

From Out of The Past

By LANCE SAILS

Place: The Hill House, Mill City, Ore.

The manager of The Hill House again requested those present at the last Chamber of Commerce meeting to again pass the word along to have people (regardless of whether they owned stock or not) to register their spare rooms with the hotel in order to take care of the overflow of the traveling public who desire to stop over at Mill City. Those who have been co-operating in this over the past have reported that they have made some nice friends who are still writing and coming back to visit us up here in the hills.

The wife of one of the fishermen stopping at The Hill House this past week, while just browsing around town, happened to see the sign "Ada's Needle Shop", and thought it a good opportunity to get the buckle on her suit belt fixed. She did. This lady was captured by our quaint little town tucked her in the hills, and the two women got to talking. Mrs. Plymale was not to learn of for whom she had sewn till later that spring and again that fall. Not only was this lady pleased with Ada's expert needlecraft as well as her friendliness, but said in leaving, "I've got an idea—you're going to like, I think. Thanks so much for fixing the buckle, and I'll see

you this fall. My husband comes up here each year to hunt."

This lady was from Portland. On her own she had inserted the following ad in The Oregonian, the week before fishing season opened here:

TO THE WIVES OF FISHERMEN

THIS year, girls, why not go with him?

Take with you those skirts and things for alteration you've always intended to get fixed but never found time to—or for that matter, any other sewing and, be sure to take them to

ADA'S NEEDLE SHOP

in Mill City

This quaint little town in the mountains in the North Santiam canyon is within walking distance or short driving distance of some of the best fishing in Oregon.

You won't be bored, there's lots to see and to do, and the friendliest people in the whole state of Oregon."

Ada's business has grown. She now sews for people all over Oregon. She has expanded her business, and now with four seamstresses and two clerks and the gift mail order business has developed into one of those things that one doesn't readily believe possible. Ada is now reaping the harvest of the smile and the genuine friendliness she sowed. And now for my column for this week:

The Democrats were tired and weary. They needed a rest, and some "time out" to cook up some more dreams, "deals" and experiments, to bring about the more abundant life for the benefit of all of us, and so everyone who wanted to work would have jobs. So, they let the Republicans have it for the next four years, the American people showing their gratitude and appreciation in November 1952 by voting us a well earned and certainly a deserved rest. LONG LIVE THE REPUBLICANS! (that is, until next election!!!)

An error of judgment on the part

of a great people appears to have produced a mistake which, luckily, will turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Lucky people, we Americans! Over these next three years and the balance of this one, one should give thanks in their hearts to the "Democrats in Exile", because had the Republicans NOT gotten in, this story might never have been written.

All a Republican is anyway, is a Democrat who either never acquired the ability to dream, or had become too old to—of better things—for you—for me!

If you will remember, back to 1953, you will recall that the Republican administration had been at the helm but three short months until the papers were full of explanations of their failure in attempts to balance the budget and cut taxes, etc.

Things began to look rough back there in the spring of 1953. Jobs were closed down, etc. All sorts of things beginning to happen.

About this time, the hillbilly mind commenced to function.

Now it "aint" everybody that can be a hillbilly. Lots of people have tried to be one of us—and just couldn't somehow make the grade. You've just about got to live here in these hills a few years to become thoroughly indoctrinated with our philosophy and thinking. Here we are—in Nature's Empire—and no one has to be told I am sure—that self-preservation (survival) is THE FIRST LAW OF NATURE.

Anyway, we all managed, somehow, to get through the spring and summer—but that autumn of '53 will stand out in the history of this canyon as the turning point for a lot of us. It was at the Annual Bean Picker's ball, held in Stayton, to which hundreds of we hillbillies come down out of the hills to attend.

The Hillbillies had organized a sort of buying co-operative early in 1953 and all that spring and summer had attended auctions and bought up pigs—hundreds of them—and brought them back up here to the hills. Farmers were going broke and unloading their stock.

We hillbillies entered into a reciprocal trade agreement, I guess you'd call it, there at that ball, whereby we would furnish the valley folks with "sow belly" in exchange for their beans. Things were tough—and getting tougher from day to day. (I believe it was this same year that young Bob Hill sponsored a soft-ball team and called them The Hill Billies, which have since brought fame to our little mountain town of Mill City.)

Like most great discoveries of science—some "insignificant something" happens that leads to a greater discovery even than what they were searching for in the first place. Some of the hogs got loose—and though people missed one now and then they never thought too much about it—until one day some small boys—playing Indian—with bows and arrows came running—wild-eyed and excitedly, down the side hill above the new highway near Mill City. They tried to tell everybody about the funny looking animal they had seen. Naturally, people, though getting a big kick out of the stories of these kids, were inclined to dismiss it as "just a kid's imagination".

However, talk of this strange animal persisted—people got to wondering—and asking themselves "Could it be?" Weeks after this episode the kids still talked about it and just as excitedly as they did the day they first saw it.

(I remember one of these kids—I think it was Stiffler's youngest boy—he just wouldn't let anyone forget

about it. He is now quite a young man and I think he is an intern at the Santiam Memorial hospital—the kid always did want to be a doctor, and he'll be a "top-notch", too!)

Not until that fall—during hunting season—was one of these animals killed—and brought in, did the people hereabouts begin to connect it up with the story the kids had told earlier in the year.

It was thought at first it was either a throw-back or a cross with some other animal. What puzzled everyone was—but how? and with what?

The Mill City Meat Market (which used to be located in the old Dawes building—across the street from the bank) was the place where it was displayed during days. At that time they had some sort of an overhead crane arrangement whereby they hung this animal by the hind feet over a hook and rolled it out during the day—suspended over the sidewalk—and back in the refrigerator at night.

Will anyone who reads this—who was in Mill City at the time—ever forget the stories this discovery started Tom Booth telling of early days here in the canyon! I hope that somebody collected them—just as Tom told them—with his own picturesque speech and descriptions. To Jack Colburn (of Booth & Colburn, then) and his good-looking and ambitious wife, Kay, goes the credit for the news of this sensational discovery of this queer animal reaching the outside world as quickly as it did. For miles—on either side of Mill City—along the highway—were signs hurriedly put up—red letters on butcher's paper, tacked to a board—and some tacked on trees:

STOP AT MILL CITY—SEE FREAK CAUGHT IN WOODS NEAR HERE ON DISPLAY AT

MILL CITY MEAT MARKET

Little wonder that not a single car ever passed by Mill City that week. People didn't know what to expect—or think—whether it was two-legged or four—or whether we had gone cannibalist up here in the hills. Things were pretty tough.

Such traffic had never before been seen in this little community. Lee Knowles did OK that week—and Geo. Stewart, too—with his wrecker truck. There were cars parked every which way—one way traffic across the bridge. All the film in town had been sold. Bob Veness from on top of the Bank building, getting pictures of people taking pictures.

(Next week I will describe this strangest and newest animal on the North American continent, tell you the name it was given, and the events and promotion which followed that brought to this canyon a whopper of a tourist trade built around the newest of hunting sports, the establishment of an altogether new kind of sports-

wear garment industry, and a packing plant—along the lines of a custom cannery, to say nothing of the unbelievable change in the already unsurpassed scenic beauty of our hills which followed early attempts to insure this new and strange animal choosing our hills as its favored habitat, just to mention a few of the changes this discovery brought about. Don't miss it!)



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