

# INVESTIGATION OF WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY DISPENSARY BOARD.

AUDITOR W. B. WEST AND SOLICITOR W. H. WELLS PROBE THOROUGHLY INTO THE MATTER OF ALLEGED GRAFT IN WILLIAMSBURG COUNTY DISPENSARIES—THE OFFICIAL REPORT.

[Continued from last week.]

Dr Bass sworn says: (Examined by Mr Wells)

Q. Doctor, have you been a member of the Williamsburg county dispensary board since it was made a county institution?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Were you present at a meeting of the board on November 18 that made awards for a quantity of Old Joe?

A. Yes sir, I think I was present at all the meetings.

Q. Did you take part in making these awards?

A. Yes sir.

Q. What did you consider an award to be?

A. I understood that we could make an award for any amount we desired. A thousand dollars worth or any amount. We had not been advised so, at first we could not understand that and we ran short and we asked about it and were advised, so next quarter we ordered enough so we would have a plenty for the next quarter. Our order was for forty-two thousand dollars worth and we did not need any thing like that.

Q. Doctor, do you recognize that a member of the county dispensary board, who if he were disposed to be a designing member, if he should desire to do so after the awards were made and had been published to the world, could cut down the awards to one concern in favor of another? Do you recognize that?

A. I do not understand.

Q. Doctor, you buy \$10,000 each from Grabfelder and Bluthenthal & Bickert and publish to the world that you had bought ten thousand from each of these concerns and after publishing it the board should cut down Grabfelder's to one thousand and raise B & B's to nineteen thousand?

A. You could not cut it down.

Q. If you wanted to put the business in the hands of B & B could you not reduce Grabfelder's to one thousand and raise B & B's to nineteen thousand?

A. We could order out the full amount of the award but not over.

Q. But you could cut Grabfelder out of the award, and put all that in the hands of one man, could you not?

A. If prices were equal we could cut out one.

Q. Prices would cut no figure in this. As I understand it the legislature that created this act stated in no uncertain terms that you should meet and after you had made your awards you should publish these contracts and these contracts should be for whiskey for the coming three months.

A. Yes sir.

Q. Do you believe that your board followed this?

A. We followed as we were directed.

Q. Did you read and study that statute?

A. No sir, I went to an attorney.

Q. What attorney?

A. Mr Gilland.

Q. And he advised that you should buy in any quantity.

A. Yes sir, he told us he thought it would be all right because the first quarter we ran short.

Q. You made an award on May 16. Tell me whether you bought stuff in excess of the award. Did you or did you not?

A. Not that I remember.

Q. I take it from your books and from the records that on May 16 you bought from I Trager & Co five drums of whiskey and had delivered to you thirteen drums in excess of what you ordered from those people.

A. Mr Gilland ordered it without anything from me.

Q. Who signed the order?

A. Mr Gilland.

Q. Did you authorize him to sign the orders?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Did you instruct him not to order out more than was ordered from this house?

A. I think so.

Q. Did you examine the records?

A. No sir; we did not think it necessary.

Q. When you met with the board to make orders for whiskey what was the basis of purchases as to the relative and commercial value of whiskey?

A. Well, we took all the bids and opened them and looked over them and would make notes of what ever houses we run over and see if we could find any better bid and to a certain extent we would buy because the dispensers had asked for it. If they especially requested anything and we could get it we would order that. We tried to do it in a business way and for the good of the people and the county. It was impossible sometimes to buy certain things just because it was cheap. And it may be we would not want to buy from one of these houses.

Q. Was Bluthenthal and Bickert one of those houses?

A. I do not remember that we ever bought from them.

Q. Do you know the proof of Old Joe whiskey?

A. No sir.

Q. Are you in the habit of buying stuff without knowing the proof?

A. No, sir. But the proof was usually in the bid.

Q. There is no proof on this.

A. I don't know. Mr Rodgers from Lake City was up there and said the people wanted Old Joe and we ordered it for them.

Q. Do you, or do you not, remember what you sold Old Joe for?

A. No sir.

Q. Do you remember the cost per half pint?

A. No sir, I don't remember many prices.

Q. Had you ever used Old Joe before this time in the dispensary?

A. I don't know that we had. I don't remember.

Q. On whose recommendation did you buy?

A. Mr Rodgers of Lake City, I think.

Q. Did you use Silver Brook rye before this time?

A. I don't remember. Who sells that?

Q. Grabfelder & Co. Had you ever had any complaints about the quality of Silver Brook rye at this time?

A. No sir.

Q. As a general business proposition would you think it good business to pay seventeen cents for half pints and retail it at 25 cents and then pay fifteen cents for half pints and retail it at 30 cents?

A. Yes sir, it would be sometimes.

Q. When would it be?

A. I don't remember as I stated as to Old Joe but sometimes we bought whiskey that cost us eleven or twelve cents and we would sell it at 25 cents, then we could afford to sell others and make less profit on them, but there was no particular brand.

Q. The records show that Bluthenthal & Bickert's stuff cost 17 cents per half pint and you sold it at 25 cents. The records also show that you paid 15 cents per half pint for Silver Brook and sold it for 30 cents.

A. It might be that Old Joe had been previously sold here at that price and there would have been a kick.

Q. Do you know what proof Mobile Buck Gin is?

A. I do not.

Q. Did you have it analyzed?

A. I do not remember.

Q. When you were first appointed on this board did you read the whole act?

A. Not at first.

Q. Have you ever read it?

A. At different times I think I have read it all, but I never have read all of it at once.

Q. In looking over the bids I see that Big Creek Distilling Co. of Savannah offered von a 90 proof stuff at \$30, will you explain why you purchased Mobile Buck Gin at \$32 \$33 and \$34 when you could have purchased a 90 per cent at \$30, and at the same time no proof was submitted with Mobile, buying a pig in a poke?

A. I do not know; I think we must have had the proof at the time of purchase.

Q. There is no proof here now?

A. I do not know; we usually had proof unless it was something we knew about.

Q. Well, had that been used before that time?

A. I do not remember.

Q. Had you ever dealt with Bluthenthal & Bickert up to this time?

A. I don't remember; I don't think so.

Q. I notice from the records that you awarded Bluthenthal & Bickert the contract to furnish you 75 drums of Royal Arch at prices \$35, \$36 and \$37 for qts. pts. and half pints; at the time this award was made there was a bid on file from Grabfelder & Co. offering Silver Brook rye, 100 proof at \$30? Do you consider it good business to pay Bluthenthal & Bickert \$36 and \$37 when you could have bought a higher proof at \$30?

A. We might have over-looked it; I don't remember.

Q. Do you think there was a possibility of you overlooking many bids?

A. No sir.

Q. Did you ever buy any stuff without bids?

A. No sir, not that I know of.

Q. The records show that you made an award of 300 cases of Stokes county corn to Myer Pitts & Co, and that you paid for that \$8, \$8.50 and \$9, whereas the bid that is now on file for the quarter beginning November 18 makes the prices \$8, \$9 and 9.50. The old bid, or the bid preceding this one, is in exact accordance with the order you submitted on November 18 and the order you submitted on November 18 is not in exact accordance with the bid that should have been entered at the same time. Can you explain this?

A. No sir, I do not know. Maybe they had gone up on it from the previous quarter.

Q. If it had gone up why didn't you buy it at that price?

A. Well, didn't we?

Q. No sir, you bought in accordance with the bid accepted the quarter before.

A. I cannot tell you from memory. We had the other bid before us, that is all. How can I tell? I don't remember anything about it.

Q. Was the proof of Stokes county corn submitted with the bid?

A. I suppose the proof was submitted.

Q. It is not in the bid.

A. I think it is an established brand.

Q. Do you have any idea it would analyze more than 100 per cent?

A. No sir, I never have thought anything about that.

Q. At the same time there was another brand called White Rabbit with a guaranteed proof of 100 per cent and yet the award for 72 drums was made to Stokes county which amounted to \$2,550 which had it been awarded to White Rabbit would have amounted to \$2,374, a difference of \$176 in favor of White Rabbit. Why was the preference given to Meyer Pitts & Co.?

A. I don't know. No reason that I know of.

Q. Have you ever had any communication by letter or otherwise with People's Distilling Co.?

A. No sir.

Q. Have you ever seen any person called their representative?

A. No sir.

Q. Have you ever seen any person that was a representative of a whiskey house that you know?

A. No sir, I saw one man before I was qualified.

Q. Did you ever suspect Mr Parker of any wrong doing?

[Continued on page 3.]

### New Train Schedule.

The following schedule of the new train from Lane to Florence, which went into effect Monday, December 17, has been furnished us by Mr J P Taylor, the courteous and efficient agent of the Atlantic Coast Line railroad at Kingstree:

North Bound Arrives	
No. 80	7:37 A. M.
*No. 46	11:42 A. M.
No. 50	6:36 P. M.
South Bound Arrives	
No. 89	9:18 P. M.
*No. 47	5:46 P. M.
No. 51	10:52 A. M.
*Daily Except Sunday.	

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