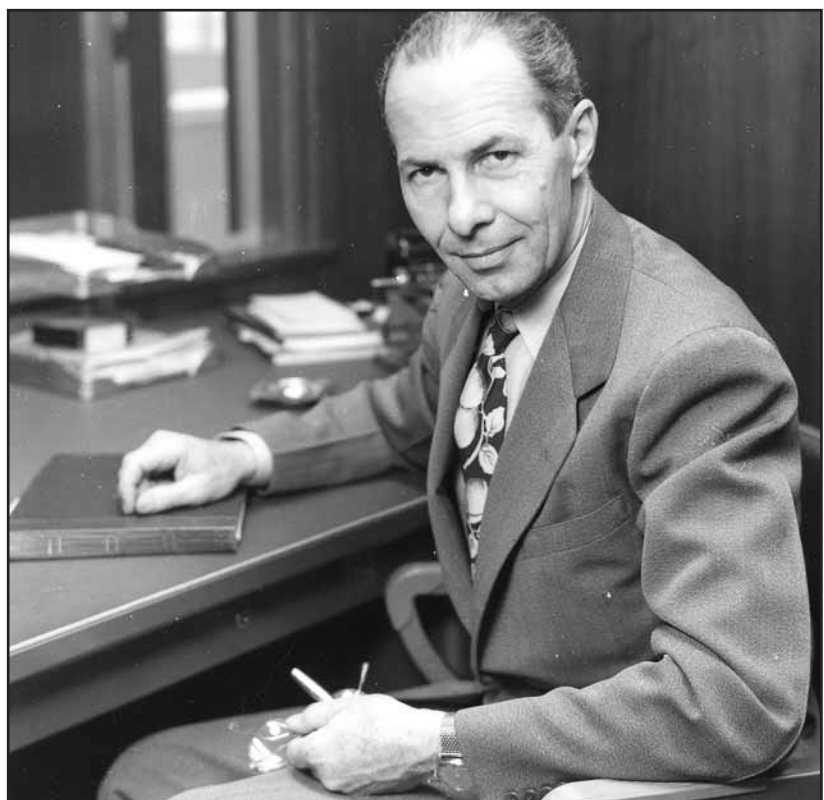




The Courier — 1901 to 1939



A technology buff, Earle Voorhies was instrumental in turning the Daily Courier into a better-than-average daily. He designed and oversaw construction of the new Courier building at Seventh and J streets in 1949, where the business stands to this day.

From newspaper carrier to co-publisher, Earle Voorhies worked 60 years for Courier

By Kathleen Alaks
of the Daily Courier

Earle Elliott Voorhies was born in Grants Pass on Oct. 29, 1899, the year his father, Amos Voorhies, acquired sole ownership of the Rogue River Courier. He worked for the Courier for almost 60 of the 71 years of his life. He grew up with newspapers, starting as a newspaper carrier at age 11, and eventually working as co-publisher, first with his father Amos and later with his son John E. Voorhies.

"He was such a low-key father," recalled his son John, the Daily Courier's current owner. "Slow to anger (if he ever did), slow to laugh, and not the least pushy. He didn't need or want a stage."

Earle went to the University of Oregon's journalism school, but before he graduated in 1923, he spent a year away from campus, running a streetcar in Spokane, Wash., and then editing a community weekly in Boston, Mass.

"He was a newsman with an education in economics and political science," said John. In 1924, he was a telegraph editor at the Eugene Guard, then moved to San Francisco, working on the copy desk of the Chronicle for a year and on the Examiner copy desk for six months.

He returned to Grant Pass late in 1925 to become news editor and circulation manager of the Courier, and then managing editor and editorial writer. During his time at the news desk, the paper's circulation increased, from 1,300 in 1925 to 2,500 in 1935.

In 1923, he married Ruth Giesler. Their son John was born in 1926.

Earle was an intense man, a hard worker, and even more technology minded than his father, remembered for his inventiveness and originality, said son John. He was a technology buff with modern ideas.

"Dad got interested in radio early," said John. "He was building sets almost before there was anything to listen to."

In an era when radio was in its infancy and long before television, Earle found elaborate ways to illuminate the events of the day for Grants Pass residents.

During the late 1920s and the 1930s, he and the Courier offered unique play-by-play broadcasts of the World Series and some Oregon-Oregon State football games via a public address system. Earle rigged big speakers on the front of the Courier building and a big scoreboard chart on the sidewalk.

Fans parked in the street in front of the building to hear advertising manager Noble D. Stanton give score updates that were charted on the scoreboard.

In 1927, Earle did the same with the Jack Dempsey-Gene Tunney fight, setting up a combination of radio and the Courier's wire service in the front window of the Courier office in downtown Grants Pass.

He also installed a 16-foot temporary ring smack dab in the middle of Sixth Street — the main Highway 99 from Portland to California — and cast two residents in the roles of the fighters. Then he sat in the window with a headset and called out, over a loudspeaker system, a blow-by-blow account of the fight, while the two fighters enacted it.

Earle started flying in March 1940, secured his private airman certificate and received his commercial airman certificate in 1941. His only time away from the family business came courtesy of World War II.

Amos E. Voorhies Award recognizes outstanding journalism in Oregon

An award to recognize outstanding journalism in Oregon began in honor of a former Daily Courier publisher's 50 years in the industry.

Since it began in 1938, the Amos E. Voorhies Award has recognized 47 people, including Voorhies himself.

The Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association gives the award to honor "outstanding journalistic achievement in the public interest, for service in the interest of the welfare and honor of the journalistic profession, or for long, useful, and honorable careers in the field of journalism."

The Daily Courier's publisher was the first living person to get the award, which was originally called the "Oregon Newspaper Roll of Honor." Voorhies was also inducted into the Newspaper Hall of Fame Award in 1979, when the ONPA created that award.

He was managing editor when, in 1942, he enlisted in the Civilian Air Patrol, and flew his own Fairchild plane in patrol over the Gulf of Mexico from bases at Brownsville and San Benito, Texas.

He was commissioned as captain in the Air Force in August 1943, reported to Winston-Salem, N.C., and was discharged from military service with the rank of major when the war ended.

His first marriage ended in divorce, and in 1946, he married Evelyn Smith in Atlanta, Ga.

After returning to work at the Courier, Earle designed and oversaw construction of the new Courier building at Seventh and J streets in 1949, where the business stands to this day.

An expert and avid golfer, Earle was involved in management of the Grants Pass Golf Course and was active in bowling. He built radios, boats and equipment for the office.

"In later years, he had pizza every Friday night, always with lots of jalapenos," remembered John. "He continued to learn by reading all his life. He bought, and then learned to play the organ from a book."

Earle Voorhies died of a heart attack on April 21, 1971.

"He bought some acreage on north Ninth Street and built a home and three-hole golf course to practice on. He maintained his tractors and mowing equipment himself," recalled John. "He went to work one day, went golfing in the afternoon, went home and died mowing his No. 3 green."

According to his son, Earle was "chiefly responsible for making the Courier into a newspaper. Boss had bought it, held it and produced it, and business grew with the town. Dad made the Courier a news product."

"He wasn't easy to know like my granddad but he was just as honest and hardworking. He wrote thoughtful editorials for awhile and his predictions are coming true to this day," John said. "His efforts from the beginning to the end were responsible for turning a little paper into a better-than-average small daily."

Crime in 1934: It was a little different back then

The Jan. 4, 1935, edition of the Daily Courier had a story listing the crime statistics for Grants Pass from 1934. In that year there were:

53 arrests for drunkenness and disturbing the peace
34 arrests for traffic violations
23 arrests for robbery and theft
6 arrests for disorderly conduct (not drunkenness)
6 for fighting
5 for shooting firearms within the city
3 "were charged with insanity"
2 for driving while intoxicated
2 "alleged narcotic peddlers"
26 miscellaneous

According to Grants Pass Public Safety Deputy Chief Laura Zeliff, Grants Pass arrests in 2009 numbered 2,946 for adults and 588 for juveniles. They were:

4 adult arrests for arson 1st degree
199 arrests for assault 2 through 4
3 arrests for assault 1
5 adult and 1 juvenile arrest for assault on police officer
21 adult and 10 juvenile arrests for burglary 1 (of a dwelling)
12 adult and 4 juvenile arrests for burglary 2 (of a building)

70 arrests for criminal mischief
51 arrests for disorderly conduct
106 arrests for driving while suspended
131 arrests for trespass
457 arrests for driving under influence
338 warrant arrests by another agency
350 warrant arrests by Grants Pass police
212 "peace officer mental holds"
230 adult and 160 juvenile arrests for minor in possession of alcohol
98 arrests for possession methamphetamine
146 arrests (110 adult, 36 juvenile) for possession of marijuana (less ounce)

158 arrests for probation violation
3 arrests for rape 1
4 arrests for rape 3
4 arrests for riot
28 adult and 4 juvenile arrests for robbery 1, 2, and 3 (10 were robbery 1; 15 were robbery 2, and 7 were robbery 3)

10 arrests for sex abuse
216 adult and 79 juvenile arrests for theft
22 arrests for various firearm offenses
7 adult and 4 juvenile arrests for stolen vehicles
52 arrests for violation of restraining order

From the pages of the
Courier

JULY 1, 1925

"A premature Fourth of July celebration in the B & B variety store this morning caused considerable excitement on Sixth street. When a spark from a cap pistol ignited the rest of the fireworks on the counter, sky rockets and firecrackers united in giving an imitation of what the Fourth will be like. A bucket brigade was formed and the fireworks were put out before the fire department arrived."

NOV. 2, 1929

"Unusual lateness of the Courier Friday night, due to the extra work in issuing a 12-page edition, gave evidence of the eagerness of local subscribers to receive the paper. Around 50 persons feared that the carriers had missed their houses and called the Courier office to make sure they would receive their papers. Presstime was delayed 90 minutes."

APRIL 3, 1935

"A newspaper is, in one sense, a creation of ink on paper, but in a large sense a newspaper is not a commodity at all, but is instead the people who read it."

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Horizon Village is conveniently located a short drive from town, minutes from Three Rivers Community Hospital and adjacent to Rogue Community College with walking trails and garden areas to enjoy.

Our goal is to encourage people to rethink the evolution from young to old as an ascending, not descending passage. Acknowledging that there are special human qualities & abilities that can only be acquired with age.



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West on Hwy. 199, Left on Hubbard, Right on University

Grants Pass newspapers since 1885

■ **ARGUS:** The first newspaper established in Grants Pass, predated the Courier by just three weeks. Started by Dr. Keeler H. Gabbert, the Argus appeared irregularly for several months and finally was sold to W.J. Wimer, who was then publishing the Courier, for \$10.

■ **COURIER:** This weekly paper was established April 3, 1885, by J.H. Stine.

■ **DAILY COURIER:** The town's first daily newspaper, was established Sept. 18, 1910, by A.E. Voorhies.

■ **THE OREGON MINING JOURNAL:** This weekly publication was established by Conklin and Wade in 1895; soon after Arthur Conklin became sole owner and conducted the paper until 1909, when the name was changed to the Pacific Outlook. Later the Outlook was published by Conklin and edited by H.S. Prescott. The paper was suspended in 1912 and the Courier purchased much of the equipment.

■ **THE DAILY BULLETIN:** For several months during the Spanish-American War in 1898, the

Courier published the Daily Bulletin, containing wire reports of the progress of the war.

■ **GRANTS PASS HERALD:** This semi-weekly was started in 1904 by Robert G. Smith and associates. It lived only a few months. The Courier purchased some of the type, while the machinery reverted to original owners.

■ **SOUTHERN OREGON SPOKESMAN:** The Spokesman was established March 8, 1924, as a weekly paper by J.J. Hoogstraat and E.C. Bell. In 1927, the paper, which had supported the Ku Klux Klan movement in Oregon, was discontinued. The new owners of the equipment changed the name to the Grants Pass Bulletin, and under that name it passed through several hands. It folded in 1939.

■ **OREGON OBSERVER:** Established as a weekly 1890 by George W. Colvig and F.W. Chase, this paper ran for 37 years alongside the Courier, at one time for several years being printed in the Courier office. It was absorbed by the Courier and discontinued in 1927.