

Ralph Watson, Jack of All Trades and Master of One, Decides He's 'Had Enough'

By WENDELL WEBB
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For as many years as should be remembered, when anyone wanted to know anything about Oregon and its political set-up they'd probably first ask either Ralph Watson or David O'Hara.



He could look tough — and be tough — at times. This is Ralph Watson, genial dean of Oregon newspapermen, who Thursday retired for the second time.

O'Hara, with the answers still at his tongue-tip, is going strong as head of the state elections bureau.

Watson, ditto, has decided to take it easy and this week retires from the active scene. As one-time Willamette had-boy, hospital attendant, newspaper reporter, practicing attorney, state corporations commissioner, and long-time political editor of the Oregon Journal, "I've had enough."

For the past four years, the plumpish, dry-humored Watson has been public relations consultant for the Oregon State Highway Commissioner. In that time he has provided Oregon newspapers with thousands of stories and pictures on the state roads. Now, his work will be taken over by the State Travel Bureau.

Retired Once Before
It was long before his high-way commission work that Watson acquired his fame. The high-way work, actually, was taken on after he'd already retired — "if I'd know how long I was going to live I would have known how long I needed to work—but I didn't so I worked."

Watson went into his first retirement right after the 1947 legislative session when admirers threw a party for him at the Marion Hotel. He was retiring as political editor of The Oregon Journal—a post he held for 41 years with four years out in state service.

Watson was born in nearby Zena, the son of Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Watson, "sometime before the turn of the century." (He admits nothing but doesn't deny being about 74.) He was graduated from the old East Salem School in the 1890s, then went to Willamette. He lasted there about three years.

Chapel Gets Decorated
There was an After Dark Amusement Club in those days. One Saturday night the amusement consisted of moving all the skeletons and stuffed animals in the Willamette museum to the chapel. The nerves of the late Rep. Willis C. Hawley, then Willamette president, under went considerable strain when he walked in the chapel for the next morning's service. Four members of the ADAC also underwent strain. They thereafter attended other schools.

Watson elected Stanford and spent a year there. Then he came back to Oregon; was city editor of the Capital Journal in Salem for a year; went from there to spend two years as attendant at the Oregon State Hospital ("advancing to a second cook"); travelled to Pendleton to be a reporter on the East Oregonian; then joined the Oregonian staff in Portland; returned to Pendleton to the Pendleton Tribune, and finally took over as political editor of the Oregon Journal in Portland in 1906.

Settled Down—a Little
He'd apparently settled down a bit by then—possibly because the previous year he had wed the beautiful Neva Griswold, whom he'd met at Willamette—who still attempts to supervise his welfare from their Portland home at 3524 N. E. Killingsworth.

But he still wasn't through straying—in 1911 he became secretary to then Gov. Oswald West, and in 1913 became state corporations commissioner. It was his job to set up the newly authorized corporations department. Two years later there was a change in administration—and in corporations commissioner.

That gave Watson a chance for a new venture. The same day he became corporations commissioner he had passed the state bar examinations, after studying under the late U.S. Sen. Charles McNary (who then was dean of the Willamette College of Law). So, the corporations commission job at end, Watson set up a law practice in Portland. But two years later the Oregon Journal's long-noted editor, C. J. Jackson, enticed him back on that paper and he stayed there.

Much Time in Salem
Many a story Watson tells of his subsequent long career as political writer, analyst and editor; his many trips to national conventions; his travels with candidates for high office.

Much of his time was spent in Salem—as it has been since he came out of retirement to work for the state highway commission. He was here Thursday to say "goodby."

Watson is probably one of the

Thirty-Nine From Valley Join Services

Thirteen Salem men and one woman were among 39 mid-valley servicemen and women to enlist in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps during September, Salem recruiting stations announced Thursday.

Enlisting in the Women's Air Force was Barbara Ann Adams of Salem.

Navy men from Salem were Darold E. Candell, 1765 N. 5th St.; Dalmer H. Bates, 160 N. 24th St.; Daniel H. Danforth, 1520 N. 18th St.; and William H. Gwin, 2625 Lansing Ave.

Five Salem men signed up for Army duty. They include: Frank E. Weber, Army Air Borne; Keith D. Ackerson, Arthur T. Akers, Gerald R. Keuscher and Charles L. Houston, all regular Army.

George H. Allen enlisted in the Aviation Cadets, while Edwin E. Stahl, Donald E. White and David C. VanDyke, all volunteered for the Air Force.

Marine Corps enlistees were: Joseph L. Abero, Brooks; Albert G. Simmons, Stayton; Vernon M. Bantsari, Amity; and Doris Stewart, Portland.

Lillian J. Barnett, Stayton, joined the Women's Army Corps and Edith May Haugen, Yamhill, the Waves.

The following Willamette Valley men enlisted in the Navy: Arlin E. Adamson and David L. Young, both of Albany; Clifford E. Davis, Monitor; Albert A. Ball, Seal Rock; James D. Garlick, Kernville; Edward T. Weaver, Seio; and Lamar S. Tilgner, Dallas.

Alexander W. Miller, McMinnville, was assigned to a special Army school and Maurice E. Ruth, Dallas, and William R. Garham, Silverton, enlisted in the Army Air Borne.

Regular Army enlistments from valley communities were: Daniel P. McLeod, John L. Rasmussen and Larry D. Arendt, all of Aurora; Miles L. Hadley, Grand Ronde; Almon C. Hopkins and Roland J. Frazier, both of Silverton.

Levis D. Olson, Silverton, and James F. Prosser, Mt. Angel, joined the Aviation Cadets and William R. Wall, Dallas, the Air Force.

MODERN WAYS
MECCA (INS)—Bedouins of the Arabian deserts are being wooed from nomadic ways they have followed for centuries by model farm communities and irrigation projects founded by Saudi Arabia's King Abdul Aziz al Saud.

Newspaperboys' Day Designated For Tomorrow

Experience as a newspaperboy provides youngsters "with a lot of the stuff that goes into building a successful and happy life," Gov. Paul Patterson said Thursday.

Governor Patterson let this belief be aired when he designated Saturday, Oct. 3 for observance of Newspaperboy Day in Oregon—and he knows whereof he speaks. As a boy, he carried the Portland News, Portland Telegram, The Oregonian, The Oregon Journal and Seattle Star.

"This work starts the boy off as an individual businessman," the governor said. "He develops habits of regularity, responsibility and thrift from the realization that he must meet a set schedule, both as to prompt delivery of his papers and handling his financial obligation."

Civil Defense Heads Pledged Ike's Support

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Eisenhower told state Civil Defense directors Thursday not to get discouraged. He said, "it is awfully hard to awaken people to a sense of responsibility without trying to create hysteria."

The directors came to the White House from their annual conference at which they heard Mayor Joseph S. Clark Jr. of Philadelphia say it is up to the President to rouse the people out of their apathy toward civil defense.

Clark said it is time to quit playing with tin soldiers and sand forts and get on with a "vital function which may well mean life or death to our Western civilization."

Philadelphia's mayor added that "Operation Candor," the idea of a speech or several speeches by Eisenhower to give the people the facts about life and death in the hydrogen bomb age, had "better go into effect pretty quick."

But when the Civil Defense directors called on the chief executive he told them "it is difficult to awaken people to a sense of responsibility that produces a steady and periodic work or effort."

Nevertheless, Eisenhower told them, the federal government is "quite well aware" of the importance of their work and "we are certainly determined to support yours."

Madge Meredith Marries



LOS ANGELES — Actress Madge Meredith who spent two years in prison after being convicted of participating in the kidnap-assault of her former manager, is pictured with Dr. Charles L. Corley, after their marriage. The 32-year-old actress has been active in television roles since she was ordered released by Gov. Earl Warren of California. (AP Wirephoto to The Statesman.)

Guild, Times End 78 Day Disagreement

SEATTLE (AP)—A spokesman for the CIO American Newspaper Guild announced Thursday night that an agreement has been reached with the Seattle Times in the 78-day-old strike by the Guild.

Don Brazier, a member of the Guild negotiating committee, said the committee will recommend acceptance of the Times' offer in voting by the union members within the next 48 hours.

He would not disclose terms of the offer. The Guild has been asking a 7.85 per cent wage increase which would bring current top minimums to approximately \$110

Owner Abandons Car, Leaves Cryptic Epistle

DES MOINES (AP)—A financially pressed car owner abandoned his auto here, then in an unsigned note to police Thursday explained: "Sir: This car belongs to Duffy used car lot at Chico, Calif. I'm sorry I can't make payments."

a week for six-year editorial staff members. They now get a \$102 top.

The Times management confirmed that an agreement had been reached but would not disclose terms. It said an announcement of plans for resumption of publication would be made after the Guild members vote on the plan.

The agreement did not guarantee reopening of the plant as four other unions have contract discussions pending with the Times.

The strike, called July 16, has idled about 700 employees, including 250 guildsmen.

County Forest Fund Reaches All-Time High

An all-time high fund apportionment to Oregon counties, based on 25 per cent of forest reserve rentals and sale of timber for the year ended June 30, 1953, was announced by Secretary of State Earl T. Newbry Thursday.

This apportionment aggregated \$6,029,382, which was more than \$1,000,000 in excess of the apportionment last year, ended June 30, 1952.

Lane County topped in the current apportionment with \$1,296,500, followed by Linn County with \$493,313 and Douglas County, \$491,128. Marion County gets \$198,831; Polk, \$2,943; Yamhill, \$18,518.

Watson's retirement is probably one of the

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