

Robert Bork on Democracy; Prairie Guard Duty

Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. Edited by Max L. Moorhead. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954, page 31:

Elisha Stanley ... was unanimously proclaimed 'Captain of the Caravan.' The powers of this office were undefined by any 'constitutional provision,' and consequently vague and uncertain: orders being only viewed as mere requests, they are often obeyed or neglected at the caprice of the subordinates. It is necessary to observe, however, that the captain is expected to direct the order of travel during the day, and to designate the camping-ground at night.

After this came the task of organizing. The proprietors are first notified by 'proclamation' to furnish a list of their men and wagons. The latter are generally apportioned into four 'divisions,' particularly when the company is large

... and ours consisted of nearly 100 wagons, a dozen dearborns, and two small cannons (a four and six pounder), each mounted upon a carriage. The capital in merchandise was about \$200,000. To each of the divisions a 'lieutenant' was appointed, whose duty it was to inspect every ravine and creek on the route, select the best crossings, and superintend the 'forming' of each encampment.

Our forefathers were enjoying a new-found freedom from recent British rule and were thus not prone to impose excessive rules and regulations upon themselves. They were secure of mind and spirit and thus not dependent upon others, save God Himself, for provisions and guidance. They submitted to limited authority when the issue was security and defense of one's possessions and loved ones. They were willing to delegate authority to those whom they trusted to give expert advice on the crossing of the prairie.

We as a people are no longer self-confident nor are we God-dependent. Without this strength of character, we look to government for our security and without realizing it has opted for equality over freedom, a subject addressed by:

Bork, Robert H. "Can Democratic Government Survive?" National Review, 16 Sept. 1996, pp. 46-51.

Gregg, Josiah. Commerce of the Prairies. Edited by Max L. Moorhead. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954, page 32:

Upon calling the roll, we were found to muster an efficient force of nearly two hundred men. There is nothing so much dreaded by inexperienced travelers as the ordeal of guard duty. But no matter what ... no one has the smallest chance of evading the 'common law of the prairies.' The amateur tourist and the listless loafer are precisely in the same wholesome predicament ... they must all take their regular turn at the watch. There is usually a set of genteel idlers attached to every caravan, whose wits are forever at work in devising schemes for whiling away their irksome hours at the expense of others. By embarking in these 'trips of pleasure,' they are enabled to live without expense; for the hospitable traders seldom refuse to accommodate even a loafing companion with a berth at their mess without charge. But then these lounging attachés are expected at least to do good service by way of guard duty.

There are several applications to be found in this incident. First of all, note that even the slothful can be forced to perform dreaded tasks when their lives depend upon it.

One of the most disliked duties on the Trail was guard duty. The industrious were willing to permit loafers and idlers to sit at mess but no one had the option to avoid their shift on the watch.

This expedition of two hundred was a sort of moving village which was vulnerable to "outside" invasion. There was no law, and protection against assault was one's own responsibility.

These pioneers recognized the reality of potential danger from hostile Indians and hungry beasts. Prairie SWAT Teams, both of man and beast, were an impending threat to the tranquility of the camp as well as the safety and well-being of its inhabitants and their possessions.

We can see from Scripture the necessity for the watch, whether it be to protect the king's throne, a walled city, or the believer's soul.

Jehoiada was Judah's high priest when all of the Davidic line, except the infant son of King Ahaziah, were slain by Athaliah, daughter of Jezebel.

After six years of exile young Jehoash was publicly placed on the throne of Judah. Protection of the child king is the subject of:

2 Kings 11:4 - Now in the seventh year Jehoiada sent and brought the captains ... to him in the house of the Lord. Then he put them under oath in the house of the Lord and showed them the king's son [i.e., **Ahaziah's son Jehoash**].

2 Kings 11:5 - And he commanded them saying, ... This is the thing that you shall do: one third of you, who come in on the Sabbath and keep watch over the king's house [**the palace**]

2 Kings 11:6 - (one third also shall be at the Sur Gate [**near the Temple**], and one third at the Gate of the Guard [**the gate near the wall**]), shall keep watch over the house for defense.

2 Kings 11:7 - And two parts of you shall also keep watch over the house of the Lord for the king.

Walled cities were protected by the watch. During the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem under Nehemiah we read in:

Nehemiah 4:7 - Now it came about when Sanballat \ san-BAL-at \, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites \ASH-da- dites \ heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry.

Nehemiah 4:8 - And all of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

Nehemiah 4:9 - But we prayed to God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

Like the loafers on the Santa Fé Trail, our Lord had to deal with a not-too-alert staff of disciples. He asked three of them to keep watch with Him on the night before His crucifixion:

Matthew 26:37 - He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee [**James and John**], and began to be grieved and distressed.

Matthew 26:38 - Then He said to them, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with Me."

Matthew 26:39 - And He went a little beyond them and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not My will, but as You will."

When the Lord returned, He found them doing eyelid maintenance.

Matthew 26:40 - And He came to the disciples and found them sleeping and said to Peter, "So, you men could not keep watch with Me for one hour?"

As one would stand watch for the arrival of enemies to a king's palace or a walled city, so one must stand watch for the agent provocateurs who search for a breach in the fortress of the soul.

Matthew 26:41 - Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Those who fail to stand watch in defense of their souls fall asleep, i.e., they capitulate to the temptations of the SWAT Team and come under the tyranny of the sinful nature.

1 Thessalonians 5:6 - ... let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep watch ...

Those who sleep through Phase 2 will not receive the conveyance of their escrow blessings while those who remain vigilant will do so.

Revelation 3:3 - If you are not alert [**standing watch**], I will come to punish you like a thief, in fact, you will not know at what point I will come to you for the administration of punishment.

Revelation 3:4 - But you have a few persons in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes, in fact, they will walk with Me in whites because they are worthy.

Standing watch on the Santa Fé Trail was a necessary task for survival, a reminder of the importance of standing watch over our souls. Those who do, do not fall victim to a SWAT Team which constantly seeks to exploit any breach in the believer's soul.