

HE BOUGHT HIS WIFE.

Sixty Dollars the Price Paid for a Swinomish Maiden.

A Lamented Wife's Commission and Indian Widow's Strain in an interesting story in brief.

A Mount Vernon special says: A case which promises to become one of the most famous in the state, and which will no doubt be carried to the Supreme Court of the United States for final settlement, was on trial in the Superior court during this week. The case involves the title to 100 acres of valuable farming land below Shaght City, belonging to the late John T. Wilbur, who died in 1884. The farm, now valued at \$100,000, is in the possession of Mrs. Sarah J. Wilbur since the death of her husband in the year mentioned. It appears that in the early 1870s Wilbur and a squaw wife, and his two half-bred sons are now claimants for the farm as Wilbur's legal heirs, their contention being to show that their father never was divorced from their mother, and consequently the marriage of the present Mrs. Wilbur was a bigamous one and she is not entitled to the property.

The case was brought up by the attorneys for the Indian heirs filing a petition asking for letters of administration to C. E. Hingham. The attorneys for Mrs. Wilbur immediately filed an objection to the court granting these letters to Hingham, at the same time stating that the debts of the estate had been paid and that nothing remained to be done in the matter except a decree of distribution of the estate.

The whole question hinges on the legality of the marriage of Wilbur to his squaw, and in this connection some interesting testimony was given by old-timers and Indians as to the early modes of Indian marriages. It was shown by testimony that in the 18th Wilbur, accompanied by a white man named "Chief" Brown, Brown's Indian wife and several other Indians, went to the Swinomish reservation on a matrimonial mission, Wilbur being desirous of obtaining a squaw. Wilbur sought the hand of a young blacksmith known as "Kitty" and he opened negotiations for the girl with her mercenary father, who demanded \$50 as the price of his daughter. After three trips negotiating were continued, and the squaw turned over to the father of the girl and the amount was immediately paid. Wilbur then gave his \$50 with which to purchase her from her father, and took her to his canoe and returned to his ranch at Shaght City.

Three children were born to the mis-matched couple, the girl and two boys, speaking of the girl, Orrin Kinsaid, who testified as to the old Indian customs with reference to marriages, gave as evidence:

"The first child born was a girl which grew to be nine or ten years of age before it died. It is a sad thing to think of a child as ever lived on the river. Of fair complexion and of perfect lady-like appearance, she seemed to have been born in a wrong country, and the admiration of all the old settlers, whites and Indians alike, and was beloved by all."

The two boys that were afterward born showed their Indian origin so marked that they have since preferred the society of Indians to white people. In 1874 Wilbur entered into correspondence with a Miss Sarah J. Wilcox of Henderson, Jefferson county, N. Y., and after a two years acquaintance by letter the young woman came west to accept Wilbur's invitation to marriage. She arrived here in June, 1876, and was married in the same month at the residence of the late R. U. Davis. In the meantime Wilbur had deserted his squaw, the fair Kitty, and had sent her back to the Swinomish reservation with the two boys. Then with his white wife he took up his residence at Shaght City. In 1884, during the busy crop raising excitement, he moved to Whitman, concluding a deal with the aid of his wife. He died at Whitman in 1884 and his wife returned to the Shaght City farm and has since succeeded in improving the land and clearing off 1700 Indian Indians.

When Kitty went back to the reservation she followed the precedent established by her late white husband and, and she, too, married, this time an Indian named John Folienness, who is fairly intelligent and speaks English fluently. Kitty and Folienness were in court during the hearing of the case, at which Mrs. Sarah J. Wilbur was present, and the two women, one white and the other Indian, who had both been wives to Wilbur at different times, and each other with a great deal of courtesy.

As the question of matrimony hinges on the legality of the marriage of Kitty to Wilbur the attorneys for the latter contented that the marriage was contracted and entered into according to the conditions of the Swinomish Indian tribes and constitutes a marriage under the common law; that the Swinomish tribe of Indians should be treated as foreign people in the same manner as a foreign nation; that if the marriage under their customs is valid the courts of this state would be bound to recognize the validity by virtue of the comity of nations, and, therefore, notwithstanding the fact that there is no such thing as a common law marriage under our laws, this marriage would have to be a valid marriage.

The contention of the attorneys for Mrs. Wilbur is that while it is true that a marriage in a foreign country, where the common law marriage is recognized, should be given force by the law of this state in the event the parties afterward live in that country, yet in this case the essential elements of the common law marriage are wanting; that the common law never recognized their customs; that it might be true that the courts of this state would recognize a marriage when both the parties were Indians, still it would not recognize the validity of a marriage where one of the parties was a white man and a citizen of the state and the other contracting party an Indian woman and a member of an Indian tribe.

Yesterday's Probate Court. Estate of Abraham Wilbur, deceased. Hearing on petition for probate of will. Order made appointing J. Waters executor.

Estate of James H. Bee, deceased. Hearing on petition for letters of administration. Thomas Henry Nett appointed administrator on filing a sworn bond.

Estate of John R. Davis, deceased. Claims allowed.

Estate of William Jansson, deceased. Hearing on petition for sale of personal property. Order made as prayed.

Estate of Abraham J. Fell, deceased. Hearing on petition for probate of will. Mrs. Annie Fell appointed administratrix upon filing a \$2000 bond.

Estate of Hannah A. Smith, deceased. Hearing on petition for probate of will. Order made as prayed.

DR. GUNN'S UNION SYRUP FOR COUGHS, COLDS AND BRONCHITIS. THE CHILDREN LIKE IT.

CONFERENCE NOTES. The fact that the Temple Gates will close at 5:30 a.m. during the ordinary ceremonies of the respective states, should not encourage the people that for the regular conference days it is necessary to be on hand earlier.

Mr. A. L. Armstrong, an old druggist, and a prominent citizen of this city, has been selected as one of the speakers at the annual conference of the Utah Association of Druggists, to be held at Salt Lake City, on the 1st and 2nd of April.

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