

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Awe"
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"... Doing, I Hope, to Aid Us"

Self-examination is not a peculiarly American trait, which is perhaps one reason for American success in nation-building and the mass production of gadgets, from motor cars to can openers. A naturally introspective people spends a good deal of its time in that occupation, with the result that it often hasn't enough to devote to more material things. Look at the Russians, for instance, who like to talk about themselves and who in consequence live more or less in a barnyard under the rule of a second rate safe-cracker.

At the same time even an American finds an occasional session alone with himself and his creative soul, his psyche, his "little voice" or whatever he wants to call it, of considerable value. One such session is the present, when the country has been discussing the pros and cons of aid to Britain for many months without particularly devastating results.

Lord Halifax, the new ambassador from Great Britain, pointed that out in the somewhat plaintive remark last Saturday that he was looking forward to seeing the different parts of the United States, and to seeing "what you are doing and will be doing, I hope, to aid us." It probably need not be said that, after all these months of talking, the definitive phrase in that sentence is still "I hope."

In other words, after all these months of free discussion, when the national administration has placed itself squarely behind a policy of total national defense and "all aid to Britain short of war," when all state and local agencies have followed suit, and when opposition to such assistance to the British government has been a ready voice crying in a synthetic wilderness, the British ambassador still finds it necessary to say "I hope" when he speaks of American aid to his beleaguered fortress homeland.

To a people who daily sweep broken glass out of their doorways, who hear more often of bomb craters in Aunt Minnie's garden than of the tallman roses which formerly burgeoned there, whose lives are bound up in a steady, gritty, numbing defense against a despotic aggressor, the amount of aid which Britain can hope to get from the United States during the expected spring crisis is hardly more than pathetic. When it is buttressed with references to the prodigious industrial strength of the new world and similar gaudy wheezes, it must be heart-rending; and when it is obscured by talk and debate which has long since explored all relevant arguments both for and against, it is agonizing.

Americans know now that their defense program is behind schedule at a time when they need it most, for the protection of their British defenders as well as of themselves. It is time that some fruitless chatter be sacrificed for a measure of introspection into America's war effort: whether it shall be continued talk, or whether it shall actually be the ships which are now on blueprints and the guns which are still ore. The bus is at the door now, and so far as making it is concerned, we hope so too, Mr. Ambassador.

Opera in Salem

Who has not thrilled to the majesty of the *Rheingold* in the Ring operas, has not felt the tragic strain of Tristan's death, has not risen exultantly with *O Carina Nome*? Yes, and who has not been bored silly with fat tenors, fatter sopranos, songs sung in other peoples' languages, mostly gibberish, and the prospect of four dismal hours of sitting while a vapid hero wins an egg-brained heroine from the clutches of a villain who could at least appreciate her? Who, in brief, has experienced The Opera?

There is a great deal of interest attaching to the coming of opera to the Salem high school auditorium on February 18 as announced last weekend by the Salem opera guild. It has been twenty years, man and boy, since the curtain was rung down on the last opera given in these parts, and it augurs well for the future of the city—and not necessarily the "cultural" future, either, in the usual sense of that hackneyed term—that a grand opera company of some pretension is to stop here while on tour.

Opera, of course, is the victim of a great deal of propaganda, most of it bad. There is the description of opera as a peculiarly refined form of medieval or early modern torture, in which the devilishness of the Chinese bell torment is combined with an alley cat's Saturday night to make several hours of misery not lessened by a seat as devoid of upholstery as a new born turkey egg.

There is also the publicity about operas which sets them up as the crowning joy of the arts, the culmination of all the graces and the *ne plus ultra* of every cultured mind practically since the invention of the calendar, to say nothing of gunpowder. In this form the opera is practically indistinguishable from the duchess's ninth sub-footman, and should be taken about as seriously.

At least for the record it ought to be said that both concepts of the opera—good opera—malign its otherwise unblemished name. Given half a chance, opera is as good fun as any other form of entertainment—certainly *Carmen*, with its toreadors, its soldiers, and its little... uh, hussy of a heroine, is. In Italy the townspeople get—or got—together practically every night to see an opera and to eat salami; that can hardly be expected here, but one is inclined to think that provided with a copy, (in English) of the libretto (the words of the music), a fairly good humer, just a hint of a taste for music, and a moderately good seat in the high school auditorium, anybody in Salem ought to enjoy himself hugely when the La Scala company arrives on the 19th. If he doesn't—well, what do people usually do when they don't like a play?

Blame for Wintry Blasts

It was the Grant county climate that beckoned Clint Haight and caused him to demand sine die adjournment of the legislature on the second day of the 1935 regular session. At any rate, that was his story. Currently Clint, who still edits the Blue Mountain Eagle at Canyon City, is dissatisfied with the climate, or at least with the weather, and blames it on Harney county. He writes:

Were it not for Harney county, Grant county would have a good climate, and in fact, we could bask in January heat waves, and our girls could be bathing beauties the yearlong. All of our storms come from Harney county to the south.

The Burns Times-Herald acidly suggests that the word "beauties" be deleted, and produces an alibi. Grant county's wintry blasts come not from, but across Harney county from the Cascade range, the Burns paper insists.

Now that the blame is accurately placed, we know what to do about it. Just saw the Cascade peaks, let the warm Japan current breezes blow unimpeded into eastern Oregon. Then Grant and Harney county will have a more salubrious climate and the Willamette valley will have less of the rain to which Clint objected.

Which, Being Translated...

What do you think Eugene needs most to help develop this town into Oregon's largest city, outside of Portland.—Eugene News.

Which, being translated, means:

"What do we need to get ahead of Salem?"

Bits for Breakfast

By R. J. HENDRICKS

"What became of all the covered wagons after they reached Oregon?" is a question asked in sincerity:

Coming to the cars or the deck of this columnist are numerous questions, from time to time; never solicited; always answered or in each case an answer undertaken. From 918 S.W. Montgomery street, Portland, Oregon, Jan. 19, 1941, is this one:

"I am doing some research on Oregon history for an article or magazine short story. One bit of data, however, eludes me, and yet it is essential to the theme I wish to develop. What I wish to know is what became of all the covered wagons after they reached Oregon. Some use must have been made of them and yet I can find no trace of it. Can you help me out? I will be very grateful if you can and will."

The answer is that the wagons were used, after they reached the Oregon country, in perhaps the majority of cases on the land claims filed upon by their owners. They were needed.

Many of them were used to make other moves; one family settled first near Oregon City, and heard of better prospects further on in the upper Willamette valley, up Santiam way, or in southern Oregon, etc., etc. So they moved on, taking their wagons. Later, many of them moved to eastern Oregon or Washington, taking the same outfit. A considerable proportion of them were "movers."

They were like Tom Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's father, as told by Carl Sandburg: "Moving was natural to his blood; he came from a long line of movers; he could tell about the family that had moved so often that their chickens would walk up to the mover, stretch flat on the ground, and put up their feet to be tied for the next wagon trip."

Of "movers" in Oregon's early days of settlement, it was said that the Dan Waldos settled in the Waldo Hills southeast of Salem because he had a rule that when you could see the smoke from your neighbor's chimney the country was getting too closely settled. That wasn't true, as to the Waldos. Mrs. Waldo had seen so much fever and ague on low land in Missouri that she chose high land for the home when the family arrived in Oregon with the historic 1843 wagon train.

This columnist's people were "movers," from near Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield, Ill., thence to Marion and Polk counties, to Umatilla and Douglas counties. They had started on the Atlantic seaboard.

At page 115 of the book "Bethel and Aurora" (first and correct name "To Every Man"), one finds: "Another wagon train came from Bethel in 1845... Still another arrived in 1847, led by George L. Becke, with about 60, including the Becke family from Nineveh. This train, even at that late date, encountered hostile Indian interference, at one point driving G. O. Becke and his wife and children into a ravine where they were shot and dying victims of arrows shot from ambush into a covered wagon company overtaken by them. Their own escape was regarded as a miracle, some members thankfully believing it divinely ordered."

That wagon train came from Bethel, Mo.; from a branch of the Kell colony which recruited its members from Bethel, Pa., a farming suburb of Pittsburgh, Pa., now a fashionable residence section of that great city; which adopted its constitution August 30, 1844, at what became Bethel, Pa., and then being acquired by the colony.

Nineveh was a near by town established by the colony in Missouri. The Becke family of course came in a covered wagon, one of many such wagons, for the colony people had since the late 1840s been busy building such wagons, for "movers" preparing for the plains trek.

That Becke covered wagon was used at Aurora by the Becke family for many years after its arrival. It was in the fall of 1867; used for every purpose usual to a wagon; used until it was worn out with usage.

Then Charles Becke, son of the original Charles, head of the family, took the wagon to pieces and built a small replica of it from the materials for a keepsake. That replica of the wagon which crossed the plains now belongs to Carl G. Becke of Salem, a son of the maker of it, and a grandson of the original owner of the wagon. The replica is displayed at the central office of the committee in charge of the Salem centennial celebration last year.

This fact is given for two reasons. First, to show that wagons which crossed the plains were used for the ordinary purposes of wagons after their arrival in the Oregon country.

Second, to show that nearly all the pictures now seen of covered wagons are not representative of the wagons that made the great trek.

They were like the replica that was displayed by the centennial celebration committee.

(Concluded tomorrow.)

Contracts Given By Highway Board

Two contracts were awarded by the state highway commission Monday.

One contract, awarded to M. L. O'Neill & Son, John Day, on a low bid of \$46,717.30, involves improvement of the Plunkett creek-Read creek section of the Kings Valley secondary highway in Benton county.

The other contract, involving the Bear Creek-Cook Junction road reconstruction project on the Coos Bay-Roseburg highway, was awarded to A. S. Wallace, Roseburg, on a low bid of \$10,000.

Another Bit of World Diplomacy—We Hope!



Wotan's Wedge

By Francis Gerard
A Prelude to Blitzkrieg

Chapter 12 continued

The following afternoon Beef met Connie at the station and escorted her to the Meredith manse.

"It's ever so kind of you, Sir John," said the girl as Meredith rose to receive her in the drawing room.

"Not at all, Miss Smith," said John. "If there's anything I can do, I shall be only too happy."

They adjourned to the smaller room. Connie accepted a deep chair into which she sank, closing her eyes, and murmured, "My dear Herbert, would you never kill himself."

Meredith shook his head. "It doesn't seem silly to me at all. If you know a person really well you know what they're likely to do, and what they're likely to do is not suicide, but 'death by misadventure.' How can you be sure that it was not an accident?"

The girl opened her eyes wide. They were tearful and scornful.

"What, my Bert, have an accident with a gun of any kind? It wasn't possible!"

Meredith made no reply for quite a minute. He frowned down at the floor and pulled at his cigarette. When he looked up his face was quite expressionless.

"Miss Smith," he said almost brusquely, "if we dispose of the theories of suicide and accident, do you realize what remains?"

The girl nodded. "Yes," she replied, "murder."

"Exactly," said Meredith. "Let her think about that for a moment or so, then went on, 'If it was murder somebody must have murdered him.' Another pause. 'Who would have gained anything by killing your fiancé?'

Once more the girl shook her head. "I don't know," she confessed. "It's a complete mystery to me... as yet."

"In all murder cases," Meredith said quietly, "one has to try to establish a motive. It is really the most important thing in the solution of the problem because very often the motive points directly to the guilty. Now who could have profited by his death?"

He Volunteered for Service



Inducted into the U. S. army at selective service board headquarters in New York, Winthrop Rockefeller, left, son of the Rockefeller family, meets a new recruit, Charlie McCarthy of New York. Rockefeller was the tallest of the group that volunteered, McCarthy the smallest.

News Behind Today's News

By PAUL MALLON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 21.—The most successful defense the government has done is one that no one supposed to know about. Danger of wholesale strikes upsetting the rearmament program at the outset has been largely averted. It has been done without publicity, forcefully and amicably. Democracy, in this instance, at least, has shown it can work.

The unsung history of how it was worked can be condensed into an illustrative example. A strike call had been issued in one of the production plants most vital to the rearmament necessities. Usual efforts to negotiate had failed. Up until half an hour before the strike was to be called, it seemed not even a supreme court writ could stop it.

But fifteen minutes before the time a government official, John R. Steelman, head of the bureau of conciliation, conceived an idea that might prevent the disastrous break to labor's prestige. Mr. Steelman secured the help of Labor Secretary Perkins. He put in a last telephone call for the respective strikers and the management. His conversation with them ran something like this:

Miss Perkins has prepared a telegram to both you people, which she will send if this strike occurs. I have it right here before me and I can assure you that the newspapers will have it tomorrow morning. I need not tell you that it will not do either of your causes any good. Now why don't you be sensible and get together on this thing?

They did. In five minutes. While newspapers were on the street proclaiming the impossibility of avoiding this grave threat to American security, the miracle was arranged by the simple process of a little ingenuity and pressure.

Forestry Patrol Bills Queried

In an effort to reach a conclusion as to payment of pending bills for forest patrol work on county-owned land, the Marion county court has asked State Forester N. S. Rogers to appear before it Tuesday to explain two statements of \$505.83 to October 1, 1940, and another of \$118.44 to October 1, 1939.

The county has already paid the state \$166.62 to June, 1939, the year in which the present law as to state patrol was changed. The forester will be asked whether this amount may be taken as an offset against the bill for \$118.44.

Salem Business Survey Is Urged

Cooperation of Salem business men in an industrial survey soon to be taken by the chamber of commerce and the Bonneville power administration was urged Monday by Ray Yocum, chairman of the chamber industrial committee.

Members of the chamber will take the survey, similar to that taken in other northwest cities. Total figures will be used and firms protected on information used. The completed surveys will be compiled in a booklet to aid seasonal manufacturers seeking western locations.

Radio Programs

These schedules are supplied by the respective stations. Any variations noted by listeners are due to changes made in the station's program to this week.

8:00—Johnny Freeman.
8:15—John H. Heston.
8:30—Battle of the Saxes.
9:00—New Flashes.
9:30—Mildred Tobiasse Orchestra.
10:00—News.
10:15—St. Francis Hotel Orchestra.

8:00—Musical Clock.
8:30—Western Melodrama.
9:00—Musical Service.
9:30—The World's News.
10:00—National Farm and Home.
10:30—News.
10:45—Charming My Love.
11:00—Associated Press News.
11:15—U.S. Army Band.
11:30—Orchestra of Divines.
11:45—Jazz and Swing Orchestra.
12:00—Jazz and Swing.
12:15—Just Plain Bill.
12:30—Climax and His Music.
1:00—The Inner Sanctum.
1:15—The Inner Sanctum.
1:30—Question Box.
1:45—The Great Musical Quiz.
2:00—Sir Francis Drake Orchestra.
2:15—This Moving World.
2:30—The Great Musical Quiz.
2:45—Portland Police Report.
3:00—War News Roundup.

8:00—Kathleen Reports.
8:15—KOIN Clock.
8:30—The Golden Hour.
8:45—The Golden Hour.
9:00—The Golden Hour.
9:15—The Golden Hour.
9:30—The Golden Hour.
9:45—The Golden Hour.
10:00—The Golden Hour.
10:15—The Golden Hour.
10:30—The Golden Hour.
10:45—The Golden Hour.
11:00—The Golden Hour.
11:15—The Golden Hour.
11:30—The Golden Hour.
11:45—The Golden Hour.
12:00—The Golden Hour.