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Flight o' Time

Medford and Jackson County History
from the files of the Mail
Tribune 10, 20 and 34 years ago10 YEARS AGO TODAY
February 1, 1940
(It Was Thursday)Arthur E. Powell, Central
Point, announces candidacy for
GOP nomination as county com-
missioner.Value of building permits in
Medford for January totals \$8,
186 compared with \$17,750 for
January 1939.Local women meet with Mrs.
Frank Humphrey to organize local
Sojourners' club.E. E. McKinney wins Rogue
Valley Radio club contest for
member making most contacts
by amateur radio.Walter E. Wiltermood, Med-
ford, makes first solo hop as
member of private pilot training
course here.20 YEARS AGO TODAY
February 1, 1930
(It Was Saturday)Mail box installed near street
in front of post office proves
big help to motorists.Oregon defeats Oregon State,
37 to 29, in basketball game.Bank deposits in Oregon re-
ported on decrease in past year.34 YEARS AGO TODAY
February 1, 1916
(It Was Tuesday)Total of \$778,778 to be col-
lected by tax collector in 1916 in
county; \$5 million shrinkage in
valuation.Fred L. Heath opens former
Diamond pharmacy and re-
names it Heath's drug store.

Editorial Comment

THE ACHESON STATEMENT

The moving statement by Sec-
retary Acheson concerning his
attitude toward Alger Hiss was
phrased with straightforward
simplicity. The secretary made
three points. First of all, he
would not discuss the law or the
evidence or anything to do with
the case itself. It would be
"highly improper" for him to do
so while it was "before the
courts." Second, regardless of
the ultimate fate of the case, he
did not intend "to turn his back
on Alger Hiss." Third, this de-
cision was a matter of individual
conscience, to be reached by
"each person in the light of his
own standards and his own prin-
ciples." For a definition of his
own standards and principles he
referred the listeners to the Gos-
pel of St. Matthew.The verses in question are
among the noblest in the New
Testament. They include the
words: "I was in prison and ye
came unto me," and "inasmuch
as ye have done it unto one of
the least of these my brethren,
ye have done it unto me." Per-
haps the voice of the late Bishop
of Connecticut, Mr. Acheson's
father, sounded in the citation.The Secretary might have
used more words to state his
point of view and might have
defined it in more detail and
with more precision. But we do
not see how any one desiring to
be fair could take these words to
be a defense of Alger Hiss. To
suggest that he was giving the
slightest opinion as to guilt or
innocence is to ignore an express
declaration. To argue that he
was in any possible position of
defending communism, in or out
of the State Department, seems
to us equally untenable.This newspaper has felt it nec-
essary at times to criticize and
oppose Mr. Acheson in his pol-
icies. We may well be compelled
to do so again. But this state-
ment made on Wednesday in a
difficult hour, we are glad to
declare that in our judgment it
was as courageous as it was
Christian.—New York Herald-
Tribune.

Editorial Correspondence

New York City, N. Y., Jan. 27—If things continue to go along
as at present, the Hiss case can hardly help but become a political
issue in the approaching campaign.Republican congressmen started the ball rolling. Secretary
of State Acheson and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt on behalf of the
administration have thrown fuel on the partisan flames by throw-
ing the ball back.President Truman again demonstrated he is one of the
shrewdest politicians in the country by refusing to get involved in
the Hiss controversy one way or the other.But he will probably have a hard time extinguishing the flames
and avoiding entirely the complications resulting from his
remark about the activities of the Un-American Activities com-
mittee being a "red herring," drawn across the political trail to
distract attention from the real issues.All of which comes under the heading of foolish business.
But since when has "foolish business" been eliminated from our
national political campaigns?Had Mr. Acheson and Mrs. Roosevelt followed the example
of their party leader and ignored the Hiss case, the GOP leaders
would have been hard put to inject life into such a far-fetched
issue. But with both of them directly or indirectly taking up the
 cudgels for Hiss, the administration may well be maneuvered
into an extremely vulnerable and unpopular position when the
congressional campaign gets into full swing.For, however resentful the personal friends of Mr. Hiss may
feel regarding his conviction, there is no doubt of the public
reaction in this state—and probably throughout the country—as to
this "cause celebre." The people, AS A WHOLE, are anti-Hiss
and strongly anti-communist. The party that takes the other side
will not only be immediately placed on the defensive, but will
lose votes.

So-o-o-o—

We expect to see some strenuous efforts on the part of the
powers-that-be in the Democratic party to "shush" any further
demonstrations of pro-Hiss sympathies on the part of Secretary
Acheson, Eleanor Roosevelt, or any other prominent members of the
"Democratic Family." And "per contra" we expect to see the
GOP generally issue orders to play up the Hiss issue at every
opportunity and leave no stone unturned to force the
Truman administration into a defense of the Reds, the fellow-
travellers and the subversive elements in this country. That may
be bad logic, but it is good politics.We believe only those who followed the Hiss trial in the
press carefully—or regularly attended it—can understand how
Secretary of State Acheson happened to make that extraordinary
statement regarding Mr. Hiss.For it WAS extraordinary.
Here was a former official of the State Department convicted
of perjury—a conviction which could only mean he had violated
his oath of office and betrayed his trust. And yet the head of
that department, a high official of the government, declared that
even if the conviction were upheld by the Supreme Court, he
would "not turn his back" on his old and good friend Alger
Hiss, then clarifying his position by referring to the gospel of
St. Matthew, to-wit:"I was in prison and ye came unto me," and "inasmuch
as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye
have done it unto me."

No light touch there.

No casual observation.

It was apparent, Mr. Acheson was thoroughly aroused, stirred
to the depths by the conviction of his friend and former colleague.
Moved so deeply that he threw discretion and political considera-
tions to the wind, and regardless of the consequences to himself,
sailed forth to stand loyally by his former associate, and pro-
claims to all the world, that while others might desert him in
his hour of trouble, and still others join the mob to rush in for
the kill, he, Dean Acheson, would remain what he had always
been, a loyal and devoted friend!If anything quite like that has ever happened in American
public life we can't recall it. And, of course, it was "duck soup"
for the Republican opposition. They lost no time in twisting the
declaration into a defense of treason, a repudiation of the Ameri-
can jury system, a defiance of the Supreme Court and what have
you. Not surprisingly the GOP demand for Secretary Acheson's
resignation was at once repeated.It was, as remarked, an extraordinary statement, and from
such a source, a surprising one.But that is the way this man Alger Hiss has apparently been
able, ever since he entered public life, to arouse in those associ-
ated with him, an almost fanatical devotion, personal respect, ad-
miration and confidence, bordering in its emotional intensity almost
on a religious fervor. And this has been true not only among
those who have worked for him and been associated socially with
him, but those for whom he has worked, from the highest gov-
ernment officials to members of the U. S. Supreme Court.

In the court room during the trial it was the same.

There were few neutrals where the defendant was concerned.

Those who were for him were for him 100 per cent. Those who
were against him, were 100 per cent against.Mr. Cross, a Boston conservative, chief counsel for Hiss, was
another example. According to reports he had seldom taken
criminal cases in many years of practice, being a specialist in
corporate law. He only took the Hiss case when convinced of
the young man's innocence. Cross certainly was not the emotional
or sentimental type. Yet he was so stirred during his final address
to the jury and in his plea for mitigation of punishment for his
client that his voice shook and at times he appeared on the point
of breaking down entirely."I still believe in Alger Hiss!" were his final words as he
sank exhausted into his chair.No one in the court room could doubt the man's absolute
sincerity. And yet knowing what he did about the case, having
listened to all the evidence, how could he feel and believe as he
did?Get the answer to that question and you have the answer to
Dean Acheson, the answer to an intimate friend of this
writer, a college professor, writer and Phi Beta Kappa who, in
spite of the verdict, is completely convinced Alger is not and
could not have been guilty—he is merely the victim of the pre-
valing cold war hysteria—the everlasting Communist witch hunt.It is different with Mrs. Roosevelt. She admits she does not
know Mr. Hiss, and should also have admitted (although in her
interior she didn't) she had not closely followed the case.But when party politics enter the picture—any picture—
Eleanor instinctively puts on her war bonnet and mounts the
Democratic battlements, to loyally defend the party and her
family.So she springs to the defense of the adviser of her late hus-
band at the Yalta conference in part as follows:"A man who has confessed innocence is involved
by a man who by his own admission, is perjurer and a
former Communist. It seems rather horrible to condemn
someone on the word of someone else who admits to guilt.
I have never known Mr. Hiss well enough to testify as to
his character, but I have often heard him speak and cannot
recollect ever hearing him say anything that would cast
suspicion on him. * * * One thing troubles me, if you had
been disloyal and your conscience troubled you, the only
way you could go scott free would be to accuse someone
else of the things you were accused of."We are quite sure if Mrs. Roosevelt had followed the Hiss
trial as the former Alice Roosevelt did, she would never have
issued such a statement.For had there been no evidence but the Chambers statement,
we are quite certain Hiss would have been acquitted. Chambers
was admitted perjurer, an ex-communist, erratic, undepend-
able, his testimony impeached in innumerable ways.But there WAS MORE EVIDENCE. Particularly there was
the typewriter and the 59 documents, with even the defense
admitting the latter had been transcribed on the former. In two
trials and close to a year's time, the defense could not explain
in any way, how anyone but Mr. Hiss could have transcribed them.Perhaps as Alger Hiss declared, when Judge Goddard
him forward to be sentenced, the time may come when it
explained how Whittaker Chambers "forged" those implicat-
ing documents on the Hiss machine. But until that time DOES come,
we are quite sure, no one with an open mind after a careful
examination of ALL the evidence, can question the justification
of the jury's guilty verdict.—R.W.R.Timberman Publisher
Succumbs In BerkeleyBerkeley, Cal., Feb. 1—(U.P.)—
George M. Cornwell, 82, found-
er and publisher of the Timber-
man, Portland lumber trade
journal, died today at his
home here after an illness of
three years. The Timberman
founded in 1899, is a monthly
magazine of international cir-
culation. Funeral services will
be held Thursday in the Little
Chapel of the Chimes in Berke-
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