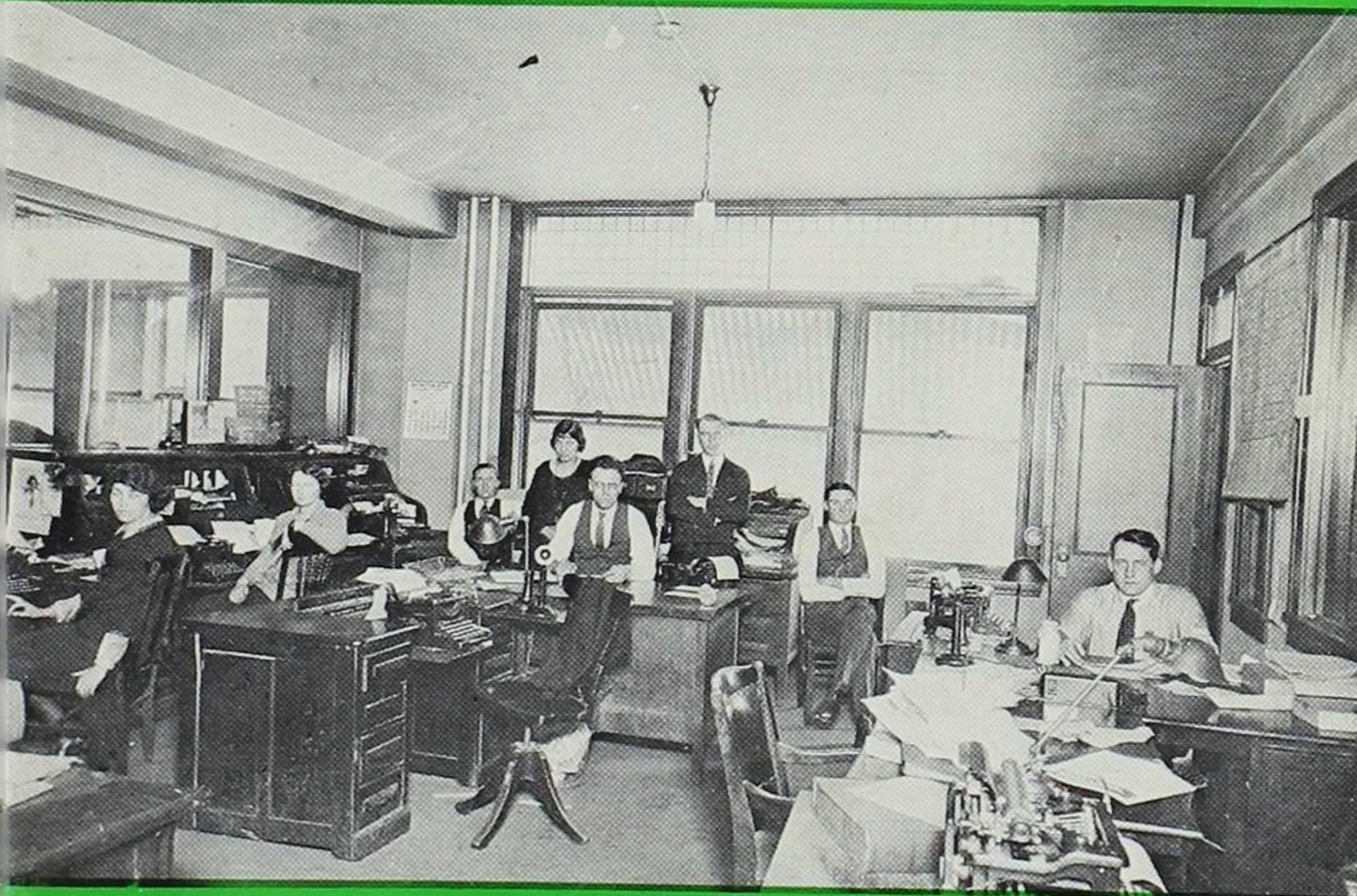


# The PALIMPSEST



News staff of the Mason City *Globe-Gazette* in the 1920's. Editor Hall is seated to the right in this picture of the news room in the old *Globe-Gazette* building. Staff members included in the left: Helene Grummon, Vesta Martin, Claude Newman, Ida Ryan, City Editor Enoch Rem, an unidentified reporter, and George Barbour.

**W. Earl Hall—Master Editor**

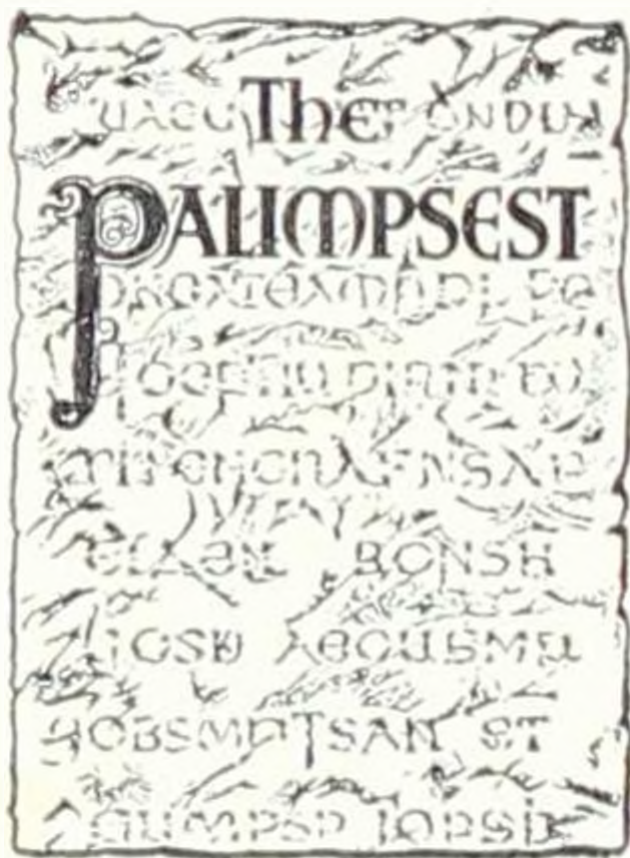
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## The Meaning of Palimpsest

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the record of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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## Illustrations

All illustrations are from the W. Earl Hall family.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY WILLIAM J. PETERSEN

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## Foreword

After 43 years of work on the same newspaper for which he started in 1920 at the age of 22 as managing editor and after three decades during which he had been generally recognized as Iowa's most eminent journalist, W. Earl Hall reached the mandatory retirement age at the Mason City *Globe-Gazette*.

In those 43 years had been crowded a term as Iowa State commander of the American Legion; 12 years (1937-1949) on the State Board of Education (now known as the Board of Regents); the founding of the Iowa State Safety Council; selection as a member of a Carnegie fact-finding mission to South America in 1941; membership on the World War II Advisory Wartime Censorship Committee; a term as correspondent in the European theatre during World War II; membership on the Red Cross national Board of Governors; winner of the Dr. C. C. Criss \$10,000.00 award for safety work along with J. Edgar Hoover, Dr. Jonas Salk, and others; the recipient of honorary



degrees from two colleges and the SUI Distinguished Service Citation, as well as other honors and recognition.

What such an individual believes is important and the article which follows immediately expresses those beliefs so well as Hall wrote in his column, "One Man's Opinion," printed April 1, 1963, in the *Mason City Globe-Gazette* and presented over Radio Stations KGLO at Mason City, WOI at Ames, WTAD at Quincy, and WSUI at Iowa City. The column was the last of a twenty-year series on radio and in print, Number 1,037 of the weekly stint.

CHARLES MILLHAM

Retired Publisher, *The Guttenberg Press*



## These Are the Things I Believe

I COME NOW to the end of 20 years of these once-a-week commentaries. The words I've spoken in these quarter hour talks would fill at least 20 books of conventional novel length. Subjects have ranged from the love life of the honeybee to man's place in the scheme of things. I've really covered the waterfront.

It would be possible—let me hasten, however, to say I'm not suggesting it—to browse through my three-foot tall pile of typewritten manuscripts and either identify my credo or discover that I don't have one.

Most of the time since March 19, 1943, when I launched my series of broadcasts, my little network has included two state university stations. Conscious of the obligation thus implied, if not actually imposed, I probably have tempered my preaching more than I otherwise would have done.

My abiding belief in the Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man has been stated more than once. Corollary to this is my belief that there is a God-directed evolution . . . always upward. The gift of an intellect and a conscience made man a partner of the Supreme Architect in this evolutionary process of which I speak.

With Grove Patterson of the Toledo, Ohio, *Blade*, whom I was proud to call my friend for many years, I can't bring myself to believe that this Supreme Architect would build for man a stairway leading nowhere.

Throughout the period of these commentaries I have rejected the oft-repeated assertion that man is a fighting animal. To the exact contrary, I have maintained—and do



maintain—that the deepest instinct in humankind is the instinct for peace, not war.

This premise was at the center of my opening commentary two decades ago. Although the outcome of World War II was by no means decided, I predicted victory for the free world and a peace organization which would permit America to make amends for its role in scuttling the League of Nations.

It was my contention then, as it has been many times since, that people throughout the world are entitled to better government than they have had. In a true democracy such as ours—and there are few others—people get almost precisely what they deserve and demand. But for nine-tenths of the world's population this rule is not applicable.

Not in modern times certainly, and probably never, have those who must do the fighting and the dying been responsible for our wars. The decision is made by those far removed from the fighting and dying. In this I find the most compelling argument possible for a quest for lasting world peace through a system of enforceable law.

It may be a far-off goal but there can be no security against future wars unless and until we have a world peace organization equipped to reach down into the individual nations and eliminate the Hitlers, Mussolinis and, yes, the Stalins and Khrushchevs before they plunge us into another blood bath.

Some say—and I readily agree—that the course of action I've suggested here involves substantial risk. I ask only that this risk be set down alongside the risk which attaches to following the same road which has led to two world wars within my own span of maturity.

Almost before the ink was dry on the United Nations Charter, I sensed that we had sent a boy to do a man's work. The lofty goals set up in that document were not matched by the means of reaching them. In fairness, as



I have pointed out innumerable times in these commentaries, it must be admitted that we were no less responsible than the Kremlin for the inadequate setup we got in the UN eighteen years ago.

How to make amends for lost opportunity is by no means clear at this time. We're locked in a life-and-death struggle with world communism. Even if it ended in complete victory at an early date—and this is by no means an impossibility—I'm not sure that we'd profit fully from the lessons we've learned from two attempts at world organization for peace.

Now for a moment or two, let's turn our attention to that most nefarious ideology ever visited upon our world—communism. No subject has had more frequent or extensive attention in my commentaries down through the years. I've spoken about it with more than a little feeling.

Communism presented itself as a reality to me, as distinguished from a theory, a dozen years ago. First it was Tito's Marxism, then Stalin's. In Yugoslavia I saw empty store windows and ill-clad people in the center of a land suggestive of Iowa in its fertility. Then it was East Berlin, still in ruins whereas West Berlin was a flourishing city.

Later I saw Marxism at its fountainhead—Kiev, Leningrad, Moscow. I viewed its collective farming at close range. I studied its education from nursery schools to graduate level in 35-story University of Moscow looking down on historic Moskva River from a commanding site on Lenin Hills.

I didn't see Russia's assembly line industry because my intourist guide was under orders not to let me. I could only judge it by its products, which included automobiles and trucks and tractors 20 years behind the times alongside their American counterparts.

What had become a well-defined impression in Yugoslavia and East Germany a half dozen years previously



became a settled conviction on the basis of my time in Russia. Here are some of the things I believe about the ideology spawned by Marx and Engels, applied by Lenin and adapted by Stalin and Khrushchev:

Communism is as phony as a three-dollar bill. It never went anywhere on honest invitation. It could stay nowhere—not even Russia—if there was a free choice and a plausible known alternative. Its one genius, if that word can be used, has been its ability to hold a pistol at the temple of its enslaved people longer than any other tyranny of our time.

I verily believe that communism has the seeds of its own destruction. I am willing to stake my reputation as a reporter on a prediction that Americans now living—including my seven grandchildren—will be on hand to witness the burial rites for this most loathsome ideology ever conceived in the mind of man. . . . IF

We of the free world remain strong economically, militarily and—most important of all—spiritually.

This is a point of view I have expressed more than once—many times, in fact—in this extended series of commentaries now coming to an end.

Another oft-recurring theme in my weekly visits has been education in its varied manifestations. My conviction that education is the one most important business in the world has presented itself in numerous garbs. My reasoning has been rather elementary.

With education and an application of the technology embraced by education, there can be food for the four billion people who will inhabit our earth by 1970. With education—and only with education—can religion be elevated from superstition to something supremely meaningful.

Education is an indispensable precedent to true self-government in the democratic pattern. This was a studied judgment reached two decades ago on an extended fact-



finding mission through South America. I had to report—and I'd still have to report—that there wasn't in all of Latin America any true democracy—republics, yes, but no real democracy.

Where illiteracy prevails, as it does in at least two-thirds of our world, a despotism is inevitable. The only question is whether it shall be a benevolent or a malevolent tyranny. I know of no exception to this rule.

Where there's democracy—our kind or any other form which glorifies human dignity—aggressive warfare becomes an impossibility. No war, as I've already suggested, could be launched by popular vote of an enlightened people. It's as simple as that.

It may be said of me that I have been a sucker for causes . . . safety, Red Cross, Community Chest agencies, crippled children, cancer, Radio Free Europe, all of them. If I am so accused, I shall not be disposed to enter a denial. Support for causes designed to promote happiness and human welfare has been deeply rooted in my credo.

As I have given of my time, my effort and my means, I have always had the deep-seated conviction that I was receiving even more than I gave. That is my heartfelt testimonial. I'm truly sorry for those who have not experienced the comfort and satisfaction which comes from believing—really believing—in a cause and doing something about it.

Some of the causes I've espoused have prospered. Others—and a larger number I suspect—have not, at least not yet.

Safety doesn't lend itself to permanent solution. My approach to the problem is that we get the degree of safety we deserve and demand. There's a price to be paid and we haven't been willing as yet to pay it.

In recent years, even recent months, there has been a most encouraging cutting through the ignorance and su-



perstition that have blocked scientific water fluoridation. Vaccination's story is being repeated.

Iowa's adoption of a constitutional amendment which can put us at the forefront of judicial and court reform—if it's properly implemented by our legislature—has been a source of tremendous gratification to me by reason of my having headed up the state lay organization behind the move.

My story with respect to calendar reform isn't as pleasant to relate. There is a plan that would provide uniformity in months, quarters, and years. The logic for its adoption would seem to be unanswerable. Other nations favor it but American inertia blocks the path. We seem to need another Julius Caesar or Pope Gregory to take a giant stride forward in time-reckoning.

I had some slight part in bringing the City Manager Plan to my community. Its abandonment through apathy by our self-admitted "good people" was disappointing. But I haven't given up. Some day it will return because it constitutes the one best path to efficient and economical municipal government.

On the less serious side I haven't been able to make it known that it was Charles Dudley Warner, not Mark Twain, who said everybody talks about the weather but nobody does anything about it. Nor have I been wholly successful in getting across the information—even among some of my own associates—that the word is *adDRESS*—not *ADress*. . . .

But my happiest memory is going to be about the thousands of stimulating letters from listeners. They have undergirded my well-defined conviction that humankind is mostly good and that our God-directed evolution is ever upward.

W. EARL HALL



## W. Earl Hall

W. Earl Hall, 72, longtime editor of the *Globe-Gazette*, died Saturday, April 12, 1969, at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Mason City.

Earl Hall was a newspaperman his entire working life. He was editor of the *Daily Iowan*, student newspaper at the University of Iowa, in 1917-18, coming to the *Globe-Gazette* in 1920 after army service during World War I.

Earl Hall served in various editorial positions, including editor and editor-publisher, for 43 years. He retired from the *Globe-Gazette* in 1963, but continued to work with his son, Reeves Hall, of Independence, on family newspapers.

The range of his interests was matched by his intense work, as newspaperman and advocate, in their behalf. He was concerned, and involved, in improving traffic safety . . . education at all levels . . . the judicial system . . . music . . . government.

During his 43 years with the paper, Earl Hall wrote thousands of words in the news columns and the editorial pages of the *Globe-Gazette*. His hallmark was a personal column, "One Man's Opinion," which also was used for radio broadcasts over Station KGLO, Mason City, and other Iowa radio stations.



W. Earl was honored for his newspaper work on many occasions. In 1946, he was named Master Editor-Publisher by the Iowa Press Association. He also received the Dr. C. C. Criss Mutual of Omaha Safety award in 1954 for his continuing efforts to improve traffic safety. In 1957 he won the Trans World Airlines 20th annual aviation writing award, based on stories written on a 1956-57 world tour.

The Iowa State Education Association's award as "Iowa layman of the year" for services to education went to Earl Hall in 1960.

In 1963, the University of Iowa presented its first Distinguished Service awards—and one of them went to Hall. Another went to his close friend from Mason City, Meredith Willson, the noted composer of "The Music Man" and other Broadway musicals.

Earl Hall was named in 1959 to the Kappa Tau Alpha Journalism Hall of Fame at the University of Iowa.

The W. Earl Hall Endowment fund was established by Hall in 1967 to provide an annual award for excellence in student writing at the University. The gift of \$2,000 was to be used to reward excellence particularly in the field of interpretive writing.

In 1964 he received a Luther College (Decorah) Distinguished Service award. He held an honorary LLD degree from Cornell College.



His hobbies were as wide-ranging, and profitable, as his work. He loved music, travel and "weather lore."

Earl Hall was a member of a University of Iowa quartet that celebrated its 50th anniversary in Milwaukee in 1968. He also was a member of the "Rusty Hinges," a Mason City barbershop quartet that served as the prototype for Meredith Willson's "board of education quartet" in "The Music Man." He seldom attended a meeting or convention without gathering people around him for a songfest.

Earl Hall traveled widely, reporting as he went . . . covering World War II action, Olympic Games, international affairs. Wherever he went, his typewriter went along.

W. Earl Hall was born April 7, 1897, in Rippey. He received his B.A. degree at the University of Iowa in 1918, then served as an infantry sergeant in World War I.

In 1919, he joined the staff of the *Milwaukee Journal* as police reporter, then went to the *Globe-Gazette* in 1920 as managing editor at age 22.

On the death of W. F. Muse in 1931, Earl Hall became editor and then was named editor-publisher in 1962, a position he held until his retirement in May, 1963. He also served as consulting editor for another year.

In 1932-33 he served as commander of the Iowa Department of the American Legion. He was one



of 14 Iowans chosen to go on the first cruise of the battleship, USS *Iowa*, following the ship's reactivation in 1951.

In 1956 and 1957, Earl Hall visited 31 countries, including Russia, and the following year was a member of a fact-finding group for Radio Free Europe. This sparked a continuing interest in the work of the American broadcasts that are beamed into Communist-controlled nations. In 1958, he was chairman of the Iowa Crusade for Freedom.

Earl Hall founded the Iowa State Safety Council and served as vice president of the National Safety Council from 1944 to 1948. He was chairman of the National Committee for Traffic Safety from 1946 to 1948, then succeeded Paul G. Hoffman as chairman of the Public Support Committee on Traffic Safety in 1949.

In the early 1950's, Earl Hall played a leading role in obtaining a state constitutional amendment that modernized the Iowa judicial system. He was chairman of a state citizens' committee and, after adoption of the amendment, twice served on the governor's advisory committee to nominate Supreme Court judges.

After retirement, Earl Hall traveled widely for the American Red Cross. He held administrative jobs and wrote from disaster areas.

BOB SPIEGEL, Editor, and THOR JENSEN, Managing Editor  
Mason City *Globe-Gazette*



## Life and Times With Dad

It is indeed difficult for a son to write objectively—in a scholarly way—in reminiscing about his Dad even though that son followed in his footsteps as an editor and should know, at least, the fundamentals of writing.

Fond memories flow back in recalling my 47 years with W. Earl Hall. They were great times and I wish they could have lasted another 47 years.

In trying to analyze the man, Earl Hall, I'm convinced that his personality and life style were neither complex nor mysterious. He had a manner all his own and it was so natural. He truly liked people. He was outgoing, friendly, and constantly looking for and finding the good in every person he ever met. He could chat with nationally-known people-in-the-news or inquire about the health of the man who scrubbed the newspaper office floor. He was sincerely interested in people and had the rare trait of being a good listener in an era when too many persons can't wait to hear what they are going to say next. Dad cared about people, liked them, and they returned his favor and interest with love and affection.

His outgoing personality, his booming bass voice and white hair, made him stand out in any



crowd. And wherever he went there were greetings of "Hi, Earl" from people he was supposed to know but didn't.

W. Earl was the most friendly, the most competitive, the most determined, informed, the most lovable, unusual and interesting man I have ever known. Of course I am slightly prejudiced.

Dad radiated warmth, friendliness, trust, and sincerity. He always said his hobbies were weather lore, song leading, and barbershop quartet singing. In looking back on his 72 years I would say that he had a hobby he was not even aware of—collecting friends from all walks of life in every state in the nation and in many parts of the world.

In his career Dad was urged many times by many people to run for political office. He declined because he much preferred writing about politics to being a combatant in that strange and often disappointing arena of American life. He was labeled by a few as a 20th century William Allen White and I know he was pleased with that comparison. The Emporia, Kansas, editor and Ernie Pyle had no greater fan than Earl Hall.

Dad often said he liked his job, writing and traveling, so much he couldn't understand how an employer (the Lee Syndicate) would pay him to do what he liked most. "It's been a lifetime of fun," he said frequently following his retirement.

Dad's attorney, Robert H. Shepard, once commented that he had never known a man who cared



less about money than Earl Hall. Many was the time that Dad and the late Leon Barnes of Northwood traveled to meetings at the *Iowa Falls Citizen* where they each had an interest in the weekly newspaper. Business meetings were a necessary evil for Dad and after the operating reports were distributed he would usually ask if they had any money left in the bank.

Carl Hamilton, for many years editor of the *Citizen* and now vice president at Iowa State University, reminisced: "We kidded Earl and he of course joined in the laughs regarding his seemingly almost total lack of knowledge of business matters. A balance sheet was almost a mystery to him. Why? Because he was overwhelmingly interested in people, events and ideas and safety and sports and politics. With boundless energy carried along to the tune of a hearty laugh, he chose to focus on those things which he felt were going to make this a better place for his friends and those who were to follow."

About the only time Dad ever used a checkbook was to write a liberal donation to some charitable organization or to help some cause in which he believed. Trusting always to human nature, he would often send checks for tickets to athletic games or some other event with the amount left blank—to be filled in by the person to whom he had sent the check.

He knew real poverty as a youth born on a farm



near Rippey, Iowa, and as a struggling student at the University of Iowa in the days before and during World War I. Dad claimed he didn't know enough to realize how poor in material wealth he and his parents were.

He frequently said he was a "sucker" for causes. Certainly he had a number of them which he espoused by written word and action. Among the sacred words around the Hall house in the growing-up years for me and my sisters, Marjory and Nancy, were: the Rusty Hinge quartet, Herbert Hoover, "Eye Observing" (his daily column), and the Iowa Hawkeyes. Later—after the brood had left the comforts of home—there were such projects to support as: American Cancer Society, Radio Free Europe, education, judicial reform in Iowa, the Salvation Army, the schools and colleges of Iowa.

Dad was not what you would call a great disciplinarian. He depended on his devoted wife and our wonderful mother, Ruth, for the daily operation of the home, paying bills, social activities, repairs around the house and other assorted household and parental chores.

Dad was not a believer in father-son or father-daughter chats or birds-and-bees conversations. As president of the Iowa State Safety Council he never voiced words of warning about our driving and a need for safe and courteous habits. He knew and his children knew that any arrest of his



kids would be printed in the Mason City *Globe-Gazette*. He just expected us to obey the rules of the road. I remember living in constant fear of arrest since I had an early day version of a hotrod car, a 1932 Model A Ford phaeton without a top.

Some years after his children had grown up Dad had one of his darkest hours when he and Mother and the Ray Roricks (Ray succeeded Dad as publisher of the *Globe-Gazette*) drove to Independence from Iowa City after an Iowa football game. Dad was stopped by the Highway Patrol for exceeding the night-time speed limit. That, plus the fact that his beloved Hawkeyes lost that afternoon, made for a particularly bad day. Yet he made a special point to me that his arrest should probably go on the front page of the Independence newspaper. He also made sure that the *Globe-Gazette* carried the same news story of the arrest since he was, unfortunately, the past vice president of the National Safety Council.

Life on the farm near Rippey or at nearby Jefferson never appealed to Earl Hall. He first smelled that unique odor of the printing shop and heard the rhythmic sound of presses while a boy in Jefferson. He applied for and got the job as a printer's devil on *The Jefferson Bee* at a salary of \$1.50 a week. He worked after school and on Saturdays and had dreams of working on a daily newspaper. Yet, when he enrolled at the University of Iowa, he had decided on the field of law.



In remembering his days as a printer's devil on the *Bee*, Dad once wrote for a college English class theme:

At the time of hiring, the printer's devil is instructed to be careful not to learn more than the editor the first two or three weeks on the job and that in case he should do this, to be considerate enough of the editor's feelings to keep it to himself. . . . He starts the day by building the fires and as the office warms up he sweeps up. Next he washes a dirty press, upon which the ink has been drying for a week or more and then he must wash his hands and run an errand.

Whenever there is nothing else to do he begins sorting and distributing leads and slugs, for otherwise he is apt to become engaged in a conversation with one of the printers and the foreman has already informed him that this is the one unpardonable sin of the print shop. This task of sorting leads and slugs is about the most disagreeable work ever contrived by the human intellect. Emptying ashes and carrying in coal are gorgeous treats when compared to it and it is very noticeable that the shop is usually warm when the devil is engaged in this task.

On press days he lugs the papers over to the post office which is really quite strenuous work but being different from most of his work is also more or less of a treat. On these occasions when he is seen by his fellows lugging a big sack of mail, he is a target of many most beautiful puns by virtue of his title "devil." But through a lack of proper love for literature he fails to appreciate the humor of these. After he has served as devil for a few months his ambitions have been perceptibly dampened and he realizes that being a printer's devil does not assure one of being a Dana or a Greeley.



In the autumn of 1914 Earl Hall arrived in Iowa City with little spending money, a small trunk with all his possessions, high hopes, and a determination to get a college education. Years later he recounted this story of standing in line to enroll in the University and meeting a young man from Rolfe, Iowa, who was destined to become his life-long friend. His name was Virgil M. Hancher, who later served as president of this great University from 1940 to 1964. Dad wrote of their friendship—"a long-term friendship that remained as simple and uncomplicated to the end as when it began back in 1914. It began in the matriculation line in old Capitol. Our meeting came at a time when a youngster's capacity for lasting friendships is at high tide. Our lives have been intertwined for more than a half century."

It wasn't long until Dad's previous experience in the back shop of a weekly newspaper lured him to the *Daily Iowan* office. There he began a writing career as a student reporter and later as editor of the *Iowan*.

It was on the *Iowan* that Dad discovered writing news, editorials, and feature stories wasn't work but sheer enjoyment. He decided that the field of journalism was to be his life's work. He received both helpful criticism and encouragement from the late Conger Reynolds who was the first head of the University's School of Journalism.

In his days at Iowa, Dad found time to try out



for the SUI baseball squad. He had had previous sandlot and some high school experience, was a good fielder and fine hitter despite his playing weight of only 130 pounds. It was this background in athletics and his interest in his alma mater that later led Earl Hall to service on the University of Iowa Athletic Board in the late 20's and early 30's.

He served on the board during the trying days in May of 1929 when the University of Iowa was suspended from the Big Ten Conference for alleged illegal recruiting tactics of a football player. This same board made history prior to the Big Ten ouster by launching the construction of the Iowa stadium at a cost of \$497,151. It was completed in the fall of 1929. Later the cost of adding modern press, radio, and TV quarters above the west bleachers totaled \$490,628—within \$7,000 of the cost of the entire stadium 29 years before.

As a young editor in Mason City, Earl Hall was active in raising funds for and later construction of the YMCA building. After the building was completed Dad took up handball. He mastered it and spent his noon hours at the Y for many years playing handball with Willis Patton, Ivan Barnes, the late Judge Grimsley, Sam Richer, George Marty, and Roger Patton. These men were, perhaps, more expert with the sarcastic barb and criticism than in playing handball. But each of them dearly loved the game and admired the other although no one could have guessed it listen-



ing to the conversation before, during, and after a game. Dad was a fierce competitor and played handball long after he should have retired because of a lame hip.

His former partner, Willis Patton, with whom he once won the state doubles championship, recalled with a chuckle his playing days with Dad:

"Earl had the most intense desire to win of anyone I have ever known, be it handball or any other endeavor. Physically, he did not look like a good handball player but he was smart . . . as smart at handball as everything else."

Dad was also a good tennis player and made up in finesse what he lacked in a power serve or a picture book forehand. Many a young college tennis player in Mason City started a set of tennis with Dad as a lark and ended up fighting for his life. He had a tremendous slice on his first and second serves, placed his shots well, played defensively, and relied on his impatient opponent to make a mistake.

In bridge, gin rummy, ping pong or tennis, Dad wanted to win, mainly because that was the objective of any game or athletic endeavor.

This competitive spirit carried over into the television era with Dad following most sports on TV. Few coaches could vent their wrath or criticism of a player, who had made a mistake or fumbled, better than Dad as he sat in the living room watching any kind of televised sporting event. He



loved all sports but couldn't stand the phoniness of the professional wrestlers.

In our hours together playing gin rummy Dad had a special snicker when he could catch me with his gin hand and I had 70 or 80 points and was just getting nicely started in the game. If he lost at gin there would be a slight interruption while he went through the stack of undrawn cards looking for the "damned three, the deuce or the jack"—whatever card would have ginned him. It was also a source of great disturbance when his granddaughter (Marjory and Paul Hook's 4-year-old daughter, Barby) would beat him nine out of 10 in a card game and then inquire politely if her grandfather wished to join her in watching cartoons or the puppet show on TV.

In his retirement Dad spent many hours working on the lawn or shoveling snow from the walks at 22 River Heights. He naturally attracted the younger set who would watch him rake or mow and then volunteer their services. He always laughed when recalling a knock on the door several years ago. It was his friend, one of the neighborhood children, who asked in a most polite voice of Mrs. Hall: "Missus Hall, can Mista Hall come out and play?"

Earl Hall thoroughly enjoyed children and young people; yet he had absolutely no time for the beatniks and peaceniks and others of a lost generation who seemed confused over what their



protest was all about. He had seen them in action in the Haight Ashbury district in San Francisco and during the rampage at the Democratic convention in Chicago in 1968. His contempt centered not so much on their dislike of the establishment and adult hypocrisy as on their brutal disregard for the rights of others, the American flag, and the freedoms won for them by United States soldiers fighting in many wars.

Earl Hall took a particularly dim view of campus militants who carried their soapbox with them to espouse many causes, criticize their government and university administrations, and ridicule their leaders. He was proud of young students who were extremely intelligent, who wanted to be involved and were possessed with high ideals and enthusiasm. He still believed, however, that their role on the campuses of America was that of a learner and not a prophet.

His concern over a small percentage of American young people showed up in his editorials written for the Independence newspapers, the *Bulletin-Journal* and the *Conservative*, after his retirement from the *Globe-Gazette* in 1964. One of his last editorials, written before his death on April 12, 1969, summarized his thinking:

Equating campus vandalism . . . and such things as taking over buildings, blocking doors, indulging in obscenities . . . with freedom of speech or academic freedom is sheer nonsense. There's no relationship between them.



And yet that's precisely what has been done in dozens of instances, including a few in our own state.

The public's patience has just about reached the breaking point. The epidemic of campus violence has come at the very time of sharply rising costs for the operation of our colleges and universities. Taxpayers who dig deeper for publicly supported institutions, and donors who must meet soaring costs at private institutions, are something less than happy.

In the earlier days of the campus violence, there was a disposition to view the misbehavior as the ebullience of youth . . . boys will be boys, and that sort of thing. But not anymore. The signs are too persuasive that there's a plan behind the violence.

At Chicago last summer, when a strange assortment of youthful leftists assembled to disrupt a national party convention, one speaker after another in Grant Park . . . across Michigan Avenue from the Hilton hotel they sought to take over . . . called for "100 more Columbias." The reference, of course, was to the take-over at that New York university which deprived as many as 20,000 students of three weeks of education.

Like most children the Hall youngsters always thoroughly enjoyed the fun, noise and excitement of the Fourth of July. Fireworks, big firecrackers and Roman candles were always a part of the celebration—if the family was not on the road with Dad to accompany him to a holiday celebration which featured the Rusty Hinge quartet.

Dad was not the worrying type, much preferring to leave the fretting to others. Two of his favorite expressions to his children, when life's set-





EARL HALL—1914 senior student at Jefferson High School.

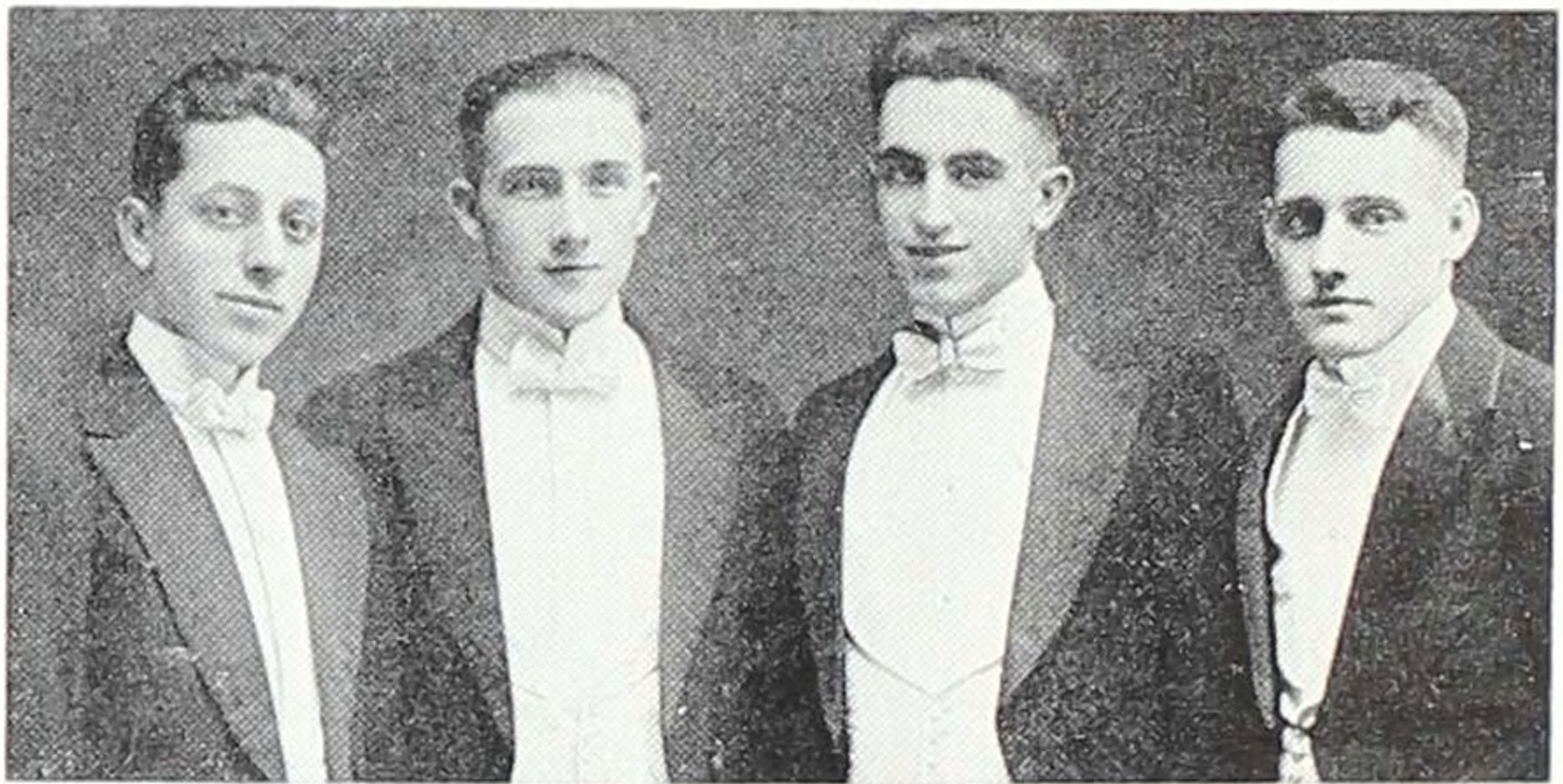


W. EARL HALL—Mason City Newspaperman and outstanding citizen.



Some years ago members of the Iowa Board of Education, at a regular monthly meeting, posed for this picture. Left to right around the conference table are: Earl Hall, Mason City; Mrs. Hiram Houghton, Red Oak; Richard Plock, Burlington; Chairman Henry Shull, Sioux City; Roy Loudon, Fairfield; H. M. Carpenter, Monticello; Mrs. George Kyseth, Clarion; and Lester Gillette, Fostoria.





The University of Iowa Glee Club quartet: Frank Marasco, Harold Thomas, Roy Mayne, and Earl Hall.



*Daily Iowan* Editor Earl Hall, right, in front of Old Close Hall on the SUI campus in Iowa City. Student at the left is Frank Marasco. President Virgil Hancher once described the architecture of this building as "early penitentiary."



The 1918 University of Iowa baseball team was coached by Maury Kent. Pictured, left to right, are: (seated) Kent (coach), Kremer, Frank (captain), Hamilton, Olson, Holsworth, Layton, Ehred, and Brown (captain-elect). (Standing): McGrath, Parrot, Belding, Hall, Luce, McLaughlin, Johnson, and Goodwin.





EARL HALL Speaking...

(Above) Before a National Safety Council convention in Chicago in the 1950's. The family considers this one of the better pictures of Mr. Hall.

(Left) To a convention audience of plumbing contractors in session at Des Moines in 1957.

(Right) Before a meeting of the Howard County Rural Teachers Association on December 5, 1941—two days before Pearl Harbor.

(Below) To a large crowd gathered in the amphitheater at the State Fair grounds in Des Moines.







When the Battleship *Iowa* was re-activated and went on a Pacific cruise in 1951, 14 Iowa educators, industrialists, and newspapermen were aboard as guests of the Navy. During a tour of Pearl Harbor the group went aboard the hulk of the Battleship *Arizona*, sunk at the time of the sneak Japanese attack, December 7, 1941. Hall is fifth from the left.



Editor Hall, fourth from the left, with a group of United States editors and war correspondents on a mission to Europe. Photo was taken in the courtyard of the Versailles Palace in France where the treaty ending World War I was signed.

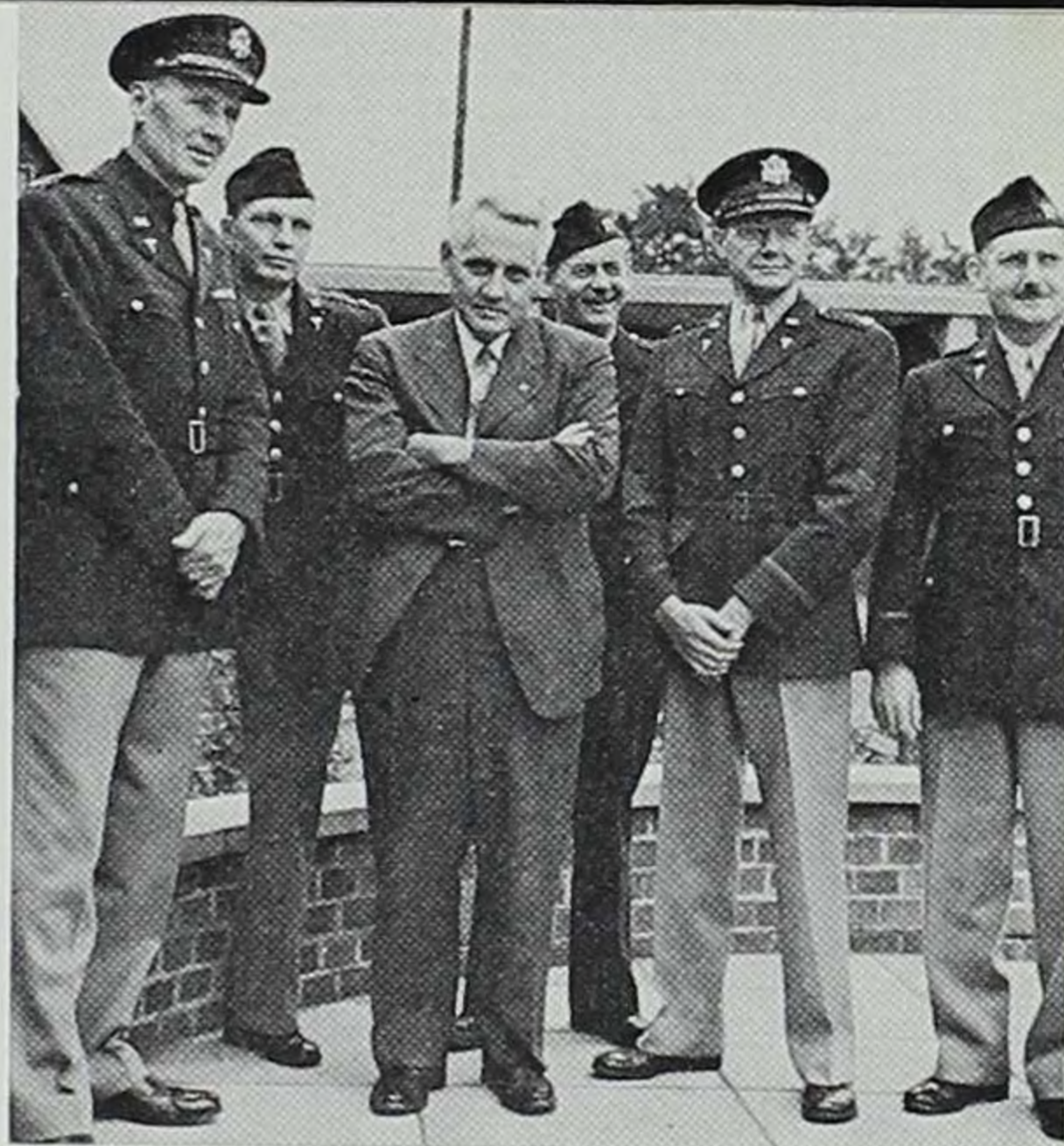
Earl Hall, right, on board ship off Guayaquil, Ecuador, with members of the Carnegie Fact-Finding mission to South America in 1941.



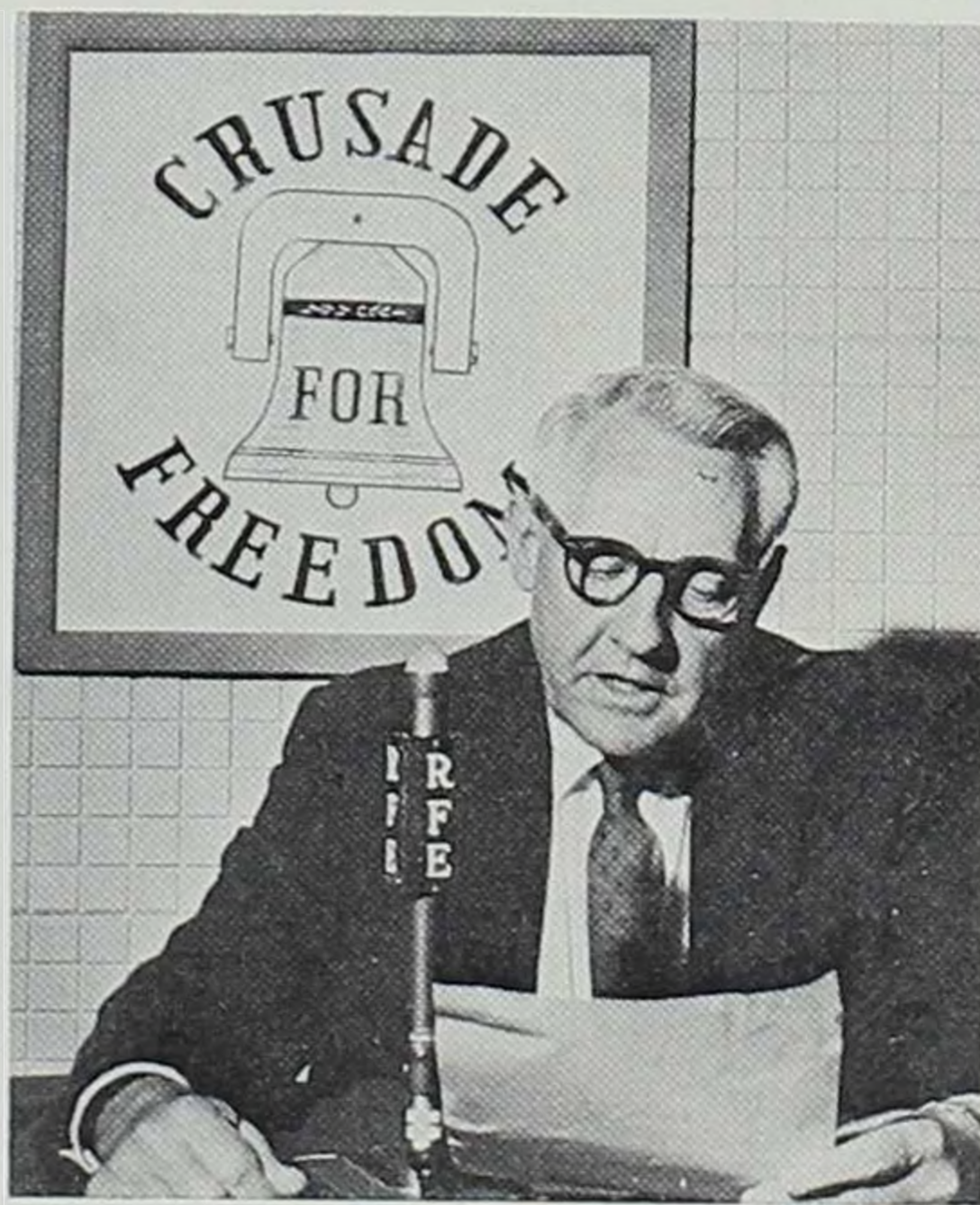




(Above, left) Seeing husband and dad off on a trip was nothing new to Ruth Hall and daughters, Marjory and Nancy. This time Earl Hall was on his way to South America.



(Above, right) Hall, as a war correspondent, met with Iowans at Churchill Hospital, Oxford, England, in 1944. Pictured, left to right, are Colonel Lester Dyke, Iowa City; Major Eddie Anderson, formerly of Mason City and Iowa Hawkeye football coach; Hall, Captain Harrison Kohl, Mason City, Major Leonard Ristine, Mount Pleasant; and Captain George Ellison, Nashua.



(Right, center) In 1957 Earl Hall addressed people behind the Iron Curtain. He used the Radio Free Europe station in Munich, Germany. He was Iowa chairman for the Crusade For Freedom in 1958.

During their round-the-world trip in 1956-57, Earl Hall, left, and Willis Patton visited a Japanese family and were dined at an Oriental luncheon—complete with robes.







Heap Big Indians! In 1939, at Rice Lake, near Lake Mills, Editor Hall was inducted into the Sauk and Fox Indian tribe as Chief Wee-Ker-See (Chief Careful Rein) in tribute to his years of highway safety work. Daughter, Nancy Lou Hall, receives a handshake.



A happy duty for Earl Hall, 1936 president of the Iowa State Safety Council, was the presentation of a safety plaque to his hometown of Mason City. Accepting the award were Harry Brown, left, and John Wallace.



Plaques designating Earl Hall as an "outstanding citizen of Mason City" and as one of the first recipients of the SUI Distinguished Service Award were presented to Hall in 1963 by Dr. L. W. Swanson, Chamber of Commerce president, left, and SUI President Virgil Hancher.





(Above, left) Earl Hall, left, and Ed Clark, right, march in an Armistice Day parade in Mason City in the 1920's. Note that World War uniforms still fitted most of the veterans. (Above, right) Sergeant Earl Hall at Camp Dodge, 1918.



State Legion Commander Earl Hall confers with SUI President Walter Jessup, left, and Governor Clyde Herring at a University football game in Iowa City, 1932.

At a President's Conference on Traffic Safety in Washington, D.C., in 1948, Earl Hall was one of the safety leaders meeting with President Harry Truman. To the President's right is Philip Fleming, director of the Conference, and Earl Hall of Mason City.







(Left) "Let's hear that song again." Earl Hall leads the singing at a 1964 meeting in York, Pennsylvania.

(Below) The Rusty Hinge quartet sings before a meeting of grain dealers in Des Moines. From left to right: Dr. Raymond Kunz, Earl Dean, Fred Shaffer, and Earl Hall.



(Right) "OK, now let's everybody sing." Earl Hall doing what came naturally to him for about half a century.





backs or misfortunes affected them, were "Don't get your dauber down" and "Let's play this by ear." He had learned years before that worry was futile, as was fretting over what might happen—things that usually did not materialize anyway.

Music was very much a part of Dad's life. His love of singing cheered and brightened the hearts of many people who were in his audiences over a span of about 50 years. Each spring Dad would hit the commencement trail to speak at high school graduation exercises in Iowa and southern Minnesota. To my knowledge these occasions were the only meetings of more than 10 persons where my father wouldn't suggest a "little community singing."

I was always amazed at his ability to draw out people who didn't really sing but who felt good just doing so. The old-time songs stirred their memories and soon they were singing lustily, remembering words to tunes they hadn't sung for years. A loud singing voice, complete informality, a unique waving of the hands, and some showmanship enabled Earl Hall to become a true song leader. There was always the familiar line: "Say, that was so good let's try it again." "If you don't know the words, just say Fluf, Fluf, Fluf."

"Girl of My Dreams," "Happy Days Are Here Again," "I Want A Girl," "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," "Carolina Moon," "Dream Train," "Little Brown Church in the Vale," "Moonlight and



Roses," "Let Me Call you Sweetheart,"—these were the tunes of yesteryear which usually were in Dad's repertoire of songs to be sung at any meeting, convention, in a large meeting hall or church basement.

During his university days Dad sang with a quartet and also with the University glee club. In the SUI quartet with Dad were Frank Marasco, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; George Davis, Lafayette, Indiana; and Arthur Kroppach, Davenport. Forty-four years after the men sang in that first quartet they gathered for a reunion at the University of Iowa for a memorable weekend and an Iowa homecoming football game.

Good times, fun and singing, were very much a part of Dad's entire adult life. In 1926, several years after he arrived on the scene in Mason City, Dad mentioned to a college friend, Dr. Raymond Kunz, that they ought to form a quartet. Dr. Kunz quickly agreed, suggested a musical farmer, Earl Dean, and three-fourths of the quartet was formed overnight. Dr. Kunz even suggested an appropriate name—"The Rusty Hinge Quartet." The lead baritone was the only spot missing and soon the three amateur singers persuaded Ed Cornell to join them. Later Cornell left the community and Fred Shaffer replaced him for a number of years. Shaffer was succeeded by Floyd Fraser.

The quartet was a familiar name and group at holiday celebrations and meetings throughout



northern Iowa and southern Minnesota. They sang the familiar tunes and were an early day version of the close-harmony barbershop quartet craze that since has swept America. The Rusty Hinges were different, however. They mixed their songs with jovial banter and featured Earl Dean, a fine musician, and his homemade ukulele-banjo and a "Tin Canolin." The latter was a farmyard version of a bass viol, Dean having made the instrument from a broomstick, one string of catgut and a large oil can which was the sounding box. He played the instrument with a bow from his fiddle and, as the singers admitted with little modesty, "We wowed them."

The quartet flourished for over 40 years—especially in the depression days of the 1930's. The money earned singing with the quartet, plus Dad's commencement talks, helped pay some of the bills for the Hall family. Actually, if the truth were known, we would guess the Rusty Hinges would have paid audiences for the enjoyment they had in entertaining them.

With a smile and a tear, Dr. Kunz recalled the 41 years the Rusty Hinge quartet barnstormed a two-state area singing before all kinds of crowds outdoors and indoors. This was in the days before television when families knew each other better and would travel to the nearest holiday celebration or public get-together.

Patience was not one of Dad's greatest virtues,



as anyone will attest if they ever traveled with him. He was of the old up and at 'em breed and if he was bound for a certain destination he wanted to get there as soon as possible. As a result he probably knew more shortcuts in Iowa than any other driver I've ever known. He knew Iowa towns, cities and highways like a book. But occasionally he would encounter shortcut roads down dusty country lanes that led him to a dead end in an Iowa farmyard. This seemed to happen most frequently when he was chauffeur on Rusty Hinge quartet trips. His detour shortcuts and Dr. Kunz's favorite stories usually provided more than enough conversation for any trip by the four singers.

Dad was impatient about getting started in the morning on a long trip and would drive far into the night. This meant that his passengers usually settled for below-par motels or hotels since most of the good lodging for the night had been taken by more leisurely travelers who stopped for a night's rest at a more reasonable hour than Earl Hall. This trait seemed only to exemplify the tireless spirit of Dad who failed to show the usual signs of weariness or fatigue after a long day of hard work or traveling.

His companion on a round-the-world trip taken in 1956-57 was Willis Patton. He recalls: "We were on the go constantly during the trip. I did the same things that Earl did, except he stayed up nights writing accounts of what we had seen and



done. The trip included the Olympic games at Melbourne, Australia, and about everything else. We went to Saigon when they told us we couldn't. We went to Cairo during the Suez crisis when everyone else was being evacuated."

In the evenings at home Dad would read newspapers and magazines—always on the lookout for a news story or idea for an editorial or a piece for his "Eye Observing" column. He would clip or tear articles from the newspapers, stuff them in his pocket, suddenly burst into song, and arise from his favorite chair in the living room. His nightly routine (if he were home for the evening) was to pop popcorn, place it in a large wooden bowl, dish it out for the rest of the family, and return to the easy chair for more reading. His expertise in the kitchen was limited to popping popcorn, washing dishes under the faucet, and cleaning vegetables from his Victory garden.

On Sunday mornings before church he would walk with one of his children or the family dog to the *Globe-Gazette* office to go through the mail, write a quick editorial, or drop a note to a friend. Dad had an amazing list of acquaintances in all parts of the country. It was his custom to send a newspaper or a clipping from his newspaper to friends who, he thought, would be interested in a particular editorial or news story from the *Globe*. This resulted in a tremendous volume of personal mail but he was usually one up on his correspond-



ents since he believed in making a prompt reply.

Earl Hall could type an editorial faster than most newspapermen (including this one) could write a simple news story. He amazed me with his ability to write succinctly, correctly, and state his case and logic clearly and concisely. Spelling, grammar and the English language were no obstacles to Dad. His typewritten copy required little editing, few references to the dictionary for the correct spelling or the right word. It was "clean" copy with little penciled editing and a linotype operator's delight. He was truly a master of the fine art of writing and communicating thoughts.

Although editorials and "think pieces" were his primary job as editor of the *Globe-Gazette* he was also an excellent reporter. He could ferret out a news or feature story with a talent seldom equaled. He became a student of correct grammar, correct pronunciation, and made a worthy effort to point out misconceptions on well-worn phrases attributed to the wrong people.

In his lifetime Dad received many honors and awards. Plaques, cash awards, and commendations from many different organizations pleased him, of course. He was not a man who divulged his innermost feelings. Yet I believe his greatest reward was in gathering together a competent staff and publishing a fine daily newspaper—the *Mason City Globe-Gazette* which "Makes all North Iowans Neighbors."



When Dad was born on a farm near Rippey on April 17, 1897, he was the youngest of 10 children, some of whom had already left home. Dad was not particularly close to his father but was literally adopted by his two sisters, Mary and Hattie, and his next oldest brother, Ora.

In later years Dad relied on the counsel and friendship of such men as: Will Muse, former editor of the *Globe-Gazette*; Lee Loomis, publisher; W. R. Boyd of Cedar Rapids, former editor of *The Cedar Rapids Republican* and secretary of the State Board of Education for many years as well as the prime mover for construction of the University Hospitals; Virgil Hancher, president of the University; Conger Reynolds, Ray Murphy, Sr., E. P. Adler, Phil Adler, Fred Schneller, and Al Efner.

It is perhaps not fair, however, to list only a few confidants of Dad's. He had so many close friends from his years of work in the American Legion, Lions club, Red Cross, University of Iowa; those met at political conventions of both parties at district and state levels; and, of course, his fellow editors and newspapermen from metropolitan dailies as well as weekly newspapers.

Upon graduation from the University of Iowa in 1918, Earl Hall entered the U.S. Army, receiving his training at Camp Dodge in Des Moines. He was attached to the 19th Intelligence Division. During his short-lived career in the



Army he rose to the rank of sergeant. After World War I ended and he was discharged from service Dad accepted his first job—that of a police reporter on the *Milwaukee Journal*.

It was in Milwaukee in 1919 that he first met the Reeves family. Two daughters of Mrs. Lucy Reeves, Ruth and Dorothy, were both employed as classified ad saleswomen at the *Journal*.

The Reeves sisters had lived with their mother and younger sister, June, in Iowa City, Iowa, when the older girls were in the lower grades. Since Dad and my mother, Ruth, were the same age, many of her grade school classmates, whose families lived in Iowa City, were in the University with Dad.

It was during his courtship days with Ruth Reeves that Dad had his first real taste of family life, home cooking, and the fun and good times which prevailed at the Reeves' apartment. Lucy Reeves had reared three daughters after her husband died at Montrose, Iowa, in 1907. Mrs. Reeves, for a number of years, was a home economics instructor at the Milwaukee Vocational school. Ruth and Earl Hall were married at the Little Brown Church near Nashua, Iowa, on July 31, 1920.

While breaking in as a reporter at the Milwaukee newspaper, Dad was contacted by the *Globe-Gazette* editor, Will Muse, who inquired if he would be interested in the post of managing edi-



tor at Mason City. Dad, without too much hesitation, accepted the offer and, at the age of 22, became one of the youngest managing editors in the daily field in the country.

Earl Hall and his young wife arrived in Mason City on their wedding day and took up residence in the old Kirk apartments. They acquired in this order: A Model T Ford, a son, Reeves, born December 26, 1921, and a bungalow in Forest Park. Later a daughter, Marjory June, was born on March 25, 1925, and on April 24, 1931, Nancy Lou arrived on the scene.

During his long career as editor-reporter at the *Globe-Gazette* Dad collected an outstanding staff of journalists, many of whom went on to high newspaper positions and responsible posts on newspapers and magazines throughout the country.

One of the most far-reaching and spectacular news stories ever to occur in Mason City was the appearance of the nation's No. 1 criminal, John Dillinger, who with his gang arrived at the First National Bank in Mason City to make a sudden withdrawal of funds. The bank robbery, two blocks down the street from the *Globe-Gazette*, was like a Hollywood melodrama with shooting, machine guns and several persons seriously injured by flying bullets.

The bank robbers made their escape in cars with hostages ordered onto the running boards of



each automobile. In their escape, the Dillinger gang scattered nails on country roads to delay pursuit by law enforcement officers. The gang escaped but within one short year the seven major criminals involved in the hold-up at Mason City and in other Midwest robberies were all dead, victims of violent deaths. Needless to say, this news event was well-covered by the staff of the *Globe-Gazette*.

Along with community involvement chores Dad became active in the American Legion and in 1927 traveled to Paris, France, with the Iowa contingent of Legionnaires for a Legion convention at the site where the veterans' organization was founded.

At the State Legion convention in Fort Dodge in August of 1932, Earl Hall went on record as opposing immediate payment of the World War I soldiers' bonus. It was his theory it would cause a financial drain on the government's expense account during the very depths of the depression. He fought the bond issue in the convention because of his own personal convictions although many Legionnaires favored immediate payment. Despite his stand, Earl Hall was elected commander and waived his personal views on the bonus to express the Legion's stand. Mainly he waged a battle as commander for payments by the government only to veterans deserving of compensation due to war injuries.

One editor summarized his year as commander:



"The point was clearly established as the goal of the Iowa American Legion: It changed from an organization that had gained a measure of public recognition as being ready to ransack the public treasury at the slightest pretense of patriotic reward to a conscientious group of vigorous American citizens who want to help their injured buddies and at the same time clear their ranks of parasitical shysters."

As he traveled the state's highways attending American Legion meetings in many towns and cities Dad became acutely aware of the need for a concentrated educational program to alert Iowans to the urgency of a highway safety program. Something should be done to reduce senseless killings which occurred with increasing frequency as the nation turned to automobiles and Iowa built concrete highways at a rapid pace. He helped found the Iowa State Safety Council, was its first president and won state-wide recognition as a crusading editor from the *Mason City Globe-Gazette*.

During the years 1937 to 1949 Earl Hall served on the State Board of Education (now the Board of Regents) and in the summer of 1940 was assigned an important mission. He went to Evanston, Illinois, to see his friend, Virgil M. Hancher, then with a prominent law firm in Chicago. The two men had been college roommates and Hancher had spent a summer in the Hall home after returning from studies at Oxford, England, and be-



fore he graduated from the University of Iowa College of Law.

Virgil Hancher was asked by his friend to return to his alma mater as president of the University, thus giving up a fine law practice to turn his talents to educational administration. After some weeks of soul-searching, Virgil Hancher accepted the Board's invitation and arrived on the campus in Iowa City in the autumn of 1940.

On February 7, 1965, a special memorial service was held on the campus in Iowa City to honor Dr. Virgil Hancher, SUI president emeritus, who died in New Delhi, India, on January 30, 1965, while serving as a consultant in higher education for the Ford Foundation. At this service his classmate, W. Earl Hall, gave the "Eulogy For a Friend."

In his tribute to Virgil Hancher and the legacy he left to the University and Iowa, Dad made these comments which I believe could also be said of W. Earl Hall:

You don't explain a Hancher any more than you explain a Churchill. You just recall their lives and their deeds—in reverent gratitude. He was not merely a great man; he was a good man. . . . By any accepted standard of measurement Virgil Hancher was a giant among men. Even in our student days I had him pegged for success on the grand scale. So did everybody else who knew him . . . his life was a life of supreme usefulness. Virgil Hanchers don't come along very often. There will never be another as far as I am concerned. . .



In turning over the reins of editorship of the *Mason City Globe-Gazette* to Bob Spiegel in 1963, Earl Hall summarized his 43 years at the helm by stating simply to Bob: "It's my reasoning that anybody who can report can step down into that lower category of writing editorials if needs be. Corollary to this is that I think of myself as a reporter rather than an editor . . . basically. It's been a lifetime of fun, believe me."

I suppose that in many ways "Life with Father" was typical of families who lived and loved in the era of post-World War I, the great depression, and the rumblings and avalanche of World War II. There were the usual joys and heartaches for Ruth and Earl Hall who managed to rear two daughters and a son, insulate them from most of the rigors of the depression, send them to college, and see them marry and start their own families.

The one big difference is that not every family had such a talented human dynamo as Earl Hall, or as kind and helpful a mother, who became *Mis-sus Fix-It* around the house. Her husband was all thumbs and was busy with causes and activities at a local, state, or national level.

We are confident that Mason City, Iowa, and surely the state and nation have benefited because of such men as Earl Hall. He truly paid his civic rent in many ways and added a zest for living to the lives of many people who knew and respected him and the ideals for which he stood. No one ev-



er had a greater love affair with life than Dad.

On just about any given subject you knew how W. Earl Hall thought. He was not a great compromiser—nor too patient if he thought any critic had begun on a false premise and was ignorant of the facts. He firmly believed his logic on any subject was right and it was difficult for him to encounter those who did not understand the simple truths and his personal thinking on a subject.

Dad did not believe in philosophizing. But I frequently recall two statements as I engage in these reminiscences: "I've had a ring-side seat at so much of the news and history for over half a century." And: "It's been a lifetime of fun."

Through his friendly and inquiring mind, his unique and contagious personality, Earl Hall contributed much to countless others who knew and loved him. The passing years will not dim our memories, nor those of his many friends, for this dynamic and generous soul.

REEVES HALL, Editor

*The Bulletin-Journal and Independence Conservative*



## As Others Saw Him

By ENOCH A. NOREM  
Retired Associate City Editor  
*Mason City Globe-Gazette*

It was my privilege to work for and with Earl Hall for 40 years as a reporter, city editor, and associate editor of the *Mason City Globe-Gazette*. I was there when he started as a young editor and rose from one achievement to another in community, state, and national affairs.

Those were exciting, fruitful years. Earl Hall was a great editor to be with. He had boundless energy and a capacity to get things done. He was a power to be reckoned with whether on the handball court or in a political battle for better government. When it came to matters of community improvement he placed his newspaper in support with a bang.

Lester Milligan, long-time secretary of the Mason City Chamber of Commerce, said of him: "I remember him for his persistent and unfailing support of public causes such as the United Fund, Family Service, or the building of a YMCA. He was always pleased when an associate was named as a board member or officer of such organizations. No other newspaper I know of had such credentials."

Charles Schaffer, a businessman, said: "He was one of the greatest ambassadors Mason City ever had. Many of the good things we enjoy in our community were sparked by him. I found in my travels over the country that both Earl Hall and Mason City were well-known."

Dr. Raymond Kunz voiced the conviction of many when



he said: "He was the best friend I ever had." Dr. Kunz and Hall were members of the famous Rusty Hinge quartet which spread good will for Mason City far and wide.

Many events come to mind when looking back. I remember one hot day in August, 1932, we were huddling over the telephone to catch the first word on the race for state commander of the American Legion. Our press deadline was nearing and Earl Hall was having a tough battle for the office at the state convention at Fort Dodge. Finally the word came: "Hall elected." The big type was already out so it didn't take long to get the presses running. The next year he was constantly on the go, visiting most of the Legion posts in the state and dashing home to pursue his editorial work.

One time, when Earl was traveling in Europe sending us a story every day by airmail, we noted one installment was missing. We got word of this to Hall and—would you believe it—along came a carbon copy. Be ready for any contingency—that was the Hall motto.

Earl Hall was as proud to call himself a reporter as editor. In fact, some of the most interesting things he did were on his travels. His description of the first Allied troops to enter Paris after the occupation was a masterpiece.

His travels took him to all parts of the world. He once expressed regret that he never reached Mecca. He could tell you the whereabouts of the world's finest harbor: Rio de Janeiro; the world's most beautiful women: Vietnam; the best place to live: Mason City, Iowa.

Hall kept up an amazing amount of correspondence with persons in all walks of life, including many prominent in government and business. He was in close contact with every former Mason Cityan who had distinguished himself—such as Meredith Willson, Hartzell Spence and Bil Baird. When we started the historical museum here he



was the one who contacted such persons and got them to donate exhibits.

The good will he created in this is still bearing fruit. Bil Baird has just sent the museum a shipment of marionettes. The little performers are Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and Dostoevski. This will be one of the top exhibits for the coming season.

I am sure Earl Hall, himself, would regard as the ultimate accolade of his life's work this simple but powerful sentence: He was a dedicated editor!

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By AL EFNER

Retired Editor-Publisher, *Ottumwa Courier*

It is especially appropriate that an issue of the Iowa history publication, *The Palimpsest*, be dedicated to Earl Hall. Few have done as much to carry the word about Iowa—and his beloved Mason City—to the rest of the world.

I recall a Pacific crossing in 1951 on the Battleship *Iowa* during which Earl and several others of us from Iowa were guests. Few of the 2,000 sailors aboard were Iowans, however. But "Iowans" they became, because of the enthusiasm—and teaching and singing—of one, Earl Hall. Hundreds of male voices, under the Pacific night sky on the ship's fantail, sang the "Iowa Corn Song" until King Neptune himself must have joined in to compete with the booming Hall bass that carried the lead. That, plus the hundreds of right arms raised in the appropriate Iowa salute, make up a memory that few other Iowans have. It's a delicious one, too, especially for one who associated for years with Earl and who knew of his dedication to his state.

Earl Hall was just as dedicated to honest newspapering. He was editor and, at the close of his career, publisher of



the Mason City *Globe-Gazette*. But first, he was a reporter to most of us in the business—and one of the best.

The Mason City editor covered more than a score of national political conventions across the country from 1924 until the close of his career—just about as many as any newspaperman anywhere. He seldom had difficulty arranging interviews with the most important political figures. The press sections were filled each time with hundreds of writers. But Earl Hall stood out in these crowds—and not just because of his shaggy white mane. He had a reputation for asking intelligent questions and listening to and recording the answers the way those interviewed intended them to sound. Earl never sought to trap a politician. He wanted the individual to get his ideas over, and he gave him every opportunity to do so. He reported them honestly and then if he disagreed, Earl went to the editorial page to say so.

Earl knew the highest and the lowest on the political party totem poles—and they knew him and trusted him. This trust is one of the highest marks a newspaperman can earn.

Earl was more than fair to his fellow reporters, too, as we struggled to develop news at these unique American institutions—national conventions. Because of his ability to reach and to talk to the news makers, and because of his great vigor at a typewriter keyboard, Earl Hall turned out great quantities of interesting and often significant copy. It filled his daily column in the *Globe-Gazette*, found its way into page one stories, and provided excellent speaking prose for his radio commentary, "One Man's Opinion."

But it was never "exclusive." He never harbored a copyright thought. He turned out carbon copies of everything, and offered the Hall "press service" free to the rest of us "if you find any of it useful." There were instances of



convention correspondents who "went out on the town" instead of covering the activity, and then mailed Hall carbons home.

We recall one instance. Earl came up with a bright story involving the "Young Turks" of the Democratic party, at the war-time Chicago convention in 1944 when FDR was nominated for the fourth time. These "Young Turks" included the President's son, Franklin, Jr., "Soapy" Williams, the governor of Michigan, and Senator Hubert Humphrey. Earl interviewed them all, then tossed the carbon into the "help yourself" pile. A Chicago newspaper writer, drooling a little, still hesitated to convert it to his own use. "Oh, go ahead," said Earl Hall with a twinkle. "Your paper doesn't bother us in Mason City."

That was a point Earl also liked to make.

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MEREDITH WILLSON

1950 CBS Network Radio Program

To me Earl Hall will always be the William Allen White of Iowa. He's made his paper the community looking glass and for 30 years now Earl has been holding it up while Mason City looks in to see her good points and her bad . . . and by the way, though it hurts me to admit, in Mason City things aren't always perfect, and whenever Earl finds something wrong with the old girl, he comes right out and says it to her face.

Thirty years an editor—isn't that something? Just think the exciting things that go across his desk every day. Think of being able to read Dick Tracy a whole day ahead of anybody else. But even at that I don't envy the editor his job. He sees so much trouble and sorrow, so much intolerance and crime and pettiness and selfishness.

But if you ask Earl how he stands it, he just says, "Oh



well, people are like news—there'll always be more good than bad."

What I want to say is that I never knew a town that wasn't richer for having an editor like Earl Hall. If you've got an editor like Earl in your town you're lucky, because like the town clock he keeps the old burg awake. Like a wise father he compliments it when it's right and spansks it when it's wrong. He never makes the money your Wall Street stockbroker does, but he never treats the community like stock, either. I mean he never sells it short.

We offer tonight for American approval the name of Earl Hall, editor—he certainly is one of the good guys.



## An Editor at His Best

### **Brotherhood More Than Tolerance**

February, 1962

The word tolerant may have served a useful purpose in the beginning days of our modern concept of brotherhood, but its status is questionable at this moment, so far as I am concerned. It has some dubious implications and overtones.

When a person thinks of himself as "tolerant"—and this is somewhat in the nature of a confession—he arrogates to himself a definite superiority over those toward whom he practices his tolerance. He endures as a martyr. He's right proud of himself.

Lest I be misunderstood, let me say right now that I regard tolerance as far better than its opposite, intolerance. I'll even concede that it can be—and often is—a midway step toward racial or religious understanding. But it isn't brotherhood per se.

I wouldn't be surprised if my own progress toward true brotherhood is typical of those who have been born and reared in the north central states. I knew no racial problem because there was but one Negro family in our county—and a well-respected family it was too.

Nurtured in a Protestant home, I was led to believe that Catholics were a people apart. The true meaning of the symbolism was lost in the telling and in a juvenile sort of way, I suspect I took on my fair quota of "anti-Catholicism" bigotry.

Fortunately for me in my university days, I was exposed



to some wonderful Catholic youngsters. One became my roommate, and I have no closer friend to this day. I came to respect him and his religion. I had taken a giant stride toward brotherhood in religion.

Although there are other—and perhaps better—ways to achieve it, a career of travel to the far places of our world has disabused my mind of the idea that ours is a superior race. Spirit and intellect are not a product of the accident of skin pigmentation.

Wherever I have crossed paths with them—and there have been no exceptions—I have found human beings possessed of the same basic ideals and aspirations held by me and other Americans.

Never once in my visits to 65 countries over a period of 35 years have I been made to feel unwanted or unwelcome because I was known to be an American. And nowhere was this more true than in Russia.

Even in Calcutta—the ultimate in poverty and squalor—I found myself recalling that time-honored observation: "There but for the grace of God, go I."

What I've seen, heard and sensed in my travels has left me with the deep-seated conviction that human kind, generally speaking, is deserving of better government than it has received. And, again, nowhere is this more true than in Russia.

The idea of second class citizenship through the accident of birth and skin pigmentation has been made repugnant to me, as indeed it must be to all who REALLY believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man.

In enlightened selfishness, if for no other reason, the arguments for erasing the racial inequality blot from the image of America in the world's eye are both immediate and compelling.

With the uncommitted people of our world, there is



scant difference between the slave status imposed by the Kremlin and the inferior status tolerated if not actually imposed by America's democratic government.

Something far deeper and more meaningful than mere tolerance is involved in all this. The really compelling reason for treating those about us as equals is that they ARE equals. In that direction lies true Brotherhood.

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**The Command of a United America  
Is "Forward March"**

December 8, 1941

Japan's cowardly attack upon the territory and flag of the United States will be dealt with by a strong and united nation. Yesterday and the day before there were "isolationists" and "interventionists," "America Firsters" and "Fight for Freedom" advocates. Today and tomorrow there will be but one classification—Americans all.

The one goal of our republic is to bring this war to a victorious conclusion at the earliest possible moment. The time for bickering is past; recriminations will have no place in our national life. There's a war to be fought and won.

It is well that America know the character of its adversary at the outset. While wearing the robes of peace Japan was clutching a concealed dagger. The fundamental tenets of civilized decency have been violated.

Even those most reluctant to believe that Hitler had designs on the western hemisphere must now see that the Japanese warlords responsible for plunging their country into war are disciples of his barbaric philosophy. Tokyo, like Rome, has become a mere remote control station for the master voice in Berlin.

We used to wince at the reference to this as "World War No. 2" but now it has become exactly that. The



democratic ideal is locked in battle with the totalitarian concept and there can be no compromise.

While we believe completely in ultimate triumph for our country and those who will be fighting with us on the side of human freedom, we are not neglecting the probability of "blood, sweat and tears."

All that Americans hold dear is at stake, our heritage of freedom, our glorification of man over state, our religion centering about the golden rule.

The issues and the stakes are clear beyond mistaking. America can be counted on to rise up in all its might against those who seek to return to the moral standards which prevailed in the dark ages.

From this point on all other considerations are secondary to winning this war and helping build a world in which future Hitlers will be dealt with before they attain Frankenstein dimensions.



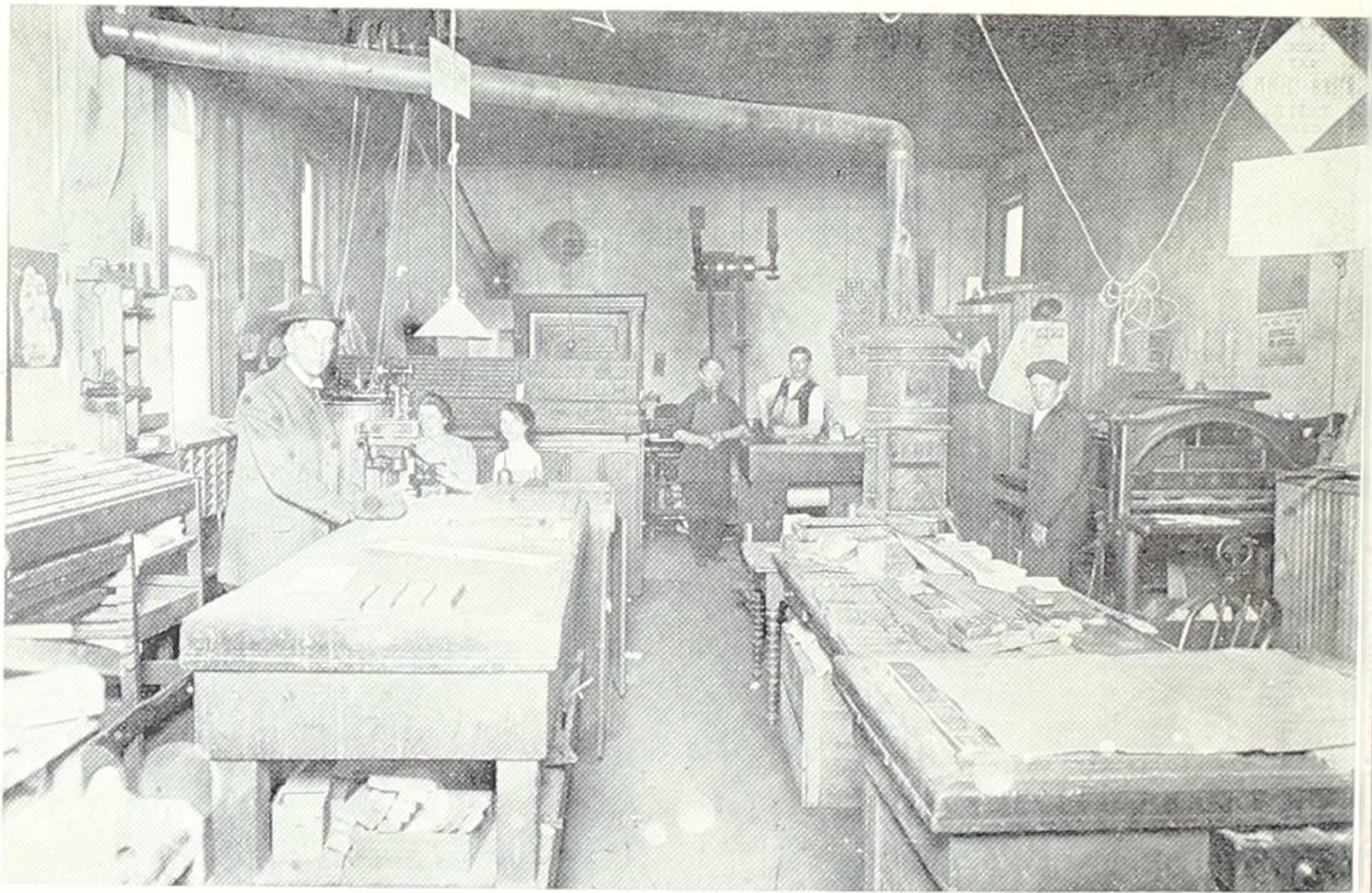


When Meredith Willson of Mason City had his national radio show, one of his guests was Editor Hall of his old hometown. They are pictured going over a script and a musical score scheduled for the program which emanated from Los Angeles.



Hollywood stars joined Mr. and Mrs. Hall and Meredith Willson between takes at the Warner Bros. lot during the shooting of the "Music Man" in 1961. Pictured, left to right, are: Robert Preston, Mrs. Hall, Director Morton DaCosta, Hall, Shirley Jones, and Willson. The following year the stars of the musical joined Composer Meredith Willson for a world premiere of the movie in Mason City. Earl Hall was general chairman of the event.





As the "printer's devil" on the Jefferson (Iowa) *Bee* young Earl Hall had an assortment of duties to earn his weekly salary of \$1.50. He is pictured near the paper cutter in this 1910 photo. At the left is an early-day publisher of the *Bee*, Paul Stillman, who later became speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives.



A business district fire in Mason City in the 1930's prompted Earl Hall, left and Reporter Dave Kaufmann to check signals on news coverage. At right, in the conversation, is George Gitz of Mason City. Man on the right is not identified.