

Notable pioneer may have built unique fence near Cove

By DICK MASON
La Grande Observer

COVE — Northeast Oregon pioneer Anderson C. Smith was a man of short stature whose life story gave rise to tall tales.

It was said Smith once killed a 900-pound grizzly with a single shot near Minam and was such an accurate marksman he could knock an eye out of a grouse with a round from his Henry rifle.

“He was the man of the mountains and the Kit Carson of the Pacific Coast,” the *Mountain Sentinel*, an old Union County newspaper, reported in its July 6, 1872, edition.

On a less embellished note, Smith reportedly built many stone fences in Northeast Oregon that were used to contain horses and cattle. The total may include one in Cove that still stands, but Smith has been denied credit for building it by historians because of geographic confusion.

This is the belief of Jack Johnson of Cove, a retired National Guardsman who studies local history, that this fence is Smith’s handiwork. The fence is on farmland 2 miles west of Cove and is close to 100 yards long.

“I believe it is possible



Dick Mason/La Grande Observer

A rock fence, which stands near Cove, may have been built by Oregon pioneer Anderson C. Smith. He reportedly built many stone fences in Northeast Oregon that were used to contain horses and cattle in the 1800s.

that this fence was built by A.C. Smith,” Johnson said.

The Cove resident thinks that a number of historical documents mistakenly list the fence as being built in the Imnaha area, understandable, Johnson said, because early in Cove’s history it may have been referred to by some as the Imnaha area. He

cites an 1864 township map that appears to indicate the Cove area was on the edge of what was then known as the Imnaha Forest Reserve.

Johnson is searching for verification indicating the Cove fence indeed was made by Smith. His case is strengthened by documented ties Smith had to Cove.

According to the book “Gateway to the Wallows” by Irene Locke Barklow, Smith and his wife, whose maiden name was Sarah A. Whittington, lived in Cove from 1862 until 1872 before moving into what is today Wallowa County. This was when Union County included all of the land that

in 1887 became Wallowa County.

A.C. Smith, a Civil War veteran, took a big step toward opening Wallowa County to settlers in 1872 and 1873 when he built a toll bridge over the Wallowa River near Minam. The bridge opened in February 1873, an event so significant

it was reported in *The Oregonian*. John Harland Horner, who documented much of Wallowa County’s history in what is known as the Horner Papers, wrote about Smith and the toll bridge, according to Barklow: “The way into the Wallows was practically opened by Captain A.C. Smith, the Daniel Boone of Wallowa.”

Smith, who was born in Franklin County, Illinois, in 1831, studied law for many years and in 1888 was admitted to the Oregon Bar. He then began practicing law in Enterprise.

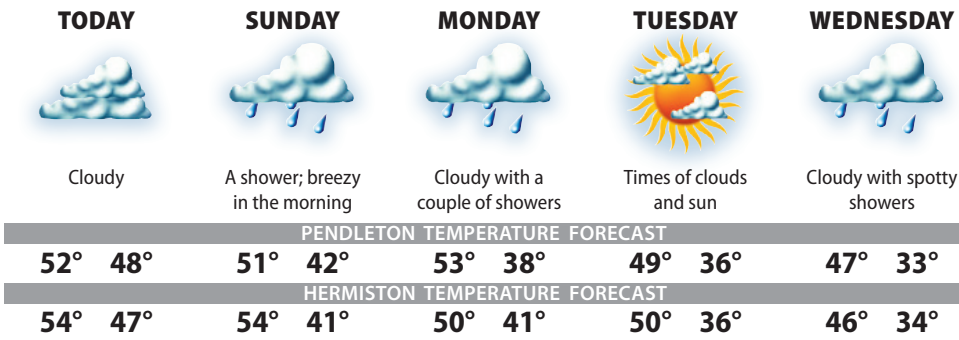
“This was remarkable considering that he never had any formal education,” Johnson said.

Smith came to the West during the gold rush in the 1850s before traveling to Northeast Oregon in 1858, where he lived in Cove and what is today Wallowa County. Smith later traveled east and served in the Union Army as an officer for a short time during the Civil War before he was slightly wounded. He then returned to the Northwest.

Johnson said Smith, who died in Enterprise in 1911, is a fascinating historical character, one he would have enjoyed meeting.

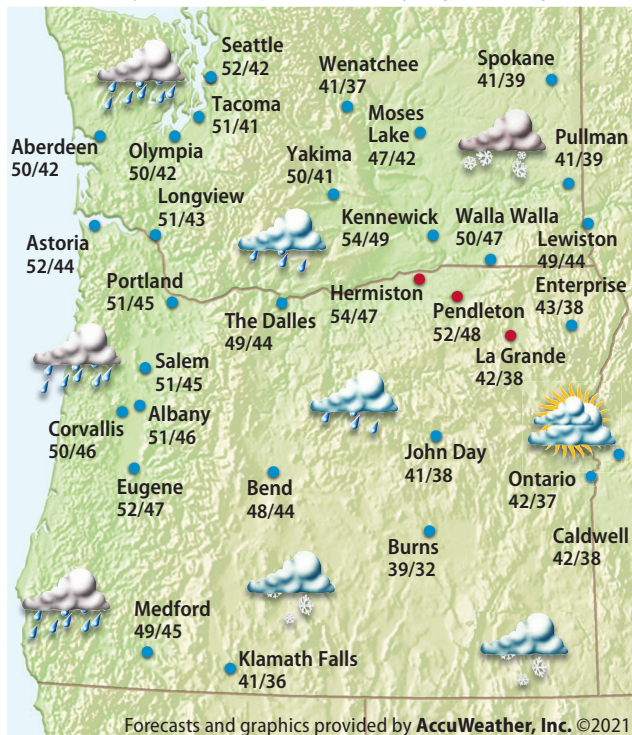
“He was very colorful and influential,” Johnson said.

Forecast for Pendleton Area



OREGON FORECAST

Shown is today’s weather. Temperatures are today’s highs and tonight’s lows.



ALMANAC

PENDLETON through 3 p.m. yest.

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 53° | 39° |
| Normals | 40° | 26° |
| Records | 67° (1939) | -12° (1979) |

PRECIPITATION

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.00" |
| Month to date | 0.00" |
| Normal month to date | 0.06" |
| Year to date | 0.00" |
| Last year to date | Trace |
| Normal year to date | 0.06" |

HERMISTON through 3 p.m. yest.

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| TEMP. | HIGH | LOW |
| Yesterday | 43° | 37° |
| Normals | 39° | 27° |
| Records | 60° (1959) | -13° (1979) |

PRECIPITATION

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| 24 hours ending 3 p.m. | 0.00" |
| Month to date | 0.00" |
| Normal month to date | 0.04" |
| Year to date | 0.00" |
| Last year to date | 0.00" |
| Normal year to date | 0.04" |

WINDS (in mph)

| | | |
|------------------|----------|----------|
| | Today | Sun. |
| Boardman | SSW 7-14 | WSW 7-14 |
| Pendleton | S 8-16 | WSW 8-16 |

SUN AND MOON

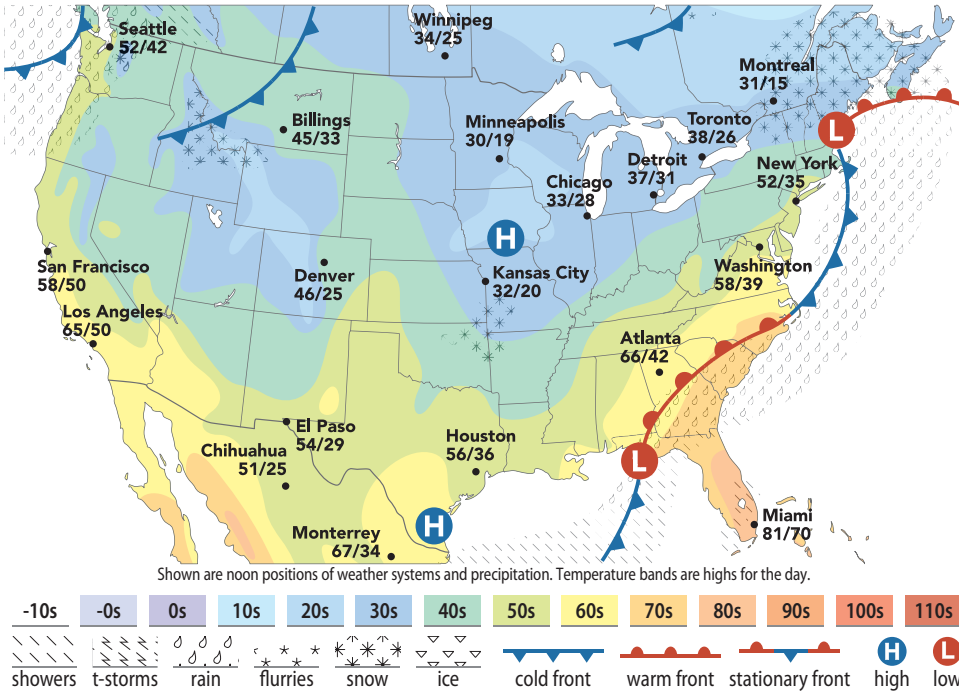
| | |
|----------------|------------|
| Sunrise today | 7:36 a.m. |
| Sunset tonight | 4:23 p.m. |
| Moonrise today | 8:20 p.m. |
| Moonset today | 10:19 a.m. |

Last New First Full
Jan 6 Jan 12 Jan 20 Jan 28

NATIONAL EXTREMES

Yesterday’s National Extremes: (for the 48 contiguous states)
High 86° in Immokalee, Fla. Low -23° in Yellowstone N.P., Wyo.

NATIONAL WEATHER TODAY



Elgin man faces murder charges

One man in custody in an apparent double homicide outside Elgin

By KALEB LAY
La Grande Observer

ELGIN — The Union County Sheriff’s Office is investigating a double homicide outside Elgin.

The sheriff’s office in a press release on Wednesday, Dec. 30, announced the arrest of Gary Otis Mason, 54, of Elgin, for the deaths of Candy K. Williams, 56, and a juvenile. Williams was Mason’s significant other, according to the sheriff’s office, which did not

identify the juvenile.

The sheriff’s office detained Mason on Tuesday, Dec. 29, following an initial investigation at his residence outside Elgin, where Williams also resided. The sheriff’s office booked Mason into the Union County Correction Facility, La Grande, at about 6 p.m. on Dec. 29. He now faces two charges of first-degree murder.

According to the sheriff’s office, Mason called the Union County Dispatch Center via 911 from his home on Chumos Road at approximately 12:06 a.m. on Dec. 29.

A deputy with the sheriff’s office and an Oregon State Police trooper

responded and found two bodies upon arrival. Mason was at the scene and received aid from the Elgin Ambulance and La Grande Fire Department.

The Union County Major Crime Team, which includes members of the Union County Sheriff’s Office, La Grande Police Department, Oregon State Police and Union County Attorney’s office, then investigated throughout the day.

The sheriff’s office also said it would not provide further comments on the case, which now is in the hands of the district attorney’s office for prosecution.

Mason remains in the county jail on no bail.

IN BRIEF

Oregon will start issuing driver’s licenses to undocumented immigrants

SALEM — A law passed by the Oregon Legislature in the summer of 2019 allowing people without documentation of legal residence to obtain a driver’s license in the state went into effect on Jan. 1.

Because the Oregon Driver and Motor Vehicle Services is closed for the New Year’s holiday, and then the weekend, the first licenses won’t be issued until Jan. 4 at the earliest.

Those licenses will not trigger automatic voter registration, unlike other Oregon driver’s licenses.

While the new law gets rid of the requirement to prove U.S. citizenship or legal residency to receive an Oregon driver’s license, those wishing to get their license must still show proof they live in Oregon, and then pay a fee and pass a driving test.

Proponents of the new law believe it will benefit more than just undocumented immigrants — they believe domestic violence survivors, the elderly and others may also have trouble accessing citizenship paperwork.

This isn’t the first time Oregon has allowed those without documentation of citizenship to get a driver’s license. Previously, the state issued eight-year driver’s licenses without requiring such documentation, but the last of those licenses expired in 2016.

Currently, Oregonians applying for a driver’s license must show proof of U.S. citizenship or legal presence in the country. The new law allows the licensee to submit

a written statement that they have not been assigned a Social Security number.

Walla Walla police pin potential porch pirates

WALLA WALLA, Wash. — Two Walla Walla men were arrested on Wednesday, Dec. 30, for allegedly stealing mail and packages from more than 100 people in the area, according to the Walla Walla Police Department.

Two news posts on the department’s smartphone app described how police nabbed the alleged thieves around 11 a.m. on Dec. 30.

Officers reportedly recognized John A. Chlipala, 54, and his son, Daniel A. Rhoads, 30, from some surveillance footage from a nearby home and went to their apartment.

While at the apartment, officers recognized the vehicle parked outside as the one in the security footage. The two suspects allegedly admitted to theft during their conversation with police, according to the post.

Rhoads and Chlipala were both arrested for investigation of second-degree theft, second-degree identity theft, second-degree stolen property possession and stolen mail possession, according to documents from Walla Walla County Superior Court.

Chlipala was also charged with forgery, and Rhoads had an additional charge of third-degree stolen property possession, according to the document.

They both appeared in court on Thursday, Dec. 31. Prosecuting Attorney Jim Nagle did not respond to a request for a status on their case.

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