

THE HUNGER MARCH

OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON
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9:00 AM



"We can't sit back and starve...I've been out of work three years...Of course there have been some small jobs, but no real money. I've tried hard to find work too... I used to earn six dollars a day. Now they pay \$3, but there ain't no jobs."

Hunger Marcher, The Daily Olympian January 18, 1933.

In the last three decades, Olympians have watched the transformation of their downtown from a Victorian setting of horse drawn carriages and Sunday strolls along wooden sidewalks, into a fast-paced urban scene of automobile motors revving and the occasional airplane soaring overhead. Impressive brick structures like the Security Building and the Governor Hotel remind people how far the Capital City has come since small businesses, homes and gardens stood on those sites. The grand Palladian windows of the Hotel Olympian provide a glimpse into the dining room with its white table cloths and elegant meals. But these are the days of the Great Depression, and in this era of hard times and broken dreams, many Olympia citizens who stare into the windows are just hoping for a sign that says "help wanted."

Today a cold rain has been falling and snow is expected soon. In Sylvester Park, people huddle around burn barrels for warmth and a group called the Volunteers of America offer hot coffee to shivering hands. People are dressed in long coats, while many carry blanket bundles on their backs. A large group of unemployed citizens from around the state have come to the capital to ask for help. Last night, many of the "hunger marchers" slept on the floor of the old Capitol Building facing the park. They plan to present a nine point petition to newly-elected Governor Clarence Martin, demanding more jobs, free utilities, and a "social insurance bill" which would give unemployed heads of households \$10 a week, plus \$3 for each dependent. They will be granted a meeting this morning with the governor and legislators. Police Chief Frank Cushman has estimated there are more than 500 protesters in town today. He has strongly cautioned the group against rioting.

Olympians have prepared meals, opened up their houses, and donated 250 gallons of gas to help get the unemployed marchers back home. Lieutenant Governor Vic Meyer fed fifteen of the marchers in his home

last night. But many citizens are wary of the large crowds of out-of-town protesters, and the threats made by their more aggressive leaders. The organizers, who refer to their group as the "Republic of the Unemployed," have warned that if their demands are not met, they will return to the Capital City with marchers numbering in the thousands. A "watchdog" group, calling itself the "American Vigilantes of Thurston County" are planning a swift citizen crackdown on future gatherings of "Communist agitators." (Fears on both sides will escalate in the days and weeks ahead. A larger protest of 1,500 will take place in Olympia on March first. At night the protesters will be confined and guarded at Priest Point Park by police and local citizens armed with guns and broom handles. But the legislature will eventually agree to some of the marchers' demands, and miraculously, no major violence will occur.)

Down on the mudflats at the foot of Legion Way and Water Street, "Little Hollywood" stands as a symbol of the desperate economic times that have swept like a plague through Olympia and across the nation. Close to a hundred primitive shacks and lean-tos, built on pilings and float logs, huddle together on the shoreline south of Chinatown. Some of the inhabitants have a criminal background, but most are just down on their luck and need a place to get out of the rain until the next job comes along.

Little Hollywood, the Hunger March, and countless other elements of the city's story are being captured forever on film by Olympia's foremost photographer, Vibert Jeffers. Vibert advertises around town with this catchy slogan, *"If there's beauty we take it; if there isn't we make it."*

The unemployed are not the only ones affected by the desperate times of the Great Depression. Since the new year, Olympia Police have gone to 12 hour work shifts with a 10% pay reduction. In the schools, which serve about 3,000 students, teachers have taken a pay cut, bus routes have been reduced and there has been talk of a shorter school year.

Four years ago, not long before the Stock Market Crash, Washington Veneer unveiled their huge brick smokestack down at the port. It became a sign of great prosperity and job opportunities to see the billowing smoke fill the sky. But today the smokestack stands idle. "Big Bill" Gustafson, the supervisor of Olympia Veneer, has managed to keep his plant open. At times Bill and other managers have paid themselves less than the hired help in order to avoid laying people off.

Despite the present economic hardships, the last 34 years have seen the city stretch higher to the sky and further to the sea. Doc Carlyon's dream of a port fill became a reality between 1909 and 1911. As of today, 29 new blocks have been added to the city, thanks to a civic effort. The

new Port of Olympia has a great deal more industrial land and a dredged shipping channel to deep water. The Swantown Slough has been filled in and replaced with streets and businesses, while the western shore of town has extended out to include Water Street and part of Columbia.

Most Olympians would agree that a great moment in local history occurred in May, 1921 when the reinforced concrete bridge finally opened to the Westside. No longer did citizens have to worry about wood-boring teredos or malfunctioning drawbridges. The sturdy cement structure is the gateway to the Olympic Highway, taking motorists out to Grays Harbor and ocean resorts. If you drive south on the newly-named Captiol Way, you will be on the Pacific Highway which now stretches to Oregon and beyond.

The County Auditor announced a while back that there were only a handful of horses left in the city limits. Parking garages now replace the once common livery stables. Over at the corner of Washington and newly-named Legion Way, the North Coast Transportation Company offers motor stages departing in all directions out of Olympia. The Birney streetcar still rattles along on its tracks, and the fare remains a nickel, but by Christmas it will be removed permanently to make way for Olympia's ever-growing attraction to the automobile. City streets are now paved with bricks, while the 7th Avenue train tunnel is covered in blacktop. A traffic signal stands in front of the old Stuart Hotel, and there are no less than seven gas stations lining Capitol Way.

Back in the Fall of 1927, Olympians marveled at the sight of Charles Lindbergh flying three times around the new Capitol dome. Though the Olympia Airport was dedicated almost five years ago, it isn't much more than a dirt strip used by military planes and hobby fliers. The buzz of the Boeing Trimotor flying overhead attracts the attention of Gladys Buroker and Gwin Hicks, who will both be important to local aviation history.

Down at the waterfront, Johnny Percival still oversees some of the local water traffic, but the huge ocean-going freighters now load from the massive port pier on the edge of the fill. They haul away lumber, veneer, knitted goods from Olympia's Knitting Mill, and ready-cut houses. The Sandman tugboat usually ties up at Percival's Dock after a day delivering oyster barges to packing centers. (One such packing house, the Olympia Oyster Company, will become the well-known Oyster House Restaurant.)

Business men and women in the Capital City like Earl Bean, George Mottman and Frances Knox have been doing their part to keep downtown vibrant and successful. George added a third story and lengthened his unique department store on 4th Avenue. In this era when chains like the J. C. Penney Company, Piggly Wiggly, Montgomery Ward and Woolworths are

buying out local merchants, George is advertising Mottman's Mercantile as one of Olympia's last big independent stores.

The population in the Capital City today is about 12,500, while Lacey has 400 residents and Tumwater about 800. Olympia's mayor is E. N. Steele, the new governor of Washington is Clarence Martin, and the newly-elected president of the United States, by a landslide, is Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Many Olympians are hoping President Roosevelt's "New Deal" programs will provide more jobs. In particular, some local citizens support a massive public works project to build a shipping canal from Olympia out to Black Lake, then along the Chehalis River to Aberdeen and Grays Harbor. However this project is receiving stiff competition from another proposed project in Eastern Washington...Grand Coulee Dam.

There are almost 4,500 telephones in service now. The local radio station, KGY, broadcasts news, weather and local events from early morning until about 6 PM. The Daily Olympian is the main newspaper, with The Olympia News published weekly. More and more people wishing an escape from the worries of the day are flocking to the town's three "dream palaces," also known as movie theaters. The Liberty, Avalon, and the Zabel Family's Capitol Theater have replaced the once-loved Olympia Opera House, which succumbed to the wrecking ball eight years ago.

Another landmark which no longer exists is the pioneer Capitol Building on the hill. Soon after the turn of the century the dilapidated wooden structure was torn down and the State made their new home in the former Courthouse on Sylvester Park, adding a wing to the east. It wasn't until six years ago, when the magnificent domed Legislative Building was completed, that lawmakers began moving back up onto the hill. Today, the old Courthouse on the park houses the State Departments of Agriculture, Conservation, Education, Public Works, Public Lands and Archives. Unfortunately, the building no longer has its signature Romanesque clock tower, due to a catastrophic fire back in the fall of 1928.

Fire also claimed the grand Olympia Hotel in 1904, and Columbia Hall ten years later. Police, fire, and city business are now conducted at the corner of State and Capitol Way in the new City Hall, with its visible hose drying rack on the roof. The Fire Department has a motorized fire engine, as well as a hook and ladder truck, while the Olympia Police Department boasts an eight officer force and two motor vehicles.

In Sylvester Park citizens have erected monuments to those who have gone before. The Emma Page drinking fountain stands on the west side of the park, not far from the stone marking the end of The Oregon Trail. A statue of Governor John Rogers graces the east side of the park

thanks to the fundraising efforts of Olympia's schoolchildren. The inscription reminds us about the importance of quality education for all.

Another contributor in the field of education, Josephine Corliss Preston, has returned for a visit today. Thanks to her earlier work as State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the rural schools around Thurston County and across the state have improved dramatically, and kindergartens have been in existence since 1919.

It has been 23 years since women were granted the right to vote in Washington State, and 13 years since the U. S. made it law. Though women like Mary Olney Brown did not live to see that glorious day, they paved the way to greater opportunities for women such as Belle Reeves and Julia Waldrip Ker. Julia became possibly the first woman police judge in the nation a few years back, and Belle will have the honor of becoming Washington's first woman Secretary of State five years from now.

There is another in the park today who has fought the battle for equality. Frank Iyall, a Nisqually leader, worked to successfully pass the Indian Citizenship Act of 1924. While Washington's Native Americans can now vote, those in Arizona will not have that right for fifteen more years!

Back in 1914, Washington declared alcohol sales illegal, but today, people are thinking a tax on legal alcohol could help the economy. When January comes around next year, the Liquor Bill will be signed and prohibition will officially end in Washington State. In preparation for that day, The Olympia Brewing Company, which has been bottling "Appleju" and artesian water, is working with Joseph Wohleb, Olympia's foremost architect, to design a modern new Tumwater brewery. The first beer will come out of the new bottlehouse almost exactly a year from now.

Today Joseph Wohleb is talking to another prominent architect, Elizabeth Ayer, about the Daily Olympian Building he recently designed on Capitol Way and State Avenue. A year and a half ago, Joseph donated plans for the new gazebo that stands in Sylvester Park. It's hard to walk far in Olympia these days without running across a Wohleb designed building.

Edmund Sylvester's pioneer home is currently being rented by ten unemployed legislators during the session. The eleventh tenant has a job, and is an up-and-coming representative named Warren G. Magnuson.

While Olympia and the nation struggle to find relief for the jobless, an even more solemn challenge looms on the horizon. Thirteen days from now, on January 30th, Adolf Hitler will be named Chancellor of Germany. But in this corner of the world, as the hunger marchers make their way along rain-soaked streets, despite frustrations and confrontations, people will continue to exercise their basic right to be heard.