

SPUDS: Nonprofit donated 26 million pounds of food crops between 2006 and 2017

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Hamm said because the acres are a mixture of potato varieties, it doesn't work to send them all to a french fry plant, for example, but each individual potato is good for eating.

"This is a good use of potatoes that are absolutely OK, just not for a commercial setting," he said.

On Wednesday, Stahl Farms donated the labor and equipment to harvest the potatoes, which were loaded onto trucks provided by Medelez Trucking. The trucks took them to Walchli Potato to be processed, washed and packaged and sent to a storage facility owned by farmer Steve Walker. Hamm said they didn't have a final number yet, but it was definitely more than 100,000 pounds of potatoes.

Farmers Ending Hunger, which started in Umatilla County, facilitates donations of fresh food from Oregon farmers to the Oregon Food Bank. Burt said Wednesday's effort with the test potatoes was a lit-



Potatoes are bagged, and then stacked on pallets on Wednesday at the Walchli potato processing facility outside of Hermiston.

Staff photo by E.J. Harris

tle different than the normal donation, but it was worth

the effort. Some of the potatoes will go to CAPECO in

Pendleton to be distributed locally, and the rest will be

picked up by the Oregon Food Bank to be distributed

to their network of food banks throughout the state.

"We will leave as much locally as possible," Burt said.

Hunger is an issue throughout Oregon. According to the Oregon Food Bank, 14 percent of Oregonians are "food insecure," meaning they don't have reliable access to a sufficient quantity of nutritious food. Of those 552,900 Oregonians, 194,070 are children.

The food bank works to lessen hunger by distributing food through 1,200 different local sites around the state and Clark County, Washington. Food is kept in 21 regional food banks, with CAPECO serving as one for northeastern Oregon. Food comes from corporate and individual donations, and Farmers Ending Hunger is one of the top donors. The nonprofit donated 26 million pounds of food crops between 2006 and 2017.

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GRIT: The difficult job is to convince the country that a print publication is still important

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in 1875, a rough, risk-laden period in the state's history.

"Along with schools and churches, a newspaper provided an important measure of civilization and order," he writes. Having a newspaper "was a way of proclaiming that a town was real and here to stay."

Willingham explains how small-town papers survived uncertain early years, how they weathered crises — such as the 1922 Astoria Fire and the Great Depression — why some papers succeeded and others folded, and why they aggressively promoted the development of their towns. "If the paper's going to thrive, the community has to thrive, and vice versa," he said.

"Grit and Ink" also highlights celebrated moments for the local press — such as *EO* editor Edwin Aldrich's push to save Pendleton's woolen mill and jump-start the Pendleton Round-Up, or *Astoria Evening Budget* editor Merle Chessman's bold editorial stand against the Ku Klux Klan.

"You learn a lot of Oregon history, actually, through this book in a way," Willingham said. "You see what the editors saw was important in their communities, and what they reported on, and what they commented on, and tried through their editorials to shape the response of the communities to those events."

Finally, the book shows how community journalism has changed from the late 19th century to the present — and how much of the pro-

fession remains the same.

Indeed, the values laid down by legendary *EO* editor C.S. "Sam" Jackson were values Aldrich, his successor, built upon — a commitment to fierce independence, accurate and fair reporting, championing the underdog and serving as the voice of the community.

Independent observer
EO Media Group CEO Steve Forrester, *The Daily Astorian's* former editor and publisher, asked Willingham to write the company's history back in 2014.

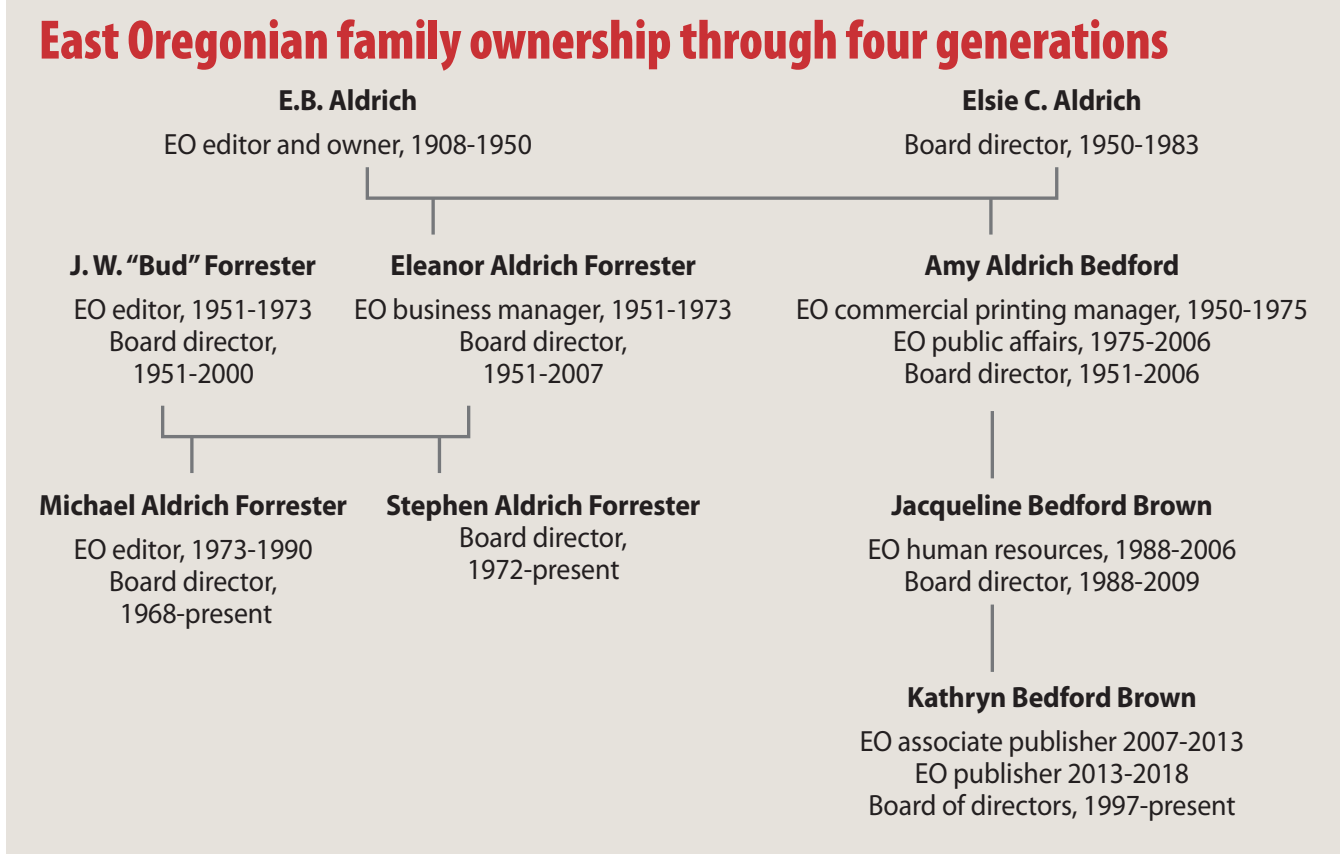
Though "Grit and Ink" is a book about the company, published by the company, Willingham said it isn't an "authorized biography." The ground rules for research were "wide open," he said.

"I had a totally free hand to go wherever the research took me, and I had no interference whatsoever with the process," he said.

The book will be distributed by Oregon State University Press.

Willingham read through *EO* records, dug through documents at the Oregon Historical Society and researched secondary sources. He studied the company's two daily papers, handful of weeklies and 20 years of online editions.

In addition, he interviewed Mike Forrester, Steve's older brother — who like their father, J.W. "Bud" Forrester, also edited *The Daily Astorian* and *EO* — Heidi Wright, the company's chief operating officer; John Perry, the retired COO; and John Shaver, the company's retired chief financial officer. And he had



continuing conversations with Steve Forrester and his cousin Kathryn Brown, who is now vice president of *EO* Media Group and until recently was the publisher of the *EO*.

Steve Forrester said he learned things about his family's company that he never knew.

"From listening to dinner-table conversations, I knew that there had been an unsuccessful venture in Idaho" — namely, the company's purchase and subsequent sale of the *Twin Falls Times* in the early 20th century. "From Bill's research I learned the details," he said.

"The book has been four years in the making, so it is

most heartening to see the finished product that is so compelling and attractive," he added.

Fighting newspapers

With material that errs on the informational rather than colorful side, the book may put off readers uninterested in the finer points of running a news operation.

What will make the biggest impression? "The fierce commitment of that family over three generations — four generations now — to succeeding in community journalism, to really do what it took and make the sacrifices to keep those newspapers alive," Willingham said, "because they felt the value they were add-

ing to the community and the importance of what they were doing."

Part of that value comes from the decision to remain a print publication, something that appears at people's doorsteps and dentist's offices.

"I think that's still what you need for an identity with your community," Willingham said. "There is that physical presence that's really necessary, and of course the difficult job is to convince the country that that's still important. Because when everything is online, it's so easy to lose sight of it, or to forget what it takes to maintain it."

There's a deeper value

every journalistic enterprise must consider: "What are the basic principles that you won't sacrifice over time, that you feel — under whatever economic and political and social circumstances — will stand the test of time?"

If "Grit and Ink" has a central message — a philosophy of how journalism should be practiced — Willingham said it is captured in a quote by Jackson that serves as an epigraph for Chapter 1: "Print the truth. Fight for the right. People like a fighting newspaper."

"I think that motto really runs through the entire history of the Forrester family newspaper adventure," Willingham said.

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