't move without the approval of the Industrial association of San Francisco; "on the other hand the longshoremen have permitted communistic leadership in San Francisco to tie them up".

Apparently the strike has reached a point where peaceful settlement is impossible. But the commerce of the coast should no longer be paralyzed. If the government will not intervene to order resumption of work, the only thing left is to open the ports by throwing off the riotous resistance offered by the strikers.

Senator Borah made a scathing speech in which he attacked monopolies which now are encouraged under the suspension of the Sherman anti-trust law. Later he was informed his speech has been cut off the air by station WJAR, Providence, when he was criticizing some administration policy. He also said his speech of March 22 was shut off from the northwestern states. What is this but censorship? Radio stands in dread fear of the licensing power of the federal communications commission. The radio commission did not hesitate to use its power for suppression of stations and has made warnings to stations which are nothing but a threat against their freedom of utterance. Newspapers have fought any licensing provision; and the experience with respect to radio justifies their objection, if freedom of speech and press are to be preserved.

For the first time since the "Oregon system" went into effect voters will not be confronted with a list of measures a yard long when they go to vote in November. Most of the proposed initiative measures fell by the wayside, meeting a richly deserved fate. Those that did qualify deserve the axe too. Instead of abolishing the legislature we should improve it, and then rely on it as a law-making agency, using direct legislation only for matters of grave importance.

Bill Binzig gets in the papers for buying a big new Studebaker car at state expense. Suppose Bill wants to take a final fling, knowing he gets the gate along about the first of next January. But careful Secretary Stadelman checked him on the car deal.

Texas kids have a new grievance against the new deal. The red-net administration has bought \$45,000 worth of cod liver oil to feed them.

"Gosh! The Senator Has Been Places, Ain't He?"



Bits for Breakfast

By R. J. HENDRICKS

When Salem postoffice was small, in 1851-52:

(Continuing from yesterday.)
The foreman of the jury bringing in the verdict for Crump, as noted, was C. A. Reed. He was quite a figure in Salem's life of the old days.

He was something of an artist and dreamer, but he erected Reed's opera house, which is now Miller's store, corner Court and Liberty streets.

Years afterward, when E. P. McCormack owned that building, a concrete basement was put under it and many improvements were made, and others have since been added.

But the brick walls and much of the superstructure are the same as originally constructed by C. A. Reed; and they will probably be much out of style a hundred or a thousand years from this date.

All the original reports of Turner Crump, postmaster at Salem, are in the jacket. There are seven of them. They show that:

For the time beginning May 15 and ending June 30, 1851, the receipts of the Salem postoffice

were \$155.84, and the commissions of the postmaster on the business done amounted to \$61.91.

July 1 to Oct. 1, '51, receipts were \$225.78; commissions, \$100.36.

Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, '51, receipts, \$127.97; commissions, \$59.93. That was a small quarter's business. There must have been a depression.

Jan. 1 to April 1, 1852, receipts were \$151.70, but commissions were only \$74.60. Business had picked up a little, but the classes of it were not such as to make the postmaster's pay quite so hot.

April 1 to July 1, '52, receipts, \$215.39; commissions, \$101.62.

July 1 to Oct. 1, '52, receipts, \$202.23; commissions, \$91.50.

Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, '52, receipts, \$254.64; commissions, \$97.18.

That was pretty good, comparatively, for two months' business. The great 1852 covered wagon immigration had been coming in, and letter writing was on the up grade; the newly arrived people reporting to their old homes, and receiving letters at this end of their long journeys.

It appears from the report sheets in the jacket that one might then mail a letter with or

without paying postage—that is, the postage might be paid at either end—by the sender or receiver.

The business of being postmaster at Salem was growing more profitable, and men wanted the job, and, at every turn of the political wheel, a new postmaster came into the picture. Besides, men in business wanted the place, because the office brought customers, and there was often more profit coming that way than from the commissions—and, afterward, the salaries.

From the above figures, it will be noted that the commissions of Turner Crump, Salem postmaster, made up an even \$517, for the eighteen and a half months he had the office; and that the total receipts of the office for that period footed up \$1333.55; that is, if the writer is correct in his additions.

That seems small, compared to the present business of the Salem postoffice. Its receipts for the first quarter of 1934 made a total of \$61,634.02. That is getting up close to an annual business of \$250,000, and it will not be very many months until the receipts will be \$1000 a day, counting the five and a half day working week which prevails now; excluding the Saturday half holiday.

Instead of part time work for one man, as in 1851-2, the Salem postoffice now has a list of 75 people on its force, and it is growing as the city and surrounding country increase in population and business.

Where was the court held that tried the case of the United States vs. Turner Crump?

The first courts, provisional government and territorial, were held in the building of the Oregon Institute, that by change of name became a Willamette university. That building stood just north of where the Willamette gymnasium is now.

But Marion county erected the old court house, on the site of the present one, in 1851-2. So the trial was no doubt in the old court house, Oregon had counties then as now, extending back to the provisional government, and in the period of the territorial government—though the judges were in the pay of the U. S. government in territorial days.

The family of which J. Turner Crump was a member lived in a house only a short distance from the postoffice; in the same block. The house did not come up to the street. It stood on the southeast part of the land now occupied by the Ladd & Bush bank. As before related, the Cox & Crum store was on the northeast corner of Commercial and Ferry streets.

So, the Salem postmaster could be called to breakfast without the use of a speaking trumpet. The Crump family kept a boarding house in their home. The late J. A. Baker, long Salem's oldest citizen in point of continuous residence, boarded at the Crump house when he was a young man.

The Salem postmaster in the time under discussion got 40 per cent commission on letter postage, evidently on such postage paid by both senders and receivers of letters.

And he got 40 per cent of receipts for newspaper postage. Also two cents each for "free letters delivered out of this office."

It shows that he got \$57.88 commission on 144 D letters and 70 C letters.

And \$37.48 commission on 74 D newspapers and 92 C newspapers.

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"DEATH SONG" By Joan Clayton & Malcolm Logan

SYNOPSIS

Seifert Vail, former opera singer, is stabbed to death in Lakeside Cottage of exclusive Sherwood Forest Sanatorium. Vail brooded constantly over his wife's death. He continuously played the phonograph record "Waiting For You," his wedding theme sung in his own voice. This record "was playing at the time of his death. A maid discovered Vail's body when she went into his room to turn off the record. Willis Clendening, Milton Cross and James Ruxton, the millionaire, shared the cottage with Vail. Ruxton's favorite nephew and heir, Loren Ruxton, and Dr. John Calvert are rivals for the affections of Sue Faraday, a nurse. Mark Hillier, the playwright, crippled from arthritis and bored by the monotony of sanatorium life, welcomes a little excitement. He sends his secretary, Bob Fowler, to investigate the trouble at Lakeside Cottage. It is discovered that Vail's room has a private entrance which opens directly on the grounds. Dr. Calvert claims Vail had been dead an hour before the phonograph started playing. Sheriff Dave Finn arrives.

CHAPTER VIII

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few minutes later. I got in bed and went to sleep.

"Did you sleep all through rest period?"

Clendening nodded. "Yes, when I woke up the phonograph was playing."

"You didn't hear any suspicious noises?"

"I was asleep, I tell you," Clendening replied irritably.

The sheriff nodded and turned to Mr. Ruxton.

"How about you, Mr. Ruxton?"

"I heard nothing," he said. "What makes it more extraordinary is the fact that I was asleep. The heat kept me from sleeping. My room is on the other side of the cottage, but I am certain I would have heard any sounds of a struggle in Vail's room."

"Where's the maid?" the sheriff asked.

"In her room there," the doctor replied.

Finn took a step toward her door, but as he did one of his deputies came out of Vail's room. He carried a small can of oil in his hand and he looked excited.

"Vail must have oiled the door himself, chief," he said. "I found this in a corner beside his bureau."

The sheriff looked at the can in silence, turned it over in his huge hand. Then he shook his head.

"He certainly fixed things up for the murderer," he said. "What breaks that guy got! First of all, there's a private door so he can get into Vail's room without anybody seeing him, and then Vail unlocks the door and oils the hinges so he won't make any noise getting in. Looks to me like Vail was an accomplice."

"It wasn't a matter of luck that Vail's room had a private door, Mr. Finn," James Ruxton said gravely. The sheriff stared at him. "What do you mean, Mr. Ruxton?"

"Vail had occupied that room just one day," the rich man answered. "It was mine until yesterday, when we changed rooms."

The sheriff's eyes gleamed with interest. He asked quickly, "Whose idea was it to change rooms?"

"It was Vail's."

"When did he ask you to do it?"

"I believe it was on Tuesday afternoon."

"Did he tell you why he wanted your room?"

"No, not then."

"Didn't it strike you as a funny favor to ask?" Finn inquired.

"No," Ruxton answered. "I didn't think about the door at first. I always kept it bolted. I never used it."

"Is there any difference in the rooms, except for that door?"

"No," Ruxton answered. "I didn't think about the door at first. I always kept it bolted. I never used it."

"We were all silent, thinking of that sequence of events. On Wednesday Vail had moved into Ruxton's room. He had oiled the door and unlocked it. This afternoon some person had entered it—and killed him. In the silence Clendening spoke, quietly but very distinctly.

"Why did you finally decide to let Vail have your room, Mr. Ruxton?"

"Finally decided?" he asked.

"What do you mean?"

He started. Clendening, again in the spotlight and enjoying it, leaned forward and said, "I heard you and Vail talking about it after lunch on Tuesday. I was certain I heard you refuse."

"How did you happen to hear us?" Ruxton demanded. "We were talking in my bedroom."

Clendening reddened and then replied with too much dignity. "I was looking for a book in the bookcase. Your voices were rather loud."

Ruxton gave the other patient a long, cold stare, and then deliberately turned to look at the bookcase, in the front of the room. It did seem somewhat distant from

any of the bedrooms for purposes of eavesdropping. Finn was not interested in that aspect of the case. He said, "Did you turn him down when he asked you first, Mr. Ruxton?"

"Yes."

"What made you change your mind?"

Ruxton glanced at Clendening. "I would prefer to tell you privately."

Finn hesitated. It would have been a simple matter for him to grant the rich man's request. I am sure now that it would have been wiser had he done so. One of the complications of this most involved case was that many important pieces of information were known by far too many people.

But Finn refused. "I guess it's all right to say it here," he said, and consequently every one of us learned why Vail had changed his room. Ruxton shrugged and answered with contemptuous indifference.

"Very well, Mr. Finn. I declined at first to move because Vail gave me no good reason except that he was a selfish man. I am a selfish man, and I saw no reason to disturb myself for him. Then, on Tuesday evening, when Vail asked me a second time, he explained the situation to me, and I consented."

Finn drew in his breath sharply. While we all listened tensely he said, "Why did he want your room?"

Ruxton smiled a sort of cold smile. "Vail wanted privacy in a cottage where no one knows the meaning of the word. He was expecting a visitor, he told me, and was extremely anxious to receive his guest without having everyone in the cottage know it and discuss it."

"That letter!" Clendening exclaimed. "Vail got a letter from New York on Tuesday morning? I was here when the bell boy gave it to him."

"Mr. Clendening has made Vail's point clear," Ruxton said ironically. "It was just that sort of prying which Vail was anxious to avoid. I could quite understand that desire and sympathize with it."

Finn must have believed the end was in sight. His eyes were bright and he was agate. His voice was eager.

"Did he tell you who this visitor was?"

"He did not tell me," Ruxton said. "and I did not ask."

Finn swallowed. He looked a little sick.

"It seemed strange, yes," Ruxton replied composedly. "Now it seems much stranger."

"Is there any difference in the rooms, except for that door?"

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