

Meanest Prisoner in Ore. Pen's History Now A Free Man and Useful Citizen

BY PAUL W. HARVEY JR.
 CLARENCE JOHNSON, who was one of the meanest prisoners in the Oregon state prison's history, is out of debt to society.

This man, who tried to kill one man and who then brutally murdered another, is the subject of a gripping story about how the worst type of criminal can make good.

Now a completely free man for the first time since 1916, he owes freedom to ex-Gov. Charles A. Sprague. And Johnson never caused Sprague to regret it.

Now 66 years old, Johnson is working in a Portland business club, and is a free citizen years after murdering the little white-haired lady who had bedeviled him.

Gov. Paul L. Patterson has given Johnson a full commutation of sentence, meaning he's paid his debt to society.

The known Johnson for 16 years, how he became a responsible citizen, and how he did it with his own resources. He wasn't reformed by the state.

Let's go back to the beginning of his story.

Working in a San Francisco shirt shop, Johnson had a common-law wife.

On Dec. 23, 1916, he found her with another man, so he shot her in the neck. Off to San Quentin he went to serve five years for assault with intent to kill.

The little white-haired Portland lady, who was active in the Prisoners Welfare Association, was Mrs. Eunice Freeman, 37. Mrs. Freeman got Johnson a parole, and he came to Portland to live in her home.

Johnson soon started running around with a woman of shady character, or of virtually no character at all.

Mrs. Freeman objected. Johnson, fearing Mrs. Freeman would have him returned to San Quentin as a parole violator, bludgeoned Mrs. Freeman with a piece of gas pipe on Aug. 15, 1919. The result was a life sentence for murder.

During his first two years in prison, Johnson spent most of his time in the bull pen for repeated violations of prison rules. He threatened to kill the warden.

The prison record says Johnson

"was one of the toughest men ever received here."

Suddenly, in 1921 Johnson changed. He decided to be a good boy. He never misbehaved after that.

There was a riot in 1925, Johnson, by then a trusty caring for the prison lawn, seized the prison arsenal, thus denying guns to the rioters. Prison officials said that if it hadn't been for Johnson's brave act, the riot would have turned into a blood bath with many killed.

As a trusty, Johnson, at various times, ran the bakery, operated the prison store, ran the green house, and was general assistant around the administration building.

On July 1, 1940, despite the doubts of many skeptics, ex-Gov. Sprague released him with a conditional pardon. Johnson would have to report to the parole board regularly.

He had to go back to San Quentin for three months to clear up the old sentence.

Then he went to work at Portland steel company, which was beginning to build Navy ships. Soon he was foreman of a large department.

He came to see Sprague and me often, proudly showing us two books—his savings account book, and the book listing his war bond purchases.

By the end of the war, he had several thousand dollars.

Since the war, he has worked mostly for clubs.

Two years ago, Johnson told me it was his big wish to get a full pardon or commutation, so he could die a free man. He said he'd like it for Christmas.

I wrote a column about him then, but it was too late for the governor to act in time for that Christmas.

But this Christmas, he'll be a free man.

When his application for a full commutation of sentence went to Gov. Patterson, it was supported by Sprague and the parole board.

Sprague, writing that Johnson "has proven himself fully," said: "I have noted with great satisfaction his successful adjustment in society. He has held steady jobs, has saved his money and has kept out of trouble."

Johnson worships Sprague, proud

Army Brass Gleeful Over Turkey Dinner, As Usual, But Personnel All Bitter

By WILLIAM C. BARNARD.
 SEOUL (AP)—The U. S. 8th Army announced with apparent gusto this week that the soldiers in Korea would be "devouring more than 150 tons of turkey" on Thanksgiving Day.

But the apparent gusto, it seemed, was confined to the quartermaster people.

Slowly the dread news spread—from the rear echelons right up to where troops look out on the demilitarized zone.

You could hear the wail in tent and bunker: "Oh no, not turkey again—anything, even boiled eel or turnip greens."

What was the story behind this uprising against the turkey?

This puzzled reporter went out to investigate.

"Why couldn't it have been steak?" asked a captain. He was an obvious beef eater.

"Chances are 3 to 5 we'd have got turkey whether it was Thanksgiving or not," said a private.

"Back home," moaned another enlisted man, "we ate turkey about three times a year instead of three times a week, and I could enjoy it."

That was it. The Army suffered from a glut of turkey. How come?

A lieutenant colonel wasn't sure. But he told how it was late in the war.

The colonel recalled with fine nausea those last harrowing days—two weeks when the front-line soldiers had turkey every other day.

"It was a ration foulup," he declared, "and it did us a lot more harm than the enemy did."

So the situation is normal—all fowled up. Turkey on the menu twice a week with hot turkey sandwiches and turkey salad in between.

A mess sergeant told me he became so depressed he took to strong drink. He wanted to put up a sign on the mess hall door: "Caution: Turkey Today." His major talked him out of it.

It isn't just the repetition that has the U.S. 8th Army down on turkey. The cause lies deeper than that—in the deep freeze where the turkey is kept, the colonel said.

"Maybe the turkey just comes too damned far and for too damned long," the colonel said.

"Somewhere out on the ocean it loses all its flavor and arrives on my plate tasting like a roasted plastic pocket comb—with sage dressing."

New Medical Machine Has Vast Potential in Field

HOUSTON, Tex. (AP)—A new medical machine developed here can record a heart beat at the same time it checks the amount of oxygen in your lungs and body cells.

Simultaneously as it checks and records nine body functions, it can detect brain complications and tell a doctor whether his patient needs artificial respiration. Its development was a community project here.

First visualized by the staffs of the Southwestern Polio Respiratory Center and Baylor University's College of Medicine, the physiograph was put into practical application by Dr. Leslie Geddes. A team of physiologists, clinical men, physicists and medical technicians combined ideas for Geddes.

Yesterday, at a reception where

the device was unveiled, Dr. William S. Spencer, director of the respiratory center, said:

"This is an effort to begin a whole flock of body function studies at one time, moment by moment studies because the disease may change the way a body reacts—moment by moment."

Other researchers said the machine can detect when a patient needs drugs to support a lagging heart. It is expected, they said, to be a key detector in diseases of the heart, lungs, and respiratory system and in brain complications or injuries.

FANS

LONDON (AP)—London's transport authority is going to install a series of huge fans to cool off its hot tunnels. The average underground temperature, it said Friday, has risen 22 degrees in the last 40 years.



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Thanksgiving... 1953



For this we give thanks!

For husbands and sons safely home.
 For the end of days racked with loneliness and fear. For the silence of the guns in the Korean hills.
 But let us remember that just to be thankful for peace has never been enough to keep peace. It can only be preserved by a country that is strong and secure.

That takes will and work and saving, by all of us.
 Only if each one of us saves for his own family security can we have the national security which provides the power for peace!
 Maybe saving hasn't been easy for you, but you will find that you can save—and easily, too—by investing in U. S. Savings Bonds through the Payroll Savings Plan where you work. Ask any friends now on this Savings Plan. They'll tell you that you never miss the money because it is saved for you, before you get your salary!

You can save as little as a couple of dollars a payday.
 Or as much as you choose. Sooner than you expect, you'll have a comfortable nest egg in Bonds. Protecting your family, protecting your country. Helping guarantee that there'll still be peace on Thanksgiving Day, 1954.
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	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$25,000
Each week for 9 years and 8 months, save . . .	\$8.80	\$18.75	\$45.00
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