

Secretary of interior investigated Dewey abuses of fencing laws

By Evelyn Ward
Sherman County Historical Society
December 23, 1903: Dewey Methods Uncovered — Report Says Neither Life Nor Property Spared — Fenced Thousands of Acres Public Lands, and With Violent Threats Drove Homesteaders from Claims and Removed Houses — The annual report of the secretary of the interior was made public this week. It deals largely with the abuse of existing laws, such as those in regard in homesteads and the fencing of public land.
So gross and high handed have been the oppressive practices of the Dewey Cattle company in north-west Kansas that a conspicuous place is given to the exposure of their methods.
After dealing with a New Mexico case of fencing of public lands, the report takes up the Dewey matter and says: "One of the most celebrated cases of this character brought to the attention of the department during the past year was that of the West End ranch in Cheyenne county, Kansas, owned by the Dewey Cattle company and managed by Chauncey Dewey, the later being a son of C.P. Dewey, said to be the principal stockholder of the Dewey Cattle company.

today in history

"Within the last three years, 62 miles of fence have been erected by said company in townships 4 and 5 south, range 35, 36, and 37 west, which, connecting with 18 miles of fence owned by others, makes a total length of 80 miles.
"This fence enclosed an area, all told, of 51,040 acres, of which 3,240 acres are state lands, 1,200 are embraced in eight homestead entries and 7,440 acres are vacant public lands subject to entry under public land laws.
"The inclosure of homesteads by the unlawful fences of that company was the primary cause of the trouble which resulted in the killing, on or about June 3 last, by Chauncey Dewey and his employees of the members of the Berry family, at the home of Alpheus Berry, near the Dewey ranch.
"It appears to have been the policy of Dewey and his agents and employees to gain complete and exclusive control of all the lands inclosed by their fences and to adopt whatever measures were found necessary to accomplish that purpose, sparing neither life nor property.

Their attitude toward settlers and homesteaders without, as well as with, their inclosure is shown by reports of agents of the department and by individual complaints to have been extremely hostile and oppressive.
"Not only have the crops of these bona fide homesteaders and settlers been destroyed by this company's cattle, but the people themselves harassed and intimidated by treats of violence made by its agents and employees, their fences cut and dwellings deliberately moved off their homesteads, and a number of them have been compelled to out-lawry to abandon their entries and seek residence elsewhere.
"Promptly upon hearing of these unlawful acts, the department instituted an investigation, as a result of which proceedings were begun, through the Department of Justice, under the act of February 25, 1885 (supra), to cause the removal of these illegal fences and to punish those guilty of erecting and maintaining them.
"At the October, 1903, term of the United States district court at

Leavenworth, Kan., the grand jury, then and there in session, indicted C.P. Dewey, Chauncey Dewey, W.J. Ratcliffe, William J. McBride and Louis McBride for violations of sections 5440 and 5508 of the revised statutes, in conspiring to threaten, intimidate and injure Alpheus Berry, a bona fide homesteader-settler, upon lands unlawfully inclosed by their fences, and for taking the life of said Berry.
"Six other counts were found against the defendants for their molestation of other settlers. An indictment was also found against Chauncey Dewey, as the agent of C.P. Dewey, for erecting and maintaining an unlawful inclosure of public lands in violation of the act of February 25, 1885 (supra)."
December 24, 1903: Change in Mail Trains — The people of Goodland and Sherman county will be glad to hear that the former time of passenger trains Nos. 9 and 10 will be effective Jan. 3, this making the arrival here of No. 10 from the west at 7:30 in the evening and of No. 9 from the east at 5:30 in the morning.
This arrangement will make it possible for all Kansas City and Topeka evening mails to reach here early the following morning, and No. 10 will leave Denver in time to bring the af-

ternoon papers from that city.
This change was due to a united effort of the people all along the line east, who sent in petitions to the Topeka Commercial club to aid that organization in its efforts to restore the old schedule time of these important mail trains.
Postmaster Stevens got up the petition from this point, and yesterday he received a telegram that the Rock Island management had granted the request for the change of trains No. 9 and 10. The present schedule make No. 9 due here at 1:25 a.m. and No. 10 at 2:25 a.m.
December 25, 1903: A Snowy Christmas — Sherman county had a bright but snowy Christmas. Wednesday afternoon about two o'clock, large flakes of snow began to fall with the wind in the northeast.
Many thought the weather presaged a blizzard, but their prophesies failed of realization. Snow continued to fall until about 8 o'clock, when it ceased, but the wind continued northerly all night. Thursday dawned clear and cold with a light feathery snow covering the ground.
December 26, 1903: New Dewey Foreman — Frank L. Ball of Abilene is the new manager of the Dewey Oak Ranch. He was in

Goodland this week.
He originally came from Cambridge, Ill., and was a boyhood acquaintance of Hoyt Andrews and E.F. Murphy. Later he moved to Abilene, and H.H. Floyd was his first Kansas acquaintance. He is also an old friend of William Walker.
Mr. Ball remarked that he was warned by his friends about the danger of assuming the management of the Dewey ranch but said there was nothing in it and that he had never been treated better in his life.
The people whom he met here assured him that there was no danger as the people were simply in favor of fair play and just dealing, and he replied, "I know it".
The Oak Ranch shipped out 12 carloads of cattle from this point Wednesday. The Dewey agents have sent notices to all of the real estate men in this section saying that all of the Dewey holdings in north-west Kansas are for sale at a reasonable figure, as the company is going to discontinue its operation in this part of the state.
From weekly issues of The Goodland News, provided by the Sherman County Historical Society. Since the paper was published weekly, some items were arbitrarily assigned a date.

With pop culture promoting self-indulgence, Christians need self-control

With the movies, television, magazines and people around us promoting self-indulgent lifestyles, Christians often find it difficult to do what the Bible says is right.
The apostle Peter told Christians in his day to "supply ... to your knowledge self-control." (2 Peter 1:5, 6)
Why? Because they knew what was right; they had knowledge, but doing what was right would require self-control.
The apostle Paul recognized that even he had difficulty doing what was right and not doing things he knew were wrong. Romans 7: 19, 23 says, "For the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice.... I behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members."
Paul wasn't describing fleeting feelings of temptation; he described



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your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things."
1 Timothy 6:10 carries a similar thought that is frequently quoted as "money is the root of all evil." Actually, that verse says, "the love of money" is the root of all evil.
Advertising promotes products as necessary that are simply wants and uses tactics to make people feel their happiness and well-being depend on material things. But Christians need to learn to distinguish needs from wants and choose which are worth enjoying and which will clutter their lives.
Jesus warned his followers at Mark 4:18, 19: "There are still others who are sown among the thorns; these are the ones that have heard the word, but the anxieties of this system of things and the deceptive

power of riches and the desires for the rest of the things make inroads and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful."
People who devote the bulk of their time and attention to earning money, buying things and enjoying the things they buy have trouble finding time for spiritual things, as Jesus warned. So Christians need self-control to say "no" to unnecessary things, to avoid overwhelming clutter in their lives.
What is another area where Christians need self-control? Let's go back to Hebrews chapter 13 and look at verse 4: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers."
The Bible does not leave open any possibility of believing that promiscuity is acceptable, nor that living together without being married is, and certainly not that cheat-

ing on your spouse is. But that doesn't mean Christians will never be tempted.
One of God's servants who gave into temptation in that area is King David. 2 Samuel 11:2 says, "And it came about at the time of evening that David proceeded to rise from his bed and walk about on the rooftop of the king's house; and from the rooftop he caught sight of a woman bathing herself, and the woman was very good in appearance. Then David sent and inquired about the woman and someone said, 'Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?'" After that David sent messengers that he might take her. So she came in to him and he lay down with her."
Jesus gave counsel for Christians who face similar situations at Matthew 5:28, 29: "But I say to you that everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for

her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If, now, that right eye of yours is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you."
Of course, Jesus didn't literally mean that anyone should actually yank their eye out of its socket; his words were a dramatic display of how important it is to have self-control. If you see something that tempts you, *stop looking*. That is what David should have done. But, as Paul pointed out, it is a war within us between what we want and what is right. It takes self-control to do the right thing.
We can pray for God's help to want what is right and to have the strength to reject what is wrong. We need to also act in harmony with what we pray for, using our own willpower. If we pray for God to help us do what is right but keep looking at the temptation, the temptation is going to win.



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