

The Courier – 1885 to 1900

Price





The Courier staff in 1897 consisted of, from left, Edna Parker, Mr. Smalley, Miss Brooks, Amos Voorhies and Miss Scovill. A sign on the office wall admonished workers to avoid unnecessary talking.

Amos Voorhies left his mark on the paper and the town

By Kathleen Alaks of the Daily Courier

mos Earle Voorhies was born on a farm near near Greenville, Mich., on June 6, 1869. He attended high school in Greenville and graduated in 1888

For a year or more, he clerked in a grocery store and later he became an unpaid apprentice in the office of the weekly Greenville Independent.

Voorhies came to Oregon in 1891, a time when work was scarce, but he managed to apprentice in several Portland job-printing offices. When he joined the Portland Sun, a daily morning newspa-per, his work day started around 4 p.m. and ended around 2 a.m. In the afternoon, he would walk the four or five miles from home to save the nickel street car fare and then he would walk back home because the street cars didn't run at that hour.

On Aug. 12, 1895, Voorhies arrived in Grants Pass, going to work as foreman of the weekly Oregon Observer. He did all manner of work around the office and solicited subscriptions, which he did throughout the county on horseback.

In July 1896, Voorhies returned to Greenville to marry Clara Emma Grabill, the daughter of the publisher of the newspaper where Voorhies had served an apprenticeship. Back in Grants Pass, the Observer could no longer afford to pay him and Voorhies lost his job, so he planned to return to Portland. Because he couldn't afford the railroad fare he bought a bicycle for the trip. The day before Voorhies was scheduled to leave, though, and at the urging of friends, Voorhies took his bicycle and rode the 40 or so miles to Ashland to try to persuade former Grants Pass school principal C.S. "Champ" Price, to join him in partnership to buy the Rogue River Courier, then a struggling weekly. Price, who was

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Grants Pass

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F Street at the Parkway

operating a peach orchard, agreed and mortgaged his property. Their first issue came off

the press on July 1, 1897. Price was editor, doing most of the reporting and writing. Voorhies, respectfully and affectionately known as Boss, was the printer, handling everything mechanical.

"Boss' father was a cabi-net maker, and passed down his woodworking skills and tools," recalled John Voorhies, Amos' grandson and the current president of Courier Publishing Company. "Boss was good with his hands ... dexterous and quick.'

In 1899, Voorhies bought out his partner and continued as publisher. That same year, on Oct. 19, his son Earle Elliott Voorhies, was born. Clara died in 1910, and in 1926 Amos married Lulu Benedict

Voorhies had just turned 28 when he and Price bought the Courier. He remained publisher, and later co-publisher with his son Earle, for nearly 64 years, longer than any other publisher in Oregon.

After resigning from active management of the paper, he continued to work regularly in the newspaper office filing newspaper clipoings for historical records He supervised the publication of the paper's diamond anniversary edition, published on April 3, 1960. He worked until just two weeks before he died, Oct. 27, 1960, suffering a stroke while raking leaves at his home at 421 N.W. B St. He was 91. Voorhies was a wellrespected newspaperman. He was president of the Oregon State Press Association in 1917 and for several years was state vice president of the National Editorial Association. He was an honorary member of Sigma Delta Chi, a professional journalism fraternity, and was a living recipient of the Oregon News paper Roll of Honor, established in 1938 by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Asso-

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ciation, in recognition of his 50 years in Oregon journalism. In 1979, he was one of the first eight men named to the newly instituted Oregon Newspaper Hall of Fame.

Besides his active newspaper career, Voorhies was active in the community as well. He was secretary and director of the Oregon Caves Company for more than 35 years and a past president of the Redwood Empire Association.

He was a charter member of the Hillah Shrine, the Grants Pass Elks Lodge and the Grants Pass Rotary Club. He belonged to the Grants Pass Chamber of Commerce and was an associate member of the Oregon Cavemen.

He was one of the founders of Company H in the Oregon National Guard in 1899, and rose to the rank of captain.

He never held public office, but in the Nov. 7, 1916 election, he campaigned as the Republican candidate for state representative from Josephine County, Seventh District. He lost by a vote of 2,020 to 1,299.

He was active in the Presbyterian church, sang bass in the church choir and served as clerk of the congregation for some 50 years.

He also chartered the Women's Christian Tempe ance Union in Grants Pass.

Courier editors through the years

1885-1886 — J.H. Stine 1886-1887 — W.J. Wimer 1887-1888 — A.A. Allworth 1888-1889 — Frank T.

Sheppard 1889-1890 — George H

Currey 1890- 1897 — Jerry Nunan 1897-1899— C.S. "Champ"

1900-1909 — Frank Men-

sch, Charles Meserve, T.K. Murray, Ben Sheldon, Ralph Cronise, George L. Drummand (the Frank B. Streeter exact dates for each are uncertain)

1909-1912 — C.G. Coutant

1912-1917 and 1919-1920 — Wilford Allen

1917-1919 and 1920-1926 — gap in G. Acklen (acting editor) records

1926-1929 — Wilford Allen Jr., "Pete" 1929 — Charles Harp

SEPTEMBER 1929-SEPTEMBER 1931 -D.L. Whitehurst

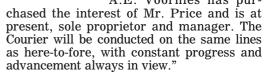
SEPTEMBER 1931-SEPTEMBER 1933 -

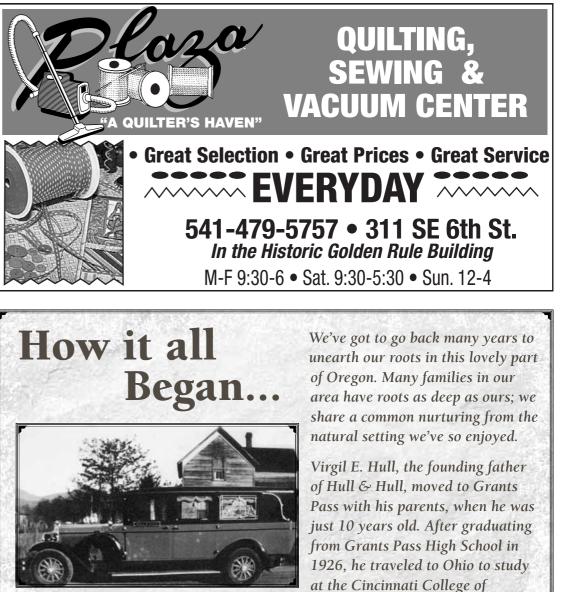
JULY 9, 1886 "Lost. On July 5th at the Picnic Grounds, a German-silver Clarionet key.



JAN. 18, 1900 "This week inaugurated a change of ownership of the Rogue River Courier. A.E. Voorhies has pur-

A reward will be paid to the finder by returning it to F.W. Van Dyke, Grant's Pass.'





WIMER 1886-1887

C.S. PRICE 1897-1899

1943 — Esther Bristol AUGUST 1943-FEBRUARY **1945** — Ned Chapin

Swerer

W.S. Trimble

FEBRUARY 1945-MARCH 1947 — E.V. Pederson

SEPTEMBER 1933-OCTO-

OCT. 1-8, 1942 — Frank

OCTOBER 1942-APRIL

BER 1942 — Rex Tussing

SEPTEMBER 1947 - MARCH 1957 -

MARCH 1957-FEBRUARY 1959 - Kenneth L. Hicks

FEBRUARY 1959-MARCH 1959 — Gerald

MARCH 1959-JULY 1963 - Paschal Wilson

JULY 1963-MAY 1986 — Harry Elliott MAY 1986-JULY 1986 — Paul Macomber JULY 1986-JULY 1990 — Roger Morton JULY 1990-PRESENT — Dennis Roler

"He didn't touch alcohol until about 1950 when Dr. Russell prescribed two ounces of port wine every night before bed," said John Voorhies. "He wouldn't go into the state liquor store to get it so I had to buy it for him.'

In 1957, the Oregon Highway Department and the city of Grants Pass recognized his interest in community progress by naming a street for him.

"I learned a lot from him, mostly by observation," grandson John said. "He was stubbornly honest and stubbornly responsible. Not a lettered man and I have no way of knowing how smart he was, but he must have been wise.

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Mortuary Science, earning his degree just two years later.

Returning to this area shortly after graduating, Virgil established Hull & Hull Funeral Directors, at Sixth & I Streets in Grants Pass. His business partner was his cousin, Ben; so you can see that it's been a family-owned business from the very beginning.

In 1931, Esther M. Harmelink married Virgil and together they raised four sons; William Ellsworth, Virgil Frederick, Jerry Edward and Thomas Michael. Their marriage was truly a partnership, as Esther was an instrumental part of the day-today business in the funeral home.



Virgil was to serve the community as Josephine County Coroner, beginning in 1932. He was also active in professional and civic organizations, serving as president of the Oregon Funeral Directors Association; as a charter member of the Grants Pass Elks Lodge, a member of the Golden Rule Lodge No. 78 IOOF and Grants Pass Lodge No. 84 AF & AM.



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His was a full, rich, spirituallygrounded life as he was also a very active member of First Assembly of God Church. When he was able to get away for a few hours, he enjoyed his personal passion: fishing in our local rivers.



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