

Ex-Medford Mayor Believes Prospects Bright for Future

By GREG NOKES
Mail Tribune Staff Writer
Earl C. Gaddis, the dear of Medford mayors, believe that Medford's prospects for the future are bright—as long as the city keeps from overdoing any one thing.

Gaddis, still spry and alert at 81, speaks from experience. He was a mayor and city councilman here during the worst financial crisis in the city's history. The crisis started in 1912 when the bottom fell out of an orchard speculation-inspired boom.

Gaddis was elected to the city council in 1916 and to the mayoralty post four years later. It was during this period that the city was scheduled to plunge into nearly \$1½ million to repay bonds that had been floated by the city during the boom years.

Over-Speculation
It was over-speculation in the fruit industry that caused that financial collapse, and Gaddis fears a recurrence of the crash should the city and valley ever again overextend themselves in one particular facet of their economy.

Gaddis, the oldest living ex-mayor of Medford, is now retired and lives alone at 815 East Jackson st. He was elected to relate several highlights of the term of office as part of the Mail Tribune's recognition of the city's completion last Thursday of 75 years as an incorporated city.

Gaddis is one of four past mayors who are still living. The others are George Porter (mayor from 1924-27), H. S. Jeuel (mayor from 1941-43), and Earl Miller (mayor from 1955-57). Miller is now Jackson county judge.

All in One Building
When Gaddis was mayor, the city hall, fire station and police department were all located in a two-story building at Sixth and Front sts.

Gaddis recalls that in his first year on the city council, it met more than 100 times to try and work out some solution to the city's financial problems. (The city council now meets only 24 times a year.)

Much of the blame for the financial collapse, according to Gaddis, rested with the promoters of the Rogue valley in those days.

He explained that these promoters would send advertisements all over the country and hold special exhibitions in the east which led to the false impression that money could be made overnight in the orchard business.

Flood to City
Estateholders flocked to the city and purchased thousands of acres of orchard property. Many bought sight unseen. In a period of about three years, from 1909 to 1911, the city's population jumped from 12,000 to 24,000. It was during this time that the city floated nearly

\$1½ million in bonds to finance extensive street, sewer and water improvements.

But, when the speculators in orchard property discovered that they would have to wait at least seven years before they could make any money on their crops, they left. It wasn't long before the city's population dropped to less than 4,000 people.

When the crash came many people were forced to give up their property for non-payment of debts. The collapse was nearly complete.

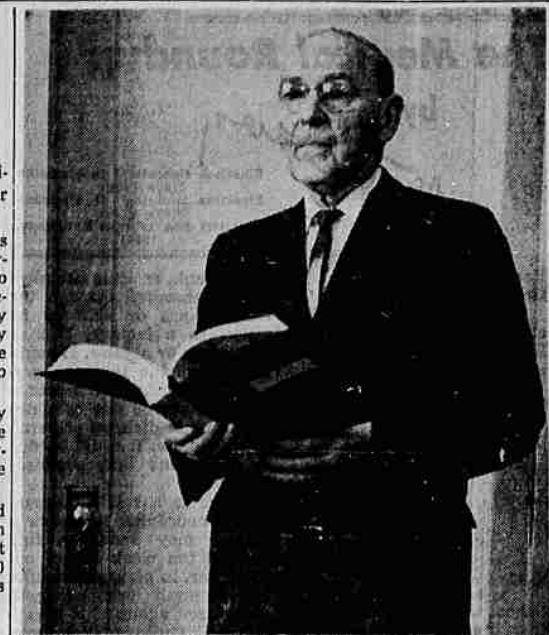
By the time Gaddis joined the city administration in 1916, things were so bad that the city had to borrow \$40,000 just to pay its own back taxes on property it owned.

Consolidate Debts
Regarding the bonded indebtedness, Gaddis said the city elected to consolidate its debts and then refinance them with a certain amount to be paid off each year. It was the only answer at the time, he said.

As a result of the financial trouble caused by bonds prior to and during his administration, Gaddis said a charter amendment was adopted by the people requiring that all bonds be serial bonds. In other words, a certain amount had to be paid off each year.

Under Gaddis, the city's first bond issue was voted for in 1912, with the line being completed two years later.

But finances were not the only problem facing the city during those days. There was



OLDEST EX-MAYOR—Earl C. Gaddis, 81, the oldest living ex-mayor of Medford, is shown looking over a copy of the new Medford city code. Gaddis was a mayor and city councilman during the worst financial crisis ever faced by the city. He is now retired and lives alone at 815 East Jackson st.

also a need for a new water supply, Gaddis recalls.

Move Started
It was in 1923, during Gaddis' first year as mayor, that a move was started to get Big Butte springs water into Medford. Eventually funds were voted for the first gravity water line from the springs, and construction started in 1925, with the line being completed two years later.

It was during this same period that Medford City Man-

Medford Mayors

From Feb. 24, 1885, to Present
Feb. 24, 1885—T. O. W. n run by board of trustees.
March 29, 1885—J. B. Howard named town president.

Dec. 6, 1887—J. S. Howard becomes first official mayor.

Jan. 3, 1888—E. P. Geary
Jan. 4, 1888—Willard Crawford
May 20, 1888—M. Purdin
Jan. 23, 1890—G. W. Howard

Jan. 12, 1892—J. A. Whitehead
Jan. 18, 1893—W. I. Yawter

system—are regarded by Gaddis to be the "growing features" of his term of office with the city. Gaddis does not pretend to take full credit for these, however, and points out that they were realized only after a lot of hard work by a lot of people.

Gaddis' service with the city did not end in 1925 when he retired as mayor. (He did not seek reelection.) The next mayor appointed Gaddis to the water commission and he served there until 1930. Since then, as a private citizen, he has made it a point to know what is going on and why it is going on.

He said the city could never have made it through those years of crisis as well as it did, had it not been for the "100 per cent hard way" backing of the people of the city. When those hard times were past, he said, the people "were ready and eager to go on to bigger and better things."

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Questionnaire for Marriage License Applicants Argued

Salem — 499 — The Senate Judiciary committee Monday heard a pitch for a bill that would require those who apply for an Oregon marriage license to answer questions pertaining to their mental health.

Two doctors with the Oregon Psychological association said the questions would be asked over perhaps a 16-month period and "samplings" taken during this time from about 1,000 couples.

Not All To Participate
Not every couple who applied for a license would have to participate but research teams would choose at random those who have to. Under SB272, if they refused, they wouldn't get a marriage license.

New York — 498 — Police and FBI agents across the country today questioned suspects in the slaying of 4-year-old Edith (Ginger) Kocor, but the 30-year-old toothless dishwasher they sought may be hiding right around the corner.

New York police assigned 500 men to dredge through the Bowery and other areas where drifters gather. They said it was highly possible their prime suspect, London-born Fred J. Thompson, might still be in the city six days after Google was lured from the front doorstep of her uncle's apartment building, ravished, and beaten to death in a shabby, \$8-a-week room.

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Suspects Quizzed In Death of Child

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Straub Criticizes Forest Land Bill

Tillamook — 498 — Sen. Robert W. Straub Monday night criticized HB314 and said it would hinder public ownership of forest land which he described as the "poor man's tree farm."

The measure would require the state to give back certain lands to counties if the counties asked for them.

Addressing the Tillamook County Democratic Central Committee, the state senator from Eugene said the bill would cut acreage of public-owned forests to the detriment of small operators.

The Oregon Democratic chairman said it would encourage liquidation of public forests in some counties and impair sustained yield management of the State Forestry Department.

Griffin Creek Grange
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