

The Oregon Statesman

"No Favor Sways Us; No Fear Shall Awe"
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Farm Telephone

The rural telephone line long has been the butt of ridicule. Its intermittent service, its defective transmission and its convenience for eavesdropping have made the rural line a shining target for jokesmiths. The city systems have often been content to let the rural people set up and run their own lines. The resulting cooperatively-owned farm telephone lines have generally failed to give the quality of service furnished by urban exchanges.

For one thing, the country lines have emphasized low cost. No adequate provision was made for maintenance and nothing was provided for depreciation. Periodic turnouts of farmers to reset poles or crossarms were relied on to substitute for full-time work by trained linemen. Small wonder, then, that telephone service on such lines was undependable.

But the rural telephone user seems about to come into his own. The FCC has been haunting him, surveying his needs and diagnosing the ills of his telephone line. The telephone companies also have had a committee working out the problem of rural telephony. Reports are coming out now, and they are sure to be followed with action as soon as materials and labor are freed for construction.

The FCC reports that the number of rural telephone subscribers has dropped some 35 per cent in the last 20 years, although the total number of telephones in the country has about doubled in that time. It finds that there are some 750,000 more electrified farms than farms served by telephone lines. The FCC blames the decline on increased service costs, decreased competition among companies and the practice of the Bell system to maintain or increase rates rather than decrease them. The chairman of the company committee replies that the statistics are unfair because they fail to make allowance for the depression when farmers didn't continue their telephone connections. Now, he says the record is very much improved, the Bell companies reporting an increase of 500,000 farm phones or 35 per cent since 1935.

The FCC report undoubtedly will spur activity. But the problem will remain of maintaining telephone lines in thinly settled areas and trying to supply a quality of service comparable to that on city lines. This will cost money no matter who does it.

One possible development is what is called the "rural carrier phone." It consists of a small set with vacuum tubes and a conventional telephone, with connecting wires leading to a power line. The carrier frequencies are superimposed on the current flowing through the power lines.

In setting up a system a line would run from the powerline to a central telephone exchange. The operators there would make the connections with other subscribers on the exchange or with other exchanges. Under this system party-line eavesdropping and conversations would be eliminated.

The application of such a method of communication to general use remains a matter for future trial. But not for long will the rural field lie as fallow as it has in the way of telephone service. Either through farm cooperatives or private telephone companies, or through government participation, there will come a rapid extension of telephone service through rural communities of America, as soon as the war ends.

The Bend Bulletin has been conducting a poll on whether social security payroll taxes should be raised. The vote was three to one against a raise on the ground "there are too many damn taxes now." Doubtless the vote would be in the same proportion if the question was whether the pensions should be doubled—and in favor of the doubling.

Guest Editorial

THE CHRISTMAS TREE IS A SYMBOL OF LIFE
Back in the dawn of the years, the tree like the sun was a symbol to primitive man, a symbol of universal life.

Trees were held sacred: some God or spirit dwelt there, gifts were hung upon them: offerings, to please or prayers to ward off evil. Trees were the earliest altars.

The Tree Worship can be traced back to earliest times; to Egypt—to India—to China. It is found in the Roman Saturnalia, that ancient pagan festival to the Sun God, the giver of triumphant life.

The Druid ceremonies were tree worship. Clad in snowy robes, the priests with golden sickles cut the mistletoe from the glorious oaks of old England.

The Christmas tree, as we know it, is the outgrowth of these ancient and medieval customs and legends.

One Christmas eve, Martin Luther, walked under the glory of the stars feeling the nearness of the great Heavenly Father. It filled his soul with wonder, and to share the feeling with his children, he cut down a little fir tree and set it up in his home, bright with lighted candles—the first Christmas tree.

The Christmas tree was set up in Germany with reverence, made beautiful, it radiated joy; gifts were set below, never on the tree. They kept this custom to themselves for a thousand years.

Prince Albert brought it to England when he married Queen Victoria, adding it to the many jolly Christmas ceremonies there. The Empress Eugenie added the tree to the joyous St. Noel in France.

The Puritan Fathers did not bring the Christmas tree ceremonies when they landed at Plymouth Rock. However, when the Dutch founded their colony in Pennsylvania, they observed the Christmas tree with the ceremonies of the Fatherland.

Today it is a universal custom all over the world. Four million trees are used in the United States alone.

If conservation, care, and economy are practiced in our glorious second-growth forests, future generations will have Christmas trees for evermore.

The forests are our heritage.
Let us not waste this great asset.
Want always follows waste.

Jessie M. Honeyman,
Oregon Roadside Defense Council.

Ahead of Competition

The city of San Francisco is planning to spend \$20,000,000 on improving its airport. The plan includes reclamation of 470 acres of tidelands, relocation of the Bayshore highway, construction of runways up to 10,000 feet in length, erection of new terminal buildings. The city is aspiring to be the hub of air transportation on the west coast. It isn't trying to "meet competition," it is trying to be ahead of competition.

We mention this to point up the comment that communities must prepare to compete, and they must be ready to back their bets with substantial stakes.

Portland, the principal port for Oregon, recently voted to spend some \$3,000,000 for dock improvements. But will this be anywhere near enough to modernize its facilities for the eventual competitive era after the war? Our information is that ships will demand the best of facilities, with space and equipment to handle loading and unloading from many hatches at once, so they can make quick turn-arounds. The ports which prepare to give that service naturally will be ports of call.

This is not just a Portland matter, because the rest of the state is interested in its expansion. From the standpoint of ocean transportation, Portland is "our" port, because over its docks flow the goods we offer for export and the goods we want to import.

In all our talk of planning there is danger that we emphasize too much the non-economic features of community life. Valuable as they are, unless we develop our economy we can't afford the luxuries that go with high community standards.

The Portland East Wind

Portland, whose winter-time position at the mouth of the Columbia gorge wind-tunnel is not a pleasant one, is getting jumpy after ten days of what the Indians called the Walla Walla wind. The esteemed Oregonian, which on occasion acts as monitor for the weatherman, has appropriately recommended a change, with wind to come from another quarter of the compass, preferably the southwest. In fact, the Portland paper says it would welcome a cargo of Pacific ocean rain.

This subject is quite academic to us who live in the mid-valley. The chill Canadian breath blown down the gorge is almost exclusively a Portland possession. The huge bulk of Mt. Hood effectively shoulders this wind away from Canby and points south. Oh, we may get a little of the fringe of the wind, but none of the cringe, sir, none of the cringe.

The current cold snap has lasted quite a spell, and true we do endorse the Oregonian's recommendation. But if the oldtimers will only think back a quarter century they will immediately feel much warmer. Remember the cold weather of December, 1919? That, brothers, was one for the record book. In comparison, this is but mild spring weather. Comparisons may be odious, but this one is beneficent.

Interpreting The War News

KIRKE L. SIMPSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS WAR ANALYST

There is no rift in the war clouds gathering over Nazi Germany as the Christmas season draws near. Look where they would, the people of the besieged reich could see nothing but portents of coming total defeat in the battle front news. Only in the inter-allied policy and political discords could they find a ray of hope that the blood-bath resistance their Nazi masters have decreed for them might conceivably win for them something less than unconditional surrender.

That hope probably is as illusory as the reliance Nazis placed in robot bombs to turn the tide of defeat. Whatever the divergence of views between London, Moscow and Washington to an interim treatment of liberated or half-liberated nations in Europe or as to post war European boundaries or peace plans, big free unity in military action against the common foe still is the dominating factor on European battle fronts.

That was patent in the events that have brought elements of six Allied armies in the west on to German soil from the Karlsruhe corner on the central Rhine to the Arnhem gateway in Holland it was clearly demonstrated, too, in the Russian sweep through Hungary to clutch closely at doomed Budapest and threaten Vienna.

Implicit in the tangled and troublesome situation in Greece which has brought the Churchill war ministry under fire and British troops of liberation into armed conflict with Greek factionists are circumstances which set it apart from the Anglo-American rift over Italian political developments. Liberated Italy below the Allied-Nazi battle-line is a military zone of action only in the sense that Allied supply lines far behind the front run through it.

That could not be true in Greece at the end of the Balkan peninsula while Nazi garrisons retain a hold on Crete or any islands of the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean sea or anywhere on the Adriatic flank of the Balkan peninsula. Liberated Greece would be a logical base of Allied operations to sweep the Aegean free of enemy outposts and establish short-line lend-lease communication routes, with Russia.

Churchill stressed to parliament this distinction between the Italian situation and that in Greece in defending the British course in Greece. In Greece as in Belgium and Holland immediate policy flowed, he said, from the Allied military high command rather than from Downing street. In the case General Wilson, former Allied overall commander in the Mediterranean theater, and in the other General Eisenhower dictated the procedure in efforts to maintain order.

The implication is that Greece, Belgium and Holland are still strictly military operations theaters in Allied eyes and that, unless the mainline by military force if necessary to insure military supply lines close to the fighting fronts or as bases of possible contemplated new military moves.

In any event, the inter-allied turmoil in Athens and elsewhere in Greece tends to delay whatever plans may have been laid by the Allies to exploit fully the Nazi retreat from the Balkans under the pressure of the Russian drive through Rumania and Hungary.



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Action on the Manpower Front

The Literary Guidepost

By John Selby

"DEEP DELTA COUNTRY," by Harriet T. Kane (Duell, Sloan & Pearce, \$3).

My first review copy of Harriet T. Kane's "Deep Delta Country" succumbed to some temptation or other on its way; the second came very late. Another day or so, and I should have missed the best, by far, of the ten volumes so far published in the American Folkways series. More—one of the best books ever written by an American about an American region.

Much of the credit goes to the lower Mississippi delta itself, which is a region like no other. But mostly, the book is good for three elementary reasons. Mr. Kane, who knows the delta, he can write, and he knows from long newspaper experience what to write and what to throw away. I suspect that for this book he dared throw away very little material, for the delta country is overlaid with "different" people, flora, fauna and weather.

One of the things Mr. Kane tossed overboard was the customary long excursion into the geological and historical background of his territory. There is enough about each of these, but there it stops. Then he surveys the territory, from the deck of a ship running down-river from New Orleans. The deck is high above the banks of the river, and these are for the most part higher than the back country. This is a land of soft, rich soil. It is wet much of the time, and will grow a crop almost overnight—three or four a year are not remarkable. A flower garden grows into a tangled bower while one's back is turned, and in the same interval a wind-heightened tide can wash in and cover the whole place.

The people are largely French, with liberal infusions of Filipino, Tocko (Dalmatian), Spanish, negro and Anglo-Saxon. They have a speech of their own, and they live with one foot on land and one in the water. Such heroes as their two famous priests, and their favorite Dr. Ballowe were living legends, and other odd characters sprout like wild rice and grow into rich color. Mr. Kane serves up both background and glittering foreground for all this, and somehow he wraps the panorama in precisely the proper English. Every northerner should read "Deep Delta Country."

A patent for a player-piano was taken out in the United States in 1890.

News Behind the News

By PAUL MALLON

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 17. —

Congress has got itself into a stir on whether it is right to "criticize" our allies. The Pennsylvania Republican Mr. Gavan said something about the British being willing to sacrifice American boys and questioned their draft policies in a way which caused the reporters to deduce he was "apparently referring to Canada." Up jumped the Texas Democrat Johnson, saying, oh no, you must not say such things about our allies because you are aiding Germany. The leader McCormack, trying to referee the argument, though constructive criticism all right but urged prudence.



Paul Mallon

It did not occur to anyone to ask what the facts of British Empire conscription policy really are. No one asked whether what was said was true or untrue, and indeed this normal gauge of whether criticism is justified or not, was never mentioned. I got the facts from no less an uncrucial a British source than the British information service and the various empire legations and information services here. An hour of work by an congressman could have avoided or settled the still unsolved dispute.

The British Isles have a draft system more extensive than ours, but Canada, Australia and the Union of South Africa have systems limiting the use of their drafted troops in various ways to home defense although their volunteers fight anywhere. India has no conscription of any kind on the native population, but the British Isles draft system applies to British subjects there. The India volunteer army is seldom fully identified in dispatches as it fights in the name of the British, but numbers more than 2,000,000 troops, plus 150,000 in the navy and air services. Three of its divisions are now fighting in Italy, one division in Greece, and while the exact number of its men in use on the Burma front (north and south) has not been given out, I was surprised to learn 80 per cent of the units in action there are Indian. Also the Indians are policing the middle east and north Africa.

Australian law prevents use of draftees beyond a certain area covering the islands just north and east of the homeland (it runs through New Zealand and New Guinea). However, 89 per cent of the Australian army is volunteer and the draft militia is used mostly for home duties as it includes those least physically fit. Volunteer Australians have fought conspicuously in Egypt, Syria, Greece, Yugoslavia and Malaya.

Canadian law which Prime Minister King is trying to break so sensationally uses only volunteers abroad, and conscripts on home soil only. Although some few went to Alaska. The union of South Africa also has conscription (18 to 60) only for home service, but over 10 per cent of its total population has volunteered and volunteers were used in North Africa (Libya) by special act of their parliament.

In the British Isles 57 per cent of the male population, 18 to 40, is in the armed forces under a strong draft act. Men 41 to 50 can be sent to industry to work, and draftees have been sent into the coal mines. Women 18 to 51 are drafted for home service. By last March, the United Kingdom (British Isles alone) had raised 4,500,000 for the armed services (excluding women and industry).

These facts show the British at home are ahead of us in draft strictness, although their total 4,500,000 is less than half our 11,000,000 and more, and the bulk of allied forces fighting on the western front are ours. Draft criticism therefore can justify be made only against Canada, Australia and South Africa. My criticism would be that they have an archaic conception of home defense, although it is the same one we had at the start of this war, and it is certainly well rooted in a solid understanding of freedom. What changed us was the expanded range of military weapons and methods proving that defense can well start aboard (successful defense of Singapore and the Philippines would for instance have saved Australia). Strictly from the standpoint of new military considerations (planes, rockets, etc.) it is evident the homeland is the last line of defense.

The facts also show the congressional notion of what constitutes just criticism is absurd. Worse than the man who might make an untruthful accusation, is the one who tries to answer by shushing any thought that could ever do anything wrong. His position implies that the truth dare not be told. Such an unwillingness to face facts can also undermine public confidence.

"THE YOUNG IDEA" By Mossler



"Anybody can do it with his SKATES!"

Kenneth L. Dixon AT THE FRONT

IN GERMANY, Dec. 5—(Delayed)—(AP)—This concerns the odyssey of William David Tatum, who drives a truck for the 84th division and who refused to quit high-balling until he reached his destination.

He hails from Valliant, Okla., and he used to be a private. This is why his general pro-Kenneth L. Dixon noted him to be a sergeant.

It was back in England one cheerless, foggy morning when William David's topkick told him to check his truck and get ready to roll. This being the army, Private Tatum wasn't told where he was going. But he was sure it wasn't down highway 66 into Oklahoma City.

"Well, western front, here we come," thought William David, and pretty soon the convoy started off.

But visibility was bad and he had a wreck. "Wait here until the wrecker comes," said the sergeant. "Then you can catch up with us at the assembly area."

One day William waited. Then two, three and four. This is getting nowhere, he thought. So he walked to a nearby airfield, borrowed a wrecker and hauled his truck over to a hangar and repaired it himself.

But when he reached the assembly area, the division had departed. So, remembering a well-known seaport, he shoved off again, pushing his accelerator clear to the floorboards.

His guess was right, but he arrived after the division had sailed.

William David was alone, and it appeared that his chance of getting across the channel was about as good as getting home for Christmas. Then one day an LST sailed with a stowaway. It still isn't quite clear how or



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now I see they are picturing the song-hit of 1904: "Meet me at St. Louie, Meet me at the Fair." That gives one a touch of nostalgia.

If one studies many of the songs that are included in popular song collections, he can't help but shake his head over the mystery of why they have lived. Take the luncheon club favorite, "Clementine," what silly drizzle it is:

"Light she was and like a fairy,
And her shoes were number nine . . .
Hit her foot against a splinter,
Fell into the foaming brine."
Yet when the song-leader gets up and waves his arms the men will sing lustily on "darling Clementine."

The only thing we can say for the words of Stephen Foster's "Oh Susanna" is that they are merely vehicles for its melody. What else can you make out of this:

"It rain'd all night de day I left,
De weather it was dry,
De sun so hot I froze to death;
Susanna don't you cry."
That wording would make angels weep, but it seems to make humans sing.

"My Wild Irish Rose" has a sweet tune and the sentiment is beautiful until one gets to the banality of the last two lines: "And some day for my sake, she may let me take
The bloom from my wild Irish Rose."

Alas for "Sweet Adeline" it is the perfect serenade, but has been barbershopped to death. The company it has kept has cost it the good reputation which its words and music really deserve. Take the song "Dixie"—the "national anthem of the south." It isn't a native folksong of the south. Dan Emmett composed it

where Private Tatum managed to hide that truck.

In France, the trail already was growing cold. Dozens of divisions were moving along the western front. Too, William David couldn't get too curious around military policemen—individual soldiers are not supposed to roam around Europe on unauthorized missions.

But across Europe he went, scrounging rations and gasoline where he could, sleeping in his truck nights and asking "which way did they go, sheriff?" in three different languages.

Driving into a little Belgian town one day, he spotted an officer he used to know. Skidding to a halt he started asking questions. He learned that his outfit was supposed to be somewhere in Holland. So he headed for the Dutch border.

The trail grew warmer. People said, "they were here yesterday" or "they were here this morning." Suddenly he got a different answer:

"They'll be here tomorrow."
So William David sat himself down to wait. He had outrun his outfit to Holland and reached the western front before it did.

When the general came up he figured this man had no business being a buck private. So he's Sgt. William David Tatum now.

Red Cross Personnel Representative Seeks National Workers

Hugo Vindal, personnel representative of the Pacific area office of the American Red Cross, will be in Salem Wednesday, December 20, to interview anyone interested in doing Red Cross work with the national organization.

Positions as assistant field director and other specialized jobs are open, announced Judge George Rossman, chairman of the Marion county Red Cross chapter. Appointments may be made with Mr. Vindal by calling the local office, 9277, or by calling Judge Rossman.

In 1859 as a "walk-around" for a minstrel troupe he was with. When the Civil war broke out the Washington Artillery had it arranged as a quick-step, and then the song-tune spread through the south. Like "Oh Susanna," its words are meaningless except as they express primitive balladry:

"Dar's buckwheat cakes an' Ingen batter,
Makes you fat, or a little fatter . . .
Den boe it down and scratch your grable."
Spite of the words it will be a long time before folk the country over will leave off singing "Look away, Dixie Land."

Far better in the rich pathos of its words and the plaint of its air is Foster's "My Old Kentucky Home," catching as it does the rare melancholy of the "darky" fieldhand.

My own choice of a song which in words and music seems just about perfect is "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes." The verse is by Ben Johnson, eminent English poet and dramatist, and the music is of an old English air. Music and sentiment seem in perfect blend:

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss within the cup,
And I'll not ask for wine."
Another song, a familiar one, a bit out of style now, but still a prime favorite of sopranos as an encore number is "T is the last rose of summer, Left blooming alone."

What makes a song live? Principally the music. A melody lives far longer in memory than the words that went with it. People "hum a tune" when they may not know the words. But when to an appealing melody are tied words with meaning—then the lawmakers take second place:

"Allons, enfants de la patrie!
Le jour de gloire est arrive!"
—La Marseillaise

Stevens

Diamonds - Watches - Jewelry

Give "Him" a Flexible Watch Bracelet

A Pink or Yellow Flexible Watch Bracelet may be the answer . . . still time to have your gifts engraved in our store!

Credit If Desired

Practical Religion

—by Rev. John L. Knight, Jr.,
Counselor on Religious Life,
Willamette University

Memory is but today tomorrow. The things which we look back upon tomorrow are simply those things which we are doing today. Each day we build memories, for memory is but a review of the thoughts and deeds of days that are past. Whether our memories are beautiful or ugly depends upon how we are living today. The surest way to fond memories then, is the highest use of today.

Dallas Vesper Service To Be Held on Sunday

DALLAS—The annual Christmas vesper service of the Menonite church will be held at 8 p.m. Sunday night at the church here. A. H. Friesen is director of the vested choir of 32 voices. Mrs. Al Kroeker is soloist. The concert is an annual affair and will be held at the church, Washington and Hayter streets.