

Levi Pennington

People

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## MORE ABOUT HERBERT HOOVER

by Levi T. Pennington

Some of my friends who heard or have read the things I said about "Herbert Hoover, the Man" in the memorial service at the Newberg Friends Church during the hour of his funeral in New York, have expressed a desire to know more about my relations with him and my recollections of him. I am glad to accede to this desire.

I had known much about Herbert Hoover for a considerable time before I met him. The fact that he was a Friend (a Quaker if we use the nickname that is more widely used than the official name of this denomination) added interest to what the world had come to know about him after he had led the greatest life-saving enterprise the world had ever known. Born in a humble little town in Iowa, the son of a Quaker woman preacher and teacher and the village blacksmith, his birth came little more than a year before I was born in a humble little town in Indiana. Both of us "birth-right" Friends, his life had led him far afield while mine had been vastly different, but both of us with a similar background of Quaker training, in basic morals, in industry, wholesome school life, making the most of meager resources.

His early schooling was in his birthplace, West Branch, Iowa. Here both his parents died, and after living with one relative and then another, his uncle, Henry John Minthorn, welcomed him in his home in Newberg. He was a member of the first student body of Friends Pacific Academy, of which his doctor-uncle was the first head. After his work in this little Quaker school, out of which grew Pacific College, now George Fox College, he did his work in Stanford University, became one of the best two mining engineers in the world (he was named "Engineer of the Century" by the first engineer organization in America). Then, sacrificing the sure prospect of great wealth, he accepted the task of heading Belgian Relief, and on and on till called by David Starr Jordan "the one great world hero that World War I produced." When I first met him he was Secretary of Commerce under the Harding administration.

It was my knowledge of all this and much more that could be said of his achievements that furnished my background for my first interview with Herbert Hoover.

In that First World War the American Friends Service Committee was organized, to furnish a place and provide an opportunity for young men who accepted the Quaker position that all war is wrong and who were exempted from military service, to make their sacrifice in seeking to heal the wounds that war was making. The head of this Quaker organization was Dr. Rufus M. Jones, probably the most widely-known Friend in the world with the exception of Herbert Hoover. I was back in the eastern part of



the United States to seek financial help for Pacific College, of which by this time I had been for some years president. Rufus Jones, knowing that I was to see Herbert Hoover, said to me, with a strange combination of Quakerly "plain language" and un-Quakerly slang, "Don't let him get thy goat. He will sit there while thee talks, and so far as thee can tell, thee might as well be talking to a stump or a stone; but he won't miss a thing." This prediction proved to be entirely accurate.

My appointment to meet Mr. Hoover was late in the afternoon. It was at the height of the Tea Pot Dome scandal, and the Secretary of Commerce had just come from a long cabinet meeting. I was told, though he did not tell me, that he was fighting out the issue as to whether he should resign from a cabinet one member of which had to serve a term in Federal prison for his crime, and in the minds of many people the administration was not clear of blame in the nation-shaking scandal, or whether he should remain in the cabinet and help to clean up the unwholesome mess.

He entered his private office where I was awaiting him, and I was shocked as I looked at his face. It was so drawn that it looked like the face of an athlete finishing a two-mile race in which he had put every ounce of possible energy into the finish and was ready to drop.

He gave me a word of greeting and we shook hands. Then I sat on one side of a great flat-topped desk and he sat at the other side, with nothing on the desk but a pencil and a letter-size scratch tablet. He picked up the pencil and while I talked he used that pencil on that tablet and never raised his eyes until I had told my story.

Taking notes, was he? Certainly not. Near the center of that page he had drawn a little equilateral triangle. Then crossing this triangle he drew another, and he had a six-pointed star. He drew little triangles in the points of that star; then he drew lines through the points of that little star and he had a much bigger one. He drew triangles inside of triangles in the points of this star; then drawing lines through the points of this star he had a much bigger one, so big that there was not quite room enough for the point of the star that was farthest to the right. More triangles inside of triangles in the points of this biggest star, and he tore off this sheet and dropped it into the waste basket, and started another doodle. (How I wish I had had nerve enough to save that star doodle. I'd have it framed and hung up in the Minthorn House, usually called the Hoover House, alongside his first love letter which he wrote at the age of twelve.)

He never got that second doodle finished. I had finished what I had to say, and he had not missed a thing.



"Have you tried the General Education Board?" he asked.

I told him that I had; that it was their fixed policy not to help colleges, but to recognize them; that a college had to be so big and so well fixed financially in order to get a contribution from them, and Pacific College could not qualify on either point.

"I know," he said. "I am to have lunch tomorrow with -----, the executive secretary of that organization. The next meeting of their board is Friday evening. I'll write to -----, the president of the board, and see if we can get any help there." (I saw a copy of that letter later, and if it had been a business letter that he hoped would close a business deal that would make him tens of thousands of dollars, he could not have written more effectively. With his consent we used the letter in the campaign we put on for the College later.)

I had told him of our plan for this campaign in Portland, and he advised me to get in touch with W. B. Ayer of the Eastern & Western Lumber Company. (I did that when I got back to Oregon, and Mr. Ayer started the campaign with an anonymous gift of \$25,000. He never told me that he had heard from Mr. Hoover, but I have my own opinion. And I know that Mr. Ayer considered Herbert Hoover the greatest man in the world. Later Mr. Ayer--but I was to tell you about Herbert Hoover.

I shall make no attempt at chronological order in reciting other incidents in my personal relations with this man who many times and in many ways proved himself a real personal friend of mine, and that for many years.

I was in the home of Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover, his gracious and queenly wife, when a friend stopped in who was on his way north for some of the famous fishing which the former little Quaker boy began to learn about, and about which Herbert Hoover by this time knew so much. As if it were a matter of great moment (as it was, for the concern of a friend even in so small a matter as sport fishing was of importance to so altruistic a man as he), Herbert Hoover got out maps, told his friend about the fishing from the Mackenzie, Hoover's favorite stream, to the Yellowstone; told his friend who the right guides were, and all sorts of things to make this friend's trip more happy and successful than it could have been without this guidance.

My wife Rebecca and I were guests at the White House during the hottest part of Hoover's fight with a hostile Democratic Congress in his efforts to get legislation passed that would help to relieve the dire economic situation for which Hoover got the blame. We were planning a trip to England and Ireland, but Herbert had planned a



fishing trip to the Mackenzie to relieve the tremendous pressure that he was under, and this plan had been publicized a long time ahead. Thinking that there might be a possibility that I could do something to make this trip more pleasant, I had written that we would gladly postpone our trip for some weeks if I could in any way advance his interests. I was informed (and it was two weeks before the public learned of it through the press) that the situation in Congress, then in session, was such that the fishing trip had been abandoned. But Rebecca and I were invited to visit Washington and be the guests of the Hoovers at luncheon some day to be agreed upon.

I was in the Friends meeting which the Hoovers attended the day before this luncheon appointment, and I preached in that service. It was the only time I ever saw Herbert Hoover wipe tears from his eyes as I dealt with matters that touched his life though there was nothing to identify it nor him as I presented it. It was interesting to see Herbert and his wife enter the meeting house as unostentatiously as any other couple there, with the secret service men doing their duty so quietly that one could with difficulty identify them.

It was the next day that we arrived at the White House, with nothing in the way of a card or anything else to identify us, but we were met and ushered to the room where we were to meet the president and his wife a bit later. It was Mrs. Hoover's social secretary who entertained us.

She told us of an experience that Mrs. Hoover had had that forenoon. One of their sons was in a sanitarium with what was reported to be tuberculosis, though he has always maintained that it was nothing of the kind. At any rate, his children were living with their grandparents at the White House, and Mrs. Hoover had gone to one of the Washington department stores to buy some presents for these youngsters. Some "first ladies" had had the store managers send a great mass of toys or clothing or whatever was wanted, and the selection would be made at the White House; but Mrs. Hoover went to the store and made her purchase as any other customer might have done. Another woman at the same counter said to her, "Aren't you Mrs. Hoover, the president's wife?" Assured that she was right, the woman said, "This will be a red letter day for me. I was shopping alongside the wife of the president of the United States." With one of her lovely smiles Mrs. Hoover said, "Well, let's make it as much worthwhile as we can," so she held out her hand and shook hands with her fellow customer, and they chatted for awhile as any two chance acquaintances might have done.

This account of the forenoon was scarcely finished when the Hoovers arrived for their lunch. We sat in the big state dining room, just the five of us, Herbert and



Lou Henry Hoover, the social secretary, and Rebecca and I, with the portrait of Abraham Lincoln looking down upon us, and a Negro waiting on us as tall as Lincoln himself had been.

Some reference was made to Mrs. Hoover's shopping expedition, and she told of what had happened the preceding Saturday afternoon and had got into the Sunday paper. One of the reporters that was assigned to the White House, she could not remember his name but identified him as "the fattest one," had seen one of the little grandsons playing in the White House yard, and had asked him what he wanted for Christmas. The little fellow had apparently given the matter no consideration as yet, and the reporter, according to the story that appeared in the paper, suggested one thing after another without any affirmative reply. Presently he mentioned a policeman's uniform, and (at least that's what the paper said) the boy nodded his approval.

The president at this point interjected, "Yes, and now we'll get seventeen policeman's uniforms for the boy." Mrs. Hoover said, "Two of them have already arrived."

She explained that these uniforms would be sent back to the firms that were trying to make capital of their connection with the family of the president of the United States, and told with more than a tinge of sadness one of the incidents that had compelled them to decline any gift that did not come from some personal friend who gave without any selfish interest. She told of the gift of a quilt or comforter that had come from a woman evidently old, who wrote that she had made this article of bedding as a love gift to Mrs. Hoover. The gift was accepted and gratefully acknowledged; and presently came a letter from this elderly woman claiming that she was entitled to a pension but had not been able to secure it, and asking Mrs. Hoover to influence the president so that the giver of this gift to Mrs. Hoover could have this pension that she desired.

The situation in Congress was such that Mr. Hoover felt that he must get back to his office very soon after the luncheon was over. (That was the day when he had said to Congress, "You must not play politics with human misery." How sadly they disregarded this advice is a matter of history.) But Mrs. Hoover took Rebecca and me up to their private living room, for one of the pleasantest hours of our lives.

I have said many times that Mrs. Hoover was as near to being a perfect hostess as any woman I have ever known. I have said, and I still believe it, that she could have had the queen of England, an Irish washerwoman and a Negro "mammy" as guests and all three of them feeling at home and having a happy time as guests of the president's wife.



In the course of our conversation, referring to our first sight of each other the previous day, she said to me, "You were a great disappointment to me, Mr. Pennington." I thought I saw a twinkle in her eye, and I said, "That sounds pretty bad for me. How did I dissappoint you?" She replied, "I thought of you as the head of Friends Pacific Academy when my future husband was a student there, and I thought of you as a very tall and a very thin man, with long, white hair and a long gray beard, and you did not look at all as I expected." Since her husband was at that time a boy not yet in his teens, and since I was then a boy a year and 19 days younger than he, and since at the time of this visit to the White House I was weighing about 240 pounds and had not too much hair and wore no beard--well, we all laughed at her disappointment.

In the course of the years I have met Herbert Hoover in his office when he was Secretary of Commerce, in the Hoover home on the Stanford campus repeatedly, still oftener in our home in Newberg, in the summer home of the governor of Oregon, in the banquet hall of a great hotel, in his apartment in The Towers of the Waldorf Astoria and in other places, but this visit to him and Mrs. Hoover in the White House is naturally one of the outstanding experiences of my relations with him and his wife.

It was at this visit to the governor's summer home near Vista Point on the Columbia that Rebecca and Herbert had their talk about fishing. He had been in our home two days before, and she had told him of the 28-pound salmon that she had caught some days before that. The day after his visit with us the governor had taken him fishing on the Columbia, and one of the Portland dailies had told of his catching a fish, a salmon that weighed about ten pounds, while the other paper had made it two salmon weighing more than ten pounds apiece. In her talk with Herbert, Rebecca asked him if his fish was bigger than the one she had caught. He replied, "My fish was bigger than yours. If your fish was six feet long, mine was longer." We had a good time with him that day. (That evening he gave the address at the "kick-off" dinner to start the Community Chest campaign in Portland, and he was served a part of this fish that he had caught. Referring to the reports of his catch, in his introductory remarks, he said that he had learned something about Oregon fish that he had never known before, that they could increase in number and in size after they were dead.)

It will be remembered that Herbert Hoover was elected to the presidency by the most overwhelming victory in the history of America and that he was defeated four years later by the most overwhelming victory of his opponent. After this defeat there were months in which he would not say a word for publication, least of all about the



political situation. It was during this period of silence that I was his guest at his invitation on my return from a visit in California. He told me things that would have been front page news in every metropolitan daily in America if I had given these things he told me to the press. He did not ask me not to make his statements public; by this time our relations were such that he evidently did not deem it necessary to make such a request. He knew that I knew he was not giving the public anything during this time. He was giving his successor in the White House full opportunity to start his administration without any interference from the man whom he had defeated.

It was not until the Lincoln's Day banquet in Portland that Hoover first came out into the open with a speech dealing with national affairs. President Roosevelt had just presented to Congress his address on "The State of the Union," and Hoover took this address and metaphorically "beat him over the head" with it. It was one of the most impressive philippics that I have ever heard or read, interspersed with wit and humor that brought roars of laughter that fairly shook the house. I was at the speakers' table, and I had Mrs. Hoover practically to myself. The toastmaster was busy with Herbert, and Mrs. Hoover and I conversed during the dinner in a way that I enjoyed greatly (and she said she did).

At the close of the program she said to me, "Nearly always when Mr. Hoover speaks on the air, there is another voice that goes out in addition to his, and I think it is your voice this time. Many people have heard your laugh, I think." I said I found it hard to believe, as far away as I was from the mike; but she was right. When I got to Newberg after the dinner, Rebecca and both daughters, who had been listening as the program came over the radio, recognized my laugh. Next I heard from my sister in Michigan, who was listening with quite a party. At the first outburst of laughter during Mr. Hoover's speech, she said with surprise, "That's Lee's laugh"--she is one of the few people who shorten my name from Levi to Lee. "Go on," they said to her. "Your brother is probably not within hundreds of miles of that dinner." "I'm going to find out," she said. "If Lee is there, that's his laugh." She heard that laugh over and over, and she was right. The next place I heard from where my laugh was recognized was North Carolina--evidence became convincing that my laugh had been scattered over a wide area.

It was during this Lincoln's Day dinner that Mrs. Hoover said one of the most magnanimous things that I ever heard in conversation on political affairs. We had spoken of the recent presidential election, and she said, "Believing what the people had been made to believe about Mr. Hoover, the citizens of the United States could do nothing but defeat him."



And this brings me to the saddest and most disagreeable things in all the history of my relations with Herbert Hoover, the way in which people were made to believe that he was responsible for the great depression of the 1930's, for which he was no more to blame than Alice in Wonderland or the Wizard of Oz or Gulliver or Robinson Crusoe, and many other things were laid to his charge. (In writing about the fishing in Oregon, I told him how poor it had been, and added, "I have not heard that your enemies are blaming you for that, but give them time.")

It was the worst "smear" campaign ever, at least in my memory; the lies that were told and were believed by people who should have had more intelligence than to believe them--lies all the way from the trivial to those of real magnitude. Some samples: It was told that he had a farm in California entirely handled by Orientals. He told me that he knew of no reason why he should **not** employ an Oriental if he so desired, but there actually was not a single Oriental in his employ.

The Haldeman-Julius company issued a publication declaring that Herbert Hoover had 10,000 slaves in his mines in Australia.

A businessman in Newberg told me in all seriousness that Herbert Hoover made a million dollars out of Belgian relief. I knew, as he should have known, and so I told him, that the accounts of the Belgian Relief organization were audited by certified public accountants. It was years later, indeed decades later, that Mr. Hoover told me that two of the leading firms of public accountants in England each loaned one of their experts for the auditing of these accounts; they were "double checked" in an unusual double way; and these firms also loaned accountants, free of charge, as were the higher experts, to keep all the accounts and thus saved all this expense for the relief organization. And yet this businessman said that Hoover made a million dollars for himself out of Belgian relief.

On one of my calls on my <sup>way</sup> back from Los Angeles to Newberg, I had just read, under a scare head in one of the Los Angeles papers, that Herbert Hoover had just purchased a ranch in a certain place in California for \$500,000. He told me the facts: that his son Allan had wanted the business experience of managing a ranch; that he had found a ranch that could be bought for \$50,000--not \$500,000, just \$50,000; that Herbert, and his wife, and Herbert, Jr., and Allan, and Theodore, the brother of the former president, had combined to put \$12,500 into the venture, the rest to be raised by selling stock in the company--but instead of \$12,500 from five Hoovers, one-fourth of a \$50,000 purchase, the paper said that Herbert Hoover had bought a ranch for \$500,000. "Of course I'll correct it," he said, "but the correction will be a little item on an inside page where very few will see it, while most of the folks who saw the big article will think they know that I bought a ranch for half a million dollars."



Aside from the campaign lies that were told about Hoover, the champion liar about him was Khrushchev, the barbarous leader of the Russian Reds for a time. I sat with Herbert on a sofa in his apartment in the Waldorf Astoria Towers just after the third volume of his four-volume "An American Epic" had come off the press. As he inscribed the book that he was giving me, he told me of the various lies that Khrushchev was telling to belittle him and the United States. I had heard all of them but the last one that had come out while I was traveling, <sup>which</sup> I had missed. Khrushchev's statements were:

There was no real famine in Russia after World War I. There was some shortage of food, but no famine.

Russia had never asked for help.

Russia had paid for every bit of food, clothing, medicine and other things that had been received during this food shortage.

What little Hoover had done during this time he had done to save his own mines in Russia.

Hoover had been responsible for the death of 10,000 Russians. (I think that is the number he mentioned. It may have been larger.)

Of course the refutation of these lies was easy. The Russian famine was one of the worst in the history of the human race. Twenty-five million people were facing certain death unless vast relief provisions were made. Russia had been sending desperate pleas for assistance--Hoover's book furnished copies of these. Russia was never asked to pay a cent and never has paid a cent for these vast supplies of food, clothing, medicine and other forms of assistance. Hoover never had any mines in Russia, and Khrushchev knew that, but that did not make any difference to him. And just how could Hoover have been responsible for 10,000 deaths in this pifflin' food shortage in which Hoover had done so little anyhow? It was really heart-tearing to hear this former little Quaker boy tell of the experience of the many notable American leaders dealing with the situation in which cannibalism had become so widespread that it would have horrified the world if the facts had been made public at that time, human flesh sold in the meat markets, and at least one case where a mother killed and ate her own baby.

But Khrushchev used the revival of some facts about that famine as an occasion for his diabolical lies.

It was not long before his death when Hoover was asked how he felt about the folks who had heaped upon him so much blame, so much objurgation, so many lies, so many curses. His reply was, "I guess I'm like the old man in the church service when



the minister was preaching about enemies. He said, 'Everybody has enemies. If there is anybody in the house who has no enemies, I wish he'd stand up.' A very old man arose. The preacher said, 'You think you do not have an enemy in the world?' 'Don't think I have,' was the reply. The preacher asked, 'How do you explain it, that as old as you are you do not have a single enemy?' The old man replied, 'I guess I've just lived so long that all the so-and-sos have died.'"

(This book that Herbert handed me as we sat on the couch and talked was not the only autographed volume of which he was the author and of which I have an autographed copy. There is a considerable space in a section of my library. . . . The last two books he sent were "Fishing for Fun--and to Wash Your Soul" and "On Growing Up," a book containing letters from children and his answers to them. The former is inscribed "To Dr. Levi Pennington with All Good Wishes from Herbert Hoover." The other book, "On Growing Up," has the inscription, "To my good friend Levi T. Pennington, not for instruction, being too late for that, but being for amusement. With the Good Wishes of Herbert Hoover.")

I was invited to have luncheon with him the day before Herbert Hoover was 89 years old. I knew of the time three years earlier when a caller had to wait a few minutes before Hoover could see him, and in the interval the caller talked with one of the secretaries. She told him that Mr. Hoover was working from eight to twelve hours every day. The caller said, "How can he do that? He is almost 86 years old." The secretary replied, "Yes, but he doesn't know that." Now, more than three years later, as we sat at lunch I said to him, "I've been telling folks that you are keeping four secretaries busy." He smiled and said, "Seven--no, eight." He had just put on an additional one that morning. I met five of his secretaries to whom he introduced me. I saw his birthday cake before he did. It was in the form of a sphere, with a baby ribbon from New York to all of the 45 countries that the United States had aided during and immediately following World War I.

All too soon it was time for me to be going, for he had an appointment to meet 75 representatives of the press. He was to meet them 25 at a time, giving them what material they desired for their articles about him on his birthday the next day. Smaller men could have been ungracious about granting these interviews, but not Herbert Hoover.

He told me that when he reached his next birthday he was going to be 90 the rest of his life. That, he said, was a good round number, and he did not intend to change it ever. Unfortunately, he did not have long to use that figure.



Newberg, under the leadership of the college, celebrated Hoover Day once "away back when." Visitors to the celebration from other places were taken to various spots associated with his life as a boy, to the house where he had lived with his uncle and aunt and his cousins, one of whom was born while he lived there; to the canyon, now Herbert Hoover Park, where he used to care for his uncle's horses and milk his uncle's cow; to "the old swimmin' hole," etc. And finally to the dedication of a plaque in his honor, in the main corridor of Wood-Mar Hall. In raised letters on the bronze plaque are the words:

Herbert Hoover  
Humble Country Boy  
Earnest Student  
Distinguished Engineer  
Effective Administrator  
World Philanthropist  
Promoter of Peace  
Eminent Statesman  
President of the United States  
A Tribute of Love and Esteem  
from His Boyhood School  
Pacific College

He could not be present at this celebration, though of course it was fully reported to him. Years later on one of his visits to our home I took him over to the college and let him read the inscription. Only a two-word comment, "Too flattering."

There are a number of places in Oregon where the name of Herbert Hoover is preserved. United States Highway US 99W is Hoover Boulevard from Tigard to Newberg. Newberg's principal park is Herbert Hoover Park. But his principal memorial is The Minthorn House, named in honor of his uncle, but quite commonly called The Hoover House.

When I learned that this house had once been the home of Herbert Hoover, I wanted the college to own it; but the financial straits of the college in those days were such that the purchase of the property was out of the question.

Later, when some endowment had been built up, I proposed that some of the endowment money be used for this purchase, and the house be restored at least to better condition and be made a source of income as a feature of endowment, but that did not meet with favor.

Later it was proposed that we raise a fund with which to purchase the property, and Dr. Burt Brown Barker, vice president of the University of Oregon, who had been a close friend of Mr. Hoover ever since they were boys together, offered to start the fund with a gift of \$500--a generous gift in that day, but a very minor fraction of what he has given since.



The property had been advertised for sale at \$1,500, but when it was learned that the college wanted to buy it, the price was immediately tripled. When the then president of the college board discussed the matter with the owner of the house, he unfortunately used the word "hold-up," which did not please the lady, and she was not selling the place to the college at any price.

But time passed, as time has a habit of doing; the president of the college board died; the property was deteriorating; and at last the lady was willing to sell, and the college bought it.

But the father of the woman who had owned the place was living in the house, and we had to make the purchase with the condition that he was to have the house for his residence as long as he lived. If you want a long life, get some such arrangement made for you.

But presently this elderly man did not need any earthly house longer, and we were free to restore the house to what it was when the boy Hoover lived there.

But the college still was far from a financial condition that would make this enterprise practicable, and though Emmett W. Gulley, my successor as president of the college, had raised a considerable sum it was evidently best to have a special organization for this purpose, and so the Herbert Hoover Foundation was incorporated, with Dr. Barker as its president, and the college turned over to this organization the money that had been raised.

But Dr. Barker and some others of the corporation had come to believe that Herbert Hoover would not be willing to have this house restored and made a museum and a shrine really in his honor. Things were at a standstill till Herbert and his son, Herbert, Jr., visited at our home, and I asked Herbert, Jr. if his father really objected to what we were proposing to do. "Why, no," the son replied. "Dad feels gratified that you want to do this."

A long story could be written about the restoration of this house. After the Minthorn family had moved to Salem, the building had been remodeled repeatedly, and was far different from what it had been when the boy Hoover had lived there. Where the porch had been a new room had been added; the stairway had been moved into this room and a fireplace built where the stairs had been; the wood shed had been moved and made into another room at the northwest corner of the house, and its shed roof changed to a gable roof; the main entrance to the house had been changed from the south side to the east end; a sort of "widow's walk had been built at the top of the



house (Hoover called it a wart and his chief secretary called it a barnacle); the windows had been changed and the size of the panes were not the same as they had been.

Fortunately in the family that bought the house when the Minthorns left there were three daughters, little girls then, but they remembered how the house used to be, and it was restored to just what it had been back in the 1880's. And not the house alone. There are two small buildings outside, neither of which is used as in the days when Hoover was there.

One of these small structures is the well house, with the pulley wheel and the old oaken bucket. When there was a well there, it was one of Herbert's tasks to keep filled the half of an old fashioned kerosene barrel used as a watering trough for the pair of ponies that Dr. Minthorn drove when answering his calls for his services as a physician. On one occasion, according to a favorite story, the doctor came home at night and the half barrel was not full by a good deal. Herbert was aroused from his slumbers and directed to fill that "watering trough," which he did; and according to the story he was required to draw two or three more bucketfuls and pour them into the brimming receptacle so that he'd remember next time. (He remembered next time.)

To come back to the house, when the time came for its dedication, Herbert Hoover was flown up from Southern California by a friend and his wife, and after the luncheon at the college, these three and the then governor of the state spent the time till the big dedication ceremony in our home. Dr. Barker had taken Mr. Hoover through the house (just the two of them, though certain newspaper men were determined to accompany them, but they found that it is possible to restrain even a newspaperman without the use of force.) Rebecca had had much to do in helping the restoration of the interior, and she asked Herbert what he thought of it and his reply was, "It's perfect."

The crowd at this dedication service was variously estimated at from 5,000 to 10,000. Hoover's speech was, of course, the best part of the celebration.

My last visit to him was in January before his death. I was invited to have breakfast with him, the second meal that he had had with anyone else since his illness the preceding June, from which he had never really recovered. He was very frail. Two nurses were in attendance all the time, day and night. Both of the ones on duty assisted him from his room to the table, and back to his room after we had eaten together and visited for a time. I left him with the expectation that it was our last farewell on earth.



I heard from him later--our correspondence for forty years and more was a thing I prized very highly. He could say more in a score of words than some writers can say in a hundred. When his wife died I expressed my sympathy as well as I knew how, and he appreciated it sincerely. When Rebecca's dear, brave, loving heart ceased to beat his letter of sympathy meant very much to me--his tribute to her was "She was a grand lady." It was not long till his last letter came, and then came the news of his death.

I was invited to attend the funeral, but we had already made arrangements for a memorial service in the Newberg Friends Church, of which he was a member, and I was one of the two speakers. Dr. Arthur O. Roberts spoke on "Herbert Hoover's Achievements," and I spoke on "Herbert Hoover, the Man." There are things in this address that have been told in this paper, but it seems best to include the entire speech. I spoke as follows:

It is not easy to speak briefly of the character of a man whose personality was so many-sided that he could accomplish all the wonderful things of which we have been so forcibly reminded by the previous speaker. Volumes could be written about his versatility that gave him top rank as a mining engineer--he was named engineer of the century by the first engineering society of America; a commanding and increasingly important place in the business world--he gave up the certain prospect of great wealth that he might render great service to humanity; a great leader in government--his enemies thwarted much of his effectiveness, and his friends were not wise enough to realize what he did accomplish till the passage of years had cleared their vision; an author who wrote many of the things that the world needed to have on record, a record that no other man on earth could have provided; and above all, the indispensable leader in the greatest life-saving enterprises that the world has ever known, from the dawn of creation until today.

But I am to speak of his individual qualities, not his achievements. And first among these I should place his absolute, unchangeable, unassailable moral integrity. His enemies could attack his philosophy, his economic tenets; they could blame him for a world crisis for which he had no responsibility and which he could in large part have averted with the right political co-operation; but there was no flaw in his armor of moral rectitude. In his personal conduct, in his family life, in his business transactions, in his international affairs, in his handling of all the billions of relief from America to the ends of the earth, he maintained the high ideals that had been taught him by his village blacksmith father and his Quaker teacher-preacher mother, and later by his uncle and aunt with whom he lived during his boyhood and youth in Newberg



and in Salem, and by the teachers in Friends Pacific Academy, where he was a student at its very beginning and where, according to his own testimony, he received the training that led him decades later to his vast fields of human service. The Decalogue was vital law to him, as was its summary by the greatest of all his teachers, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart--thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

The second element of his character that I would have us consider has to do with the second great commandment which the Great Teacher declared to be like the first. Herbert Hoover loved his fellowmen. The black aboriginals in Australia, the impoverished coolies in China, the terrified and starving men and women and children in Belgium, the Germans whom we had been taught to hate until many blind one-hundred-percent Americans considered it a patriotic duty to kick a dachshund simply because he was a German dog, the twenty million starving Russians in that most terrible of all modern famines which most folks did not know about and most of those who did have forgotten, for all of these and many others, in our own and in scores of other countries, the heart of Herbert Hoover went out in a way that took him and his queenly wife to the ends of the earth. Herbert Hoover loved humanity, and invested his life in helping men and women and children. His hand-written letters to children who have written to him, a few of which are printed in his book "On Growing Up," his leadership in Boys Clubs of America, and other things that seem so small in comparison with his leadership in the work for tens of millions are simply other evidence of his love for humanity.

Another quality that contributed to his greatness was his invincible courage. Without it much of his work could never have been done. It was not merely the way he handled his tasks as a mining engineer, sharing in the perils of the men who worked under him, and accomplished things that other leaders had declared impossible; it was not merely the heroism that he showed and which his devoted wife shared in the Boxer Rebellion in China; it was not merely his courage in crossing the North Sea again and again not knowing at what second a German-planted mine or a German submarine might send them into eternity and carry out the ideal of German marine warfare in those days, "Sunk without a trace." He faced human perils greater than merely the perils of the material world. He was the man who could stand face to face with the German Kaiser and bring him to a decision which the imperious Wilhelm had scorned even to consider. He was the man who could oppose the Big Four at the council chamber who were seeking to starve Germany into the acceptance of a treaty which declared that the entire guilt of World War I was theirs, and to assume reparations that everybody knew they never could pay. Indomitable courage was one of the outstanding characteristics of Herbert Hoover.



Another characteristic was a remarkable combination of originality and independence. When he faced a problem, whether one of material nature or one in the more difficult area of human nature, he was likely to come up with a solution that nobody else had thought of, or that somebody may have thought of but abandoned as impossible. This sort of situation arose more than once in his mining engineering work in Australia, where a new method accomplished the supposedly impossible. And while he was American Food Administrator, much of his work was accomplished by methods that experts were sure could not succeed. There was inescapable need for vast additional stores of food for American soldiers overseas and for others of the Allies, both in the field and in areas remote from actual combat; and the number of men removed from productive labor on the farms increased the need for greater emphasis on increased production of food in America and decreased consumption of basic foods. Many in high places in government were sure that voluminous laws must be enacted to control the consumption of meats, sugar, flour and other eatables; and there must be stringent laws limiting gasoline consumption, with heavy penalties for the violation of these and a myriad other laws that were considered necessary. Herbert Hoover believed that American citizens would cooperate when the need for cooperation in such matters was made clear to them. And as Food Administrator he carried out his ideals with a minimum of laws and legal penalties. And so we took our supposed quota of meat and shortening; we used jelly on our bread instead of butter; we ate potato bread and bean bread and buckwheat bread and corn bread, with never a taste of white wheat bread; we used our small quota of gasoline, and met all the limitations that "directives" put upon us--and were much the better as a result of our deprivations. Here, as in other activities, Herbert Hoover chose to be the Food Administrator. He knew what had to be done and he knew how to do it, and he did not want to be handicapped by others who knew so many things that were not so.

Independent as he was, Herbert Hoover was loyal to the American ideal of obedience to law. He obeyed the law, whether he was fishing for redsides on the Mackenzie or entertaining royalty in the White House. America was under national prohibition during his administration, and the executive mansion had the unusual experience of not having a drop of intoxicating beverage alcohol inside its walls for society leaders from America or for royal potentates from overseas. The first time I ever met him personally was when the Teapot Dome scandal was at its height. He had just come from a cabinet meeting. One of the president's cabinet members was involved in violation of the law that landed him in a federal penitentiary, and the Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover, was fighting out the personal question as to whether he should resign from a



cabinet where such a scandal could center, or remain in the cabinet and help to clean up the foul situation. I never saw a face so drawn as his was except the face of an athlete finishing a two-mile race in which he had given everything he had. Violation of the law, in high places or in low, found no favor in the heart nor in the mind of the little Quaker boy from the West Branch and Newberg--and presently from London, Berlin, Paris, St. Petersburg, Rome, Peking, Adelaide, Washington, Palo Alto, New York--and where not?

Another quality that endeared him to those who had the privilege of being his personal friends was his really delightful sense of humor. During much of his life there was little opportunity for him to give evidence of this quality. Too many people were dependent on him for him to have time to laugh--often he had no chance even to smile. He was not like Abraham Lincoln in this regard, much as he resembled Honest Abe in other particulars. Lincoln could throw off temporarily the great burden that was crushing the life out of him, and by some rollicking story that would convulse his auditors, with him joining in the laughter, he could ease the pressure of his terrible responsibility for a time, at least. But there was seldom such hilarity for Herbert Hoover. Day and night for many long periods he had to know that the lives of thousands, sometimes millions of men, women and children hung on his ability to reach a right decision. But sometimes in private conversation among his chosen friends, with his wife, who was so definitely a complement to him, so definitely what he was not in some social lines, he could unbend, laugh and joke and enjoy himself and add to the joy of others. And there came a time when, if he chose, he could delight an audience with his wit and humor. I was in one big gathering where he mixed wit and humor with his very serious address and got more than one hearty laugh; and I was in another great gathering in which his speech was interrupted again and again by uproarious laughter that fairly shook the house.

It would be hard for some people to believe that a man of such colossal achievements as those of Herbert Hoover could be genuinely humble, but he was. He did not consent to the restoration of his birthplace until after the death of his wife. When he finally consented to the restoration of the house in Newberg where he had lived with his uncle and aunt, Dr. and Mrs. H. J. Minthorn, it was not to be the Hoover House, though most people call it that; it was to be the Minthorn House, as it is, officially. On one of his visits to Newberg I took him over to the college and showed him the simple plaque on the wall in Wood-Mar Hall which mentions briefly the steps from boyhood to world prominence, and his only comment as he turned away was, "Too flattering."



Indefatigable energy was another of Herbert Hoover's qualities. Work eight hours a day, ten hours, twelve, sixteen--sometimes twenty-four. Shortly before his 86th birthday a visitor was waiting till Hoover could see him and one of Hoover's secretaries told him that her employer was working from eight to twelve hours every day. "How can he do that?" said the visitor. "He is almost 86 years old." "Yes," replied the secretary, "but he doesn't know that."

When Lou Henry Hoover died, Fate had come near to breaking the heart of this giant among men. Dr. Burt Brown Barker, who is president of the Herbert Hoover Foundation of Oregon which restored the Minthorn House, and who was a boyhood friend of the former president and his friend until his death, said to me after Mrs. Hoover's death, "Herbert Hoover is the loneliest man in the United States." But grievously as he missed the heroic companion of his heroic years, he threw himself into the task that nobody else could do, such as the writing of "An American Epic," and keeping as many as eight secretaries busy he completed this and other monumental works before age curtailed and at last put an end to his labors.

Herbert Hoover was elected to the presidency of the United States by the greatest majority ever given to a presidential candidate. He was defeated four years later by the greatest majority for his opponent in our history. The story of how the loved and honored world hero was brought down so low in the minds of his countrymen is not appropriate to deal with here. The lies that were broadcast, the political opposition to every proposal for relief from the world depression that was a delayed detonation from World War I (the president had just said to the Congress the day that my wife and I were the guests of him and Mrs. Hoover, "You must not play politics with human misery" but they did)--the story of that "smear" campaign is not one of the most pleasing stories in American history. Many things about it are very hard to believe; but the most remarkable thing about it is the fact that Herbert Hoover never became bitter. Many of his friends were bitter beyond measure. Many of them still are, in spite of the efforts of some who participated in that "smear" campaign to make an atonement by writing about their victim some of the finest things that have ever been written about him; and notwithstanding the statement of Eleanor Roosevelt that Hoover was not responsible for the depression that contributed to his downfall. But Herbert Hoover maintained his equanimity; went about the work that was his, unembittered, and ready for any service that he could render to his country and the world.

And there came opportunity for great service, which he gladly rendered. America came to honor him again, as in the days before his election to the presidency. He came



to be recognized as an elder statesman. The change had come rapidly, as had come the loss of favor with the people. At one national convention of his party the meager applause when he appeared was little less than an insult to one who had held the highest office in the greatest nation in the world; four years later the spontaneous and long-continued ovation that was given him was like nothing else which that convention produced.

Now he is gone, and in every continent there is mourning for his passing. The son of the village blacksmith and the humble Quaker teacher-preacher, by what he was and by what he did became president of the United States and the world hero of the Twentieth Century. There is a passage in the Bible which says, "There were giants in the earth in those days." There are giants in the earth in these days, too, and one of them as a boy went to school here, fished in our streams, played with his schoolmates, did chores in what is now the city park named in his honor. We can think of him as the giant of vast world affairs, and we can think of him, too, as the boy, full of fun but full of earnestness. Of him, as of Lincoln whom Lowell was describing in his Commemoration Ode, it can be said,

Here was a type of the true elder race,  
And one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face.

I hardly need to add that I have felt highly honored that I could consider Herbert Hoover my personal friend. While he was president it was a great satisfaction to me when he told me that my letters did not stop with a secretary; he saw every one of them.

God give us more such men.