

January 17, 1995

Bingham County
Water Resources Board:

To Whom It May Concern:

My Uncle Willis D. Higley and my Father
E. Lihue C. Higley took possession of land
upon the Blackfoot River, in Bingham.
I am enclosing a copy of a Newspaper
Clipping telling of ^{my} Uncle Willis Higley's
life upon the Blackfoot River.

He tells of the ditch he & my Father
dug with shovels. The ditch was approx 3
long. This was done to get water to their
property.

I was born at Presto, Bingham County, Idaho
in Nov 1912. I spent time on the afore-
mentioned property, during three summers.
My Father & Mother spent time there.

I remember my Father taking me with
him to work on, & clean the ditch. He also
took me "fishing" there. We fished in the Black
River.

The Indian Reservation was just across
the river. Three of the Indians came over
and ate dinner with us. I was scared
of them and cried. They laughed at me.

My Mother Mary J. (Jeeples) Higley
died in April 1917.

One year later Father brought my Sister
& I to his older sister Harriet (Higley) Hunt

Who lived in Indian Valley (Adams County Idaho).

That is where I grew up.

I was always interested in the Ranch on the Blackfoot River. Had talked about it often. My first trip back to Prusto was in 1924

I remember asking about the Ranch, the Ditch and the Water Situation, on several occasions through the years.

Yes I was quite young, but I sure do remember my Father working on that Ditch.

Sincerely

Evert J. Higley

3328 N.W 2nd Ave.

New Plymouth, Idaho 83652

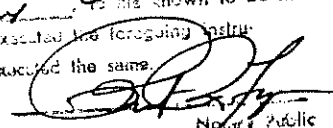
Phone 1(208) 278-5529

Evert J. Higley

State of Idaho ss.

County of Layette

On the 19th day of January, 1995, before me came Evert J. Higley to me known to be the individual described in and who executed the foregoing instrument and acknowledged that he executed the same.


Notary Public

P-29-97

NOV 13 1996

To whom it may concern.
My father

Albert D. Warner

Homesteaded a tract of land the fall
of 1915 in the Grave Creek area.
There were three established
Ranches in the area, at this time
Austins on Grave Creek

Craig Watts on the River above
Grave Creek, and Higleys about 3
miles up river.

Each ranch had various acres of
meadow land, which they irrigated
Austins from Grave Creek

Watts from the Blackfoot River
and Higleys from Williams Creek.
Cland's Creek, Seventy Creek

They also had a Water wheel and
watered from the River.

The Water wheel is gone now
but the ditches are still in evidence

Signed

Mary Maud Walker Wallace

Jan 23, 1995

We bought the farm on the
River in the fall of 1964 and used
the water from Cland's Creek for gardens
trees and part of the meadow each year
since Mary M. Wallace

A27-04030

175

NO. 45

CARTON PRINTERS, CALDWELL, IDAHO

No 275. Blackfoot 029541 and 029542

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To All to Whom These Presents Shall Come—GREETING:

WHEREAS, A certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Blackfoot, Idaho has been deposited in the General Land Office whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, "To Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of

Claude B. Going

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the Southwest quarter of section twenty nine and the east half of the northeast quarter and the east half of the southeast quarter of section thirty in township four south of range forty east of the Boise Meridian, Idaho containing three hundred twenty acres.

RECORDED
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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Blackfoot012216

To All to Whom These Presents Shall Come—GREETING:

WHEREAS, A certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Blackfoot, Idaho has been deposited in the General Land Office whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, "To Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of

Elihu C. Higley

has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the

southeast quarter of the southwest quarter of Section twenty-five and the northeast quarter of the northwest quarter and the west half of the northeast quarter of Section thirty-six in Township four south of Range thirty-nine east of the Boise Meridian, Idaho, containing one hundred sixty acres,

NOV 13 1907

Wednesday, April 27, 1960

Presto Man Looks Back To Oxen, Wagon Days

By Mrs. Daphne Jemmett
Staff Correspondent

BLACKFOOT, April 27 — After spending nearly three quarters of a century in the Gem State and almost 60 years in the water-shed area of the Blackfoot River, 84 year old Willis D. Higley of Lower Presto can look back to change on change.

He is one of the few old timers who can remember the oxen as work animals, and the long mule trains that used to tromp their dusty way across the Snake River desert. He has used wagons, buckboards, buggies and cars as means of transportation and has seen the hot-rod challenge the bucking bronco for thrills. He has watched as the horse-drawn machinery was almost entirely replaced by motor driven equipment on the farm and vehicles run the saddle pony a close second at round-up time.

He has seen children trudge their way through wind and weather to the old school house, weighed down with heavy clothing against the cold, compared to today's youngsters, picked up by huge heated buses and taken to ultra-modern air conditioned buildings.

Is it better? Higley thinks that is a hard question to answer. It is certainly easier. But the old days had a lot to offer. And he looks back with more than a little nostalgia.

First Pony

Born in Erda, Tooele County, Utah, April 1880, Higley remembers that he was just six when he got his first pair of boots. Someone had given him a pony. It was a good pony, too, but his mother wouldn't have it on the place after it had thrown a sister who tried to ride it. He smiles now, when he remembers how disappointed he was, and how much better he felt when he "traded" it for some overalls and a real pair of boots.

He thinks he was about eight when the family moved to Idaho and settled down in the Raft River country. It was there that Willis and his brothers broke two oxen to work.

Higley thinks it must have been about 60 years ago that he came to Presto. His brothers, Charlie and Elihu, were with him and they stayed overnight at the stage station at Kimball, run by a man named Heaton.

First Cattle

Charlie didn't stay long, but Elihu did. He and Willis, as Higley is affectionately called by young and old, worked together as partners for a good many years. They worked and saved until they could buy 14 head of cattle; built up the herd until they had 50; then they mortgaged them to buy more.

Those first cattle were good, big stock, half Durham, half Hereford. Even the bull was a half and half. He remembers that it weighed out at 2,900 pounds when it was sold.

The Higley brothers ran their stock up on the Upper Blackfoot River. They "squatted" on a piece of land just a few miles below where the government reservoir is now. They built a willow house to live in until logs could be got out to build a better one, and they dug three miles of ditch with only a shovel, to get water onto the hay.

Long Winter

It was a long way from the mountain place to the valley, so when they had the hay the cattle would be wintered right there. One winter, Higley remembers, Elihu stayed at the ranch they had rented in Presto, while he stayed with the cattle. He saw only two people during the winter, from November till the middle of April. A man came over from Chesterfield on Christmas day and brought the mail. He stayed all night, then Elihu came up about the middle of March and stayed all night. That was a long winter.

Willis used to cook for the round-up crew when they gathered the cattle in the fall. One year he fed 50 men and two women. That was when Bob Eldridge brought his wife and baby with a girl to take care of the baby while Mrs. Eldridge helped with the cattle.

One morning after the rest were



Willis D. Higley

gone and Willis was clearing up after breakfast, the baby woke up crying, but the sitter didn't. He couldn't wake her by calling, so he shot a squirrel out by the tent. That woke her up.

It is a long time ago, but Higley remembers how hard the Presto folks worked to build the old rock school house, now torn down and hauled away.

At that time the social life of the community centered around the school house.

One evening it was a basket social. He was there carrying Carrie Hansen's basket proudly. Everything went along fine, with the men gayly "swinging their partners" until it was time to auction off the baskets.

Now, every one knew Carrie had come with Willis, and that it was more or less his privilege to buy her basket. However a hopeful cowboy, almost as determined as Willis himself, bid against him, again and again. When it was finally settled with the stubborn cowboy definitely out-bid, Higley said, he had to dig down in his pocket for \$20.

When Willis and Carrie were married they rented the Dre place, but when Ralph was just few months old they bought it farm at Lower Presto where the live now.

There was a two room log house on it. Elihu and his wife lived one room and Willis and Carrie the other, with tents put up out the yard to take care of the overflow. Later they built a frame house close by and Elihu and family moved into that. Last Willis and family moved into the frame house. It has been home them ever since.

Never Empty

However, the little log house has never been empty. It has been continuous use since the Higley bought it in 1916. They aren't sure just how old it is, but know it has been built several years before that.

One of the younger boys, Dave, his wife Marie and their four children live there now, while Dave runs the farm, and the little house the same hive of industry that has always been.

It has acquired an additional frame room and the usual modern conveniences, plus a house-house telephone so that the young folks can keep easy track of older Higley's needs. But, to it is like going back into another era when life was not so complicated.

Yes! Willis Higley will agree life has changed. But for better or the worse . . . who wise enough to say?