HERBERT HOOVER
AND
JAY "DING" DARLING

1919 - 1962

Kim Knutsen
Journ. 205

Dr. Herbert Strentz
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Herbert Hoover and Jay Darling maintained a relationship that began in 1919 and lasted until Darling's death in 1962. Because the nature of their relationship appears to be more personal than professional, the materials that document their communication can at best be considered a vague outline of their history.
Mr. Herbert Hoover and Mr. Jay "Ding" Darling met in the year 1919 in Des Moines, Iowa. That meeting began what was to be a forty-three year correspondence between the two men. Their resulting friendship was based on mutual respect, a love of the outdoors, and individual political interest that often resulted in a difference of opinion. Though these differences were often made public, Hoover and Darling maintained an interesting private relationship that appeared to be based on a genuine concern for the well-being of one another.

About Hoover:

A strong believer in the Quaker religion and way of life, Herbert Hoover was known for his strong work ethic. He was an engineering graduate of Stanford University, and later became a successful mining engineer who traveled around the world five times in ten years. Hoover headed the American Citizens' Relief Committee in 1914, and then moved on to head the Commission for Relief in Belgium. Because of his success, President Wilson appointed Hoover Food Administrator to the United States in 1917.

In 1919 Hoover began his political career in Washington as vice-chairman of the Industrial Conference, a commission created to provide post-war labor opportunities. In 1920 Hoover unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for president, and in 1921 he was appointed Secretary of Commerce. Hoover remained in politics until 1928, when he was nominated and elected as the 31st President of the United States.
As Herbert Hoover was rising the political ladder to the presidency in Washington DC, Jay "Ding" Darling was establishing his own national reputation through Iowa newspapers. Beginning his career as a professional cartoonist at the *Sioux City Journal* in 1901, Ding moved to the *Des Moines Register & Leader* in 1906 where he became syndicated throughout the *New York Herald Tribune*. In 1911 Ding moved to New York to join the *New York Globe*, returning to the *Register & Leader* in 1913. He was twice awarded the Pulitzer Prize for best cartoonist of the years 1924 and 1943.

Ding had a reputation for his opinionated and often controversial view of the world and politics. David Lendt, author of the biography "Ding," said about his career as a cartoonist, "As might be expected, it was not long before Ding's drawings were expressing opinions contrary to those on the *Register & Leader's* editorial page. In 1915, for example, Darling argued for national military preparedness while the editorial page condemned the world-wide arms race."¹

Though Ding's opinions were often controversial, he was well respected for his humorous and insightful depiction of American society. Lendt said, "...nor was his humor ever more necessary than in the troubled Midwest of the 1920's, where the Great Depression was preceded by a severe agricultural crash."² Even Hoover said about Darling, "His insight into the national life lifted his cartoons into the high rank of great and trenchant editorials. His kindliness and humor were but the reflections of his own character."³
Hoover and Darling:

Hoover met Darling on a trip to Des Moines in 1919. Though their correspondence apparently did not begin until 1926, Hoover and Darling were obviously aware of each other, and were interested in one another's career. In 1924, Ding was awarded his first Pulitzer Prize for Best Cartoon of the Year; a cartoon entitled "In Good Old U.S.A." that depicts Herbert Hoover, Dr. Frederick Peterson and Warren G. Harding. Also, in 1925 Ding requested a January 14 speech that Hoover delivered to the National Distribution Conference on.4

Hoover and Darlings' first recorded correspondence took place on April 6, 1926. Because of ill health, Darling had been on a leave of absence from the Register & Leader for over a year. Hoover's first letter to Ding merely said, "It does my heart good to see you back again."(A) Darling responded by identifying Hoover as a "faithful friend,"(A) a statement that proved to be true over the forthcoming years.

In the summer of 1928, Ding visited Hoover at Rapidan Camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains. Upon his return he wrote to Henry Allen, "Hoover is a real friend of man and whatever his attitude on the economics of the McNary Haugen bill is he can be depended upon to look carefully into the welfare of the human race. How in the world he ever got tagged as a spokesman for big business is a mystery."5 Darling further showed his support for Hoover by attending the 1928 Republican National Convention and presidential inauguration.
It was during the inaugural visit that Darling and his family developed closer ties to the Hoover family. By an agreement with Mrs. Hoover, Ding began to distinguish his actual cartoons from the cartoons he roughed out for his assistant, Tom Carlisle, to finish.\(^6\) He did so by adding a small "x" to the end of his name, a distinguishing mark that he used for the rest of his career.

During this time in 1928, Hoover also began to support and, in effect, promote Ding Darling. In a September memo to Governor Allen, Hoover admonished Allen for the inappropriate way his employee was sending out Ding's cartoons. Hoover wrote, "His sudden awakening to the value of Ding and McCutcheon cartoons is not good business. They get nothing like the distribution they would get if he had followed instructions of last July and sent them out as fast as they appear and one at a time."\(^{B}\)

The relationship of Hoover and Darling had a particular definition that remained fairly consistent until Ding's death in 1962. Many times, particularly in the early years of their friendship, Ding would correspond indirectly (and often unintentionally,) with Hoover. In March of 1929, Ding wrote to Mark Sullivan, recommending four men for public service: Gardner Cowles (Ding's publisher), James C. Davis, W.S. Gilman, and F.W. Lechmann, Jr.\(^7\) It is probably no coincidence that in 1932, Gardner Cowles was named to Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation committee to study federal lands.\(^8\) He was also urged to run for Republican U.S. Senate for 1932.\(^9\)
In April of 1930, Ding wrote to George Akerson, suggesting that Fred White, Chief Engineer of the Iowa State Highway Commission, and Earnest R. Moore, President of the American Trust and Savings Bank of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, be considered for a "noteworthy appointment." Secretary Richey then wired Verne Marshall of Cedar Rapids and Hanford MacNider of Mason City to ask them confidentially what they thought of Mr. Moore for appointment as Chairman of the Civil Service Commission.

In May of 1930, Herbert Hoover received a letter from Verne Marshall, who was the editor of the Cedar Rapids Gazette Republican. Marshall was informing Hoover of a meeting of Iowa publishers, where the issue of Hoover's press relations was discussed. In it he writes:

"Yesterday I had a gratifying talk with Jay Darling, a most valuable supporter of yours. He expressed pleasure over the reactions to the impromptu explanation in the talk to the daily publishers. We both feel that the situation could be just as easily clarified in some of the other states. Ding is most anxious to help and has some good ideas...By the way, Ding is not inclined to worry much about the present situation, but does think that its clarification would be better now than later. I asked him to write you as frankly as he had spoken to me, but he was hesitant. He has some thoughts on the subject that should get to you...If Mr. Darling does not write you soon it will be because he is not as presumptuous and brash as I, but I do hope that he will write you as he talked to me. As you know, he can be and is a great influence for the administration, and his suggestions should have value." (C)

It was obvious at this time that Hoover respected the opinion of Darling enough to take his advice under consideration. There was,
however, more than one instance when Hoover did not agree with Ding. In December of 1930, Hoover was scheduled to perform a button-pushing ceremony to start the presses of the first edition Midwest Free Press. The owner of the paper, Norman Baker, was a man with a questionable reputation who claimed to have a cure for cancer. Ding not only telegraphed Hoover on December 12 to warn him of publicly supporting such an endeavor, he also telegraphed George Akerson on December 19 and said:

"There is trouble ahead in the newspaper project at Muscatine, Iowa, which the Chief is scheduled to inaugurate by electric button this afternoon. Norman Baker is cancer cure quack exposed by every reputable paper in state. He is starting paper to fight other papers in retaliation. American Medical Association also is apt to take serious offence. If your department is not aware of conditions advise looking them up." 12

Unfortunately, Hoover may never have received either telegram. On December 19, Ding received a telegraph from French Strother, who wrote, "Telegram to Mr. Akerson received. Arrangement was purely routine common in scores of instances and without knowledge of the facts you state." 13 On December 20, the Des Moines Register wrote:

"...It is true President Hoover did not endorse Baker's activities. But because he took part in the ceremony starting the presses of the new paper, he has given Baker the opportunity to convey the impression to his followers that although numerous groups are 'conspiring' against him, President Hoover stands on his side. The President would have done better to have had no hand in the Baker ceremony. He was clearly ill-advised." (D)
Other newspapers questioned the action of Hoover also. W. Earl Hall, publisher of the *Mason City Globe Gazette* of Mason City, Iowa, wrote to Hanford MacNider, the U.S. Minister to Canada:

"Have you heard yet what our good friend Mr. Hoover to us down at Muscatine?...It seems that Mr. Hoover must be entirely lacking in gratitude. The Lee newspapers almost without exception have gone to bat for him at every turn. In Wisconsin last year two of our papers let themselves be crucified because they stuck to the president in the face of the LaFollette crowd's ravings. Well, I suppose we will go on being for Mr. Hoover, but I find it most difficult to muster the enthusiasm for him that I once had..."(E)

Another issue that Hoover and Darling disputed was Hoover's Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC), which Darling felt was failing because "of the inelastic policy under which assistance is proposed."(F) On April 28, 1932, Hoover wrote to Darling about the RFC's assistance to Iowa institutions. He said that of the nearly 100 Iowa institutions that had applied for assistance amounting to $8,262,000, all had received some assistance in total of $6,854,000, and $1,000,000 were still being processed. He also stated that the average turn-around for these applications was eleven days. Hoover then ended his letter, "so much for the lecture...(G)

Conservation and wildlife preservation were two of the major concerns in Darling's life. David Lendt writes, "Jay Darling in later years freely admitted that his friend Herbert Hoover had done nothing about the threat to wildlife caused by years of drought, and that his enemy Franklin Roosevelt did recognize the problem."14
Darling also wrote to Chiles Plummer, "It's a sorry day when men the calder of Les Miller and Herbert Hoover will sell the water resources down the river to the Army Engineers as the only cure they know of to defeat socialization of water power."  

Though Hoover and Darling had some political differences, they also shared common goals and beliefs. On the issue of prohibition, both men believed, "...that total prohibition had been instituted before the anti-alcohol education program had been allowed to run its course and accomplish its purpose." 16 In a sarcastic exchange, Darling wrote to Hoover:

"Dr. Will Mayo told me he had discovered the only real indictment against the prohibition law. The indictment was based on the fact that there are no longer sufficient cadavers to supply to medical clinics and furnish the medical students with laboratory materials. Prohibition has eliminated the derelict and has caused such general prosperity that friends are always able to provide proper burial." 17

Hoover responded to Darling:
"I deeply regret the shortage of cadavers. If they were to give me a little more authority I would supply this deficit." 18

Darling often acted as Hoover's liaison and occasional spy. In 1931 he worked on Hoover's behalf to purchase the Hoover homestead in West Branch, Iowa. Darling wrote to Mr. Lawerence Richey on January 28, 1931, explaining his tactic to have Mr. Edgar R. Harlan, custodian of the State Historical Museum of Iowa, purchase the home. He wrote, "I have put him onto the job with instructions to
use all the ingenious devices at his command to get the Hoover birthplace for you. He is very much interested in doing so and I believe is our best bet under the circumstances."(H)

Darling also acted for Hoover in 1933 when he reference-checked a list of Iowans who had written to Hoover asking for personal loans. Darling responded with the names of two men who he thought were worthy loan candidates: A.C. Fouts of Atlantic, and Edward Nelson of Boone. He took a special interest in Nelson, an engineering student at Iowa State University who needed money to finish the engineering program. Darling gave Nelson a loan from his own money, an act that Hoover discovered when Nelson wrote him, telling him that Darling had sent him the money, and thanking him. When Hoover asked to pay Darling back, Darling wrote to him:

"That Edward Nelson boy, with whom I got in touch thru a letter from you, has proved to be about the best investment I ever made in that sort of deal. He is a real one, and I was so delighted to find a young man who didn't think that money grew on bushes and all you had to do was shake them and it fell off, that I couldn't possibly let you in on that investment. As a matter of fact, it was only $45 and I got twice that amount of satisfaction out of the young man. Please forget it."19

In 1934 Hoover asked Darling to investigate the "philosophic pattern underlying the New Deal."(I) On March 12, 1934, Darling wrote to Hoover:

"As you state in your letter, there must be a fairly definite philosophic pattern underlying the New Deal.
I have exposed myself for a period of approximately two months in extent to the contagious infection of the microbe or virus which pervades the atmosphere of Washington in an experiment of pure pathological research -- (a sort of human guinea pig) -- and either I am immune or there isn't any identifiable microbe. Probably it is due to my own density of mind but I have listened carefully and studied ardently in an effort to discern the outlines of what you call a fairly definite philosophic pattern, and without success. If it were not for lack of faith in my own capacity for discernment and understanding, I would be convinced that there is no pattern. As matters stand, I can only watch with tremulous apprehension the reckless speed with which we are traveling toward an undefined goal."(I)

Keeping in mind Darling's support of Roosevelt on the issue of conservation, he also wrote, "I see for myself a chance to do a job for conservation. If I wait until a change of administration it will be too late for Herpicide. I'm going to take the head of the Biological Survey until I can find a good man to take it over."(I)*

*Darling served as the Chief of the Bureau of the Biological Survey from 1934-1935. His resume, submitted for the Frances K. Hutchinson Medal of the Garden Club of America, said that "as administrator of the Department his record of the first year showed: 661,000 acres added to the migratory waterfowl restoration program, and 10,000,000 acres, approximately, withdrawn from the public domain, for State game reservoirs. For converting submarginal land into wild life refuges he obtained first $1,000,000 and later $8,500,000 [the] largest appropriations in the history of the Biological Survey. To provide additional funds, he designed a one-dollar duck stamp, showing two mallards in flight, which hunters were required to paste on their state hunting licenses before shooting migratory water fowl."(J)
Hoover and Darling both shared a love for fishing, and it was often this activity that prompted playful behavior from the two men. In 1933 Hoover and Ding took a fishing trip to the Klamath River which apparently resulted in a rather large catch for Darling. On October 21, Hoover wrote to Ding, "If you want a certificate as to the fish that you took home, do not hesitate to command me. I can certify to your honest ownership of it." On October 25, Darling responded to Hoover, "...the trip back was pretty rough going but the advent of the big Steelhead Trout created its full quota of sensation." Hoover then received a letter from Gardner Cowles on November 2 which read, "Please accept the thanks of the Cowles family for the fine trout which you sent to us by Jay Darling. The fish came through in fine condition, and it was served at a company dinner soon after its arrival in Des Moines." In response to this kind but mischievous trick Hoover wrote Ding, "I have a note from Gardner Cowles expressing appreciation for the trout sent by me through one Jay Darling. I know all about this trout and so do you." Another "fishing" correspondence that took place between Hoover and Darling was in 1937, when Hoover was the volunteer Director of the Huntington Library in Pasadena. The library had wanted to reproduce cartoons of Ding's that "proved" artistic leadership. Hoover wrote to Darling, "...they can get no reply to their communications to you asking permission[.] As this is for your own good please stop fishing long enough to telegraph them and besides take them off my back." Darling replied by telegraph, "What do Handbooks and Libraries of Knowledge matter when fish are biting and government disintegrated[?] However since you insist I have
wired Huntington Library to do anything they darn please just like Roosevelt."25

In the later years of Hoover and Darling, a more personal and tender aspect of their friendship was apparent. On December 26 of 1961, Hoover wrote to Ding, "My Dear Ding: At this season, life-long friends pass through one's mind. And those whose undeviating devotion over nearly forty years rise in the first rank. So this is just to record again my gratitude, and to wish you a happier New Year..."26 One month later, when Ding was supposed to be planning a visit to Hoover in Florida for a fishing trip, he wrote, "Therapy Specialists have me so hog-tied with routine that the answer to the swell invitation for March 1st will have to be no[.] Letter follows."27 Unfortunately, Jay Darling died on February 12, 1962, and there is no recorded evidence of his promised letter.

Perhaps the most symbolic correspondence between the two men was that of Hoover and Darling on October 6, 1955. David Lendt wrote, "The Iowa Award, created as an outgrowth of the State's centennial observance, is the state's highest honor. Its first recipient was Herbert Hoover in 1951, and its second was Jay Norwood Darling in 1956."28 In 1955 Hoover wrote:

"My Dear Ding: If I could only draw I could express myself better. But as you and I are to go down the corridors of Iowa History arm in arm, I am content. It adds greatly to my character in the eyes of future Iowans. With kind regards, yours faithfully."29
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ADDITIONAL SOURCES


April 6, 1926.

Mr. J. N. Darling,
Register & Tribune,
Des Moines, Iowa.

My dear Mr. Darling:

It does my heart good to see you back again.

Yours faithfully,

HERBERT HOOVER

Mailed by ____________________________

APR 8 1926
April 10th, 1926

Mr. Herbert Hoover,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Mr. Hoover:

I had thought that such a prolonged absence from the newspapers of the world would leave me entirely forgotten and I am happy to know that you remembered and sent in your good wishes.

It is rather hard to pick up the broken threads where I left them over a year ago and untangle them and know just where they are leading. In the meantime, the assurance that your smiling face is in the audience is giving me courage to 'carry on'—I don't dare fail now with so many faithful friends magnifying the importance of my efforts.

Yours very sincerely,

J.M. Darling

J.M. Darling
Memo for Governor Allen

From: Mr. Hoover

This is just a note to remind you that it has been agreed time and again that Anthony is to submit his proposed plate and mat releases to this office before they go out. We have not seen one of them so far. His sudden awakening to the value of Ding and McCutcheon cartoons and sending them out in a block is not good business. They get nothing like the distribution they would get if he had followed instructions of last July and sent them out as fast as they appear and one at a time.

Will you please see if we cannot get some order in this situation?

We have many ideas from here that we want incorporated in this service and we have no opportunity to get these ideas in.
My dear Mr. President:

At Des Moines the last three days between 200 and 300 of Iowa's publishers were in annual session. After learning from George Akerson—whom I telephoned Wednesday night—that I had given no unpardonable offense since being in Washington, I went to Des Moines. Developments there may be of interest in connection with our recent conversations.

Des Moines interests on Friday entertained the daily newspaper men at lunch. Called on to acknowledge the gratitude of the guests, I took advantage of the situation to give my own interpretation of the Washington situation and the first year of the administration. The publishers were told that the President has the keenest interest in Iowa's reactions, and that behind the scenes at the Capital there have been at work the old Hoover plans for large achievements, that are not yet ripe for publicity. The effort to break down European animities and antagonisms, including the World Court, the handling not only of the crisis that followed the market crash, but of the crisis that almost materialized in the commodity markets when wheat threatened to drop far below $1, your purpose to deal directly with the prohibition question as soon as you have the facts, your attitude toward the tariff, your occasional discouragement when the Senate and the press apparently failed to sense what lay behind these attacks on important nominations to the Supreme bench, etc.

It was explained that the information was not to be published, but was being given in an attempt to let Iowa editors know the situation. Then, speaking as one of these editors, I asked for an understanding of the Hoover program, and support for the President "against the pack." About forty men were present. I am told that their reactions were what we want, that some things were cleared up, and that a need had been met. This is recited merely to indicate how simply and easily some of this work can be done. All the press needs to know is what is going on.

Yesterday I had a gratifying talk with Jay Darling, a most valuable supporter of yours. He expressed pleasure over the reactions to the impromptu explanation of the talk to the daily publishers. We both feel that the situation could be just
as easily clarified in some of the other states. Ding is most anxious to help and has some good ideas. He feels that Keats Speed is one of the men who should be given early consideration. "He can be converted, and should be," said Ding, who thinks that some of the boys on "the other side" should be called in, as well as the more friendly critics. By the way, Ding is not inclined to worry much about the present situation, but does think that its clarification would be better now than later. I asked him to write you as frankly as he had spoken to me, but he was hesitant. He has some thoughts on the subject that should get to you. He saw the New York crowd after he last saw you.

While in Des Moines I met the editor of Better Homes and Gardens, a Meredith publication with 1,500,000 circulation that gets into the representative homes. His name is Peterson, and before coming back to Iowa he was Henry Allen's editor on the Wichita Beacon. Peterson heard my little harangue at the luncheon and asked for a few minutes afterward. He is intensely interested in your success, as is everyone else who is at all familiar with what is going on there in Washington.

Peterson told me he has been in frequent communication with Senator Allen concerning the failure of administration senators to stand up and do some fighting. He has been suggesting that Allen deliver one of his ringing speeches, and that the speech refer to the senate's responsibility to the President. Peterson asked permission to mention to Allen the circumstances of this Des Moines luncheon, and suggest again that this might be an excellent time to deliver such a speech as they had debated. My answer was that, despite the fact the senators are worn out and in no mood for speeches, if Allen could prepare himself to adequately handle the subject, the effect on the country would be great, and would be beneficial to Allen's candidacy. But I said it would be unwise for the Senator to give any time to such preparation until he got the President's approval. Peterson wrote Allen Friday afternoon. Incidentally, Peterson, himself, handling such a fine circulation among thinking citizens, is doing and will continue to do splendid work. The Parker nomination may fall by the wayside. Be not discouraged. Its defeat would afford you a fine opportunity to make a crisp statement in proof of the fact that you do not submit tamely to the coercive measures that brought about the rejection. A show of fight would make a highly desirable impression. I say that advisedly, after repeated interviews. And, oh, how I wish that story of the way in which you and Alexander Legge met an emergency by inaugurating government buying of wheat could get the proper publicity! I almost weep when I think of the possibilities for constructive publicity that are being passed up. So does Ding. We may be all wrong, but we both are stubborn.

Again permit me to suggest that if Col. *McCormick is asked
to the White House—and I hope that he will be—that you will as frankly discuss the situation as you did with Ding and with me, even more, if possible, and then determine not to be disappointed if the effect of the conversation is not immediately discernible. As I told George, if we can get even a slight start in the right direction we can be most happy. I am somewhat skeptical in this instance, but the setup never will be as good for the attempt as it is right now.

If Mr. Darling does not write you soon it will be because he is not as prompt and brash as I; but I do hope that he will write you as he talked to me. As you know, he can be and is a great influence for the administration, and his suggestions should have value.

With best wishes for your continued health, and assurances that whatever pertaining to the press may be worrying you is certain to work out to your interest, I am

Sincerely yours,

Verne Marshall

Hon. Herbert Hoover
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.
The Baker institute claims to treat cancer, goiter, varicose veins, and several other ailments, principally by use of hypodermic injections of a secret fluid, or, in some cancer cases, by application of a powder. The American Medical Journal has attacked him for his cancer cure claims and harmful broad statements over his radio, such as that 95 per cent of all medical operations are unnecessary. Baker retorted branding the state medical school at Iowa City a "slaughter house."

It is true President Hoover did not endorse Baker's activities. But because he took part in the ceremony starting the presses of the new paper, he has given Baker the opportunity to convey the impression to his followers that although numerous groups are "conspiring" against him, President Hoover stands on his side.

The president would have done better to have had no hand in the Baker ceremony. He was clearly ill-advised.
Hon. Hanford MacNider,
U. S. Minister to Canada,
Ottawa Ontario, Canada.

My dear Jack:

Have you heard yet what our good friend Mr. Hoover did to us down at Muscatine? At the opening last Friday of Norman Baker's new daily newspaper Mr. Hoover did the official button punching act.

Now, I presume you know Mr. Baker. He is the cancer cure wizard that the Iowa Medical Association, American Medical Association and the newspapers of Iowa and surrounding states almost unanimously have been attacking as a charlatan. The establishment of the newspaper has been aimed almost directly at the Lee Syndicate. And at least half of his radio time is taken up in condemnation of chain newspapers and chain banking. This letter is being dictated and so I can't tell you as specifically as I might what this bird really is.

It seems to me that Mr. Hoover must be entirely lacking in gratitude. The Lee newspapers almost without exception have gone to bat for him at every turn. In Wisconsin last year two of our papers let themselves be crucified because they stuck to the president in the face of the LaFollette crowd's ravings.

Well, I suppose we will go on being for Mr. Hoover, but I find it most difficult to muster the enthusiasm for him that once I had. I am writing this to you as man to man in the hope that perhaps you can tell me just what the factors were which prompted the president to do such a foolish and ungracious act.

Was sorry not to see you at least for a few minutes on your visit here last week.

With best wishes to you always, I am

Sincerely yours,

(W.) Earl (Hall)
The new Emergency Credit Corporation is not failing because of lack of funds or incapacity but because of the inelastic policy under which assistance is proposed.

To illustrate:— Any bank which is in trouble is by that fact, in their judgment, proved unworthy of aid. Such banks are outcasts, so far as the esteemed officials of the Emergency Credit Corporation are concerned. These same outcast banks may be perfectly solvent if their securities were valued at anything but forced liquidation prices. The only thing that makes them tend to insolvency is that present values have been forced down by unnatural liquidation.

To refuse them aid, which would mean their salvation, is equivalent to starting the whole row of dominoes to pushing each other over again. I can name three banks in Iowa at this moment in immediate danger of crashing. Their assets are ample if values hold at their present rate. Let these values sink, even a little, and these banks will be forced to liquidate, throw their securities on the market and thereby start the avalanche of banks sliding into the ditch.

The officers of the Credit Corporation say "Let them go". We insist that the situation can be saved without loss to anyone. Ninety-odd banks in Iowa that we can enumerate were literally pulled out of the mire when the President announced the Emergency Credit Corporation. They will all of them be back in the danger zone if values slump again.

The President's Credit Corporation announcement doubled the value of corn. That put courage into everyone. The immediate danger is that the ground gained by the President's act will be lost by lack of sympathetic attitude on the part of the eastern officers of the Credit Corporation.

There is no use trying to make over the Credit Corporation. The present set-up is as fixed as a cement block. The visit of an agent to the west would be like calling in a pathologist when an emergency operation is demanded.

The officers of the Credit Corporation are content to operate that institution on the basis of isolated paper credits.
of the individual bankers. What is needed is an attitude that will operate on the basis of the substantial worth of the community which the individual banker serves. There is nothing the matter with these stalwart communities, nor with their bankers, except that the breath of life has been choked off by the men who control the credits.

The American citizens in the middle west know that the eastern bankers loaned $300,000,000 to Germany with much more ease than the western farmer can raise $1500 on a 160-acre farm clear of indebtedness.
My dear Darling:

Just out of curiosity I had the situation as to the Reconstruction Corporation's assistance to Iowa institutions looked up, and I find that nearly 100 Iowa institutions have applied for assistance; that the total amount of applications is $8,262,000; that no institution has been refused; that out of the $8,262,000, loans to the amount of $3,854,000 have been approved, and over $1,000,000 are in course of being acted upon. This does not seem to me to bear out the information that $15,000,000 have been asked for and only $5,000,000 granted. As a matter of fact, the average reduction on the whole of the loans which have been approved is about 10 per cent below the original application. Great numbers of them are given in full. Others of them who have applied for rather large amounts have been given part and told to come back when their necessities require more.

Beyond all this, the time has been checked up that has elapsed between the date of the original application and the date of its final approval, and I find that from the date that the applications are received in Washington the date of approval averages about 11 days. When you consider that this Board is dealing not alone with the state of Iowa but with every state in the Union, and that the Board under the law is required to itself pass on every loan, I think it is a most astonishing record, and I doubt if it has been equalled in any private institution in the world.

So much for the lecture. Let me add that it was a cheerful thing to see you at the White House again, and I hope you did not accumulate any great political folly from the Gridiron dinner.

Kind regards.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Jay N. Darling,
2320 Terrace Road,
Des Moines, Iowa.
January 28th, 1931

Mr. Lawerence Richey,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Larry:

In the matter of the old Hoover homestead at West Branch, Iowa:—

Mrs. Scellars, the owner, does not choose to sell. I have approached the matter from several angles. First I sent a prospective small town resident to try to purchase the place for a home. I authorized him to pay twenty-five hundred dollars and to go higher if there was any prospect of making a purchase. Mrs. Scellars thought at first she might go to California and live with her son, but evidently she got no encouragement from that quarter. It seems likely that the price was not an object. She likes the place to live in and receives an income of approximately six hundred dollars a year through the ten cent admission fee from visitors and sightseers. She rejected the offer with such completeness and her refusal to name a figure at which she would sell was so firm that I gave up the idea of trying to do it that way. I hesitated to make a forced campaign for fear she would hold out for an exhorbitant sum.

I then sought another means of approach. Mr. Edgar R. Harlan, custodian of the State Historical Museum of Iowa, is a very close friend of mine and a very ardent Hoover supporter. He is constantly busy over the state acquiring sentimental and monumental features which should be preserved to posterity. He had long wanted to buy the Hoover homestead as a state monument, but lacked the funds. I have put him onto the job with instructions to use all the ingenious devices at his command to get the Hoover birthplace for you. He is very much interested in doing so and I believe is our best bet under the circumstances.
If Mrs. Scellars will not come to terms I have instructed him to get an option on it giving him first opportunity buy in case and when she arrives at the point where she wants to sell. This will, at least, secure us against the possibility of it falling into other hands and will guarantee that when any sale is made we can get the house if you still want it.

There is a provision in the Statutes of Iowa providing for condemnation of property for state park and monument purposes. That was one of Harlan’s hopes for the future. He thought he might take advantage of that provision and acquire the property for the state. That, however, would not answer your purposes, I presume. If it was bought under condemnation proceedings of course it could not be turned over to private hands.

I have presumed all along that you were anxious to obtain it in order to preserve it from abuse that might result from commercial use. If this is the only consideration you have in mind it might be possible, as Harlan suggests, that you would like to have the house put under the care of the state.

Two other matters in connection with the West Branch history may interest you. In the old cemetery is a granite and marble monument to Mr. Hoover’s grandfather. It has cracked from the weather and a large slab has fallen off and lies on the ground and the monument is not a very pleasing object. Mr. Harlan looked it over to see if there was something the state could do about it but hesitated to suggest anything for fear of intrusion on private rights and, of course, he could not act without permission from Mr. Hoover.

Then, there is a very nice little sentimental memorandum in the court records of the county. It is the report of young Herbert Hoover’s guardian in lead pencil showing the amounts spent for his board, keep and incidental expenses, five cents for this and fifteen cents for that, and it makes a very interesting little story. I have authorized Mr. Harlan to have photostats made of those records and kept in the archives of the State.
Historical Society where they will be better preserved than in the court records. I wish the photostats might be substituted for the original records and the original records kept in a better state. As they are now they are subject to the thumbing over and examination of anyone who may ask, and deterioration would be much more rapid than if they were put under glass and preserved.

I am sailing February fifth for a somewhat extended trip and there will be no opportunity for me to hear from you before departure, probably. I hope the above arrangements will meet with your approval. Nothing will be done that can not be retracted if it is not according to your wishes.

With best wishes, I am

Yours very truly,

J.N. Darling

JND: H
Des Moines, Iowa  
March 12, 1934

Mr. Herbert Hoover  
Palo Alto, California

Dear Mr. Hoover:

Yours was a short letter but it contained an order for a long reply if I were to carry out the specifications you laid down in it.

As you state in your letter, there must be a fairly definite philosophic pattern underlying the New Deal. I have exposed myself for a period of approximately two months in extent to the contagious infection of the microbe or virus which pervades the atmosphere of Washington in an experiment of pure pathological research --- (a sort of human guinea pig) --- and either I am immune or there isn't any identifiable microbe.

Probably it is due to my own density of mind but I have listened carefully and studied ardently in an effort to discern the outlines of what you call a fairly definite philosophic pattern, without success. If it were not for lack of faith in my own capacity for discernment and understanding, I would be convinced that there is no pattern. As matters stand, I can only watch with tremulous apprehension the reckless speed with which we are traveling toward an undefined goal.

The one objective which I have been able to discern is that the President wants, most sincerely and profoundly, to make everybody happy. Redistribution of wealth is the only definite item in his tool box of mechanical devices. I don't think he even pretends to know how either of the above may be accomplished. He sincerely believes that by searching the minds of the students of sociology and economics he can discover the equation by which these desirable objectives may be attained.

* * *

A very humble ambition!
I have not found anyone in Washington who believes that the said equation has been found. In the meantime, anything that seems plausible to the President will be tried.

It has seemed to me that the only difference between the Air Mail experiment and the N.R.A., P.W.A., and so forth and so on, is that the crashes in the former are registered in terms of human destruction which everyone can see and understand, while the crack-ups in the other experiments are less visible.

Wallace remains, in my judgment, as the one man in the Administration who has completed the circle of his philosophy.

Tugwell is, I believe, reckless of fact and a slave to theory. I think he is dangerous and his plausible presentations make the President an easy victim to his policies.

I see for myself a chance to do a job for conservation. If I wait until a change of administration it will be too late for Herpicide. I'm going to take the head of the Biological Survey until I can find a good man to take it over.

My best bow to Mrs. Hoover.

Jay

JND: MH
November 3, 1954

Hon. Herbert Hoover
Waldorf-Astoria Towers
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

The Des Moines Founders Garden Club, an affiliate of the Garden Club of America, wishes to propose the name of Jay N. Darling, cartoonist, internationally known as "J. N. Ding" for the Frances K. Hutchinson medal, (in bronze) awarded annually by The Garden Club of America, "for service in conservation."

It is required that five letters of endorsement be submitted "from those able to speak with authority about the record of accomplishment of the candidate."

No one could fulfill this requirement so well as yourself, nor could anyone else bring to Jay the same warmth of friendship which your endorsement would convey. Jay and Iowa would be deeply honored.

To refresh your memory on some of Jay's Conservation activities, a copy of part of the letter of proposal from the Des Moines Founders Garden Club is enclosed.

The Des Moines Founders Garden Club join me in greetings from Iowa and grateful appreciation of your acceptance of this request for an endorsement in behalf of another dearly loved fellow-Iowan, Jay N. Darling, as a candidate for the Frances K. Hutchinson Medal.

Yours very sincerely,

Mrs. Addison Parker, Sr.
Chairman, Conservation Committee
Des Moines Founders Garden Club
4024 Grand Avenue
Des Moines 12, Iowa
PROPOSAL

of

JAY NORWOOD DARLING

for the

FRANCES K. HUTCHINSON MEDAL

of the

THE GARDEN CLUB OF AMERICA

1955

November 10, 1954
JAY NORWOOD DARLING

Jay Norwood Darling, cartoonist, known internationally as "J. N. DING".

October 21, 1876: Born in Norwood, Michigan, the son of a Congregational Minister.

1900: Ph. B. Beloit (Wisconsin) College. Beloit College bestowed upon him an honorary degree as "a son of Beloit; cartoonist, journalist, national interpreter of current events, bringing to play upon the shifting developments in public affairs the kindly satire of his discerning mind, a loyal upholder of the best in American traditions".

1900: Litt. D.; L. L. D. Drake University, Des Moines.

1899: Reporter, Sioux City (Iowa) Tribune

1900: Reporter, Sioux City (Iowa) Journal

1901-1906: Cartoonist, Sioux City (Iowa) Journal

1906-1911: Cartoonist, Des Moines Register

1911-1913: Cartoonist, New York Globe

1913-1917: Cartoonist, Des Moines Register

1917-1951: Cartoonist, Des Moines Register and New York Tribune

1924: 1943 Received the Pulitzer Prize for the best cartoon of the year.

1929: As Chairman of The Civic Art, Park Design and Recreation Committee, Des Moines City Planning Commission, Ding won the city's Annual Community Award as its most useful citizen.

"The award was made for his work in city planning and beautification and for the daily ministry of his cartoons... The City Plan recently adopted by Des Moines to a large extent represents his inspiration, his courage and his indomitable determination to plan and to build for posterity. "

His efforts are expressed to day in our civic centers, our river beautification, our city parks and beautiful bridges and in our many recreational areas for every age and every activity.

1931: As a member of the Iowa State Fish and Game Commission, he conceived and promoted "the Iowa Twenty-Five Year Conservation Plan." "In building up the organization for
the survey, the personnel material of the country was canvassed to draw into this work the most valuable men available at the time, within the limitations of the funds to be used. Probably never before in America has so varied and so skilled an assembly of talent set to work on a coordinated conservation planning project."

(Report on the Iowa Twenty-Five Year Conservation Plan, 1933).

Many of these men, experts in the fields of science were warm personal friends of Ding's, pleased, no doubt, to be invited to assist him in the great program which he was projecting. Among them are many of the great names in Conservation history: Aldo Leopold, of Wisconsin, Dr. Carl Stubbs of Michigan, Prof. Floyd A. Nagler of Iowa, as well as leaders in the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Biological Survey, U.S. Bureau of Fisheries, and U.S. Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

The Iowa Twenty-Five Year Conservation Plan was defined as "a Plan and Program for the wise human use of Iowa's natural resources"... "Let every citizen of Iowa catch and hold that vision of the economy and the enrichment of human living to be achieved only through state-wide, far sighted development plans. Not for too visionary but for too meagre-minded planning shall we be held to account".


As administrator of the Department his record of the first year showed: 661,000 acres added to the migratory waterfowl restoration program, and 10,000,000 acres, approximately, withdrawn from the public domain, for State game reservoirs. For converting submarginal land into wild life refuges he obtained first $1,000,000 and later $8,500,000, largest appropriations in the history of the Biological Survey. To provide additional funds, he designed a one-dollar duck stamp, showing two mallards in flight, which hunters were required to paste on their state hunting licenses before shooting migratory water fowl.

1936: Ding united 36,000 members of Wild life Societies, in a national organization, "The General Wildlife Federation", of which he was named President.

He contributed $9,000.00 to Iowa State College for study and research in the field of Wildlife Conservation. "Ducks
can't lay eggs on a picket fence", said Ding. "There should be a puddle for every duck." The research has continued and the program broadened through participation with the College, the State Conservation Commission, the Wildlife Management Institute and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This is now called "The Iowa Wildlife Cooperative Research Unit."

State Fishing and Hunting Licenses contribute to its support and to the purchase of land for the restoration of marshes and lakes, and for fishing access areas on lakes and rivers.

1954:

"Ding!" pioneered in the field of Conservation Education. He felt that the proper conservation of our natural resources should be included as a course of study in the various age groups in the school system.

In recognition of his leadership in this field, the National Wildlife Federation has announced a "Fellowship called the Ding-Darling Fellowship in honor of the noted newspaper cartoonist who served as first President of this organization." A limited number of $1,000.00 fellowships will be awarded to outstanding graduate students in Conservation for 1955-1956.

In addition to his work as a writer and as an artist and as a leader in Conservation he has been consulted by the White House on governmental and political affairs. It has been said that America's social and political history may be traced through Ding's cartoons.
Our 'Ding' Darling Dies; Pulitzer Prize Cartoonist

Darling’s farewell cartoon—prepared by the artist for publication on his death. Page 22.

Special to the Herald Tribune

J. N. (Ding) Darling, eighty-five, the noted cartoonist whose work appeared in the Herald Tribune for fifty years, died yesterday in Iowa Methodist Hospital here of a heart ailment.

Mr. Darling won two Pulitzer Prizes for his cartoons, which were syndicated by the Herald Tribune to some 100 newspapers across the nation. Ill health forced him to retire in 1945. He suffered a stroke last December.

Mr. Darlington was also nationally known conservationist, honorary president of the National Wildlife Federation and, with Walt Disney, was recently named co-chairman of National Wildlife Federation.

On March 18, Jay Norwood Darling, known as "J. N. Ding," to millions of newspapers, was an Iowa-bred minister's son who made a fortune by cartooning when he felt like it. Beloved and respected for his talent in producing what he once called "a humor-coated capsule" of editorial judgment, and "an illustrated figure of speech," he also was one of the most effective conservationists the country has ever seen.

A self-admitted lazy and ornery youngster who was drifting toward a career in medicine, Mr. Darling pumped a wheezing church pipe organ for his minister father and once started, but never finished, a correspondence course in art.

His first drawing which attracted any notice outside the family was an innocent sketch of the Beloit College faculty lineup up girl ballet dancer which he did for the school annual. It provoked an immediate faculty meeting and he was summarily suspended for a year.

Sketched Trial Scene

The drawing was signed "Ding," a family nickname which stuck from the beginning and became his cartoon nom de plum. His next effective bit of art work was a sketch of a ruddy-faced trial lawyer. Mr. Darling did it to pass the time during a dull courtroom session which he was covering as a reporter for the Sioux City Journal the year after he finally was graduated from Beloit College in 1900. When the lawyer exploded into anger and began coming his opponent there was no photographer available and the paper eagerly ran the drawing.

That day he became a cartoonist. His drawings were popular and the Des Moines Register and Leader (now the Register) hired him away from the Sioux City paper. The first cartoon published in Des Moines caused quite a stir. It pictured a fat monk, labeled "Des Moines," puffing clouds of black smoke marked "coal" and being sketched by a lanky artist. The caption announced "Ding" begins his work of cartooning Des Moines.

Some critics accused him of incoherence while others pointed out that Des Moines got its name, not from the French ridge of "plume," but for an Indian word meaning "salt." Years later, Mr. Darling rechristened Des Moines and still hasn’t learned anything about abating its smoke nuisance.

A big, hefty man who was once described as looking "like 169 acres of corn," Mr. Darling had an unmarked office on an upper floor of the Des Moines Register building. Before setting to work he would read half a dozen newspapers and "dig out the spirit of the world."

In later years, under a serious illness nearly killed him, he produced cartoons only when he felt in the mood. The 100 papers which carried his drawings through the New York Herald Tribune syndicate would wait patiently for Darling’s cartoons which often came in half-dozen batches.

By 1911 his work was being reprinted all over the country and he was offered a job in New York City by George Matthew Adams, then forming a syndicate under the now defunct New York Globe. Mr. Darling moved to New York City but he never cared for the life here.

He began to be plagued by a troublesome right hand which refused to respond as it should. Doctors were baffled and Mr. Darling gradually was forced to abandon his pen and use a brush instead. Then he switched to his left hand. Finally a doctor discovered that an improperly set childhood elbow fracture was poking a nerve. Amputation restored the use of his hand.

By this time he had moved on New York and in 1913 he moved his family back to Des Moines. He was persuaded to join the New York Herald Tribune syndicate with a promise that he could remain in Iowa. The relationship, which continued under the New York Herald Tribune, was long and happy.

Views were at variance with those of the Herald Tribune’s editorial page. In 1915 he was convinced that war was coming and that the nation was unprepared. He presented his arguments in the papers and the editors contradicted them in editorials. While the Herald Tribune argued that armaments bred wars, Mr. Darling argued with cartoons showing that fire escapes do not cause fires or doctors cause sickness.

One of his most famous cartoons was an almost unpublished sketch, when Theodore Roosevelt died. Mr. Darling, who admired him greatly, drew the former President in a Rough Rider outfit, riding a mustang and waving farewell as he rode toward a ridge of the Great Divide on the horizon. Entitled "Long, Long Trail," some Tribune executives thought it too ticked off and decided not to print it.

But managing editor Garrett Garrett heard about the cartoon, pulled it out of the drawer and ordered it published. It finally appeared Jan. 10, 1919, four days after Roosevelt died. The paper was deluged with requests for reprint and "Long, Long Trail" remained a favorite for many years.

Many victims of Mr. Darling’s cartoons prized the originals of his caustic attacks upon them and wrote asking for these drawings. Franklin Roosevelt never did and Mrs. Roosevelt reportedly once said she could never forgive "Ding," a arch enemy of the New Deal, for depicting her husband as Little Lord Fauntleroy.

Mr. Darling was inclined to be blunt but he was basically a kindly man. One thing that aroused his hatred through his life was waste and spoilage of the nation’s natural resources. He liked to hunt and fish and was an ardent conservationist, in the broadest sense.

There was universal amazement when he put away his anti-New Deal pen and became Chief of the Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture under FDR. Mr. Darling resigned in 1935, after a year and a half when he decided he could do more for the cause of conservation as a cartoonist than he could as a bureaucrat.

But in that short span of time he wrung nearly $6 million in appropriations from Congress for a program to convert sub-marginal farm land into wildlife refuges. To supplement appropriations, he designed a $1 duck stamp which hunters were required to affix to state hunting licenses before they could shoot migratory wild fowl.

"Ducks can’t lay eggs on a
picket fence," and "there should be a puddle for every duck" became his personal conservation mottoes. His parting shot at bureaucracy was "I guess I'm the only guy in Washington who puts stamps on his private mail."

Mr. Darling had headed the Iowa Conservation Association and had served on the Iowa Fish and Game Commission. Shortly after leaving Washington he helped found the General Wild Life Federation and was chosen president.

He won two Pulitzer Prizes, the first in 1924 for a cartoon called "In the Good Old U. S. A.," depicting the opportunities offered to youth in this country, and the second, "What a Place for a Waste Paper Salvage Campaign," showing mountains of reports almost burying the city of Washington appeared in 1943.

Mr. Darling traveled widely. In 1931 he toured the Soviet Union and the following year published "Ding Goes to Russia," a compilation of articles that appeared in the New York Herald Tribune. His only other book was "The Cruise of the Bouncing Betsy," a humorous account of a trip by trailer from Iowa to Florida.

Beloit College forgave him his earlier transgression and awarded him an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature in 1925. He was also a member of the National Society of Illustrators, Beta Theta Pi, Theta Nu Epsilon, Phi Beta Kappa and Sigma Delta Chi. He also belonged to the Lambs, the Players, the Century Association and the American Arts Club.

Surviving are his wife the former Genevieve Pendleton, and two children, Mrs. Richard Browne Kass and John P. Darling.
"What a Place for a Waste Paper Salvage Campaign"—one of Ding’s Pulitizer Prize winners. It was printed Sept. 13, 1912, and poked fun at the then rapidly expanding bureaucracy in Washington.

"The Long Long Trail"—one of Ding’s famed cartoons, appeared four days after Theodore Roosevelt’s death (Jan. 10, 1919), showing the Rough Rider waving farewell as he turned to the Great Divide.

"Halloween, 1936"—This was one of Ding’s most controversial, showing Franklin D. Roosevelt, James Farley and Harry Hopkins as young pranksters carrying away John Q. Public in an outhouse.