

"Black Bob" Again.

Under the heading "Black Bob Squatters" there appeared in the MIRROR last week a dispatch sent out from Topeka which escaped the eye of the editor until after the paper was printed. It was about as misleading an article as could well have been printed. As the same dispatch was republished by many papers we give the facts as we know them.

Originally there were about 33,000 acres of land in this county, known as the Black Bob lands. The title to these lands was in the various members of the Black Bob band of Shawnee Indians. In the years prior to 1870 the Indian title to most of these lands was purchased by speculators, and within the last few years different persons have bought the remaining titles.

In the meantime during the sixties all of this land was settled by industrious, intelligent whites, who have improved it and built up homes, school houses and churches, and made it one of the best portions of our county.

Under the law these deeds from the Shawnee Indians were of no validity until they were approved by the Secretary of the Interior. When the first deeds were obtained from the Indians, it was charged that fraud was used. Their approval was resisted by the Indians. It was not until 1884 that, under the proper authority from Congress, the first of these deeds were approved, covering about 20,000 acres of this land. It was done by suit in the United States Circuit Court, in a proceeding very similar to the one recently instituted. All the parties, the Indians, the settlers and the speculators were before the court. Decree was entered that the title was in the speculators, and they in turn conveyed the land to the settlers at a reduced price of about ten dollars an acre. Nearly all retained their homes on those terms.

The present suit is an almost exact counterpart of the former one, and is expected to cover the remainder of the Black Bob tract. The settlers will probably get their land for less than was paid for that which came in under the former decree. All parties are represented by reliable local attorneys and instead of its being that "great excitement prevails," the fact is that the suit was brought under a special act of Congress passed at the request of the settlers and with their approval.

The article does an injustice to the settlers by intimating that they are criminals and law-breakers. Within the last few years there has been almost no criminal cases in the courts from that tract, and the people are as good citizens as our county contains.

Woodruff's Philosophy

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ianhmunro

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