

Curiosa Americana
By Elmo Scott Watson

Mill Hitched to the Moon
REMEMBER the old admonition to "hitch your wagon to a star"?

Caleb Hodgdon did better than that. He hitched his mill to the moon and for 111 years the moon has been running the mill for him and his descendants.

It was back in 1825 that Caleb, sailing down the coast of Maine, reached the mouth of the Damariscotta river and saw a 40-acre natural pond which opened into the river through a very narrow inlet. This perfect tidal basin was filled and emptied twice a day by the sea, and since the moon controls the tide, it is literally true that he hitched his mill to the moon.

Caleb built a dam and a bridge which are still in use today. He installed the old type undershot waterwheel to run his mill and used it as power for grinding grain as well as sawing lumber. Next he added a shipyard and began building ships.

Later generations of Hodgsons continued to operate the mill and shipyard, and one of the products of the latter was the schooner, Bowdoin, which Commander Donald B. MacMillan used in his Arctic explorations. Later Hodgsons also replaced the undershot water-wheel with a turbine, but the principle of operation of the mill is the same with it as with the water-wheel. When the tide rises, it forces open the gates in the dam which Caleb built and fills the pond. When the tide is on the ebb the doors automatically close and the water is prevented from flowing out of the pond except through the turbines of the mill.

Go to East Boothbay, Maine, today, and you can see the mill which Caleb Hodgdon built and hitched to the moon.

Double Meaning
IT FIRST appeared in a Philadelphia newspaper in 1776 thus:

Hark! hark! the trumpet sounds, the din of war's alarms,
O'er seas and solid grounds, doth call us all to arms;
Who for King George doth stand, their honors soon shall shine;
Their ruin is at hand, who with the Congress join.
The acts of Parliament, in them I much delight,
I hate their cursed intent, who for the Congress fight.
The Tories of the day, they are my daily toast,
They soon will sneak away, who Independence boast.
Who non-resistance hold, they have my hand and heart,
May they for slaves be sold, who act a Whigish part;
O'er Mansfield, North, and Bute, may daily blessings pour,
Confusion and dispute, on Congress evermore;
To North and British lord, may honors still be done,
I wish a block or cord, to General Washington.

It was reprinted in many other Colonial newspapers. "That's fine!" said British army officers and Tory officials. "The man who wrote that is certainly loyal to His Majesty."

If any Patriot heard one of them say that, he must have smiled to himself. For if he was "in the know," he didn't read the poem as it is printed above. He read each line as far as the comma in the middle, then he read the next line the same way and so on. Or he began reading at the comma in the first line, then dropped down to the comma in the next and so on.

That gave the poem a very different meaning indeed. Try it and see for yourself why the Patriots read it that way!

Mad Poet
ONE of the most beautiful descriptive passages in all American literature is these often-quoted lines:

Nor twilight lets her curtain down,
And pins it with a star.

They were written by McDonald Clarke, the "Mad-Poet" who died in the "lunatic asylum" on Blackwell's Island, New York city.

Characteristic of his gift of combining the ridiculous with the sublime was the poem which he wrote about George Washington:

Eternity—give him elbow room;
A spirit like his is large;
Earth, fence with artillery his tomb,
And fire a double charge.
To the memory of America's greatest man;
Match him, posterity, if you can.
© Western Newspaper Union.

Poisonous Snakes
Rattlesnake is not necessarily a "gentleman snake" which rattles its tail before every strike. A cotton-mouth water moccasin can and does bite under water. The copperhead is the most common poisonous snake in some sections, says a writer in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and, in the dead grass and dried up leaves which it infests, is one of the hardest to detect.

Giant Forest Hog Largest
The giant forest hog is the largest of the pigs, and bears a Latin name, *Hylochoerus Meinhertzgeni*, in proportion to its size. Three times as heavy as a wart-hog—an adult may weigh up to 500 pounds—it is often compared in size with a donkey or mule.

Many Languages in India
Britain's great linguistic survey of India, twenty-five years in process, describes and lists 850 languages and dialects of the country

Scenes and Persons in the Current News



1—Crews of two Japanese warships paying their respects at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington cemetery. 2—King Edward VIII of England, vacationing in Yugoslavia, enjoying a motorboat ride with Mrs. Ernest Simpson, one of his guests. 3—Generals Goded and Burriel, captured Spanish rebels, at the court martial trial that resulted in their conviction and execution.

OUSTED FROM MEXICO



Gen. Nicolas Rodriguez, leader of the Gold Shirt movement in Mexico, which was officially banned recently by the government, shown on arriving at the International boundary at El Paso after being transported by plane from Mexico City. The political refugee predicted the possibility of a civil war similar to that raging in Spain.

Marital Barque Launched in Lake



Five years ago, Merlin Andrews, life guard at Lake Pontchartrain, New Orleans, rescued Miss Elsie Hagner from drowning in the lake. The other night he took her back into the waters of the lake and married her before a huge audience that lined the beach.

Lumberjack Shaves With an Ax



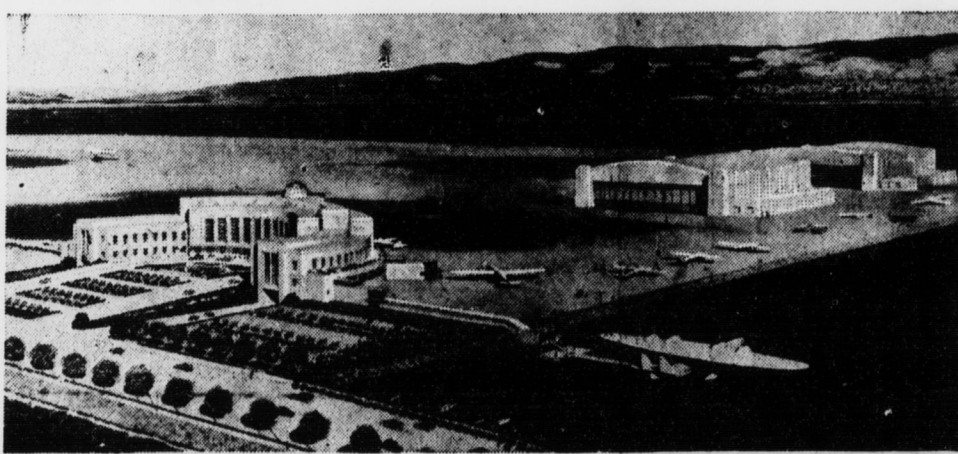
Jack Wallulis, lumberjack who works among the giant firs of Oregon, shown shaving himself with a double-bitted ax which has one blade ground to a razor edge. He has shaved with an ax for three years without an accident.

FIRST G-WOMAN



Margaret Eleanor Connors of Bridgeport, Conn., has become the country's first G-woman. Attorney General Homer Cummings has announced her appointment.

Big Airport Which San Francisco Will Build



First official sketch of San Francisco's new municipal airport, to be opened in 1940 at Yerba Buena Shoals. The 430-acre site, now under reclamation by army engineers, will be the scene of the Golden Gate International exposition in 1939. Part of the exposition program is the construction of the three permanent structures shown in this oil painting—the Administration building, embodying the most modern design and equipment of aeronautical engineering, and the two hangars. The three buildings, financed by PWA grants, will cost more than \$1,600,000.

Washington Digest
National Topics Interpreted
by William Bruckart
National Press Building Washington, D. C.

Washington. — The Associated Press carried a dispatch from Moscow a few days ago that had more in it than just the announcement that certain oppositionists among the Soviet leaders were to be executed. The dispatch reported that 16 confessed conspirators against the Soviet state were sentenced to death by the firing squad as the "highest measure of social defense" of a government.

It reported a new stage in the so-called progress of Communism in the Russian state. For the first time since the Bolsheviks came into power they ordered the death penalty for some of the leaders who marched in the Revolution of October, 1917.

So we have a clean sweep now of the men who sat next to the dictator, Lenin; the men who were his closest advisors in council are out of the way, and in their place remains the extensively practical and strong-willed executive, Stalin, who has in this instance declined to allow theory to interfere with a condition.

Here is the picture. Leon Trotsky in exile and under sentence of death if he returns into Russia. Zinoviev shot to death. Kamenev also executed by a firing squad (he will be remembered as an outstanding pillar of Bolshevism). Tomsy, a suicide. Rykov, Bukahrin and Rodek under investigation by the dreadful OGPU. A hated secret service is looking into the records of Sokolnikov and Pyotakov. The latter two have been important advisors to Stalin. But what is all of this about? The answer is simple. While these men were charged with plotting the murder of Stalin, with conspiracy, beneath it all lies the thirst of men for power. Through all of this since the fall of the Russian empire and the execution of Czar Nicholas, the Communists have pushed forward. The strongest of them have traveled. That is the why of Stalin. Yet as most always happens under any circumstance where the will of a few men runs free, they have inflicted to the last degree the power that they have gathered unto themselves. In so doing they have not failed to reserve unto themselves such considerations as they thought necessary—a perfectly human trait of character answerable only where a whim becomes a will and there is power to carry it out.

Between Stalin, who was able to enforce his will, and Trotsky, who dwelt in the starry heavens of theories and dreams, there is only a theoretical difference. Each wanted Communism. Trotsky considered the problem in the terms of world revolution; Stalin thought of it as the Russian state and recognized his capacity to carry his plans through in that jurisdiction. So the Stalin-Trotsky feud, as it has turned out to be, has become ferocious and any one who has gone contrary—even entertained thoughts contrary to the will of the mighty Stalin—committed a sin against the state. And a sin against the Russian state under Stalin means to disappear.

It seems to me there is an important lesson for the American people in that situation. Stalin, along with Hitler and Mussolini, is always right. It matters not what the people may desire, what their philosophy of life and living may be, how they propose to encourage or accept responsibility for self-government, the dictatorship continues.

Many times in these columns I have criticized bureaucracy in the federal government. There are so many bureaucrats in Washington now that some one has bitterly described them as locusts. It may seem quite a jump from bureaucracy to dictatorship but the difference actually is very small. When the people of the United States concede to the federal government such rights as the federal government attempted to exercise in NRA and even to a greater extent in the AAA, they are taking the first step to grant to a centralized government the authority that leads to absolute control of the person and everything that person does.

There are conditions undoubtedly that need to be remedied before our form of government is anything like perfect. There is always to be considered changing conditions and the changing whims of people themselves. But I entertain the conviction that so long as the American people are unwilling to accord increasing powers to the federal government, the nation as a whole will go forward, civilization will progress and we will enjoy having a government.

The transfer of William C. Bullitt from his recent post as ambassador to Russia to a similar assignment in France upon the resignation of Ambassador Straus has occasioned but very little comment, but it seems to me in view of all conditions and circumstances that it should attract attention. He will take up the job as the chief American diplomat at Paris in most troublesome times, the most difficult, perhaps, that have confronted an American diplomat anywhere since the days of 1917 to 1916. Appointment of Mr. Bullitt then, it would appear, is a move that calls into consideration not only the conditions which he will meet as our ambassador but also his qualifications for the job.

It is to be remembered, first, that the post of ambassador to Paris is the second highest in rank among our foreign diplomats. It is a post that always has called for about the best that our nation can turn out in the way of tactical representation even though we always count the assignment to London as the No. 1 ranking post. The reason is that we seldom, if ever, have had the problems to deal with in the case of the London government that continuously arise between the United States and France. We always have been friendly with France in modern times, but it can not be denied that there has been constant friction between the two peoples. The same has not been true concerning Anglo-American relations. Hence, the job at Paris has always been regarded as more difficult than that at London.

As for Mr. Bullitt's capacity, there is a general feeling that he is not an outstanding diplomat. He has achieved success in some lines, yet I believe the consensus is that in so far as his recent service at Moscow is concerned, the Russians can claim much greater success in dealing with the United States than we can in dealing with the Soviet. Those of us who were present as observers in Washington during the days when Foreign Commissar Litvinov met with President Roosevelt in the series of conferences that resulted in recognition of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics can not fail to recall how Mr. Bullitt labored to accomplish that recognition. It will be recalled as well that Mr. Bullitt insisted throughout these negotiations how trade would follow recognition. He urged that the 13-year old policy of non-recognition, held by Wilson, Harding, Coolidge and Hoover, should be cast aside in the interest of trade, predicting a great flow of commerce between the nations. President Roosevelt eventually made that the real basis for granting recognition.

None of the predicted trade has come about. None will be possible until the Soviet finds means of paying for American goods. American business men are a bit old fashioned. They want to be paid for what they sell.

After what some critics have called Mr. Bullitt's "dismal failure" at Moscow, he is promoted to the French post. The selection comes at a time when French internal politics are boiling. It comes likewise at a time when the Washington government is striving to expand American exports and when it is hoped that there will not be a further decline in outbound shipments such as official figures of the Department of Commerce show has taken place in trade with Russia.

Senator James Couzens of Michigan who is up for re-election this fall has sort of upset the apple cart for the Republicans, although they profess not to be particularly worried. The senior senator from Michigan has always served in the senate as a Republican but now he makes the announcement that he is going to support President Roosevelt for re-election and that brings the senator's regularity as a Republican into question.

Senator Couzens has been a powerful man politically in Michigan in years past. He has served his city, Detroit, and his state and the nation in a distinguished way. Obviously, such service builds up an important political following but, according to superficial indication, no one knows exactly how much remains of that following. This statement assumes that the senator's strength is not as great as it used to be and all current information supports that view. Yet, in politics, nothing is certain and that is the reason why Senator Couzens's action has proved disturbing.

Former Gov. Wilbur M. Brucker is seeking the Republican nomination for the senate in Michigan and thus the incumbent has his difficulties in getting the nomination because the Democrats will have a candidate of their own. Be it said in favor of Senator Couzens, however, he was fair with the voters of his party by announcing before the primaries what his attitude would be respecting the presidential candidates and his sincerity in this regard may have some effect. On the other hand, it is difficult to say how dyed-in-the-wool Republicans can remain with Senator Couzens after an announcement by which he virtually has read himself out of the party.

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Bullitt's Big Job
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