Statesman Has 85th Birthday; Established March 28, 1851

Early History Was Colorful

Asahel Bush First Editor of Paper; Politics Is Original Purpose

The Oregon Statesman was established by Asahel Bush at Oregan City, March 28, 1851. It followed the state government to Salem in 1853 and to Corvallis in 1855. A short time later it returned to Salem and a permanent location.

Mr. Bush continued as editor of the paper until 1863, when the paper was sold to a group—J. W. P. Huntington, Ben Simpson, Rufus Mallory, Chester N. Terry and George H. Williams. Soon D. W. Craig, publisher of the Salem Argus, merged his property with that of the Statesman, took over the interests of others and became principal stockholders of the corporation.

The Statesman issued a small afternoon daily a few months in 1864. Of this daily, devoted largely to news of the civil war, brought in over the newly-constructed telegraph line from California, Rev. P. S. Knight, Congregational minister, was assistant editor.

Daily Since 1868

The Statesman, having absorbed—or been absorbed by—the Salem Unionist, became a morning daily in 1868. It was then owned by J. W. P. Huntington, superintendent of Indian affairs for Oregon. Huntington died in 1869, and the paper was sold to S. A. Clarke, who restored the Statesman name to the paper.

Clarke sold the paper in 1872 to C. P. Crandall. In 1874 the Statesman Printing and Publishing company was formed. The directors of this company were H. Carpenter, T. C. Shaw and L. S. Scott.

Capt. A. H. Waters and W. H. H. Waters, brothers, bought the property in 1875. They sold it in 1877 to W. H. Odell, who retained ownership seven years. During 18 months of this period Reuben P. Boise, jr. and Whitney L. Boise were editors and managers.

W. H. Byars, state printer, bought a half-interest in 1883, and in 1884 Mr. Odell sold his interest to R. J. Hendricks and George H. Saubert, from Roseburg. Byars, the state printer, sold his half-interest to D. W. Craig in 1884 and Craig sold it to Hendricks and Saubert several months later. R. J. Hendricks became editor and manager of the Statesman August 18, 1884, and continued in that capacity 44 years.

Noted Men Employed

The personnel of the Statesman from its beginning under the fiery editorship of Asahel Bush is an interesting one. We find such names on its payroll as Edgar B. Piper, known and celebrated in a later generation as editor of the Portland Oregonian; J. B. Horner, later of the State college at Corvallis, Oregons' highest authority on historical matters; John H. McNary, now United States district judge at Portland; T. T. Geer, ex-state governer; Fred Lockley, for years associate editor of the Portland Journal; and dozens of others.

The Statesman was among the earliest members of the Pacific Coast Associated Press. In 1889, according to R. L. Polk & Co.'s directory for that year, it was the only paper in Oregon, outside of Portland, receiving Associated Press service. The paper became a charter member of the Associated Press when all the units unthat head were consolidated.

Political Origin

The Statesman at the outset of its career was a child of political ambition. In 1851 Samuel R. Thurston, territorial representative of Oregon in congress, was to become a candidate for re-election, and he wanted a paper of his political faith to offset the influence of the Whigs, who had an organ. Such is the story.

The story is substantiated by the fact that in 1850 he bought a second-hand printing plant at Chicopee, Mass. This outfit, which included a Washington hand-press, was shipped to Oregon. Having the printing material, Mr. Thurston's next step was to find a suitable man to put the plan into operation.

He heard at Chicopee, where the Thurston family lived, of a young printer at Westfield, a town less than 15 miles distant from Chicopee. This young man's name was Asahel Bush, who was engaged in studying law and at the same time editing the Westfield Standard, a democratic newspaper. After some correspondence, as well as a trip to Washington, Mr. Bush consented to take over the Oregon publication. He was amply qualified, having been a printer from the age of 15.

Bush Lacked Funds

But he was lacking in the funds necessary to the venture. (Think of Mr. Bush lacking in funds!) Mr. Thurston, according to the commonly accepted story, supplied the deficiency, and Bush departed for Oregon shortly after the 4th of July in 1850. He made the journey by way of the isthmus, and in consequence had a considerable time to wait for the ship carrying the material to arrive.

The ship, by the way, was none other than the Columbia, of the same name at least of the famous vessel which had been the first to cross the bar at the mouth of the Columbia river and for which Captain Gray had named the stream.

The ship was weeks overdue in making this voyage around the horn. Before its arrival Bush had been appointed territorial printer and clerk of the lower house of the Oregon assembly. Also before its arrival a Whig newspaper had been started at Portland.

The vigor with which Bush got the democratic Statesman under way is readily pictured by those who knew him in the after years. Incidentally, it may be stated that Thurston died at sea off the coast of Mexico in 1851, 12 days after the first Statesman was issued. Notwithstanding the interest he had in the newspaper venture, he did not live to see a copy of the paper.

The mechanical plant of the Statesman of today is a far cry from that of the paper in the '50s and '60s. A Scott perfecting newspaper press, linotypes, everything to bring the equipment up to a high standard of efficiency.

Facsimile of Page One of First Issue of Oregon Statesman, March 28, 1851

The Oregon Statesman.

ASAHEL BUSH, Editor. OREGON CITY, O. T., FRIDAY MORNING, MARCH 28, 1851. Vol. 1. No. 1.

MISCELLANY.

Herewith is reproduction of the way The Oregon Statesman appeared to its first readers when it was published Friday morning, March 28, 1851, in Oregon City, then the territorial capital. The Statesman removed to Salem two years later, in 1855 following the capital to Corvallis, returning here in December, 1855.

Practice Teacher Lists Announced

RICKREALL, March 28.—Student teachers who are doing their practice work at Greenwood with Mrs. Alma D. Dempsey, critic, include the following: Upper grades — Edward Dunckle, Independence; Elinor Tilden, Portland; Berry Mauney, Springfield; Herbert Moreland, Monmouth; Ernest Lund, Boring; lower grades —Orva Aebi, Dallas; Marjorie Gable, Dundee; Isabel Kerr, Portland; Wanita Propst, Albany; Kathryn Washburn, Oregon City; Gwen Martin, Portland; Belle Hufford, Foster; Sigrun Grim-Smith, Mill City; Kathrine Sarkstad, North Bend; Alice M. Smith, Mill City; Kathrine Sarkki, Knappa; Mary Elizabeth Ward, Dallas; Betty Cameron, Portland; Louise Peters, Cornelius; De Nice Snowberger, Corvallis; Roy Nolen, Monmouth.

Kitchen Tragedy Topic Of 4-H Talk on Radio

WOODBURN, March 28—Miss Viola Mills, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mills, who has been active in club work as a student of Washington Junior high school, will present a reading, "4-H Club Kitchen Tragedy" over KOAC broadcasting station at Corvallis Monday evening, March 30, at 7:30 o'clock.

Miss Mills recently attended a 4-H club tryout in Salem which resulted in the trip to Corvallis.

Sellers Have Boy

MONMOUTH, March 28. — A son was born March 12 to Mr. and Mrs. B. L. Sellers of Banks. The child is their first son and has been named Larry James. The Sellers family formerly lived in Monmouth, where Sellers was a bookkeeper at the local bank.

Electric Company Improves Service

Oil-Immersed Switches in Power House, W. Salem Station Are New

Recently, to improve the reliability of electric service in Salem, the Portland General Electric company started the installation of two 57,000 volt oil immersed switches, one at its power house at Mill and Liberty streets and the other in its substation in West Salem at a cost of approximately $15,000, according to statement made by W. M. Hamilton, division manager.

To further insure the reliability of service, the management of the company has just approved the installation of three additional 57,000 volt 1250 KW transformers at their power house at Mill and Liberty streets.

These transformers will be installed in a "bank" of other transformers to increase the capacity of the "bank", thereby giving more adequate relay service which this bank of transformers furnishes when the big 12,500 KW transformer is "out of service" for inspection and repairs, or in case this big transformer should fail.

Cost Is Heavy

According to Mr. Hamilton, the cost for labor and materials required to install these additional transformers will be approximately $7500 which does not include the value of the transformers themselves, as the company had them on hand.

The company also installed a high tension oil switch a few months ago at a cost of about $7000, and with the completion of the installation of the two high tension switches and three transformers, above mentioned, the company will, within recent months, have made an expenditure totaling approximately $22,000 for high tension switches and $7500 for installing these transformers, or a total of approximately $30,000, this money being spent, accordi g to Mr. Hamilton, to increase the reliability of service in Salem, as above stated.

Normal School's Enrollment 525

MONMOUTH, March 28—Registration at Oregon Normal school has reached 525, which is a 10 per cent increase over the spring term of 1935. As registration will be open next week, it is believed more will enroll. This indicates a steady growth for the school in recent years. Each term has marked a gradual increase over the preceding one for some time.

Hostess to Stitchers

DALLAS, March 28—Mrs. R. R. Van Orsdel was hostess to her sewing club Wednesday afternoon. Bouquets of daffodils and forsythia presented a colorful note about the rooms.

Salem Capital Won by Fight

History of Battles Over Capital, Buildings Is Told by Statesman

The 85-year history of the Oregon Statesman has been closely enmeshed with early battles to make Salem the state's permanent capital and to obtain suitable capitol buildings, a glance through old records and through issues of this paper shows as this newspaper today enters the second day of its 86th year of publication.

The Statesman has chronicled affairs of official Oregon under both territorial and state governments and followed for its readers the construction and destruction by fire of two capitol buildings. This newspaper informed its patrons of plans to build the first capitol in 1853 as today it is keeping them abreast of plans for the new, third capitol building.

Capital Issue Arises

The issue of moving the capital seat from Oregon City to Salem loomed large as the first edition of The Statesman came off the press on March 28, 1851. The territorial legislature had voted January 13, 1851, to remove the capital to Salem but Judges Strong and Nelson of the supreme court and Governor Gaines had declared this act unconstitutional.

The eighth month of The Statesman's publication, December, 1851, however, found the legislature meeting in Salem in rooms furnished by what was then the Oregon institute, now Willamette university. The United States congress at the urging of General Lane, territorial delegate, ratified this action in May, 1852, and Oregon's executive offices followed the legislative bodies to Salem.

First Building Begun

The territorial act grant of $5,000 and a $20,000 congressional appropriation enabled Oregon to begin building its first capitol here in 1853 following authorization by the legislature early in that year. The legislative session of 1854 met in this structure, not then completed. An additional congressional appropriation of $27,000 made possible carrying the new building, of stone foundation and timber framework, nearer to completion.

While construction of this building was still under way, Representative J. C. Avery, Benton county, influenced the legislature to designate Corvallis as the capital city. Despite a ruling by the secretary of the federal treasury invalidating this act, the legislators met in Corvallis in December, 1855. Governor Curry and Secretary Harding, however, remained in Salem.

At this session efforts of R. P. Boise, sr., and F. A. Waymire, Polk county legislators, and others, to keep the capital in Corvallis, and a resolution by L. F. Grover, Marion county, was adopted returning the seat of government to Salem, where it has since continued.

Fire Destroys Capitol

The legislature had no more than again taken up its quarters in the uncompleted capitol when the building was destroyed by fire December 28, 1855. Suspicion of incendiarism was directed at Corvallis backers. An election in January, 1856, favored Eugene City for the capital but territorial officers ignored the ballot result.

After Oregon entered statehood in 1859, an election to designate the capital city was held in 1862 as provided by the new constitution but no city received a majority. In the second such election in 1864, Salem won by a majority of 79 over other cities, of which Eugene and Portland were leaders.

Lacking a capitol building, state offices were housed in the brick building at the southwest corner of Commercial and Ferry streets, now occupied by The Statesman and the W.C.T.U., and the legislature met in the brick building at the northwest corner of this intersection.

Second Structure Erected

The legislature of 1872 appropriated $100,000 for a new capitol, the beginning of the structure which was razed by fire April 25, 1935, and ground was broken in May, 1873. This structure, partially completed, was accepted August 8, 1876 and became the meeting place of legislatures until last spring's catastrophe occurred.

Before The Statesman attains its 90th year, a $2,500,000 capitol will have risen, returning the legislature again to a building devoted exclusively to state government.

Introduction to Empire Builders Acquired Through The Statesman

History This Newspaper Saw and Characters That Made It, Combine to Produce Unique Distinction

By D. H. TALMADGE

TWENTY-SIX years ago, come this summer, if summer comes this summer, which it doubtless will, despite the dubious noises being made by certain individuals who have a touch of the flu, I saw a copy of The Oregon Statesman for the first time. The paper was at that time 60 years old. Not the copy that I saw, understand, but the institution itself.

Perhaps it merely happened to be my way of doing things. Perhaps there was another reason for it. Possibly somewhat of each. At any rate, I find in looking back that I depended a good deal on The Statesman in the furtherance of a wish to learn more of the valley and the valley people.

I told myself that I was not interested in The Statesman or in any other newspaper. This resulted from a feeling of guilt. A physician in the middle west had ordered me to cut out newspaper work. When I arrived in this valley I was still conscientiously observing this order. Which, so far as I was able to see, had but one effect—my appetite improved. In other words, I became hungrier oftener and more.

The Statesman and other newspapers were something to read, nothing more. So far as I was able to remember, there was nothing in the physician's orders to prevent my reading newspapers, hence I read them recklessly. And gradually I became acquainted with The Statesman from the date of its birth in 1851. It introduced me to the men and women who were the strength of the Oregon empire in its beginnings. They did not know that I had been introduced to them. They went on in a leisurely way attending to their other worries. But little by little I found out who they were.

Unobtrusive Viewer

I was a nobody, someone who had happened along, that was all. I tried to hold this character. I prided myself on knowing my New England sufficiently to recognize certain characteristics when I saw them, and I tried to behave myself in accordance with the code.

The result was nothing to rave over. But I had a good time. And through those memories The Oregon Statesman, past and present, was seldom absent. It was not so with other newspapers, although I cherished not the slightest of prejudice against any of them. They did not seem, somehow, to go back into the heart of the valley life. Even The Oregonian, of which I had heard on the east coast as being a model editorially, typographically and otherwise, which reputation by the way, has largely faded out, did not seem quite so close to the heart of things as The Statesman seemed, unless it may have been in Multnomah county.

Thus one day into a small printing shop in Commercial street, which shop I had acquired with the laudable view of making a living, which view was a somewhat mistake none, came unexpectedly an old man. This was in 1910 or '11, and the old man was Asahel Bush, founder of the great banking house of Ladd & Bush, by which name it is still known, although the Ladd interests were long since withdrawn. Mr. Bush owned the building in which I and others were located, and was just looking around. By fits and starts he talked newspaper and printing equipment that day, and mentioned, with some pride, I thought, that he had once been editor of The Statesman. This was but one of a number of visits. He was an old man, but he still flashed fire. Had he set his heart to it, he would have been a great newspaper man.

They Helped Make It

Contacts came later with others of that generation of hardy spirits which had laid the foundations upon which was to be reared the future of the Willamette valley and Oregon. I came to know, among the rest, Peter D'Arcy, who never wearied of relating incidents of his career as an employe of The Statesman. A gentleman was Mr. D'Arcy of strong character, of strong likes and dislikes, of veneration for the forefathers of the United States and the pioneers of Oregon. And I came also to know Dr. Mark Skiff, from whom I learned that he was one of the early carriers of The Statesman, and that this man and others amongst the earlier settlers in Salem had in one capacity or another been connected with The Statesman. I am sorry, but I cannot recall the names.

I arrived in Salem when the first generation was almost gone. The town as I have known it is peopled with descendants of the pioneers and with newcomers, largely from the middle west. I never saw Judge Reuben Boise, although I knew the second Reuben Boise, and he was a man whom it was a privilege to know. Mr. Boise had a way, when, on occasion, I pestered him with questions pertaining to pioneer days in this region, of referring me to the files of The Statesman, although when he chanced to have the data which I wished to obtain he gave it pleasantly and patiently.

It may be, I suppose, because I am beginning to grow old myself that I miss these old-timers. As a case in point, I seldom pass the old law chambers in the D'Arcy building that I do not have just a bit of a lonely feeling, and I cannot but wonder — well, the judge had definite notions about things, past, present and future, and one does not forget.

Survival Struggle

The survival of a newspaper through almost a century of ups and downs, more particularly when it is a daily newspaper in a field not fully adequate to the requirements necessary to the welfare of a daily, is a pretty marvelous thing. Not that the field was inadequate after the town began to take on the vigor that was its heritage.

When I came to Salem a new day was beginning. The town's two daily papers were getting along. But—and this R. J. Hendricks of the old Statesman did not tell me—there was a struggle going on to recover from days and months and years of keeping up an institution on resources barely equal to the requirements. No exceptional perceptives were necessary to understand this. There is no occasion to go into a discussion of the matter. Mr. Hendricks brought the paper through, and that is all that is necessary to state in reference to that period in the paper's life.

It is fair to say, I think, that The Statesman at 85 is younger than it has ever been before. Salem is becoming a city. Furthermore, it is becoming a city of progressive spirit. The valley is becoming peopled with the sort of citizenship that makes for prosperity. I reckon there is little rea-

(Continued on page 3)

NINE YEARS » »
of Successful Business and Friendly Relations in Salem
A Growth from 6 Employes in 1927 to 52 in 1936
With Pleasure We Extend Our Greetings to the Statesman on its 85th Birthday
Douglas McKay Chevrolet Co.
430 N. Commercial Street

Through 45 Years
Salem's Leading Book Store
17 Years Under the Present Management
We extend our greetings to The Statesman on its 85th birthday.

A. A. GUEFFROY
Commercial Book Store
A. A. GUEFFROY
163 N. Commercial Street

O. E. PRICE
and
The Price Shoe Co.
Extend Best Wishes to The Statesman on Its 85th Birthday
During our 29 years in business in Salem we have enjoyed friendly relations with the Statesman and our business has grown with theirs.
Today we are proud of our store, which we believe to be the finest and most complete ladies' store in this district.
The Price Shoe Co. 135 Liberty St. Salem, Oregon