

## Women Behind State Pen Bars Live in Clean Surroundings, But Need Mental Rehabilitation

By Marguerite Wright  
Staff Writer, The Statesman

Mrs. Helen Rookard, 29-year-old Creswell housewife and mother who shot and killed her husband, this week joined the women behind the barred windows of the state penitentiary. Her case is similar to those of the seven other women serving time for murder or manslaughter—women whose misdeeds caught the attention of the curious public for a short while, but who are forgotten as soon as the iron gate clicks shut behind them.

Of 1180 penitentiary inmates, only 24 are women, but that number is above the 12 to 15 average enrollment, according to Deputy Warden E. C. Halley. The present total is the highest since 1930 when there were 32 women including federal prisoners who are no longer housed by the state. The wards could accommodate 40 if necessary.

Despite these figures Mrs. Ruth Halley, prison matron for the last 24 years, does not think crime among Oregon women is increasing to any appreciable degree. The present number is a temporary jump reflecting the national postwar increase, she said. War-time tension and easy money were given as possible causes.

### Average Age 31

These women are young. Their average age is around 31, 11 of them being under 30 and four whose ages are unrecorded. They represent 12 counties and all but one are white. Their terms range from two years to life, but the five "lifers" may apply for parole every seven years. Only one woman remains from prewar years; 10 were admitted in 1946 and nine this year.

Murder (five cases) and forgery (six) are the most common crimes. Three women are in for manslaughter and two each for the following: Larceny, robbery, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, assault with intent to kill and assault with a dangerous weapon. Most of the women who committed murder or manslaughter killed their husbands and their cases are nearly identical: illicit relations, conjugal jealousy, beatings and drunkenness.

### 'Didn't Know Better'

Sex, liquor, poor home environment and inherent character deficiency are the main reasons for crime by women, the matrons believe. "Easy money is often the motive and revenge is involved in many cases. Most crimes are committed impulsively while under emotional stress or the influence of alcohol; 'I didn't know better' is rarely given as an excuse for a serious offense. Mrs. Halley estimates the inmates' intelligence is about average.

Poor home environment is undoubtedly the basic cause in many cases; children acquire their fundamental attitudes before they begin school. Parents are responsible for the individual's conception of herself in relation to society and her knowledge of right or wrong... and a broken home is no place to acquire constructive attitudes.

But education in schools could be a telling factor in crime prevention, Mrs. Halley believes. Matter-of-fact sex education, more emphasis on individual responsibility and psychologically sound instruction on human (especially marriage) relationships should be undertaken more extensively by public schools, she suggests. With compulsory education now in effect, children from every social strata can be taught basic requirements for social living.

Sex remains the major problem in the penitentiary although little is being done about it. Homosexual practices are prevalent among some inmates and seem to be increasing. The confirmed lesbians, whose original crimes stem from their homosexual tendencies, are teaching perverted habits to their sexually normal companions. Curbing by authorities of this condition is complicated by the fact that three to eight women sleep together in the wards. Mrs. Halley and Matron Lucille Davy were emphatic in their belief that individual sleeping rooms are the only solution. This would entail construction of a new women's section or extensive remodeling of present quarters.

### Living Conditions Good

Although no prison is intended to be a pleasant place, living conditions here (except for recreation) are good—almost as good as those in the University of Oregon women's dormitories, for instance. There is a separate kitchen for the women, dining room, bathroom with several tubs and showers, sitting room with piano, laundry where inmates do their personal wash, separate rooms for "fish" (newcomers) and wards with beds, closets, other furniture.

Everything is kept spotlessly clean by the inmates and the food is no worse than many college students get in their dining halls. The Thursday dinner menu included veal, gravy, potatoes, carrots, broccoli, bread, butter, milk, coffee and fruit jello all tastefully prepared.

During the day the barred doors to the wards are kept open and prisoners are allowed to visit each other and use the sitting room when their duties are completed. They have access to the prison and state library books, and their handiwork is sold in the penitentiary lobby.

### Facilities Inadequate

Recreation facilities are inadequate. Whereas men inmates see movies and participate in outdoor sports, women are only allowed outdoor walks under a matron's supervision. Mrs. Halley and Mrs. Davy feel that an outdoor yard where inmates may do as they please is required.

There is little evidence that a term spent in the penitentiary is going to mean the inmate will emerge a better woman and a better citizen. There is no definite program to salvage these women. The Gideon organization is planning to establish a Bible study class soon and clergymen occasionally visit the wards, but the matrons believe regular psychiatric service in an integrated program is called for.

### Prisoners Psychanalyzed

A Portland psychiatrist interviews each woman as she enters but he is not required to report his findings to the matron. One inmate's record notes that she may be a victim of schizophrenia. She may eventually become insane, but with regular treatment from a competent psychiatrist this young woman's chances for recovery would be increased and she might become a useful member of society.

Prison sentences are taken payment to society for infractions of its rules and customs—they are punitive. Actual "payment" for crime depends on an individual's psyche—as Dostoevski showed in his "Crime and Punishment." Atonement for sin presupposes confession of guilt and inmates with delusions of persecution will leave prison with no better chance

## Valley Obituaries

### Nellie E. McLaughlin

WOODBURN, Nov. 10—Funeral services for Mrs. Nellie E. McLaughlin, 58, who died early Sunday at a Portland hospital after two months illness, will be held at 2 p.m. Wednesday from the Ringo chapel with burial in Belle Passi. Mrs. McLaughlin, resident of Hubbard for the past 50 years, was born in Mt. Hope, Kan., April 21, 1889. She was a member of Pythian Sisters of Hubbard.

Survivors are the widower, John Elton McLaughlin of Hubbard; three sisters, Mrs. Sadie Callister, Siletz; Mrs. Katherine Stuve, Woodburn, and Mrs. Lillie Stuve, Canby; and three brothers, John H. Blosser, Salem; Charles F. Blosser, Drain, and Chauncey L. Blosser, Cottage Grove.

### Mollie Jane Marks

PEDEE — Mrs. Mollie Jane Marks, widow of the late George Marks, died November 5 at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Chester Chambers, in Kings Valley, after several months illness.

Born at Lewisville, Polk county, Feb. 4, 1871, she was the daughter of Anderson and Cornelia Taylor. She attended elementary school at Montgomery and high school at Walla Walla, Wash., and was graduated from the Oregon College of Education.

After teaching three years in Polk and Benton counties she married George Marks at Lewisville in June, 1895, and they lived at Summit. The Taylor farm at Peede is the one now occupied by the R. Van Den Bosch family. She was a member of the Evangelical church.

Survivors are three daughters, Mrs. Chambers, Mrs. M. B. Clark, Summitt; Mrs. Hugh Van Loan, Monmouth; one son, George Marks, Summitt; one sister, Mrs. Lillian Johnson, route 2 Corvallis; one brother, Dick Taylor, McMinnville; five grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Corvallis Saturday, The Rev. E. A. Fogg of Portland officiated, assisted by the Rev. Howard Perry, pastor of the local church. Burial was in the Kings Valley cemetery.

### David M. Burnett

JEFFERSON, Nov. 10—David Mayes Burnett, resident of Jefferson for the past 25 years, died at his residence here Sunday at the age of 77 years.

He was born near Silverton, Oct. 11, 1870, the son of Thomas M. and Nellie Mayes Burnett, and had been a farmer all his life. He was a member of the Jefferson Christian church, Jefferson lodge 33, AF & AM, and the Sidney-Talbot Farmers Union.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Pearl Burnett of Jefferson; two nephews, Milton Burnett of Oregon City and Floyd Burnett of Long

Beach, Calif.; a grand nephew and three grand nieces. Funeral arrangements are in charge of Howell-Edwards company.

### John Russ

MT. ANGELO — John Russ, 63, died Monday at his home near Brooks. Funeral services are to be held at the Unger chapel here Wednesday at 2 p.m., with interment in the local Calvary cemetery.

He was born in Sleepy Eye, Minn., March 19, 1884, and had lived in Oregon for 57 years.

Survivors are four brothers, Frank of Portland and Peter, Joseph and Andrew, of Brooks; two sisters, Mrs. Mary Miller, Rochester, Ind., and Mrs. Frances Udelle, Grayland, Wash.; and three nieces and nephews.

## Swegle Parents Meetings Planned

SWEGLE — Two important meetings are scheduled for the parents of children living in the Swegle community this week. Wednesday at 8 p.m. all mothers of the community are asked to attend a meeting sponsored by the Marion County Public Health association for the purpose of introducing the plans for organizing more study groups in social hygiene and family relations. Several of these study groups were organized last summer by Mrs. Earl Huckstep and those mothers who have studied the lessons are enthusiastic about the classes and would like to have all mothers take part.

A speaker from the health office will be present. All material used in the classes is furnished

by the health association and is made possible through the sale of Christmas seals. The classes are nationally sponsored by health associations and the Parent-Teacher association.

Thursday night will be open house at the school for all parents of school children enrolled at Swegle. These open house nights are planned for all schools in the Salem district for the purpose of introducing the teachers and acquainting the parents with the work done in the schools. All class rooms will be open.

## Valley News Briefs

Union Hill—Mrs. Floyd Fox will entertain the Home Ec club Wednesday afternoon. Suggestion for Christmas gifts will be discussed, Mrs. Byron McElhane leading.

Mt. Angel—Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Berry are announcing the birth of a son, October 29, at Sunrise sanitarium, Hubbard. The baby, named Joseph Anthony, weighed 7 pounds and 11 ounces.

Silverton Hills—Joe Tulare has sold his four-acre ranch and plans to spend the winter in Portland.

Brooks — Garden club will meet Thursday with Mrs. Dollie Ramp for 1 o'clock luncheon.

Swegle — Regular executive board meeting of Swegle Parent-Teachers association at the schoolhouse Wednesday at 8:30 p.m. Meeting was postponed one day because of the holiday.

Out of respect to the boys who gave their all for their country, we will be closed all day

## ARMISTICE DAY

Today, November 11th

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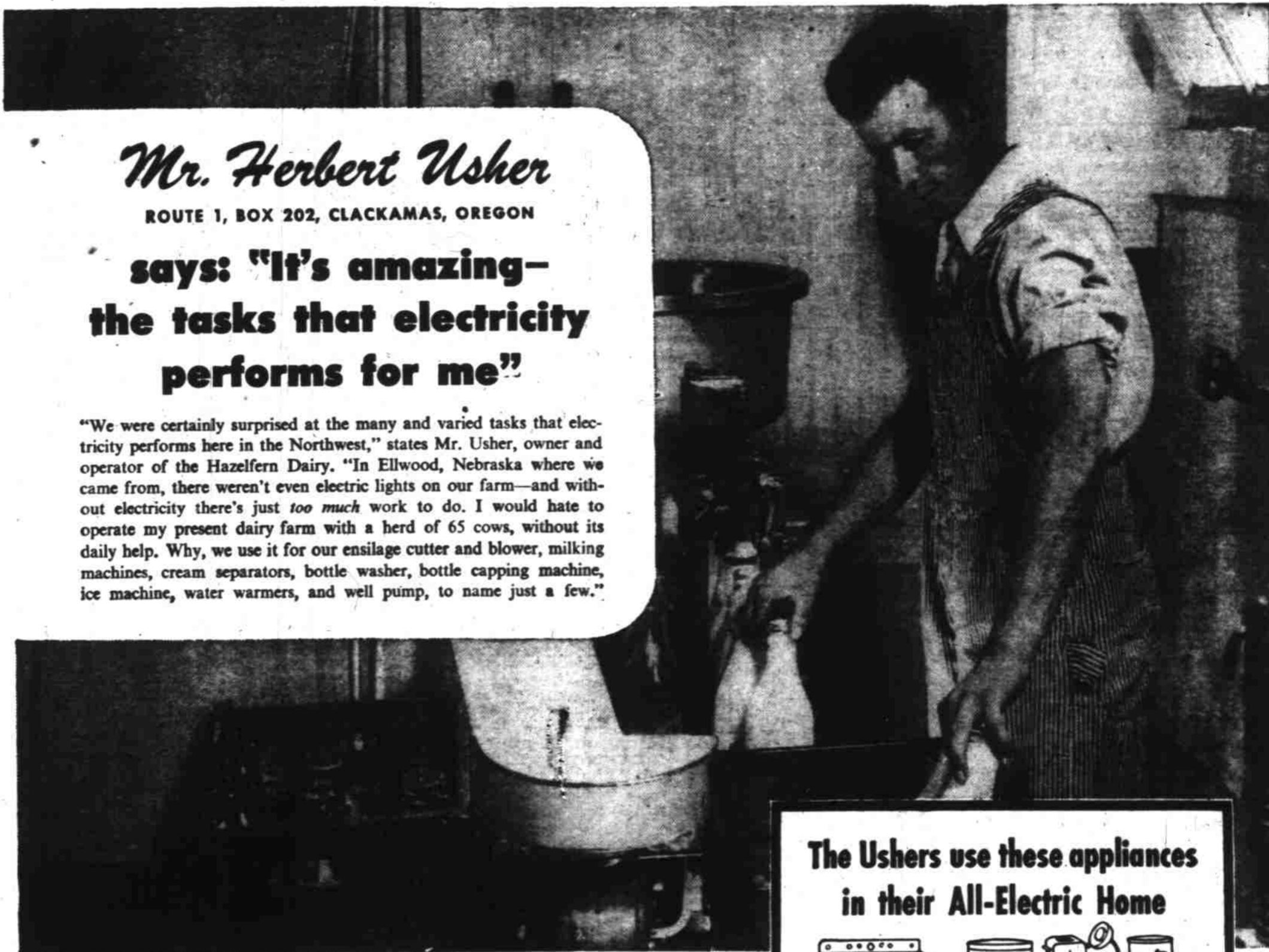
To men who wear the uniform of the United States Armed Forces — Army, Navy and Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard — the people of this nation owe a full measure of respect and gratitude. They

have volunteered for one of the most important tasks ever shouldered by a body of young men — the preservation of peace in an uncertain world. For that great service to mankind, we honor them.

## ON ARMISTICE DAY RESOLVE THAT AMERICA SHALL STAY STRONG

This message is published in the public interest by:

Air Reserve Assn.  
745th Very Heavy Bombing Squadron



Mr. Herbert Usher

ROUTE 1, BOX 202, CLACKAMAS, OREGON

says: "It's amazing—the tasks that electricity performs for me"

"We were certainly surprised at the many and varied tasks that electricity performs here in the Northwest," states Mr. Usher, owner and operator of the Hazelfern Dairy. "In Ellwood, Nebraska where we came from, there weren't even electric lights on our farm—and without electricity there's just too much work to do. I would hate to operate my present dairy farm with a herd of 65 cows, without its daily help. Why, we use it for our ensilage cutter and blower, milking machines, cream separators, bottle washer, bottle capping machine, ice machine, water warmers, and well pump, to name just a few."

The following Salem Used Car Dealers will be

## CLOSED

All day Tuesday, November 11th, 1947, in observance of

## Armistice Day

- ORVAL'S USED CARS
- SHROCK MOTOR CO.
- SAM'S MOTOR CO.
- LES' MOTOR COMPANY
- BURGOYNE MOTOR CO.
- ELSNER MOTOR CO.
- DURAND MOTORS
- QUALITY USED CARS
- SALEM USED CARS
- MURPHY USED CARS
- CAPPS USED CARS
- HATFIELD'S USED CARS
- STEVEN'S USED CARS
- A. B. C. MOTORS
- SQUARE DEAL USED CARS
- CHEFFINGS USED CARS
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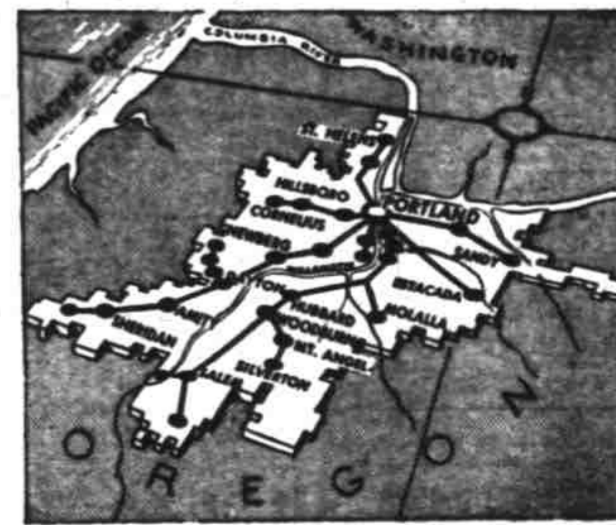
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