

Teen fugitives caught after sensational jail break

Blue Mountain Eagle
Friday, Sept. 15, 1944

Last Friday witnessed a rather sensational jail break at Canyon City, which was staged by three boys awaiting sentence for larceny of automobiles and other articles. They were Robert Duane Briggs, 17, Clifford Elwood Robinson, 16, and Albert De Lonzo Wyatt, 15.

The would-be Baby Face Nelsons first attempted to dig through the stone wall of the jail corridor using a 20p nail and stick of stove wood, and they had a rather large opening almost through the wall. However, they decided this too slow a procedure so they piled some bread wrappers and other papers and stove wood around one of the wooden posts supporting the ceiling of the jail, and started a fire. When it was blazing almost to the ceiling, they called the janitor and jailer, James Finlayson. He opened the jail door, threw in a section of hose and, as he went to turn on the water, the boys escaped, whooping like school kids. The break occurred at about 8:30 p.m., just after dusk.

Sheriff I.B. Hazeltine and State Police H.C. Snyder were on a larceny case in the northern

part of the county and did not arrive until about 11 p.m. The boys were seen climbing the hill toward the golf course and local officers had searched the area. These officers immediately notified all outside points where roads left Grant County, and local deputy sheriffs placed road blocks within the county.

State Police officers Larson and Zumwalt of Burns came over to offer assistance, as they had heard of the break over short-wave radio. It was thought that the fugitives might have gone east or toward Prairie City, so the sheriff and police officers started patrol of this area.

Oliver Gives First Real Clue
The first real clue as to the whereabouts of the escaped prisoners was furnished by Herman Oliver who was at his ranch home five miles east of John Day and, upon hearing his dogs bark at about 11:45 p.m., went out to look around. He saw a car on the highway headed west and the headlights' beam showed the three boys walking toward Prairie City. They jumped over a fence to avoid the light and, after the car had passed by, continued on their way up the highway. The sheriff and Police Officer Snyder were informed by radio of this clue

and, a few minutes later, they contacted Oliver, then patrolled the highway until they were called to Bates to investigate a fire which had destroyed the mercantile store at Bates.

Car Containing Guns Stolen
At about 8:10 a.m. Saturday, the officers were notified that L.D. Fleming's car had been stolen at Prairie City, that it contained three rifles, a 30-30 carbine, .25 Remington automatic and a .22 repeater. The deputy sheriff and the city marshal at Prairie City had noted a car leaving there at excessive speed at about 3 a.m. and gave chase, but could not overtake it. The sheriff and police officer decided to follow after having notified officers at Ontario, Baker and Vale of the license, serial number, etc. of Fleming's car.

Chase Ends After Car is Wrecked

On Dixie Mountain, they received a radio message to the effect that the Fleming car had been found wrecked about 1-1/2 miles east of Austin Junction, that no one was apparently hurt and that the guns were missing. The officers were joined by two State Police from Baker and they found the tracks of the trio and commenced to follow them, finally apprehending them at

about 11:45 a.m., some seven miles east of the wrecked car.

The escapees had been surrounded in a clump of second growth pine and, when taken had the stolen guns loaded, with two of them cocked and ready for action. They admitted that it was their first intention to resist arrest and that they had taken a bead on the sheriff and another member of the posse but as they had but little ammunition and the officers were armed with high power rifles, they decided that to surrender was the safest action.

The Fleming car was the second automobile stolen by this trio in Grant County. They have now added arson and armed escape to their list of criminal offenses.

Sheriff Hazeltine has previously warned people through these columns to remove the ignition keys when leaving their cars out at night, or at any other time. "To leave loaded guns in a car and the ignition key, too, might result in the killing of arresting officers as well as innocent persons who might resist giving up their cars or valuables," the sheriff states, and further warns "A car with the key left in ignition lock only invites larceny and a gun murder."

SQUINTS AND GLANCES

Oct. 21, 1915 - Grant County Journal

Poisons of Johnson Grass
All Fodder Plants Related to Sorghum Must Be Used With Discretions as Feed for Stock
(By G.H. Glover, Colorado Experiment Station)

Johnson grass is closely related to sorghum. Poisoning of cattle from sorghum and kafir corn is well known. After chemical analysis of many plants Brunich gave the following advice: "All fodder plants related to sorghum must be used with discretion in either the green or dry state and should not be given in large amounts to animals which have fasted for some time." The poison in these plants is hydrocyanic acid. Poisoning usually occurs when the plants have made a stunted growth from drought and are eaten in large quantities, when the animals are very hungry.

Animals poisoned in this way usually die within half an hour and sometimes live only a few minutes. Hydrocyanic acid is the most deadly of poisons and in large doses kills almost instantly. Animals usually die suddenly from paralysis of respiration and before medical measures can be thought of or prepared for use.

Oct. 4, 1940 - Blue Mountain Eagle

Bits of Telephone History in the County

Some 45 years ago, the Duncan boys of John Day, built a telephone line from Canyon City to Izee. The only other line in the county at that time was the one connecting Canyon City with Heppner. After the fire in November 1898, at which time the local connections were destroyed, new equipment, consisting of wall telephones were set up in the office of the Grant County News, on the site now occupied by the city hall and fire station. In order to be heard, when talking over the line, the patrons would talk so loud they could be heard all over town. It was a strenuous job. Canyon Cityites dubbed the Canyon City-Izee line the "Rawhide Line," by which name it went for several years. Along about

the time of the Portland Exposition in 1905, I.B. Hazeltine built a new line which he operated for 10 years, or until it passed into the hands of 16 shareholders at Izee and was incorporated under the name of the Canyon City-Izee Telephone Co., with residents of Izee comprising the officers and board of directors. Perry and Tilly Hyde held the positions of president and secretary-treasurer, respectively for a number of years. At the present time Rex Brisbois is the president and Mrs. Joe Officer secretary.

The line which was built by Mr. Hazeltine has become inadequate and a new line is again being built by Mr. F.H. Asbury of the Asbury Transportation Co., of California, who recently acquired the W.S. Phillips holdings at Izee.

The new line will have connections with the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph Co., but will be operated by the Canyon City Telephone Co., according to President Rex Brisbois.

Oct. 7, 1965 - Blue Mountain Eagle

Seneca Unit Plans New Swim Pool

Seneca - Construction of a 25 by 50 foot swimming pool here is the goal of the recently formed Seneca Swimming Pool club headed by Leonard Trafton.

The group is now seeking donations to finance the construction. The goal has been set for \$5,000, and about \$2,300 has already been collected.

The pool will be located between the ball park and the hotel. It will be constructed with gunite. Maximum depth will be eight foot. There will also be a baby pool and a bath house.

Trafton said Monday that the new pool is being planned, because repairing the old pool there would be too costly.

Volunteer labor will be used to build the pool. Two business firms will contribute materials and equipment.

Persons or merchants wishing to contribute to the new swimming pool can mail their donations to Leonard Trafton, Box 204, Seneca.

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