**Article from winter of 2014 Range Magazine**

**STRONG AMERICANS**

If you want to see a fine example of the true American spirit, look no further than the Dwight

Hammond family of Diamond, Ore. The Hammonds backfired a portion of land and kept

this fire from burning their winter range. This burned a small area of federal land. The federal

proceedings from then on took the family’s life savings and put both Dwight and his son

Steve in federal prison.

I recently asked Susie Hammond how they were doing and expected to hear a cynical and

bitter person tell me of their predicament. “You can’t let what life hands you destroy you,”

she said. “Ranchers all have to accept this or they wouldn’t be ranchers.” I was fascinated by

this fine family’s attitude and knew they would always survive. It was obvious to me that our

government is actually trying to destroy this strongest segment of our society from the top

down. Ronald Reagan would have stopped this nonsense immediately.

Los Angeles is turning loose 11,000 convicted felons because of no prison space. We will

have rampant crime throughout the West because of this—and Hammond is put in prison

for protecting his ranch. A little background: A few years ago the Hammonds won a case

against the BLM when it purposely fenced off their water with an illegally positioned fence

line. Getting back at the Hammonds from then on was an act of vengeance. They had to win

against a corrupt government and they were able to do so. [“Enemies of the State,” by Hank

Vogler, Spring 2013.]

The high desert and farming areas of California and eastern Oregon should be turned into

a separate state not run by corrupt officials in Los Angeles and San Francisco who will always

have the votes. It is definitely possible—and necessary. Eastern Oregon and California, secede

if you want to survive. Meanwhile, look with great admiration to the Hammonds. They are

strong, true Americans. Anyone would be lucky to have them as neighbors.

J.N. SWANSON, CARMEL VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

JOAN WINK