

Crook County Journal

COUNTY OFFICIAL PAPER FOR CROOK COUNTY

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Famous Land Fraud Suits Dismissed

"On motion of E.A. Johnson, United States Attorney, two more of the famous Oregon land fraud cases, which involved many of the prominent citizens of the state, were dismissed in the United States district court by Judge Wolverton," says the Portland Journal. Both of the cases were against John N. Williamson, former congressman, and now a well known resident of Prineville.

Back of the cases lies an interesting history. Williamson, along with Van Gesner and Marion R. Biggs, a prominent attorney of Prineville, were indicted early in 1905, during the regime of United States District Attorney Francis J. Heney, when the land fraud cases were first started which eventually involved Senator Mitchel.

In this indictment they were charged with conspiracy to suborn perjury, and it grew out of efforts of Williamson and Gesner to obtain ranges for their cattle and sheep in Crook County. Biggs was jointly indicted for giving them legal advice that they were within the law in doing what they were accused of. It took three trials in 1905 to convict them. Gesner and Biggs were convicted early in the game, but it was not until the third that a jury said that Williamson was guilty. This was the famous alleged "hand-picked" jury of William J. Burns, the detective.

Judge DeHaven had presided at the former cases when the juries disagreed. Judge Hunt of Montana presided the third time and ordered that the jury be drawn direct from the box containing the names of all the eligible freeholders of the state.

It was charged that the defendants had caused timber and stone entrymen to come in and settle on the lands they desired and to swear falsely in making their affidavits as to their intent as to permanent residence and ownership after they had proved up.

Williamson, because of being a member of congress, had the privilege of appealing direct to the United States supreme court under a constitutional provision. In 1908 that body reversed the conviction and ordered a new trial. The other two defendants were not so fortunate in their connections, and had to appeal to the circuit court of appeals. That body affirmed the jury decision.

Biggs was beseeched by his friends to apply for a pardon, on the strength of the charge that the jury had not been square. Biggs refused to do this, saying that he had never done wrong, and at time made some sensationally bitter statements of his attitude toward the government. He and Gesner each served long jail sentences and paid heavy fines.

No fourth trial of Williamson has ever been had and this case was one of the two dismissed this morning.

The other case was one in which Williamson was indicted along with Senator Mitchell, Binger Hermann, commissioner of the United States land office; Franklin P. Mays, Willard Jones and others, for conspiracy to defraud the United States of public lands. Mitchell died of a broken heart it is said. Jones, Sorenson and Mays were convicted, and Hermann's case, after the jury had disagreed, was dismissed by Heney. As the same reasons applied in Williamson's case that had obtained in that of Hermann's, he was never brought to trial.

Negotiations for both dismissals have been going on for 3 years, but final action has been held up pending efforts of the interior department to regain some of the claims that were alleged to have been granted through fraud.

Surveying to Begin in Earnest Next Week

H. P. Scheel of Tenino, Wash., and F. M. von Planta, an engineer, arrived in Prineville Monday to take a look at the country between here and Metolius. Mr. Scheel said that there was some other work that needed to be finished before he would transfer his surveyors to this country. It would only take a few days, he said, and then the work of locating the line would begin.

Mr. Scheel felt very much encouraged over the prospects for a road and said that we would surely get one if the farmers and committee would co-operate with him: He did not think there would be any trouble about a right-of-way as the enhanced value of the land would more than offset any damage. Just where the line will be located nobody knows. "The grades, curves, expense and tonnage alone will determine," said Mr. Scheel. "If it costs too much in one location then some other will be chosen. Am not sure yet whether it will be an electric or steam road. It will depend upon what the electricity costs. You see it's a little too early to give out any definite information. If your farmers do the right thing, and I feel they will, and the electric light people come to terms, then you can safely say that you will get an electric road. We are going back to Tacoma today, but will be back again Monday ready to take up the work."

Remains of an Unknown Man Found

The remains of an unknown man were found five miles south of Redmond Saturday. The sheriff, coroner and health officer were notified and Sunday morning Dr. Belknap, District Attorney Wirtz and Coroner Poindexter left for the place designated.

The man had evidently been dead a long time. His remains were scattered in all directions within a radius of 100 yards. The coyotes had gnawed off the feet and hands and carried them away. There was not very much left to identify the man. What there was were placed in a sack and taken to Redmond and a coroner's jury summoned. Some of the witnesses thought the man to be one Robert Boyd, but could not say anything definitely. The remains were those of a tall man, who had red hair and was 35 or 38 years of age. The man's clothes were scattered around. He was evidently a laboring man. His undershirt had two holes in it that looked like bullet holes, but there was nothing sure about it. Nothing was found in the man's pockets of any value or that would help to identify him.

The jury brought in a verdict that "the man is unknown to us and that the cause of his death is unknown."

Holton Released on Good Behavior

Art Holton, who was sentenced to 60 days in jail a little over a month ago on pleading guilty to a charge of petty larceny, had his sentence reduced to a parole Tuesday. Jack Curtis, who was the victim in the case, wanted to take Holton back in his employ, and as he was the only sufferer the district attorney was willing that Holton be released pending good behavior. Holton is now at work in the restaurant where his offense was committed.

Lost.

Auto top boot on road between Shaniko and Haycock on April 22. Finder leave at this office or C. W. Elkins' store and receive reward. Ip



When a band of Blackfoot Indians from Glacier National Park established their tepee village upon the roof of the McAlpin hotel, 34th St. and Broadway, New York City, Manager Boomer of course had to have them register. The braves were unable to write their names only in the picture language of the redman. This they did after James Shoemaker, who had the Indians in charge, explained to them

that they could not pitch their tepees upon the roof top until they signed their names.

This unique village of tepees was the first ever pitched upon the roof tops of New York City. They were in fact the first tepees pitched on Manhattan Island in 140 years, according to the records of the American Historical society. The Indians spent two weeks in New

York as the guests of Louis W. Hill, chairman of the board of directors of the Great Northern Ry. who took them to New York to attend the Travel and Vacation show, as representatives of Glacier National Park, which was represented in this show with a miniature reproduction of Uncle Sam's newest playground.

Prineville Stuff Gets Highest Price

Ed Slayton returned from Portland the last of the week feeling good. He took six carloads of beef cattle to that market and as usual got the best prices paid for beef during the week. He received \$8.30 for two carloads and \$8 for the rest of his shipment. The \$8.30 stuff was a strictly fancy grade, bought for the Alaska trade.

The cattle receipts for the week were very heavy with prices from 10c to 15c lower on all grades of steers except fancy stuff. The Slayton cattle brought the extreme price for the week ending April 18. The principal demand was for choice 1000 to 1200 pound stock.

The demand for cows and heifers was good with prices ruling strong. The receipts were light. Good bulls were also in demand with prices correspondingly firm. The veal market was steady to firm at \$9.

New School Laws Recently Enacted

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction summarizes the more important educational bills passed by the last legislature as follows:

Districts may, by a majority vote, at a regularly called meeting, authorize the school board to purchase books and furnish them free of charge to all pupils attending school in the district.

After September 1, 1915, all persons applying for teachers' certificates must have completed two years' work in an accredited high school and attended a teachers' training class at least six weeks. This act will not apply to teachers who have had six months' experience prior to September, 1915.

Provision is made for substituting a three weeks' summer school for the annual county institute. The County Superintendent shall, upon the petition of ten teachers, submit to the teachers of this county the question of whether or not such school shall be held. All teachers in the county must attend unless they have had at least twenty-seven months teaching experience, eight of which shall have been in Oregon, or are

graduates of an accredited normal school, or the teachers training class in an accredited high school. When the teachers have once voted for the summer school thereafter such school shall be held in lieu of the annual institute.

Provision was made whereby graduates of non standard colleges can take an examination for high school certificate.

Provide penalty for persons refusing to give the name and age of all their children to the census taker.

Hereafter all schools must have regular fire drills and suitable instruction relative to the danger from fires.

Hereafter all school districts may provide for night schools.

There were several other laws of minor importance passed during the session of the legislature, but they will be printed in the new school laws, which will be distributed before they go into effect. None of the laws will go into effect before June 3rd, and any action taken by any district, or by the teachers of any county, will not be legal and any action before that time will have to be taken again.

Judge Springer on County Taxation

Mr. Editor: The matter of taxation is not in the least poetical, and yet it is a matter of acute interest to every one about once a year. To one who has given the matter solid consideration it becomes a matter of surprise that states and counties should vote to spend money to advertise their resources and yet spend more money, or lose it, by systematically hiding their resources.

The state of Oregon is ready to spend thousands of dollars to show the world our immense wealth, and yet the counties have vied with each other in hiding their wealth. A list of the percentages of the legal (the cash) valuation of the property of the various counties furnished by Mr. Eaton of the State Board of Tax Commissioners, shows that the counties, with the exception of two or three, are determined to hide their resources, some giving to the State Board as little as thirty-one per cent of the legal

value. How much business is there in appropriating thousands of dollars for exhibiting, advertising and showing, and at the same time vastly more than offsetting the same by lying to the assessor? Why do we destroy our credit by hiding our resources? There are only two answers, we are either ignorant or dishonest.

The time was when by making a low assessment we escaped paying our just proportion of state taxes. Not so now, for the reason that the State Tax Commission inquires into our methods and determines for itself just what percentage of our real values are represented on the roll; and regulates our state tax accordingly. If the county board gives only one-third of the value, the state will assess the railroad and telephone lines at one-third their value, so there is little chance to cheat the state or the railroads. Why then should we not tell the truth? There possibly may be some advantage in such a system for the professional tax dodger. When no one tells the truth it furnishes a fruitful field for the professional liar. If one small owner tells a small lie and saves a dollar, the professional can tell a larger and save a thousand. And if I were permitted to make a guess as to the principal reason for continuing such a benighted system, that would be my first guess.

I am going to ask the tax payers of Crook county, and especially the wideawake, progressive, home-booming fellows, if it would not be better for our county and all of us to avail ourselves to the credit which rightfully belongs to us by telling the truth and showing the full cash value, the legal value, of our property. If we are worth one hundred thousand dollars and represent that we are worth only twenty-five thousand, we cut our financial rating by just that much. Better than trying to make the outside world believe fishy yarns as to our possibilities would be to tell the truth, and show that we have not ten millions of assessable property in this county, but thirty millions; and that our rate for state, county, school and road tax is not twenty-four mills, but eight mills. Such a truthful showing would be more valuable than any

Arrested for Violating the State Game Law

Charles A. Sherman, justice of the peace at Fife, this county, was arrested yesterday by Deputy Game Warden Clyde M. McKay on charge of violating the game laws, the specific offense being, it is alleged, having part of a deer in his possession. His trial will take place next week at Camp Creek precinct, about 12 miles from Fife, arrangements for which will be made later.

Meanwhile, Deputy District Attorney Wirtz, acting upon instructions from the governor, sent the following letter to Mr. Sherman requesting his resignation:

"Dear Sir:—Positive evidence of the violation by you of the game laws has come to the knowledge of this office from different sources. Aside from the prosecution started against you in the natural course as you have violated the oath you took when appointed justice of the peace to obey and abide by the constitution and laws of the state of Oregon, your resignation as such justice is hereby requested and the county court will be pleased to accept same at its regular May term."

Mr. Sherman is also United States Commissioner at Fife.

Jake Hillard Has Serious Runaway

Jake Hillard, who was driving M. R. Biggs' mule team Saturday, had a serious runaway on Main street. The mules took fright while turning around and started to run. In some way the wagon pole got loose and fell to the ground. It broke in two and the part remaining got caught under the street crossing at the Prineville Hotel. This threw Mr. and Mrs. Hillard and child violently to the ground where all were more or less badly shaken up. Mrs. Hillard received a cut over the eye but otherwise escaped with severe bruises.

Prineville Public School Won the Debate

The Prineville public school won the debate from the Crook County High School freshmen last Friday evening. Both sides put up some good strong arguments. The public school yells were very amusing. The primaries under the leadership of Weldon Hyde and Elwin Reinke, brought down the house. Zoe Cornett, the leader for the upper grades, was right on the job all the time. Her charges were well drilled.

Have your eyes examined, lenses duplicated or glasses made by Dr. I. A. BERBENDT, Hotel Oregon, Prineville. 4-24

advertising we can do.

Here, we may as well state that the county judge is committed body and boots to that system. If this article is faithfully delivered we will come again and turn the search light of publicity on some of the boulders that lie in the path of accomplishing just such a glorious advertisement at the next session of the board of equalization.

G. SPRINGER, County Judge of Crook County.

For Sale Cheap.

New 5-room Bungalow; modern in every way. In East Prineville. 4-24 E. L. Coe.

Moved

Riggs' Shoe Shop is now located in the City Meat Market Building. Removed from the old Bank building. 4-10-lmp P. G. Riggs.