

Fifty Years of Oregon Newspapers

By George Putnam

(Read at the Golden Jubilee of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.)

It is just 50 years ago that the linotype, hitherto a laboratory experiment, was first sold commercially. The machines were shipped over the protest of Ottomar Mergenthaler, their inventor, who left the company to work out improvements, finally in 1890 bringing out a successful machine. It is just 50 years since Frederick E. Ives, who died a few days ago, invented half-tone engraving, enabling the printing of photographs, now a main feature of all publications. Later Mr. Ives invented the three-color printing process, enabling the printing of photographs, recently the polychrome process and movies in natural color.

Mechanical Improvement

These inventions and many others have contributed vitally to the perfection of production. Presses have been constantly improved in mechanism, as have stereotyping processes. Electricity, unknown to the newspaper plant of 50 years ago, now turns the countless wheels as well as lights the plants. The teletype has replaced the telegraph operator with hitherto unattainable speed in the sending of news, and the transmission of photos by wire and radio has become an actuality. In brief, all mechanical processes have been speeded up by science, for half a century ago neither the auto, the airplane, the radio, the movies nor countless other inventions that have transformed civilized life existed, save in the visions of some dreamers.

Fifty years ago the type had to be set by hand, the typewriter was not in general use, the counting machine not yet invented, the telephone was available to few, the incandescent light just coming into use, and the electrical age just dawning. The first newspaper chain was still in its infancy. Hearst had but recently acquired the San Francisco Examiner and was busy experimenting with sensations. Pulitzer had but recently launched his venture in popular journalism, the New York World. Leased wires were few and press association reports consisted mostly of skeletonized pony services.

No Size Limit

Fifty years ago even city newspapers consisted of four or eight pages, with an occasional splurge of 12 or 16. Now there is no limit to the size of the papers, for there is enough type, paper, press speed and news available. Not so in 1887, when there was neither sufficient type nor the time for setting it, even though printers averaged 12 hours and were paid by their "strings." The then limited production has been speeded up all along the line.

Advertising in the modern sense was unknown then to the smaller papers. It consisted principally of display cards that ran along with-out change. National advertising was mostly patent medicines and quack cure-alls, though a few manufacturers of standardized merchandises utilized the newspapers, increasing in volume through the years since. But, we must remember, modern merchandising methods were comparatively unknown then.

Business Sense Lacking

Fifty years ago circulation rates were higher than those of today. Lack of business methods handicapped many journalistic ventures. Partisanship and politics, rather than news, was the main objective. Gradually this has changed and newspaper publishing has become a standardized business, if not profession. The advertising manager and the circulation manager have become skilled in their lines of merchandising.

Newspapers have become vast business enterprises, requiring capital in proportion to the communities served. The business has been standardized and systematized. The fly-by-night adventurer is definitely out of the picture.

The personal journalism of 50 years ago has been largely superseded by the impersonal one of the corporation, but the opportunity for the individual remains. A higher standard of ethics obtains, necessitated to maintain reader confidence.

However, some of the greatest newspaper successes of this half century have been built by violations of every code of ethics, through unscrupulous methods.

"Toss a Coin, Boys"

Founders of Portland Flip For Naming of City

If it had been "heads" instead of "tails" Oregon's largest city would today be referred to as "Boston, Oregon."

For it was by the flip of a coin in 1845 that A. L. Lovejoy, a native of Massachusetts, and F. W. Pettygrove, a native of Maine, settled the privilege of naming a city at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers. Pettygrove, the man from Maine, won the flip and immediately christened the village "Portland," after the metropolis of his home state.

"Uncle Billy" Brooks, early settler in the Waldo Hills country, amassed a fortune of \$50,000 and at his death bequeathed it all to foreign missions. His property he gave to the Methodist church, also for foreign missionary work.

Heating Technique Develops With Growth of Northwest

From primitive times, home life has centered about the hearth. Savages wanted protection from wind, ice and rain; they built rude huts and roasted themselves in front of the fire.

Pioneers came west, and with them they carried a fundamental desire for homes—warm homes, protected from the elements.

In 1837 a pioneer cabin was fortunate if it possessed a smoldering fireplace and a stone bake-oven.

Many were the trials and tribulations of housewives in those days. Their day was full, and cooking remained a delicate and harassing art. Stone ovens supplied both heat for cooking and for warmth, for early settlers were economical.

According to R. C. Clark's "History of the Willamette Valley," a visitor to the valley in 1845 could say: "With the box or frame house comes the inevitable stove. The cooking and eating of the family go on in a lean-to room. . . ."

Even in that day, notes the visitor, the fire and stove was a warm and gratifying influence. "To my eye," he writes, "there is something rarely comfortable in the

low, solid, rugged walls of gray logs, with overhanging shingled roof; the open hearth, too, with its great smoldering back-log and wide chimney, invites you to sit down before it and rest."

They had their troubles. The picture was idyllic. But there are many references to the fireplaces that "went wrong" occasionally, driving out occupants of the house in uncontrolled haste.

"If people of today could go back to the pioneer days, they'd find it pretty hard to adjust themselves," asserted Herman Cutler, of the Caspar and Cutler heating firm. "Maybe it's just because people are getting lazy!"

Cutler, who has viewed the progress in heating equipment during the past two decades, insisted that the predominant demand is for comfort in heating.

Gradually, as a farmer or merchant prospered, he installed more elaborate heating facilities. That tendency has accounted for the large business now being served by heating companies, Cutler said.

Caspar and Cutler, in three years of existence, has built itself up as the second largest heating firm in the state, with a valuation of \$20,000.

When the firm started in 1935, it was valued at \$2500.

Caspar and Cutler does an annual business of \$75,000, in comparison to the modest \$8000 total it met in its first year. The number of employes has jumped from one to 14.

Oil and Gas Popular Oil and gas heating systems have been subjected to a large increase in demand, Cutler stated. He estimated that in 1937, the demand for oil and gas systems together, accounted for 58 per cent of the total, indicating a departure from the requests for wood heating.

In addition, he said, 61 per cent of the heating systems installed were accompanied by air-conditioning process.

Caspar and Cutler now boasts the only "elbow machine" in the Will-

amette, guaranteeing a large output. The firm also has a 300 ton press. Seven trucks and three cars are now employed, contracted to the single automobile that the company started out with in 1935.

The company has also purchased a new set of rolls and shears for one-half inch boilerplate. Cutler disclosed. It also possesses the only spot-welder in the valley, which can be used in place of riveting. Caspar and Cutler is agent for the Frazier gas furnace, which has shown wide popularity here in the past year.

Nicholas Caspar went into the furnace business in 1926, at the present location. Herman Cutler entered in 1935.

Although the partnership of Caspar and Cutler extends only over the past three years, the firm had its roots in the efforts of Dave Steiner over 50 years ago. Steiner was assisted in his development of furnaces by F. H. Berger, his son-in-law. In 1931, Caspar, who had worked with the company, bought an interest.

Brazil wants its foreign debts based on its "economic capacity to pay."

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First 'Gay Divorcee' Scandalizes in 1846

Divorce reared its ugly head in Oregon as early as 1846, a WPA survey reveals. At that time, one Mary Ann Smith obtained a decree in provisional court, November 2. The jury turned a hearing ear to Mary's plea, found "the allegations as set forth in the petitions substantiated" and gave to the supplicant "all the rights and immunities of a state of celibacy."

To Mrs. Smith went the dubious distinction of receiving the first divorce granted to a woman in Oregon.

Sales of radio sets in France are about half those of a year ago and radio manufacturers are dismissing employes.



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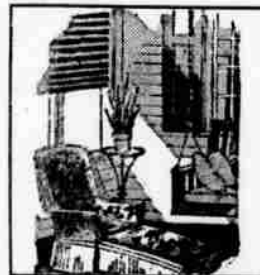
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