

History and Strife Have No Datelines

Diary of 46 Years Ago Points Way for Present

By BAUKHAGE

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WASHINGTON. — Mary Condit-Smith, a young Washington society girl, visiting diplomatic friends in China, and a 17-year-old boy in a little town on the Erie Canal both were keeping diaries at the turn of the century.



Baukhage

Mary, alone in her room in the American legation in Peking on June 11, 1900, slipped on her pink silk dressing gown, sat down and wrote:

"The telegraph was broken last night. We have no more communication with the outside world; our world is this dangerous Peking."

That same day, though it was really the day before, according to the strange tricks Old Sol plays as he pushes the clock around while he marches westward and paradoxically reaches the Far East—that same day, Monday, June 11, a boy in the fifth grade of the High Street school painfully inscribed this entry in his book:

"It rained this A. M. Two more weeks and we'll be free from this School of Misery." (The next day it is of record that he broke the crank of his "wheel"—bicycle to you.)

The boy's name appears at the head of this column and what he wrote isn't important, but just 46 years later he was to read Mary's diary. She had gone to her reward long since but not until her diary became a book and she had become Mrs. Hooker, a colonel's lady.

White Man's Prestige Slipped to Low

As I read this fascinating story, told in simple, boarding-school English, those awful days when the foreign colony in Peking lived in the daily horror of massacre during the Boxer rebellion, became very real.

Today the fires of civil war are spreading in China. Voices are being raised, demanding that our marines be withdrawn. American prestige has fallen almost as low as it was when Mary Hooker in her diary told the dramatic story of the Boxer Rebellion—that moment in China's history when Americans, along with all foreigners reached their nadir. History repeats.

The Empress Tzuhsi, a reactionary, encouraged the activities of the Boxers and other groups whose chief purpose was to cleanse China of the "foreign devils." It is only fair to say that China had passed through a period during which the occidental powers had exploited her to the hilt.

Attacks on foreigners, especially missionaries, began in 1899, but as Mary Hooker records, "the diplomats and people in general put these things down to the usual spring riots which yearly seized Peking."

By June and July of 1900, however, the foreigners found themselves besieged in Peking. As late as June 7 Mary's diary reports:

"Mr. Pethick . . . forty years a resident of China and an intimate friend of half the political leaders, knowing their weaknesses by heart, urges the minister to state to Washington the situation as it is, but all to no avail."

Three days later, as I mentioned, the foreign colony "had no communication with the outside world."

The next day's entry states: "Such intense excitement! This afternoon the Japanese Chancellor of the Legation went down to the railway station in the official legation car to see if there was any sign of troops. Returning by the principal gate, he was seized by the Imperial (Chinese) troops, disarmed and cut to pieces."

Eagerly Awaited
Arrival of Troops
From then on the entries become even more exciting. . . . twenty of our marines have been sent by an officer to guard the big Methodist Mission . . . the Russian secretary . . . has figures at the ends of his fingers about the number of troops Russia can land in Tien-Tsin . . . are they trying to prepare us for a Russian coup d'etat? . . .

Each day the arrival of foreign troops was awaited. On June 17 the entry reads:

"Just one week ago today we got the telegram that the combined forces of England, the United States, France, Japan, etc. . . . had left to go to the relief of the legations in Peking . . . when the time comes that the American and Russian legations can no longer hold out, the British legation will be the stage for the terrible last act."

The Roman Catholic church was

only one of many burned, and the converts and their families in the vicinity slaughtered.

"In some cases," says the diary, "the Christians thought it better to be roasted in their houses than try to escape." (She herself had decided that she might as well be massacred in her pink silk dressing gown with a pink bow at her neck as in her golf clothes.)

On the 19th of June, the Chinese government offered to give legation members their passports and escort them and their families to the port. There was a division of opinion as to whether to trust the Chinese. In the evening the German minister started to confer a second time on the question when he was murdered in the streets.

The situation grows worse.

Dead Piled Around Ramparts

A bullet knocks off the headpiece of a baby's crib. All the women are sewing sandbags.

The Dutch and Austrian legations burn.

On July 1: "There are so many dead dogs, horses and Chinese lying in heaps all around the defended lines, but too far for us to bury or burn them."

They used the dead horses closer by, however: "The . . . mess has an invariable menu. At breakfast, rice, tea and jam; at tiffin, rice and horse; at dinner, rice, horse and jam."

With the privations and fear of the Boxers grew the suspicion and distrust of the members of the foreign missions of each other. Russians and English hated each other; Americans were the buffers. Racial ruckers have no date lines. Mary Hooker notes:

"The dislike of the Russians for the British is so cordial that it is only equalled by the feeling the British entertain toward them. Our compound joins the Russians, and they love us and we love them in as strong a fashion as they hate their English neighbors on their other side."

And so pretty Mary Hooker wrote history. . . .

But it was more than history. It was drama. It was tragedy. Just look over her shoulder once again:

"July 9 . . . day before yesterday, the Austrian Charge d'Affaires was shot at the French legation. . . . At first we kept a record of the dead or badly wounded . . . but now they come in so often we cease to note the exact number. . . .

"July 16 . . . I was en route to the hospital carrying a pot of coffee to the doctors and nurses when some soldiers passed me, carrying a rough litter, bearing Captain Strouts (the British commanding officer) mortally wounded."

Then July 16:

"It is discussed quietly by men that they will certainly kill their wives when that time comes (to make a final stand). God grant it never may! Apropos of this, I have in my pocket a small pistol loaded with several cartridges, to use if the worst happens. A Belgian secretary stole it from the armory for me—in case you need it, mademoiselle."

Then finally this note on August 15, when the Chinese were closing in on the improvised fortifications manned by lord and funky, soldier and civilian making their last stand . . . "a veritable ring of flame on all sides of the defenses."

And then!—"Through that racket that was around us all night, we could faintly hear the unmistakable sound of the foreign guns of our troops."

That page of history, let us hope, will not be repeated.



FACES MIRROR JOY . . . Happy faces of these Belgian children show what they think of the American food just arrived at their camp at Tervueren, near Brussels.

NEWS REVIEW

Means Devised To Halt Further Lags in Housing

HOUSING:

Fear New Obstacle

Having trimmed commercial construction and tightened allocation of materials to speed up the veterans' emergency housing program, Housing Expediter Wilson W. Wyatt feared a prospective labor shortage as a new obstacle to the rapid erection of dwellings.

Revealing his apprehensions in his August report on the vet housing situation, Wyatt indicated that the government would strive to head off the latest bogeyman with an intensive recruiting and apprentice training program.

Despite a pickup in new building in July, Wyatt disclosed in his report, the emergency housing program is lagging behind the announced goal of 1,200,000 homes and apartments for this year. During the first seven months of 1946, 607,100 new dwellings were started and 287,100 completed.

AUTO OUTPUT:

Hits Lag

In calling a press conference in Detroit, Mich., C. E. Wilson, president of General Motors corporation, presented the company's case against both the government and workers for the serious lag in auto production.

Pointing out that G.M. had turned out only 400,000 cars and trucks in the year following V-J Day instead of the 1,400,000 scheduled, Wilson charged the Truman administration



THIS IS THE HOUSE! . . . Out at Lemont, Ill., a house is rising which is different than the house that Jack built in the nursery rhyme, because much of the work is being done by a couple of Janes. Mrs. Joseph Gurski, center, is laying brick on the new family home, assisted by willing friends.

with having attempted to appease labor unions by taking the lid off wages while at the same time stating that price increases were unnecessary. As a result, manufacturers were "put in the nutcracker," he averred.

Although G.M. has 88,000 more employees on its payroll than in 1941, production is about half, Wilson said. Tests on relative jobs have shown that worker productivity is about 80 per cent of the pre-war rate. Refusal of employees to extend themselves, a high absenteeism rate, inexperience and a large turnover partly due to the ease in collecting unemployment compensation all have contributed to the inefficiency, Wilson declared.

VFW: Ask Vet Aid

Adoption of resolutions calling for increased benefits to World War I vets and satisfaction of domestic needs first before providing for those of other nations highlighted the Veterans of Foreign Wars national encampment in Boston, Mass.

Congress was urged to authorize pensions for World War I vets for old age and disability, with payments made for the latter regardless of whether the disabilities resulted from military duty. Such payments are made to Spanish-American war vets.

The government was asked to halt shipments of food to former enemy countries as long as any American was unable to obtain sufficient food stuffs to maintain proper health. A protest was raised against deliveries of grain abroad at the expense of U. S. brewers while beer was being imported from England, Belgium and Holland.

Other resolutions called for the trial of Yugoslav airmen who shot down American fliers; support of the Anglo-American recommendations for admission of 100,000 Jews to Palestine, and condemnation of the practice of awarding actors combat awards for troop entertainment.

NAVY:

To Provide Comforts

One could almost have heard the rattle down in Davey Jones' locker when the navy announced that it was air-conditioning the new cruisers, Salem and Newport News, to determine the best kind of equipment for eventually cooling all of its ships.

In announcing the navy's plans for providing additional comfort for crews on the bounding main, Vice-Adm. Edward L. Cochrane, chief of the bureau of ships, emphasized that air-conditioning had proved invaluable in boosting morale and fighting efficiency in combat.

Various types of new air-conditioning equipment will be used in the tests in the new 17,000-ton cruisers, with the cool air transmitted into all living and working compartments save machinery areas where the heat is too intense. Simplified coils will be shockproof and easily cleaned, it was said.



in WASHINGTON
By Walter Sheed
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Federal Funds Will Aid Building of Hospitals

IF YOU live in one of the more than 1,000 counties in the nation in which there is no hospital, or where there is no adequate hospital, there is a chance, if you and your fellow citizens get together on the proposition, to get a new hospital at reduced rates—with the federal government paying a third of the cost.

For President Truman has signed the Hill-Burton bill, the national hospital construction act which sets up a potential total of \$1,125,000,000 for a five-year hospital construction program. But do not get excited and rush down here to Washington in the belief that one of these hospitals can be picked out of a hat.

No Funds Available Now

Only 3 million dollars of this fund, of which the government's share is 375 million dollars at the rate of 75 million dollars a year for five years, has been made available by the 79th congress. This congress was a cautious congress. It considered, and probably rightly, that before any of this money should be made available, surveys should be made to determine how many governmental units could or would put up the necessary two-thirds cash to build a hospital. This survey, they opined, would take no more than 3 million dollars.

So that much money is available for use of the local units of government. It will be up to the 80th congress, which convenes January 3 of next year, to put up the money called for in the new law. So it will be some time next year before the money is made available. Probably building construction costs are too high now, anyway.

Sponsors for local hospitals, under the bill, may be states, cities, counties, towns or other public governmental agencies, or private non-profit hospitals. States will share in the federal grants in aid on the basis of their needs, which will be ascertained through the ratio their per capita income bears to the national average. Other factors determining the amount apportioned to each state will be population and value of products.

May Not Benefit Country

So whether this will favor those rural counties where hospitals are so badly needed, or whether it will work to the advantage of the more populous urban communities will depend largely upon responsibility placed in the hands of a non-governmental advisory council. This council is different, however. Most public health services such as nursing, cancer, tuberculosis and other activities are presided over by an advisory council, but they are advisory only. The council in the hospital act has the veto power, not only over some actions of the surgeon-general, who will administer the law, but likely over some state action. President Truman doesn't like this feature of the act and said so when he signed it.

At any rate, in counties where there is need and desire for a hospital, the first action is to determine how much money the local community can raise. A showing that the hospital can be maintained after construction is also necessary. When this information is forthcoming, the next step is to go to your state health office and ask for inclusion in the state program—and the state, if it approves, then makes the application and showing to the surgeon-general of the Public Health service.

Dr. Hoge Will Rule

Actual administration in the surgeon-general's office will be in the hands of Dr. Vane Hoge, who has been with the Public Health service for 18 years. Dr. Hoge is a native of Waynesburg, Pa., and a graduate of Jefferson Medical school in Philadelphia.

Dr. Hoge has had several years experience in clinical work and in research, and for 10 years has specialized in hospital administration, and so has an excellent background as administrator of the new act. While his office expects much increased activity in hospital construction as a result of the federal grant of \$1 for \$2 of local money, he declared that there was no basis for estimate on the number of new hospitals or additions which may be constructed as a result.

He advised local communities not to wait for the state health agency to come around to visit governmental units wanting a new hospital but urged them to get busy themselves, determine their needs, their potential power to raise the necessary amount for construction and maintenance, and then to go to the state agency themselves.

While President Truman declared that the construction of hospitals and related facilities, such as health centers, was excellent, he said it was only the first step in the five-point national health program.

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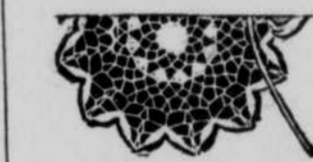
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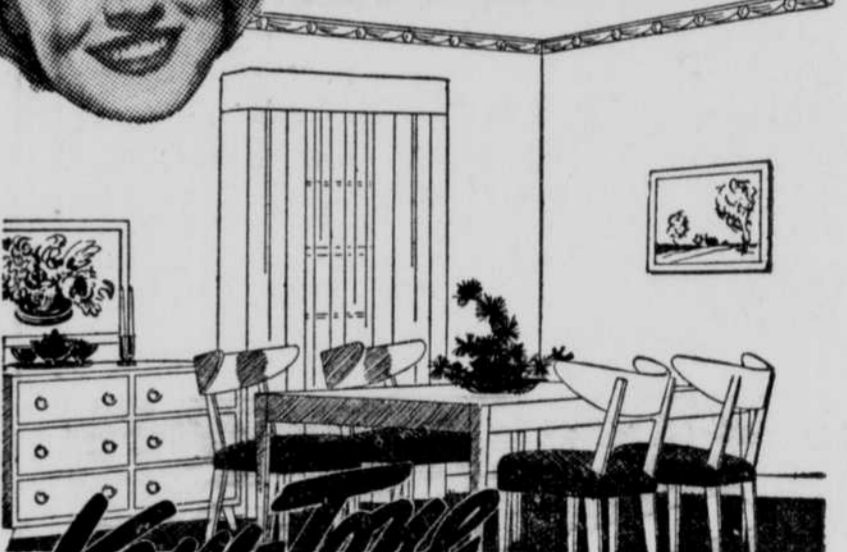


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Sugar Shortage Remains Acute

WASHINGTON.—No general improvement in the sugar supply situation is possible until the 1947 Caribbean crops, particularly the Cuban and Puerto Rican output, begin to move to market in large volume about six months from now, the agriculture department reports.

Chances that supplies will increase sufficiently to permit abandonment of consumer rationing next year appear "rather slim," officials declare.

The forecast was made in connection with announcement that 1,187,000 short tons of sugar will be allocated for civilian distribution in the October-December quarter. The figure compares with an allot-

ment of 1,147,000 tons for the corresponding quarter last year.

Below Prewar Figure.
Total amount allotted civilians for 1945 is 5,400,000 tons. This compares with a prewar consumption that reached a peak of 7,587,000 tons in 1940. The per capita supply this year is officially estimated at 72.3 pounds compared with 108 pounds in 1940.

The present short domestic supply situation reflects a drastic decrease in world production resulting from the war. World production this year has been estimated at 27,200,000 tons, or 7,300,000 tons less than the prewar average.

Sharpest declines in production were in Europe, the Philippine Islands and the Netherlands East Indies. In Europe, where normally considerable beet sugar is produced, shortages of fertilizers and farm motive power, lack of coal for operating sugar mills and disrupted transportation have interfered with production.

The sugar industry in the Philippines, important prewar source of supply for the United States, was practically eliminated under Japanese occupation. In prewar years, the islands exported nearly 1,000,000 tons a year, nearly all to this country.