



Offbeat Oregon History

Criminals and dynamite are a long tradition in Oregon

BY FINN J.D. JOHN
For the Sentinel

For the criminally minded Oregonian of yore, dynamite had much to recommend it. It was relatively easy to buy the stuff, surprisingly easy to steal it from a construction depot, and almost shockingly simple to brew up at home using a few simple, innocuous ingredients from the local drugstore.

Furthermore, when used in a criminal enterprise, dynamite was like a first-class ticket to the front page of the local papers. A lot of crooks really enjoyed the ensuing notoriety.

So it's not surprising that it enjoyed a relatively high level of popularity among the state's criminal class. It's been used for plenty of crimes over the past 100 years or so — crimes against society as well as crimes against good sense. In addition to obvious abuses of dynamite by safecrackers, train robbers and self-styled dead-whale disposal experts, dynamite has also proved a great boon to:

Extortionists. Naturally, "pony up or be blown up" is a compelling argument, although it doesn't always come together the way the extortionist wants it to. In the case of D.B. Cooper, the skyjacker who in 1970 took a commercial airline flight hostage for a \$200,000 payoff, it worked nicely — although there's plenty of doubt as to whether Cooper lived to enjoy it. In the case of David Heesh, the "Beaver Creek Bomber," who in 1974 dynamited a dozen high-voltage power lines and threatened cut off power to Portland if he didn't get a \$1 million ransom, it did not — the FBI triangulated on his CB radio signal and caught him red-handed.

Jailbreakers: Prison, until relatively recently, was a place where inmates worked hard at tough, dangerous, exhausting jobs — building roads, breaking rocks, and so on. Projects like that sometimes involved dynamite. When they did, enterprising would-be busters-out were not slow to take advantage of any opportunities that came their way.

Late in the evening of July 28, 1907, a massive explosion rocked the Portland city jail at Kelly Butte. A group of four inmates had managed to smuggle three sticks of the good stuff home from the jail's rock quarry. Then they spent at least a week trying to surreptitiously drill a hole in the

prison wall, using a railroad spike for a bit and the heel of a shoe for a hammer. Finally, having made about a one-inch-deep divot in the wall, they tamped the dynamite against it as best they could, lit the fuse, and took cover.

The blast cracked the concrete wall of the prison bunker but didn't breach it. Unfortunately for the inmates involved, it was pretty easy to figure out who was responsible. Everyone in the joint ran for cover except four guys, who eagerly ran straight into the smoke and falling plaster. No doubt they tried their best to "act natural" when they got to Ground Zero and saw the wall still there, but the guards didn't buy it, and all four of them were busted.

Things worked out even worse for a convict named Harry Edwards at the pen in Walla Walla, just over the border in Washington state, in late 1915. Edwards' plan involved extracting the nitroglycerin from the dynamite he'd stolen by boiling it in a big kettle — a technique well known to the "yeggs" of the day, who liked the more concentrated and pourable nitroglycerine for tough safe-cracking jobs. The "soup" would float to the surface, where it could be skimmed off and carefully bottled up for later use.

Unfortunately for Edwards, the state was using a different kind of dynamite.

"After an explosion which wrecked a corner of the bunkhouse and inflicted minor injuries to two sleeping convicts, Edwards was found fully dressed, while fragments of a metal kettle were distributed over the landscape," the Pendleton East Oregonian reported the next day. "Edwards was considerably 'peevish' at the state for providing dynamite which proved so tricky."

The paper doesn't mention how badly Edwards was hurt in the blast, but it couldn't have been too bad, because he was out of the hospital within a week.

Jealous lovers. Yes, there have been a few examples of young men using dynamite for this purpose — either trying to murder the unresponsive objects of their affection, or their rivals. One memorable case happened in Klamath Falls in 1912, when a 30-year-old logger named George Gowan learned that the 17-year-old girl he was sweet on, Miss Adeline Beck, was

Please see **OFFBEAT**, Page 5A



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Chair issues

This is in regard to the service I have received from Numotion concerning my electric power chair. I have severe MS and I am dependent on my power chair at all times, from performing daily functions to getting to medical appointments.

Numotion has been contracted to supply repairs to my power chair, and in late October of 2014, I contacted Numotion for repairs to my chair. On Oct. 30, the technician brought the required leg lift but failed to bring the parts required to install it.

By Nov. 6, my chair was reduced to going in circles to the left. I was stuck in a hallway, unable to go anywhere but into a wall.

On Nov. 10, another technician came out and determined that the left motor was going out. He said he would order a new one.

I spoke to the technician several times between then and Dec. 4, at which time I found out that the motor had not even been ordered yet and that my chair would be out of order until after the first of the year.

It is now Jan. 30, and I am still without a working power chair or any indication as to when I might expect the repairs. I am relegated to a

manual chair which, to say the least, is extremely difficult for me to use with my MS. I am practically bedridden since transferring from the bed to the manual chair is almost impossible without help. My quality of life has plummeted drastically.

Life can be challenging for people with disabilities, and often we have to rely on medical supply companies to supply/repair the things that make our lives a little easier and help us cope with our physical restrictions. Companies such as Numotion shouldn't even be allowed to contract to deal with mobility issues when they are so unprofessional and unsympathetic to the people they are supposed to be serving.

I would strongly warn anyone with mobility issues to be aware of Numotion.

Nichole Fegles
Cottage Grove

Loggers got gyped

Thank you, Wilbur and Catherine Heath for what you have done to help further the safety conditions, business practices, logging methods and image of the timber industry. I include Catherine because it has been a joint effort. Wilbur spending all day on

the job site and then having to spend numerous evenings and weekends working with the Associated Oregon Loggers to get that organization off the ground had to have an affect on family life.

I must take exception to the term "gyppo". It was not because loggers gyped people — it was because loggers were getting gyped by so many people. Granted, a few loggers would not pay all of the crews wages and would gyp the employees by not paying them, or shorting them on hours — but they were far and few between.

To get on with how the logger was gyped: There were the scalers employed by the people buying the logs; they would short-change the logger on the scale an inch or two on diameter or maybe even more, and then gyp them on length. They would cut the grade of the log, and a number one mill would suddenly be a two mill; a one-peeler would be a three-peeler at best, a high-defect one at that; there would be cull-out logs that were not culls. Sometimes they would cut the net volume by cutting the diameter and length because of a perceived defect.

Like the old saying goes, "One scaler knows how many board feet are in a log, two are not sure." Then the mill would give the scaler their

earned bonus. When water scale was popular, some logs were somehow missed and did not get scaled at all. The timber owner would quite often extend the property line so the logger was trespassing when in fact he would be guided by the owner's directions as to where to log; then the logger was the dumb so-and-so for trespassing. When the mill owner got a load that was mis-scaled and they were aware of it, the timber would get cut up or put into the deck before the logger got the scale slip — there was no way to find the logs in question then.

So you see, it wasn't the logger that was gyping people; it was because he was so easy to gyp.

With the different log scaling bureaus that have been established that has almost come to an end, and the scalers now days are honest and trustworthy people, as well as the people buying the timber. They wouldn't be in business if they weren't.

I do not find the term "Gyp-po Logger" derogatory. I wear that badge proudly.

To get back to the original point I was making, Thank You Wilbur and Catherine!

Dick Gilkison
Cottage Grove

Preserve your vision: prevent (or reverse) diabetes

BY JOEL FUHRMAN, MD
For the Sentinel

Diabetes is a serious disease that poses considerable risks to the vascular system, particularly to the crucial and delicate blood vessels of the eyes.

Diabetes is the leading cause of blindness in adults. Nonrefractive visual impairment refers to a



visual defect that cannot be corrected with glasses, and diabetic retinopathy is a common cause of nonrefractive visual impairment. Retinopathy is quite common among diabetics; about one-third of diabetics over the age of 40 have diabetic retinopathy. Retinopathy can lead to serious vision loss, preventing sufferers from driving and living independently.

A new study has uncovered an alarming upward trend in nonrefractive visual impairment and provides evidence that the diabetes epidemic is likely the cause.

Nonrefractive visual impairment increased by 21 percent among adults between 1999 and 2008 — a dramatic increase in a short period of time. When broken down by age, the largest increase in prevalence occurred in younger people — 20 to 39 years of age, compared to older age groups. This is a stark finding that predicts climbing rates of disability among middle-aged

and younger adults in the near future.

The researchers then looked to the risk factors for this type of visual impairment to find the potential underlying causes. The risk factors include older age, poverty, lower education level, lack of health insurance and diabetes. Diabetes rates increased by 22 percent among U.S. adults from 1999 to 2008, and the other risk factors remained relatively stable, suggesting that the increase in visual impairment was due to the increase in diabetes.

Once diabetes is diagnosed, the damage to the body progresses over time, and the risk of complications progressively rises. Having diabetes for at least 10 years was linked to greater risk of nonrefractive visual impairment, and a greater proportion of the population had been living with diabetes for at least 10 years in 2008 compared to 1999; in adults younger than 40, this proportion doubled.

Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common in younger populations, and therefore diabetes is beginning to do its damage earlier in life, bringing dangerous complications, such as vision impairment, earlier in life.

This is alarming data that begs for action; it indicates that medical advances toward better glucose control are not preventing vision loss due to diabetes. Managing glucose with drugs is not enough — we must get rid of diabetes to get rid of the risk.

Preventing and reversing diabetes: for type 1 and type 2 diabetics, the risk of vision-related complications can be eliminated with a nutritional eating style plus frequent exercise. The vegetable-based dietary program described in my book "The End of Diabetes" is the most effective dietary approach for those with diabetes and is much more effective than drugs. For a Type 2 diabetic, this approach results in complete reversal of the diabetic condition for the majority

of patients. For a Type 1 diabetic it eliminates the excessive highs and lows, dramatically reduces insulin requirements and prevents the degenerative diseases common in later life in those with type 1 diabetes. Both type 1 and type 2 diabetics can maintain excellent health, proper eyesight and quality of life into old age. Now is the time for us individually and collectively to utilize modern nutritional science to save our vision and save lives.

Dr. Fuhrman is the #1 New York Times bestselling author of *Eat to Live* and *Super Immunity*, and a board certified family physician specializing in lifestyle and nutritional medicine. Visit his website at DrFuhrman.com. Submit your questions and comments about this column directly to newsquestions@drfuhrman.com.

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Personal attacks and name calling in response to letters are uncalled for and unnecessary.

If you would like to submit an opinion piece, Another View must be no longer than 600 words.

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