

# The Centre Reporter.



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## FLOOD AND FIRE.

### OIL REGIONS A SCENE OF A TERRIBLE HOLLICAST.

Over Two Hundred Lives Lost at Titusville and Oil City on Sunday. Burning Oil Carried on the Surface of the Water.

The oil regions of Pennsylvania were visited on Sunday by a disaster of fire and water that is only eclipsed in the history of this country by the memorable flood at Johnstown just three years ago. It is safe to say that no less than 200 lives have been lost. Nearly 100 bodies have already been recovered and many people are still missing. The number may far exceed 200, but this is regarded as a conservative estimate. The property loss will reach far into the millions. At Titusville the loss is estimated at \$1,500,000; Oil City, \$1,500,000; Corry, \$60,000; Meadville, \$150,000, and the surrounding country probably a million more. For nearly a month it has been raining throughout Western and Northern Pennsylvania almost incessantly and for the past three or four days the downpour in the devastated regions has been very heavy. The constant rain last week converted all the small streams into raging torrents, so that when the cloud burst came on Sunday morning the streams were soon beyond their boundaries and the great body of water came sweeping down Oil creek to Titusville, which is eighteen miles south of its source.

### THE DEVASTATION AT OIL CITY.

Fire and Flood Caused Immense Damage—Many Unfortunates Were Drowned—Some Burned to Death.

OIL CITY, June 5.—Never before in the history of Oil City and the oil country has there been such disaster, excitement and turmoil as this city is now witnessing. At 11.45 o'clock this morning the city and country for miles around was startled by two explosions occurring almost simultaneously.

Oil creek was a raging torrent and over 500 people had approached it banks watching the muddy waters rolling by. At about 11.30 upon the opposite side of the stream a greenish fluid floating on the water was noticeable. This increased rapidly in quantity and extent and at last covered almost entirely the yellow muddy waters of the creek. A smell of gas and oil was perceptible and several gentlemen were discussing the danger should the oil catch fire.

Hardly were the words uttered when 200 yards up the stream, a mass of flames was seen to shoot heavenward. "Run!" yelled a hundred voices and the people turned like stampeded cattle, and started for the hills. Hardly had they started when a terrific explosion rent the air and the entire creek for hundreds of feet on each side seemed one seething mass of flame and smoke.

The panic-stricken crowd shrieked madly in their efforts to escape. Women and children were trampled under foot, and about twenty were severely bruised and had to be picked up by a few of the cooler heads and carried out of harms way. Oil Creek is not usually more than a foot deep at this point, where it empties into the Allegheny river about 100 yards wide. Directly at its mouth is the iron bridge of the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio railroad. About two squares further up the stream, is the iron and wooden bridge of the city connecting the Third ward with the city proper. On the side of the creek is Trinity Methodist church on the one side of Centre street and the Derick office and oil exchange opposite. Across the creek, and built up square from the water's edge, was the hotel and livery stable of J. B. Reinbold, and the furniture house of Paul & Sons. These buildings were built on a narrow strip between the creek and the hills which rise precipitously back of them.

About half a mile from the postoffice northward from here on the western New York & Pennsylvania railroad a tank filled with gasoline was standing on a siding. Some young men noticed that the tank was leaking and knowing its explosive nature and seeing a shifting engine approach, ran up the side of the hill where they turned and looking down as the engine passed witnessed a fearful sight and a mass of flames shot a hundred feet in the air and the earth seemed to shake with an awful tremor. The engineer and fireman were seen jumping from the cab and it is supposed at this writing they were burned or killed by the explosion. In an instant the flames swept madly over the entire upper part of the city, which was flooded by the oily waters of the creek. And men, women and children, who were moving from their houses were caught by the deadly flames and if not burned to death outright were drowned in the raging flood.

At one end of the city was another iron and wood bridge which went down five minutes after the fire started, the huge iron structure being broken

and swept away like so much kindling wood. From this bridge southward far a quarter of a mile the entire town is destroyed. Paul & Sons' furniture house, a four story immense building was swept away. Reinbold's hotel and livery stable were destroyed in a few minutes and Mr. Reinbold and two others who have not been identified were burned to death. These three bodies have been recovered and it is not known how many more are lost. About half the Third ward has been destroyed.

People were panic stricken all over town and afternoon mothers have been running madly about looking for their lost children. Fathers of families are searching for their children and endeavoring to get them all together in a place of safety. It is almost impossible to find words to describe this awful calamity. For miles up the creek on both sides everything is in ruins and hundreds of families have been rendered homeless. The fire came so suddenly and so unexpected that very little, if any, property has been saved along this stream, and the sky for mile around was black with the smoke from the burning dwellings and oil tanks.

When the two explosions occurred people were knocked down by the force of the shocks and every window for two squares along Centre street was broken. Falling glass added to the danger and several people were slightly cut. One young girl was picked up out of the mud of the street after the crowd had passed over her. She was badly bruised and cut but not seriously injured, it is thought. The panic at this time was something awful and it was remarkable that no one was killed by the horses and the wild mob as it was a case of every one for himself. The flames and smoke covered the entire lower part of the city and it seemed that the entire city was doomed to destruction.

The water in Oil creek is falling slowly at this time and it is hoped the worst is over and no more lives will be lost. The creek is about fifteen feet deep here now and about one hundred yards wide and in the memory of the oldest inhabitants has never been so high before. In the upper part of town about one hundred dwellings have been destroyed by fire and owing to the depth of the water, the fire department can do little to stop the flames. This part of the city cannot be reached at all and Senrea street, up to within four squares of the postoffice, is blocked with lumber sheds and roofs of houses which have floated down from above. Nothing seems to be exaggerated and affairs are appalling.

Few of the spectators who were watching the flood when the explosions occurred and escaped can give a good idea of what happened. All agree that there was a terrific explosion and that the air was filled with flames. This was quickly followed by two other explosions. Men thought that hell had broken loose on earth, and they were apparently not very far out of the way. Three gasoline tanks had exploded almost at the same time.

The oil on the creek blazed up, gas in the air burst into a roaring flame and sheets of water, land and air, were all literally ablaze. Men, women and children were knocked prostrate by the shock, and many never arose. The multitude fled with screams of anguish for the higher ground. In the rush many of the weak were trampled upon and badly injured. Some were hurt by horses, others ran, leaped into the water and were drowned. The flames in the air quickly burned out, but they left huge volumes of black smoke across the face of the heavens, beneath which roared the fierce fire of the burning oil upon the water. The many submerged houses and shops along the creek bottom were soon in flames and the silent fire of blazing gas was succeeded by the crackling flames of burning homes. In many of these houses the people were confined. They could not escape for the fire. Within sight of thousands who heard their piteous screams they burned to death or leaped into the river and there perished by both floods and fire.

Such a combined scene of destruction by two terrible elements was seldom witnessed upon this earth. It is marvelous that from this valley of death any were saved alive. It is strange that out of this mingling of fire and flood any houses were spared.

### WRECK AND RUIN.

At Titusville—Many Lives Were Lost in the Flood and Some Perished in the Flames—Business Blocks Destroyed, Etc.

TITUSVILLE, Pa., June 5.—The city of Titusville has been visited during the past twenty-four hours by one of the most disastrous fires and floods in all the history of the region. Oil creek has overflowed its banks from the west and above the water and gas works to the city line below and for hours assumed the proportions of an almost irresistible flood, almost up to the line of

Spring street. The city is without electric light. The water works and gas works are surrounded by water and inundated.

The Perry street and Franklin street iron bridges have been swept away; scores of cheap dwelling houses in the lower part of the city, on Mechanic street and vicinity have been lost, some being burned, but the majority perishing by drowning.

The scene presented by the rushing waters surging through the lower part of the city as witnessed by thousands of citizens was one of utter desolation. When morning broke hundreds of anxious people looked out of the windows or stood on the roofs of the houses waiting for a helping hand and trembling for their fate. Strong and brave men by means of boats and ropes succeeded in reaching and saving those who had a secure position till help arrived or till the waters began to recede.

To add to the horror of the scene rain fell in torrents, fire broke out in the refineries at different points and the burning oil sweeping down the current was communicated to other manufacturing plants and establishments and the destruction was increased a hundred fold.

It is simply impossible to give the reader an idea of the terrible scene enacted in our midst. People do not as yet realize through what they are passing. Fully fifty people are yet unaccounted for, and in the present rush, excitement and confusion it is out of the question to correctly state the number exactly drowned or burned to death. Five persons, all males were seen to perish while grasping a piece of timber. Just as the thousand of spectators who were looking on with bated breath, unable to render the slightest assistance, were led to believe that the sufferers would reach land safely, a neighboring tank of oil exploded in close proximity, and in a moment the doomed men were enveloped in flames and death came speedily to relieve their sufferings, their bodies being at once swallowed up in the surging waters.

Scores of cases of a like fearful character are reported. Among them is that of a mother with her babe clasped to her breast with one hand while with the other she clung to a piece of plank. The board drifted with great force toward the Dunkirk, Allegheny Valley and Pittsburgh depot, around which the water was rushing furiously at a depth of five feet. So swift had been the current that a large hole had been washed under the platform of the station. As the mother and babe reached this point the suction was so great that it drew them in and they disappeared from view.

The almost constant rains of the past month caused the earth to be so thoroughly filled that it would hold no more. Therefore the heavy down pour of Saturday and Saturday night caused more of the small streams to overflow their banks. Early in the evening Church run, in the northern part of the city gave much trouble. About midnight Oil creek began to suddenly rise. So sudden was the inundation that the flood was in before the residents were aware of the danger and not more than half of them managed to reach high ground.

The suddenness of the rise of this famous old water was later explained by the intelligence that the huge mill dam of Thompson & Eldred located at Spartansburg, about seven miles from this city had burst. The lake made by this dam was a half mile in length by a quarter mile in breadth and water thus suddenly let loose made of this valley in the course of a few moments a roaring Amazon.

To-night the undertaking establishments of Messrs. Davidson & McDewitt have been turned into a temporary morgue and with the exception of seven Hebrews and two children, all the bodies so far recovered have been taken there as fast as taken from the water. Most of the bodies bore evidence of having met death from burning oil, many of them being burned almost beyond recognition and several of them in such a terrible manner as to leave the bodies without the least semblance of human form. The night is dark and it is raining, yet the streets are filled with people. No city water is in the mains, no natural gas, and no electric light. The loss to the country will be enormous.

### IN THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

A Territory Eighteen Miles in Length Swept by the Flames and Water.

OIL CITY, June 6.—Eighteen miles of death and desolation is the story in brief of the awful catastrophe which has decimated the borders of Oil creek from Titusville to this point. On both sides of the creek flood and fire have left ruin and wreck, and it will take days before the record of death and destruction can be completed.

This is the most awful disaster which has ever come to this vicinity and has no rival in the United States except

the Johnstown flood. A raging torrent, a tank of oil undermined and toppled into the flood, a coal dropped from a locomotive passing over the bridge in the city, a series of explosions along the surface of the creek, and houses, men, women, and children were instantly wrapped in flames.

These are the cause and effects of the disaster so far as this place is concerned. The inmates of the houses had but to choose how to die, either drown or be burned to death. There was no escape, and many chose the death and jumped into the water; but even there the fire found them, and everybody so far recovered shows that fire helped the work of destruction.

At 6 o'clock this morning the fire had burned itself out, and the flaming oil had passed away. The creek and river, however, are rising, and much of this place will be still further flooded. But there is little left along Oil creek which the flood can damage. The fire has left practically nothing on which the water may prey. The rising waters have interfered with recovering the bodies of the victims in Oil City proper.

The exact number of the dead may never be known. The station where the loss of life was greatest in Oil City was largely occupied by foreigners employed in the tube works and no one knows their names.

Up to Monday evening 67 bodies were recovered at Oil City and taken to the improvised morgue, and many others are missing. The loss of life at Titusville is placed at over fifty.

### IMMIGRATION PROBLEM.

Congressman Stone is reported to be in distress because his immigration bill was not adopted by the joint committee of the two houses, says the Pittsburgh Post. The committee had a dozen houses and senate bills before it and on this basis drew up what is called a "composite" measure, aiming to embody the salutary and practical ideas of all the bills. This measure puts the burden of guarding against undesirable immigration, which has long been defined by law, on the steamship companies that carry the immigrants. There are laws plenty shutting out the vicious, pauper or diseased immigrants, but the trouble has been to enforce them. The steamship companies have hitherto evaded these laws, and by their European agents boomed all sorts of immigration in great quantities for the immense profits of the passage money. Under the "composite" bill, if the immigration inspectors of New York, Baltimore and a few other seaports where most of the emigrants land do their duty, steamship companies will have to sift the immigrants and adopt regulations that will exclude from passage the forbidden class. In case of refusal or neglect the penalties are severe and can be enforced. The government deals with responsible parties who can be easily reached.

Colonel Stone's bill, if we understand its provisions aright, would have compelled all intending immigrants to go before a United States consular officer, and submit to a rigid inspection or examination to ascertain whether they came up to his standard of desirable immigrants. Here was a chance for a regiment of officials and unlimited jobbery on the other side, and then the work would have to be gone over again at the American ports. The immigration is nearing 800,000 a year, and the idea of United States consuls inspecting this vast army is most absurd. It can be done by the steamship companies that organize and promote immigration, and if they fail they can be nuled in heavy money penalties. Colonel Stone's notion was much discussed long before he proposed it in congress, and very generally rejected as impracticable.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS.

#### ASSOCIATE JUDGE.

We are authorized to announce that Samuel Decker, of Walker township, is a candidate for Associate Judge, subject to the decision of the Democratic County Convention.

#### PROTHONOTARY.

We are authorized to announce that David R. Foreman, of Potter township, is a candidate for Prothonotary, subject to the decision of the Democratic County Convention.

We are authorized to announce that Charles E. Kutz, of Centre Hall borough, is a candidate for Prothonotary, subject to the decision of the Democratic County Convention.

#### ASSEMBLY.

We are authorized to announce that James Schofield, of Bellefonte borough, is a candidate for Assembly, subject to the decision of the Democratic County Convention.

#### DISTRICT ATTORNEY.

We are authorized to announce that William J. Singer, of Bellefonte borough, is a candidate for District Attorney, subject to the decision of the Democratic County Convention.

—If you want a light spring and summer overcoat, the Philad. Branch, Bellefonte, can satisfy your wants in a most satisfactory manner to you, both in price and quality.

—Boom-de-ay. Subscribe for the REPORTER for the campaign.

## WASHINGTON LETTER.

(From our Regular Correspondent.)

WASHINGTON, June 6, 1892.

Mr. Blaine is nothing if not dramatic, and that his resignation was the carefully worked up climax of the professional dramatist is not for a moment to be doubted. He has recently concluded that he wanted the nomination, and all his actions since reaching that conclusion have been carefully planned with that end in view, and his resignation, which speaks as if he said "I am again in the field," was announced just at the time when it would do the most effective work with wavering delegates arriving at Minneapolis.

The Washington idea is that the resignation of Mr. Blaine knocks the last leg from under Mr. Harrison's chance, although there are some who believe that Blaine may still be beaten in the convention, but it does not look that way to your correspondent.

Democrats are well pleased over the situation. Mr. Harrison will aid Mr. Blaine, if he is the nominee, to just about the extent that President Arthur did in 1884. Mr. Harrison would probably have lost his own State if he had been nominated, and his defeat by Mr. Blaine's peculiar methods will place that State in the certain democratic column, and he has enough to see that the man who snatched from him at the last minute that which he had been foolish enough to think was solely his personal property, is hurt in other States. In other words, Blaine secretly opposed by Harrison will be a much easier man to beat than Harrison supported by Blaine would be. The two men whom Mr. Harrison ought to blame the most are Secretary Foster and Attorney General Miller. They, by their ill-advised talk against Blaine, furnished the excuse for him to resign, which he was looking for; but he would of course have found some other excuse if they had guarded their tongues better.

Saintly Mr. Wanamaker has been explaining again—his public life has been very unfortunate in this respect. This time he rises to say to the committee on Postoffices of the House that the statement made under oath by Mr. Samuel G. Leake, of Philadelphia, to the effect that Mr. Wanamaker had, after making certain promises to him concerning the erection of an experimental pneumatic tube to be used by the Philadelphia City postoffice, become interested, he believed in 7,500 shares of stock which another pneumatic company had set aside for postoffice officials, and declined to fulfill his promises, was untrue. He also informs the committee that "I shall be pleased to answer any call that the committee desires to make upon me, personally or otherwise." Evil disposed persons might place a bad construction upon the wording of the sentence quoted, but such is not my purpose. I deal with facts; others may put their own construction upon those facts.

"Straws show which way the wind blows." U. S. Treasurer Nebeker is so certain that he will have no use for a residence in Washington after the 4th of next March that he has given up the house his family has occupied since he entered office. When asked why he did not renew his lease, Mr. Nebeker laughingly replied. "Because we shall not need the house a year longer."

The Census Bureau investigation shows, so far, that a very demoralized state of affairs exists in that branch of the Government service. Testimony has been given showing that a woman paid \$12.50 a month to another woman, a relative of Chief Clerk Childs, in order to retain her position, and it has shown that the chiefs of a number of the divisions regulated their treatment of the women under them largely by the liberties the women allowed them to take, and that it is common for these chiefs to make pets of young and pretty girls under them, allowing them to work or play as they may feel disposed. These things have been hinted at before, but now they have been told under oath by ladies of undoubted reputation. And these things, calling themselves men, are still allowed to draw salaries from the Government. It is not to be wondered at that the people of country demand a change.

Mr. Harrison's alleged order to Federal officials to keep away from Minneapolis must have been intended for members of the Cabinet only, as nearly every one of the chiefs of the large Government bureaus are at the convention shouting for Harrison. It is believed that if such an order was really issued it was because Mr. Harrison was afraid that more than one of his cabinet might have gone there in the interest of some of his rivals.

The House is pushing its work, notwithstanding the absence of more than half of the republican members. The postoffice appropriation bill has been passed and nothing but a point of order prevented its carrying an amendment repealing the mail subsidy act of the last Congress.

## RESULT IN DOUBT.

### LATEST FROM THE REPUBLICAN CONVENTION AT MINNEAPOLIS.

Neither Blaine or Harrison Can Win on First Ballot. No Ballot Until Thursday.

The Republican National Convention met this week in Minneapolis to nominate a man for President, and up to this morning no ballot has as yet been taken and the result of the convention is much in doubt as to who the nominee will be.

Blaine and Harrison are both strong factors in the fight but both lack from twenty-five to fifty votes of securing the nomination, on first ballot.

There is much ill feeling between the Blaine and Harrison admirers, and with the Blaine men, Harrison is to be downed at the cost of the party. Minneapolis is crowded with visitors and has over fifty thousand within her limits.

The convention was called to order on Tuesday morning and the delegates got down to business. Blaine's friends showed their strength by the selection of Fasset for temporary chairman of the convention, without a contest which was considered a defeat for the Harrison crowd. Committees on resolutions were appointed and contested seats decided with other minor business and the Convention adjourned until eleven o'clock Wednesday morning.

The day closed with the Republican nomination a hidden secret. The present convention is one of the most aggravating contests of the Republican party and the strife between Blaine and Harrison is bitter and all means will be used by either to defeat the other.

Wednesday morning at eleven the convention convened in session and different reports were heard and resolutions adopted. McKinley, of Ohio, was chosen permanent chairman and after a two hours session Chairman McKinley announced as the next business in order the presentation of candidates for the nomination for president, but was pulled up with a short turn by Senator Ingalls, who called for the reading of rule six, which prohibited proceeding to a nomination until after the adoption of the platform. The convention then adjourned until tomorrow at eleven a. m., and a rush was made for the open air.

The first ballot will likely be taken today and as to who the nominee will be no one on the face of the earth can tell, and the result is in as much doubt as ever. It is not probable the convention will nominate a man before Friday.

### Important Decision.

Judge Sadler, of Carlisle, last week filed an opinion which is of interest to all soldiers holding peddling license. The opinion is in the matter of John Webbert versus the county of Cumberland. It seems that Webbert has a soldier license and on that has been purchasing butter, eggs, and poultry and selling them. The county treasurer then comes and demands a huckster's license of \$12. This was paid by Webbert and he then brought suit against the county to recover. A case stated was made and Judge Sadler decided against the plaintiff and directed the judgment with costs be entered for the defendant, the county. This decision was made on the ground that act of Assembly in regard to the soldier's license only permitted the holder of "peddle, hawk and vend;" but did not give him "any right to purchase or barter for butter, eggs or poultry."

We have received from Richard A. Saalfeld, 794, 796 and 798 Tenth Ave., New York, the second number of the New York Musical Monthly. It contains both classical and popular music, and has 32 pages of full sheet size, and printed upon the best paper and compares with high priced publications in every respect. The price is 15 cts. per copy, or \$1.50 per year, postpaid. The second number contains My Son, My Son, My Only Son, a beautiful song; Poor Girl Didn't Know You Know, a bright song; Love's Dream After the Ball, waltz, by Cibulka; For You song by Sidney Smith; Minuet by Paderewski; Melodia, by Paderewski; Oxford Berlin polka, a lovely piece by Montenegro and Tystnad song by Jacobsohn.

### Marriage Licenses Granted.

Following is a list of marriage licenses granted during the past week.

Dr. C. B. Church and Annie E. Wright, both of Milesburg.

Frank A. Richards and Minnie Copelin, both of Phillipsburg.

J. Frank Smith, of Tusseyville, and M. Lizzie Hosterman, of Centre Hill.

—A guarantee goes with all goods purchased at Mingle's shoe store, Bellefonte, and when a purchase is made it can be depended upon as reliable.