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GRAND JURY REPORT.

Comprehensive and Interesting—It Deals With All Matters in which the Public is Concerned.

Crockett, Texas, April 22, 1905.
Hon. B. H. Gardner, Judge 3rd
Judicial District:

The grand jury empanelled at the spring term of your honorable court would respectfully represent to your Honor that, while they have not done all that calls for investigation and attention and therefore have not completed their labors in the usual acceptance of such term, they beg, nevertheless, to submit that they have accomplished all that is practicable at present and would refer quite a number of matters to the grand jury to convene at the fall term of your Honor's court and ask your Honor to call special attention to same in your charge to next grand jury.

It is a source of much gratification to us as individuals and citizens and cause for indulging and cherishing a pride in our county to be able to say that there has been a remarkable change for the better in the matter of violating the criminal statutes and a general and decided elevation and uplifting of ideals on the part of the general citizenship of the county so far as observance of law is concerned. We are glad and proud to note and to publicly mention that there has been an extraordinary transformation of social conditions. A few years ago the good name of this county was darkened and besmirched by the gravest offenses known to criminal annals and the frequency thereof added to the character of same was enough to cause any and every good, law abiding citizen who felt a pride in his county and in the enforcement of law to blush in shame when public mention was made of it. We are happy to state that our labors have disclosed a remarkable change for the better and upward in these matters and that from personal knowledge and official investigation we are warranted in the statement that there is not one fifth of the crime of a felonious nature that there was five to ten years ago. We indulge the hope and confidence that this improved condition of affairs of this character may be permanent and we feel sure it will be if every good citizen in the jury box and out of it will present and carry out a stern resolve to enforce the laws of the country and elevate the standard of good citizenship.

We beg to represent to your Honor that we have been in session sixteen days. Quite half of this time has been devoted to an investigation of matters referred to us by the report of finance committee and that but for questions raised and matters referred to us by said report we could have concluded our labors in about eight days. During the period named we have examined between 450 and 500 witnesses and have returned—bills for felony and—

for misdemeanor. Some on this grand jury have been on other grand juries a few years back when there were as many as sixty-odd felony bills returned which, when compared with the number returned herewith, amply and conclusively shows the healthy improvement in public sentiment both as to the observance and the enforcement of the laws of the state.

There are sections of the county which a few years since were scenes of lawless and riotous defiance of order, but now, we are happy to say, show as sound and healthy public sentiment as any section of Houston or other county. Nothing tends so much to arouse the virtue of good citizenship and to make firm the resolution of good citizens to suppress crime and to uplift and preserve the fair name of their section and county as publicity and the fact that sections of Houston County, which a few years back were the theater for such lawlessness as we spoke of, were publicly named and the crimes denounced, had a wholesome effect and is now reflected in the pride which those same sections now show in the prevailing character for law and order. In this connection we beg to say that there is one section of the county where there seems to be a spirit to override law and the infractions of same have occupied the most of the time we gave to violations of the criminal statutes. It is not necessary to name the section for the records of our courts and the reports of our officers show which section it is. We will say further that the great body of citizens in that section are peaceful, law-observing citizens and are earnestly concerned to see that the laws are enforced and crime suppressed, but the transient, migratory element of the population there makes it easy to violate law and difficult to enforce same. We find that nearly all the more serious offences against law and society,—such as murder, gambling, theft, violation of Sunday law, violation of local option law have been committed there. There seems to be an inadequate effort made by the local officials to bring those who are guilty to justice. We are not prepared to say who is responsible for this condition of affairs. Certainly not the good citizens of that section who seem willing to bring about a change. The weight of evidence seems to fasten a large share of the responsibility for this status on the local peace officer who was elected by the people. We also had complaint from this same section of the great number of swaggering deputies who carried arms and who claimed to have authority to do so from the local authorities. The sheriff has but one deputy there and the people elect-

ed a constable who has no authority to appoint deputies. We made an effort to locate the party or officer who was responsible for these deputies and tried to find evidence on which to indict some one, but failed.

We beg to represent to your Honor that we have devoted a good deal of our time to violations of the local option law and failed to find but one or two instances which we presented. We looked into the sale of patent medicines when we had reason to believe they were being compounded and sold as a substitute for intoxicating liquors and found nothing on which we could base a presentment. We have reason to believe that the local option law is being violated at Kennard Mills or near there and also at a place or two in the southwestern part of the county but after diligent inquiry we failed to secure sufficient evidence for presenting any one. We, however, call the attention of local and county officials to these matters for their investigation.

Your Honor's grand jury has made some special effort to protect the dumb, speechless part of the animal kingdom by earnestly inquiring into all cruelty to stock and we recognize, that while we have no society for the prevention of cruelty to stock of all kinds, the law of the land, if enforced, amply does so and we felt that it was our duty, a duty we regret to say very much neglected by officers and grand juries, to look into these matters and did so and report two indictments for violation of this statute.

We beg to submit that from observation in the grand jury room, in the court house and from experience on grand juries, the one offense, more than all others, responsible for crime, the defeasance of justice and the enormous expenses of the judiciary system of the state is the offense of perjury. It is too easy for a witness, from malice or other motive, to come before the grand jury and deliberately swear one thing, in order to get an indictment, and then go into the trial court and swear the contrary, thus entailing on the state and county an expensive and useless procedure without results. A witness who acts thus commits the offense of perjury and should be punished for such. We believe that if the laws of Texas were so amended as to provide every district judge with an official stenographer and also give said stenographer the privilege at the request of the district attorney to go into the grand jury room and take down verbatim the language of every witness in felony cases, that the witness may be confronted in the trial court with a literal report of what he had sworn to in the grand jury room, there would be few if any bills found from malice or prejudice, the dockets of the courts would not be burdened with bills prompted by motives of personal interest or feeling, the heavy expenses of the present judiciary system largely curtailed and the demoralizing practice of swearing one thing before the grand jury and another before the trial court will have been largely, if not entirely done away with.

We stated that a large part of

our time was occupied in consideration of the report of the finance committee and other matters brought to our attention in certain offices in the court house. We attach the report of the finance committee hereto. We desire to call attention to some matters brought up by said report. The matter of delinquent taxes is one that concerns every citizen and especially every tax-payer. Investigation shows that the delinquent taxes of Houston county for five years past from all sources foot up the startling sum of nearly fifty thousand dollars. We do not hesitate to say that we believe that fully half or more of these taxes could have been collected if the proper effort had been made, but that it was not made is evident from the fact that these taxes have been growing every year with an ever increasing ratio or per centage, showing that the tax-payer reasoned with himself in effect that "if one can escape payment of his taxes, I can and will try. If they can run the government without the taxes of the delinquents of last year, they can get along this year without mine and I will not pay." And thus it has been going on from year to year with the number of delinquents increasing and the sum total of tax delinquencies constantly growing. By suggestion of finance committee we asked the Governor to send the state commissioner of revenue to Crockett to look into the question of delinquent taxes and other matters coming under his jurisdiction. Hon. F. S. Bell, the commissioner, came over Wednesday of this week. Judge Newman, at our request called a special session of commissioners' court to meet with grand jury, Collector Brightman and State Revenue Commissioner, Mr. Bell. We devoted nearly one entire day to this one subject of tax-delinquencies. Mr. Brightman promptly agreed to second all efforts made by the commissioners' court. And it was finally agreed all-around and by all that the commissioners' court should proceed at once to put competent men in the field to collect these taxes. May 1st is the day fixed for these deputies to go to work and we feel confident that good results will follow these efforts.

The tax-collector collected nearly a thousand dollars in occupation taxes since we have been in session.

The matter of sheriff's bills in felony cases against the state for mileage called to our attention by finance committee was taken up by State Commissioner Bell and checked out by him or in his presence by grand jury and finance committee. These charges seem enormously large but were approved by the district judge at the terms of court last year and year before. The sheriff in explanation stated that his deputies did the riding in serving papers and he went by the reports they made and he had no means of verifying their accounts.

The sheriff's bills against the state for the terms of court held in 1903 and 1904 foot up as follows:

Spring term 1903.....	\$ 1010.50
Fall term 1903.....	1240.50

Spring term 1904.....	973.20
Fall term 1904.....	1749.70

We advise a change in the law so as to require all bills of this nature to be referred to commissioners' court for inspection and approval, for the reason that they should know and be able to pass on the question of mileage, when a district judge may not always know except in his resident county.

In reference to report of finance committee on road working we beg to say that we have looked into the question of expense of same and find that all expenses, mules, harness, plows, scrapers, wagons, nails, blankets, cots and scores of other items, foot up a total of \$2,393.80. That 48 miles of road have been worked, 94 bridges and culverts made; total expense of working convicts on roads has been \$6,221.00. After deducting assets, the net cost of working roads will be \$3,827.20.

In reference to the public debt of the county we beg to say that in November, 1902, the total debt, bonded and floating, was \$49,249.57. In March, 1904, the debt was \$37,049.81. Total debt at present as shown by report of finance committee is \$32,275.68.

It will be observed, and it is very gratifying to note it, that the debt of the county for several years has been gradually reduced, especially is this true of the floating debt.

We regret to have to refer to the manner in which the public records of the county are kept. For the time we had, we looked closely into the methods used in the county clerk's office for keeping the records of the county. We examined the books the finance committee called our attention to and found abundant evidence of neglect on the part of some one in that office as to the manner in which some of the records are kept. We find from the docket of criminal court of the county that cases are disposed of and no record made on criminal minutes of cases disposed of. We found that there is not a line on record of the proceedings of the county court, (criminal) for May, 1904. Some twenty-odd cases were disposed of in some way at that term and not a line on record in book of criminal minutes as to such disposition. We do not think that such loose, negligent methods of keeping records can be to severely reprehended and respectfully ask your Honor in your charge to grand jury at fall term to call attention to these matters. We did not have time to look into all the matters called to our attention in this office, but it is the office, of all, in which the people have a deep interest and have a right to expect that all records therein should be kept in an intelligent and business-like way. We beg to request your Honor to have all matters pertaining to the records of the county, the fee-books of all officers looked into by next grand jury. We can not close this report without saying that the commissioners' court fails to do their duty in not correcting some of the delinquencies we have been looking into. They are rather too prompt to pay some parts of the

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Publisher's Notice.

Obituaries, resolutions, cards of thanks on other matter not "news" will be charged for at the rate of 5 cents per line. Parties ordering advertising or printing for societies, churches, committees or organizations of any kind will, in all cases, be held personally responsible for the payment of the bill.

Our citizens have the material right at their doors for making good and hard roadways. All it takes is clay and gravel, a little energy and some money.

More progress has been made in Crockett in the matter of streets and sidewalks during the past year than during all time before. Let the good work proceed.

Work has been carried to the street leading to the depot, and that street is now being graded and made hard with the use of clay and gravel. The public will be glad when this work is carried to other streets.

Crockett now has hard streets where a year ago there were beds of sand. The change has been brought about by the use of clay and gravel. These streets have stood the test of an unusually hard and wet season and have not a rut in them.

Mr. Fisher, one of the Illinois gentlemen owning a fine home and orchard near Crockett, and who has gone on a business trip to Joliet, will, we are informed, bring down a fine automobile with him on his return. This will be the first automobile to reach Crockett. It is expected that others will follow when the roads are improved and made hard.

While there has been much improvement, there is still room for much more in the matter of sidewalks for the town. In many places where fences have been moved in, the walks have been left uneven and dangerous. But those setting back their yard fences to make room for sidewalks deserve that much credit, for it is more than some of their neighbors have done.

The Crockett cigar factory is going slow until it can get Crockett tobacco. It is now working up Willis tobacco into cigars which will be put on the market as a Willis product. They are of a high grade, but the Crockett tobacco is pronounced even better than that grown at Willis. The crop grown here last year under government supervision is held in storage by the government, and while an effort has been made by the Crockett Cigar company to get hold of it, they have so far been unsuccessful. After January next the company will have plenty of Crockett-grown tobacco to make a strictly Crockett cigar and they will be so advertised. We do not mean to leave the impression that the cigar now being made is not up to the standard and up to expectations, for it is, and even surpasses the standard cigar in many respects, and particularly so in points of manufacture, grade and aroma. But the purely home-grown and home-made cigar—the Crockett product in every particular—is expected to even surpass that. The factory will have plenty of tobacco for use next year. Crockett was threatened with a shortage of plants, but the Blohms have secured a crop of plants from Willis which they will bring here for transplanting. The mistake made this year in regard to tobacco will not be made again, and the same is due to lack of

experience and training. Crockett has an advantage over some other sections in that it can grow fillers, binders and wrappers for cigars, whereas fillers are generally confined to certain localities, as are likewise and separately binders and wrappers.

It is highly probable that the next meeting of the Texas Tobacco Growers' association will be held at Crockett. In fact, it is a foregone conclusion. The association was organized at Houston last fall with J. A. Blohm, then of Willis, now of Crockett, as president. It has for its membership the leading tobacco promoters of the state, and a meeting of this association at Crockett would be worth something to the town in the way of advertising our fine tobacco soil, which the county is rich in, but which fact is not generally known outside of this immediate section. Mr. Blohm being president, can call the meeting wherever and whenever he pleases. Mr. Blohm's interests are now here and are identified with our interests in common. While this is true, the meeting will not be called here purely from selfish motives or for what might be gained to the town from such meeting, but from generous impulses and a desire to be hospitable. Crockett's hospitality has been made known on previous occasions, and it is a thing in which we all take great pride and interest. We are noted for it. Our citizens will not feel right

unless they are permitted to do the right thing by the Texas Tobacco Growers' association, and they feel quite equal to the occasion in the matter of entertainment. Knowing them and their hospitality, the COURIER takes the liberty to speak for them. The date of the meeting has not yet been determined by Mr. Blohm and his associates, but the COURIER can say with reasonable assurance that it will be called at an early date.

W. M. Hinson, in charge of the U. S. tobacco work in Texas with headquarters at Palestine, was in Crockett Thursday looking after the progress of the work here. He finds a disappointment in the acreage here, but finds prospects good for a fine crop of tobacco on the small acreage. Farmers first agreed to grow about seventy-five acres in all, but this amount has been reduced until the requirements of the government are hardly met. However, he says his department is still ready and willing to help all farmers who show an interest in the work. He sees a bright future for Houston county in its tobacco crop if the industry is properly pushed. He has great confidence in our soil and climate, and while he finds considerable interest taken, regrets that there is not more. The COURIER hopes to see the new industry firmly established and believes that each succeeding year will witness a largely increased acreage.

**PROBABLE RAILROAD EXTENSION.
Eastern Texas Showing Renewed Activity—Crockett Should Keep Awake.**

A visit that is significant was made to Crockett this week by three gentlemen from east of us. The fact that three gentlemen from east of us should visit us does not in itself signify anything, for gentlemen frequently come from that direction. But the fact that these three gentlemen should come in the manner in which they came does mean something. Tuesday evening there arrived at Crockett, travel stained and tired, three heads of as many departments of the Central Coal and Coke company, the parent company of the Eastern Texas Railroad and the Louisiana and Texas Lumber companies. They were P. J. McCarthy, civil engineer, R. C. McDowell, commissary manager, and R. W. Miller, traffic manager of the Eastern Texas railroad. They came horseback and had put in the day between Kennard and Crockett. When seen at their hotel, Mr. Miller said that they had come in over the route surveyed two or three years ago by his company and were again looking it over. He could give out no information as to an extension, but the directors had requested him to do some reconnoitering and report. He said he would return to Kennard over a new and unsurveyed

route and consume two or three days in doing so. Mr. Miller would not say positively, but the COURIER believes his company is getting ready to do something and that it is only a question with them of routes. They are not in the field for nothing. And right here the COURIER would like to say to the business men of Crockett, and to utter a word of warning, that our people had better keep their eyes open and keep awake or something might happen that they won't like. Crockett does not want to lose this road when the extension is made. A committee should be appointed to keep in touch with the situation and empowered to act when the opportunity presents itself. Crockett does not want to let this road cross the I. & G. N. either south or north of us. We want it right here. This road is proposed to eventually open up a through line between Shreveport and Waco, and will be of inestimable value to Crockett and Houston county in the way of furthering industrial development and in the addition of taxable wealth. Messrs. Miller, McCarthy and McDowell left Wednesday at noon and expect to reach Kennard by Saturday night.

Pneumonia is Robbed of its Terrors by Foley's Honey and Tar. It stops the racking cough and heals and strengthens the lungs. If taken in time it will prevent an attack of pneumonia. Refuse substitutes. Smith & French Drug Co.

BARGAINS

—THIS IS WHAT—

The Big Store Has for You

A warm welcome awaits each and every one who comes to the Big Store's 15-Days Bargain Sale, commencing April 26. Our stock is too large to quote the

Many Bargains

that we have to offer you. Suffice it to say that we will not be undersold on anything, but on the other hand we promise to sell you

Better Goods for Less Money

than any firm in Crockett. Come to our store and feel at home, and while there price some of our many bargains and we feel sure you will avail yourself of some of the

Good Values

By so doing you will go home a well pleased customer and tell the good news to your neighbors. Your money refunded if anything should prove unsatisfactory (except cut goods.)

Yours that sells for less,

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