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SUMTER, S. C.

TWO ARE CONVICTED OF PEONAGE IN LEXINGTON

Magistrate and Farmer of Lexington
County Guilty in United States
Court.

GOING TO PENITENTIARY

Both Men Also Required to Pay Fine
of \$500—White Man Causes
Charges.

J. G. Taylor, a farmer, of Lexington County, were found guilty with recommendation to the mercy of the court of peonage in the United States District Court here yesterday and were each sentenced to serve a year and a day in the Atlanta penitentiary and to pay fines of \$500 by Judge Henry A. M. Smith.

Hayes and Taylor were each indicted for attempting to force a young white man named Cook to work for the latter and a joint indictment was brought against them for conspiring to force Cook to work for Taylor.

On each separate indictment the defendants were given a year and a day in the Atlanta penitentiary and fined \$500 each and on the joint indictment were each sentenced to serve a year and a day in Atlanta. The sentences of each were made concurrent, however.

United States District Attorney Francis H. Weston, who represented the government in the prosecution, said last night that it was the first conviction in a peonage case in South Carolina he knows of. While he has tried a number of peonage cases in which negroes were concerned, he said that this was the first in this State in which a white man was the principal. He expressed great satisfaction at the result of the trial and believes that it will greatly aid in eliminating this "dastardly" practice in this State.

The jury retired shortly after 6 o'clock yesterday afternoon and returned with its verdicts, all "guilty with recommendation to mercy." Judge Smith imposed sentence about 11 o'clock.

From the testimony it appeared that Cook, a white man in his early twenties, signed a contract to work for Taylor for \$10 a month. He borrowed money of Taylor and got married and then left his employment. Taylor had a warrant taken out for

his arrest by Hayes, a magistrate, and when it was served Cook and his father-in-law testified that the magistrate said that if they would give him \$25 it would be all right.

The money was paid, as a fine, Hayes testified, and five days later Cook was arrested again on the same charge and testified, and so did his father-in-law, that he was told by Hayes that "he would either work out the year with Taylor or on the chain gang."

It appeared that Cook's father-in-law, being poor, was forced to borrow thirteen dollars of the \$25.00 paid at first. Cook was tried before a magistrate's jury and sentenced to serve on the Lexington County chain gang. The sentence was served.

A third warrant was also issued for his arrest. Judge Smith ruled that none of the warrants issued charged any legal offense and he also ruled that Cook had a right to break his contract with Taylor and that Taylor had a right to recover the damages incurred and no more. In addition he charged that under no consideration should Cook have been punished more than once for the offense.

He also charged that ignorance of the law was no excuse for a magistrate or for anyone else, and that a man is to presume the consequences of his acts.

Hayes said that he thought he was carrying out the law of the State in doing what he did and that he did so only on the insistence of Taylor. Taylor was a voter in his precinct and has several sons, it was brought out in the testimony.

Taylor testified that all he wanted was the law carried out and that it was on the insistence of Hayes that the several warrants were issued against Cook.

Both denied that they had any other intention than that of carrying out the law. Hayes, it developed, inquired of a certain status under which he issued his warrants. He stated that the attorney general had ruled that the statute in question was constitutional. Judge Smith ruled that the Supreme Court of South Carolina had declared this statute unconstitutional, the decision of the attorney general notwithstanding.

Sumter's Distinguished Visitor.

Messrs. Harby & Company had the pleasure the first of the week of entertaining gentlemen prominent in financial circles in the old world, Mr. K. Loos, of Rotterdam, Holland, who

is traveling through the cotton belt of America in the interests of his firm, Scheuer Brothers, cotton controllers and ship brokers, who are operating in Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Harlingen and London. His business is traveling through the South to interest cotton shippers in the open door of Rotterdam to the old world.

Mr. Loos has visited Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston and from Sumter he will go to Savannah. He was well enough acquainted with Sumter to know that it could not be missed as a city in the export cotton business.—Sumter Herald.

CHIEF ENGINEER IS FAVORABLE

Leading Army Officials Believe
Muscle Shoals is Best
Site.

That the leading engineers of the United States army, who are in charge of the work of collecting information for the location of the \$20,000,000 government nitrate plant, look with favor upon Muscle Shoals, on the Tennessee river, as the best site for this great plant is indicated by a report recently issued by the war department of investigations made by a special board of engineers. A proposal was made for the development of the vast power of this site in co-operation with private interests, and the investigation was made to determine the feasibility of this plan.

Col. Frederick V. Abbott, head of the board of engineers for rivers and harbors, stated in his endorsement of the report: "Since former reports were submitted on the improvement of Muscle Shoals reach for combined navigation and power purposes, there has appeared a demand for the establishment of nitrate plants to supply government needs in the manufacture of explosives for military uses, and provision for such a plant has been made in section 124 of the pending army reorganization act. In view of the nitrate legislation referred to above, it may now be desirable to abandon the joint development and to reserve the power for the sole use and control of the United States. In view of these conditions the board recommends that action on the proposed contract with the Muscle Shoals Hydro-Electric Power company be suspended until it has been determined whether the Muscle Shoals power will be utilized for a nitrate plant."

Gen. W. M. Black, chief of engineers of the United States army, said: "I recommend that action on the proposed contract with the Muscle Shoals Hydro-Electric Power company be suspended until it has been determined whether the Muscle Shoals power will be utilized for a nitrate plant."

As these reports were issued before the passage of the nitrate act, it is practically certain that these engineers will now follow up these recommendations. Although their views assure almost entirely the selection of Muscle Shoals, the Muscle Shoals association, which has been organized by representatives of commercial clubs and similar bodies throughout the south, will not take even a remote risk, but will submit to the government a complete brief, prepared by the Nashville section of the Engineering Association of the South, giving conclusively the reasons why the plant should be located at the Alabama site.

As the Editor Sees It.

The man who poses as a model citizen is usually the biggest fake in town.

An excellent way to get rid of a grouch is to forget that you have one.

No wonder men of today are becoming stoop shouldered. The horsey display keeps every male eye on a downward slant.

If the high cost of white paper interferes, love letters can be just as silly on any other color.

Every time a hobo comes to our back door for a handout we wonder if he is a rich Mexican ranchero driven out by the bandits.

Will Pay Higher Wages.

Pittsburg, Dec. 11.—The Pittsburg Steel Company, with plants at Monessen and Glassport and the Pittsburg Steel Products Company, a subsidiary concern, recently announced an increase of ten per cent in wages. Seven thousand men are affected.

ALCOLU NEWS.

When you see a town growing so much as to have lock boxes for mail delivery you know its growing some. Watch Alcolu.

Just as the lock boxes was installed a new engine came in for the Alcolu R. R. Co.

D. W. Alderman Sons Co. is putting in a log pond. This company has

spent several thousand dollars in the past few months on improvements.

What improved this town more than anything else is that nice bungalow building on Hotel street. It is hoped that it will be occupied by Mr. Woods, who now holds a position as bookkeeper for the Alcolu R. R. Co.

On last Thursday night there was a supper given by the ladies phala-

thea class. Their husbands were invited, and all wondered how come them to ask even their husbands. They served cake and cream and fed on all kind of games, such as checkers. They did not fill up much only the checks for the board where they lay.

Xmas is here and every dog expects his share.

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