Ancient Woodville Oak Careful; Nearby Home Is Spared In Fall

Rogue River, Mar. 18—A giant oak, one of the historical trees of old Woodville, toppled and fell with a crash recently. There was not a breath of air stirring, according to Mrs. Julia Myers, in whose yard the oak had stood, when with a pioneer's true dignity and respect for the surrounding lives and property, the old tree fell to earth with the least disturbance possible.

Roots Give Way

It had stood through the storms of at least a hundred years, grown to maturity, and then, in ripe old age, when its roots had rotted away, leaving it without anchorage, it toppled over. One large limb cleared the woodshed roof to fall full length at the rear of the shed as though the big tree had carefully lifted its heavy arm as it fell, stretching its huge 85-foot body out across the yard.

As the short stubs of the old tree's roots tore from the wet earth, only a few bricks were displaced from the walk that curved around its base, but black crumbs of wet soil were plentifully spattered over the back porch and the well curb, and over the old hand pump that for many years has stood in the shade of the tree and served ice cold water to the Myers family.

Mrs. Julia Myers, 89 years of age, was alone in her home at the time the tree fell. "I thought it was an earthquake," she said, "it shook so." In commenting on the other large trees growing in her yard and the possibility of their falling and damaging her home, Mrs. Myers said, "I'm not afraid of them; they lean, a little, away from the house, just as this tree did, and God carefully laid this one down without harm to anything. He did a better, neater job than any man could do."

The tree measures 12 feet 2 inches in circumference, according to Arthur Myers, who said their neighbor, Ray Moore, will buck it up into firewood.

'Don't Be Impatient' VA Tells Veterans

Washington, Mar. 18— (U.P.) — The veterans administration again told veterans today — "Don't be impatient."

The special GI life insurance dividend checks are rolling out at a steady rate. About 225,000 checks a day are mailed out. At the close of business today, 9,729,603 checks, representing payments of $1,741,735,731 had been mailed.

The agency continues to be besieged however, with inquiries by veterans who think they should now have their checks. The questions arise because of the system VA uses for mailing the checks. It is based on the last three digits in the veterans' service serial number.

(Acme Telephoto)

FLORIDA VACATION—President Truman disembarks from the yacht Williamsburg at Key West, Fla., after a rough sea voyage from Washington, D. C. The President, in Key West for a three-week vacation, said he enjoyed the trip despite the two days of storms; and was ready to make another similar voyage at any time. Saluting the colors in the background is Maj. Gen. Harry Vaughn, the President's military aide.

Rarity Collector Finds His Hoards Have High Values

Memphis, Tenn. —(U.P.)— For more than half a century, 79-year-old Louis Philip Wulff has been collecting things, the items ranging from stamps to artifacts.

Now that he has started disposing of his possessions, he is surprised at their value.

Take, for example, the collection of Danish, American Indian and Alaskan artifacts he turned over to the University of Tennessee. Prof. T. M. N. Lewis, head of the university's department of anthropology, said they are worth "thousands of dollars" and date back to pre-historic times. One set of Danish arrowheads were chiseled sometime between 6800 and 5000 B.C.

Then there was the set of 60 rare books which Wulff, a native of Copenhagen, Denmark, turned over to the university. Among them was an almost priceless edition of Sir Walter Raleigh's "The Historie of the World," published in London in 1634.

Other objects in the Wulff collection have gone to public libraries and two colleges here, and he's looking through his belongings to see what else he has of value.

"I'm getting up in years," Wulff said. "After I die, my collections might become scattered. I'd rather have them go where they can do some good."

He has sailing ship models, relics, ancient and modern firearms, etchings and prints of vessels of all types, pictures, portfolios of rare autograph letters, old bottles and what have you.

Mars In Flirtation With Earth

By J. Hugh Pruett
Astronomer, Extension Division, Oregon Higher Education System

The red planet Mars, namesake of the fiery Roman god of war, is again staging one of his biennial flirtations with Mother Earth. Once in 25 or 26 months, the two in their regular spatial wanderings find themselves on the same side of Old Sol. Since the path of the planet is outside that of our world, Mars on such occasions appears very bright to us.

Oval In Shape

As neither of the orbits concerned is a circle but is slightly oval in shape, all near approaches are not equally near, the best occurring once every 15 or 17 years. The last "nearest" near approach came in 1939; the next comes in 1956. The most distant occurred in 1948.

Mars will be nearest us this year on March 27, when it will be 60,350,000 miles distant. Around this time it will rise almost due east—unless obstructions interfere—and at about sunset. There will be no mistaking it for in the early evening nothing of equal brilliance appears in that part of the sky. Sirius in the south excels it slightly, but twinkles with a blue-white light while Mars shines with a steady, reddish glow.

May Be Different

To many, the mere mention of this planet brings visions of Men from Mars, perhaps in full armor ready for a hostile descent upon our hapless world. But actually we know nothing about animal life on the planet. If such creatures do exist, they may be quite different from anything we can imagine.

Mars is relatively a small world, having a diameter a little over half that of the earth. Its atmosphere is very thin and usually quite free from clouds. Since it is half as far again from the sun as are we, it does not receive as much solar heat. Freezing temperatures seem certain during every night. The Martian day is about 24½ hours in length; the year, almost 23 months. Mars has two tiny moons encircling it.

The polar regions in winter are covered with white—seemingly real snow. This begins to disappear when spring comes, and soon the tropical regions darken to something like a green as though vegetation was developing. It seems that the polar moisture has been carried toward the equator, either through the air or along the surface and causes the vernal revival of life.

Soil May Be Saturated

Some attempt other explanations of the darkened areas. Arrhenius has suggested that the soil in these places may be saturated with chemicals which readily absorb moisture from the air coming from the polar regions, and thus form dark mud. During the dry season the mud dries out and is again light in color.

The so-called canals are a subject upon which prominent astronomers are not in agreement. This column will be given entirely to canals next week.

Olympia, Wash., Mar. 18—(U.P.) Phil Fryer observed St. Patrick's day by dyeing his beard bright green.

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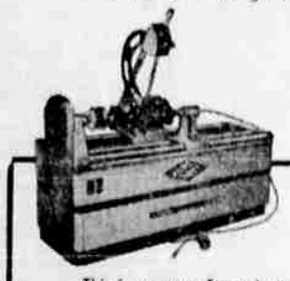

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