

WHALE HIJACKED FOR SIDE SHOW

Jingle of Nickels and
Dimes, Death Dirge.

BODY VIEWED BY THROGS

Finders Keepers, Losers
Weepers, True Lament.

KILLERS FAIL TO PROFIT

Oregonian
Exhibitors Bring Remains to Top
of Slough Water, Where
Crowds Pay to See.

10-26-31

BY LAWRENCE F. BARBER.
Finders keepers; losers weepers!
That childhood slogan was recalled yesterday when Jimmy McCool's famous whale was "hijacked" from the bottom of Oregon slough by an independent searching party and denied to the man who killed it the day before; then placed on exhibition in the middle of the slough where boatloads of paying excursionists, drawn from the Pacific International Livestock exposition crowds, could see it. The slayers of the whale are receiving none of the benefits.

The jingle of quarters, dimes and nickels was louder in the ears of the whale "hijackers" and the operators of pleasure boats than the public cry of anger over his death.

Elmer C. Rowley, 79 McClellan street; R. Timmerman, 115½ Kilpatrick street, the same man who was in Judge Mears' district court only a week ago on charge of shooting at the whale, and W. E. Caldwell of 238 Terry street, formed the crew that dragged the whale from the bottom of the slough.

Body Floats on Surface.

They found it, according to Rowley, about 100 feet below the Interstate railroad bridge and near the draw span, where it sank from sight Saturday after Edward O. Lessard and his son Joe, and party, had put it to death by the use of home-made harpoons. Rowley said he and his partners spent much of Saturday and a brief period early yesterday dragging the area with a drift net 40 feet deep, and finally recovered the body, which had already become so bloated that it was ready to float. In fact, once on the surface, the carcass floated readily and was drawn about the slough with a rope tied about the tail and attached to an old launch.

While the hijackers were reaping a silver harvest by displaying the carcass of Jimmy McCool's whale, plans were made yesterday for the prosecution of the two Lessards, arrested soon after they harpooned it Saturday, on the complaint of A. L. Cross, state agent of the Oregon Humane society.

"The public was cheated. This was wanton destruction of wild life and ought to be punished," said William L. Finley, naturalist, last night. "Surely there is some law in Oregon that will fit this case.

"Now, if the people who have possession of the whale want to do the right thing, they will turn it over to the Portland museum of natural history so the skull may be saved for positive identification and possibly for mounting for display when the museum gets a home," Mr. Finley added.

Rowley and his friends took the whale to a boathouse landing a mile below the bridge where it was hunted down by newspaper photographers after one mile hikes through tangles of brush and trees. Then it was towed up the slough to a point just above the bridge where it was moored in the middle of the river, bottom side up and teeth showing, to be shown to all who jingled the pockets of boatmen with quarters, dimes and nickels.

"Whose whale is it?" Rowley was asked.

"I don't know, but we've got it. Isn't that enough?" was his reply.

"Has Lessard been down to claim it?" he was asked.

"Oh, yes. He came down and wanted to buy it," Rowley admitted.

"What did he offer?"

"Oh, we wouldn't dicker with him. We told him it wasn't for sale."

Fred W. Vogler, operator of a motor launch and the gasboat Wisdom from Jantzen beach park, was directing the operation of his boats from a landing on the south side of the slough and directly in front of the livestock exposition. It was he who was jingling the quarters, dimes and nickels in his pockets.

"I'm paying plenty for that whale today," said he. "You see, I've rented him for the day on shares. I get half and the men who own the whale get half.

"It's not as good pickin's as it was when the whale was alive, of course,"

he continued. "I wish he was still alive. We'd pack 'em into these boats then and draw 'em to the stock show, too.

"You know," he added, "I blame the deputy sheriffs for the killing of the whale. They were supposed to protect him, and they didn't do it. They came out a few times, but they didn't stay on the job. Why, I knew those fellows were going to come out some morning and harpoon him."

"Why didn't you tell the deputy sheriffs about it, then?" he was asked.

"Oh, that wasn't my business."

And, the quarters, dimes and nickels continued to jingle into the hands of those who sought to commercialize the dead whale by drawing from stock show crowds. In fact, they placed a hawk with a big megaphone on the street car tracks directly in front of the pavilion entrance so no sucker could escape. A good day's business.

And, still it was finders keepers; losers weepers. Lessard, the killer, and his son were under arrest on a charge of "grossly disturbing the public peace and health and outraging public morals and decency"—whatever that means in the courts of Oregon—and were at liberty under \$250 bail each. The case will come up at 10 A. M. today in Judge Mears court.

Jimmy McCool's whale, by the way, shrunk considerably in size after his night of death in the river. Lessard said Saturday, after telling of the "terrific" battle he had with the otherwise harmless creature, that "he was 30 or 40 feet long." But, yesterday he had shrunk to only 12 feet 6 inches, and that was from tip of nose to tip of tail. Instead of weighing many tons, as Lessard estimated, he weighed only 1500 pounds, according to Rowley's estimate.

The whale, according to the rivermen, was a killer, without a doubt. He had teeth 1½ inches long, nice, shiny white teeth, the kind they tell about in radio advertisements of tooth paste. He had a white belly and an eight-inch dorsal fin. Those characteristics, say the rivermen, belong to the killer whale.

Someone suggested that the stock show management put on a string of free launches and offer everyone who bought a general admission ticket to the big show a free ride and a free look at the dead whale.

But T. B. Wilcox, president of the exposition, thought different.

"I'm mighty sorry the whale was killed. And now I feel that it ought to be a free public attraction. But we have our troubles and will take no hand in the matter as long as the whale is not harmful to our show. If the owners allow him to smell up the place, however, we'll have something to say."

Finders keepers; losers weepers.
Jingle, jingle, jingle.