



TRAGEDY AT WOODWARD

Constable Barner Brutally Murdered While in Performance of His Sworn Duty.

THE MURDERER FORTIFIES HIS HOME

The Sheriff and Posse Fire the House After Being Held at Bay for Over Twenty-four Hours.

THE MURDERER, ETLINGER, COMMITS SUICIDE

Wm. Ettlenger Kills the Officer Who Tries to Arrest Him.—With Dynamite, Guns and Revolvers, Refused to Surrender.—The House Riddled with Bullets.—Many Wounded by the Desperado.—Cuts the Constable's Throat.

Woodward is a pretty village of about thirty neat and cozy homes on the pike leading from Centre Hall to Lewisburg, at the west entrance to the Penns valley Narrows. Its people are mostly retired farmers, and respectable. It contains two churches, several stores, hotel, grist mill, saw-mill and some mechanics. The country around is the best and surest agricultural district in our county, and it has a romantic mountain scenery; its people are intelligent; warm hearted hospitality is one of their characteristics, and among them it is to be found some of that good old stock of whom it is said, their word is as good as their bond, and their is no section anywhere where a man's life and purse are in greater safety.

Here took place the awful tragedy of Thursday and Friday, March 5th and 6th, in which a desperado and his wife held at bay, for two days an armed crowd of from 1000 to 2000 men, from their fortified home, supplied with Winchester rifles, revolvers and dynamite, to resist arrest and attack upon their domicile, by the officers of the law, and which resulted in the death of one constable, seriously wounding of several other men, the burning of the desperado's fine home, and the blowing out his own brains as the fiery elements forced him to desert his castle, rather than surrender to Sheriff Condo and his posse.

though he worked much on lumber jobs. Persons who had him in employ, and had no difficulties with him tell us William was obliging, industrious, and valuable as a help wherever he was put to, but when anything was done to arouse his anger he was fearfully revengeful. He was not any too kind in his treatment of his first and second wife. The first wife, nee Ella Fleisher, daughter of Rev. Fleisher, of the Evangelical church, died about eleven years ago—she had born him no children. She was an adopted daughter of Michael Fiedler, now of Millheim, and was a young woman, well-raised and with more than ordinary accomplishments.

The present Mrs. Ettlenger was a daughter of Benjamin Benner, of near Woodward, married to Mr. Ettlenger about six years ago, and bore him two children, a daughter aged five years, and a son aged about two years—this family, father, wife, and two children were barricaded in their house for twenty-four hours of awful experience, with bullets constantly whizzing through the doors and windows, from the guns of over a thousand citizens who were wrought to the highest pitch of excitement because constable John Barner had been murdered by the outlaw, in the discharge of his duty.

Some time last summer an altercation arose between William Ettlenger and his father-in-law, Benjamin Ben-

At the February election John Barner, who lives about one-fourth mile north of Woodward, was elected constable of Haines township. After his nomination he declared if he was elected he would arrest Ettlenger or die in the attempt. He was duly sworn into office at Bellefonte, on the 2nd day of March, the Monday previous, and again made this declaration to the sheriff. The sheriff cautioned him to use every precaution in making the attempt at arrest, knowing the desperate character he had to deal with. The bench warrant was then placed in his hands for execution.

On Thursday afternoon about two o'clock, Barner hearing that Ettlenger was seen prowling about his home, he, in company with John Hosterman and C. D. Motz went to Ettlenger's house, and found the door locked; upon asking Mrs. Ettlenger to open it she refused to do so; he then took a sledge and battered the door in. Not finding

away from Ettlenger's house, and were looking in the direction of said house, when he deliberately shot a load of buckshot into the window where they were standing, smashing many of the panes, but fortunately not hitting any of the children. Several other persons were shot at while walking the streets, making narrow escapes.

One of his bondsmen, Isaac Orndorf, he covered with his breechloader while he was riding past his house, and fired several shots after him, but he missed his mark and Mr. Orndorf made his escape.

The citizens by this time became thoroughly aroused and alarmed and sent word to the surrounding country for men and arms and telegraphed to Bellefonte for the assistance of the sheriff, determined not to let Ettlenger make his escape to the mountains as on former occasions. They stationed guards with trusty Winchesters at convenient places, who kept a constant



Ettlenger 15 Seconds After Firing His Last Shot.

any of the inmates down stairs he went to the stair door and again demanded admission; she again refused to open the door, saying that if he would come up stairs he would be shot into fragments.

Being undaunted by these threats and firmly resolved to secure his man at all hazards, the constable broke in a panel of the stair door, which had been barred previously by Ettlenger. He attempted to crawl in through the opening of the door, and had got partly through the panel with his body, when two shots were fired from the head of the stairs, and Barner was seen to sink down with a groan, by his deputies, and never uttered another word.

His companions attempted to pull him out of the opening in the door but he got fast and they retreated without him and called for more help.

John Brumgard across the street, heard the call and in attempting to cross the road, was shot at by Ettlenger from an upstairs window, the ball grazing the one side of his head. By that time the two men in the house decided to retreat, deeming it unsafe to remain longer.

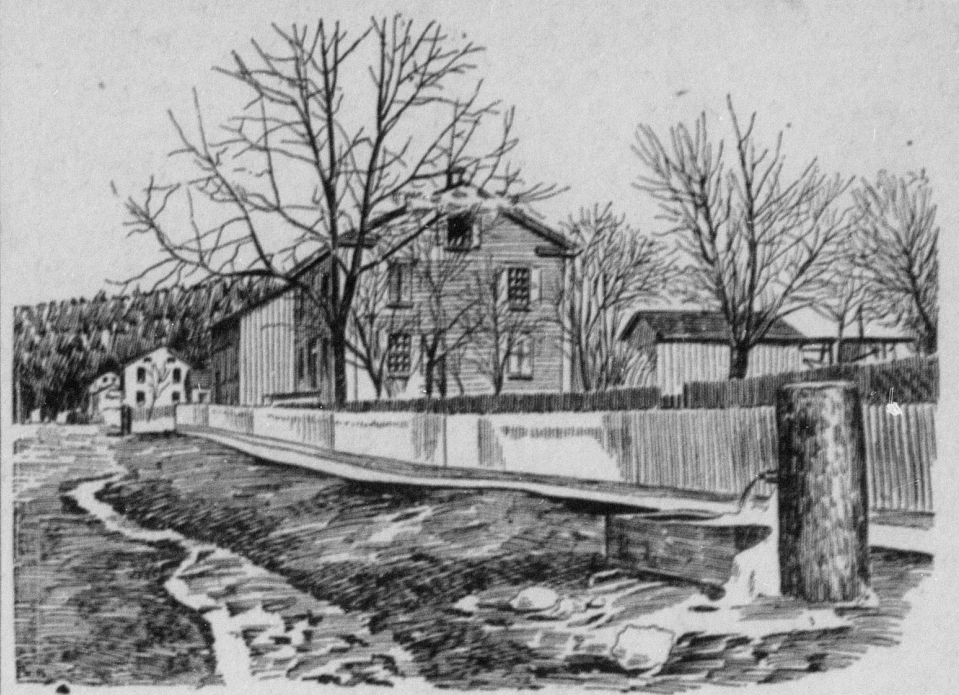
After the assault on the constable, Ettlenger began to fire promiscuously at any person he saw walking near his premises.

Across the street from his house lives Frank Geisewite. He was standing at his window looking in the direction

fusillade upon the house all of Thursday night breaking window panes and shattering the house as if it were undergoing a regular siege.

Sheriff Condo with about a dozen deputies from Bellefonte, arrived upon the scene about nine o'clock. They came on a special train to Coburn and then to Woodward by private conveyance. After viewing the situation the sheriff decided to wait until morning to make the arrest, instructing the guards to keep a close watch on the house, so that the desperado might not make his escape.

The morning dawned bright and resplendent; everything was quiet within the Ettlenger house; everything without was tumult; the firing on the house was incessant; crowds were gathering from all directions; everybody was planning how best to capture the probable murderer. Nothing had been heard or seen of Barner since the day before when he had entered this ill-fated house to meet his untimely death. Fears were entertained by many that Ettlenger had either escaped, or had first killed his wife and children and then committed suicide. The people were very uneasy and restless. Few women ventured outside their doors, men were gathered in knots and discussed the situation; all dwellings in that part of the town within range had been deserted by the families.



The Ettlenger Residence.

It was then known that the tiger was yet in his lair, and that he was a lively tiger at that.

Many theories were advanced how to capture this man, who singlehanded was successfully keeping at bay a thousand men. To make a rush would be at the peril of losing precious lives. The guards kept up the firing at the house, and this was often answered by Ettlenger firing in return when he saw an opportunity that his shots would tell. He came very near shooting several guards, the balls either passing through their clothing, or making slight wounds.

To capture the desperado did not seem an easy matter. To starve him out would take several weeks, and to fire the house would endanger the lives of the little children. Shortly before noon it was decided by sheriff Condo and his posse, to burn the house. One of the deputies, James Cornely, of Bellefonte, got a bucket of oil, and making some cotton balls, threw the burning oil-soaked balls over the roof of the little machine shop at the rear



Constable Barner.

of the house, to the roof of the house containing Ettlenger and his family. The fire balls did not lodge, but rolled off the roof to the ground, far enough away not to communicate with the house. During this attempt at firing the house the guards kept up a heavy fusillade from their repeaters from all sides. The house could not be set on fire by the cotton balls, and then the little shop was thoroughly saturated with oil and the match put to it. Soon the building was in flames, and the fire communicated to the roof of the fortress. Ettlenger was in the cellar at this time and had evidently not seen Cornely firing the shop. There was no window in the rear of the cellar.

The flames soon gained headway, and communicated to the house, where Ettlenger had so long defied the officers. The flames shot up high in the air and a deafening shout went up from the vast crowd of excited men. When the wretch saw that his chances of escape were now so limited he commanded his wife to set the children free.

When the roof was all ablaze the cellar door facing the alley was slowly opened. There was a cessation of firing by the guards, awaiting further de-

peared and came out and sat upon the cellar door. A perfect storm of bullets whizzed by her head, and her escape from death at this critical moment was nothing short of miraculous. The sentiment of the crowd being strong against her, and careful aim was taken at the woman, but the shots went wide of the intended mark. While she was sitting on the door Ettlenger was seen, but only the top of his head was exposed to the fire of the guards. The desperado and wife were holding a conversation, and she appeared to the crowd to be earnestly entreating him to come out and give himself up. Mrs. Ettlenger finally made a break for liberty and ran to the right in the alley. Ettlenger fired two or three shots at her from his rifle, but the direction she took would have caused him to expose the greater part of his body in taking careful aim at the fleeing woman. In the middle of the alley the woman fell, she could scarcely walk and it was seen that her limbs had been bound in some manner. The crowd yelled, "shoot the witch," and several shots were fired at her as she lay in the road. Cooler heads prevailed in the crowd and the woman was assisted away.

Across the alley was a building standing on the corner of the lot. This was used by Ettlenger for storing lumber. At the corner of this building, within twenty feet of the cellar door stood Al Garman, Samuel Miller, of Bellefonte, and several others. A conversation was held with Ettlenger, and he recognized some of them. He was asked to come out and give himself up being guaranteed protection from the mob if he would do so.

Ettlenger said he would be killed if he gave himself up, and the parley lasted several minutes. Ettlenger



Ettlenger's Children.

A snap shot taken right after being put out of the cellar.

at this time showed no disposition to shoot any one, and could have easily done so, as several men were fully exposed, and within close range.

While the parley lasted he was told that all they wanted was the body of the constable and his surrender. Ettlenger threw his three-barreled gun out of the cellar into the alley and told the men that it was to be given to his children. A few minutes later Ettlenger walked up the cellar steps and took two steps out in the alley, just outside of the yard fence. When coming up the steps he had his right arm raised above his head, in his left hand which hung down, he carried his large self-acting five chambered 38 calibre revolver. He stood for a few seconds in the alley fully exposed to the fire of the vigilant guards. The fire from them had ceased, and it was supposed that he would give himself up.

One of the guards in the woods above took careful aim at the head and drew a bead on Ettlenger's head. The ball made the hair jump on top of his head, cutting a swath through his hair, and was close enough to cause the desperado to dodge. At this he said, "None of you will have the satisfaction of killing me," and with his left hand raised the revolver and fired into his head. The ball entered the brain about two inches back and above the left ear.

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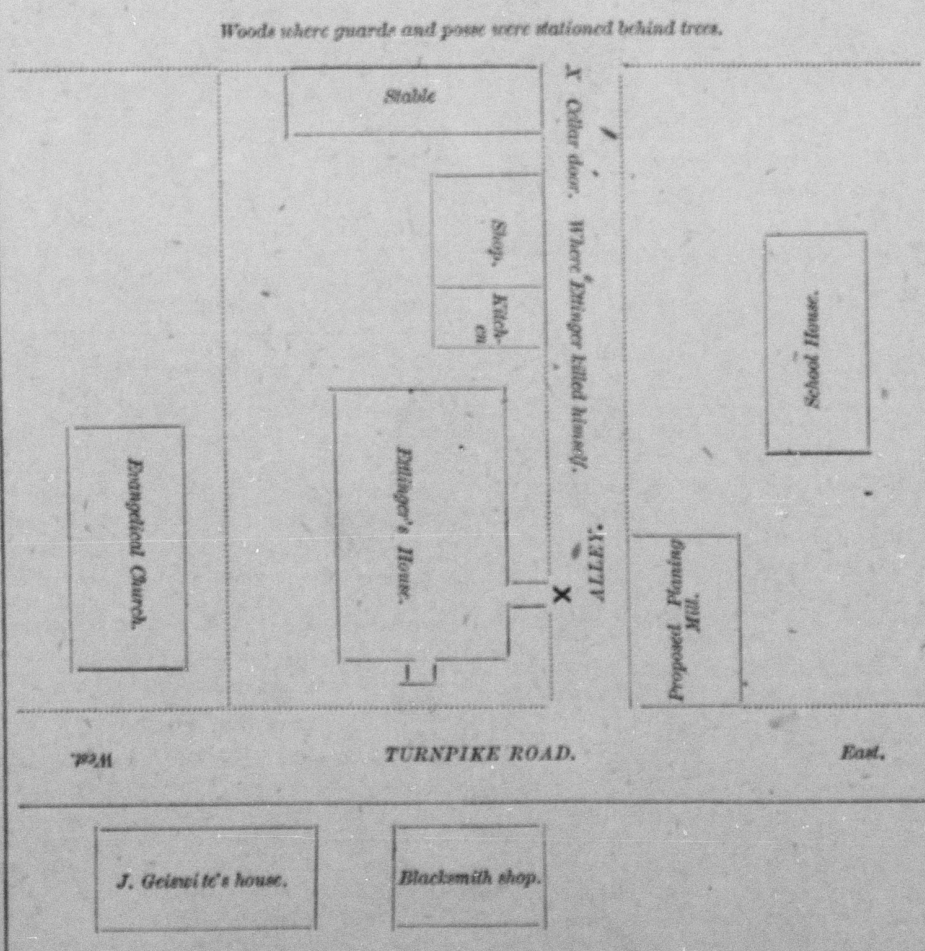


WILLIAM ETLINGER, The Desperado.

In this community the outlaw, William Ettlenger was born, and had his home all his life time, save an occasional absence. His father was Solomon Ettlenger, well-known in the eastern end of this valley, of Jewish extraction, and who committed suicide several years ago when at Potters Mills, on his way home to Woodward, by sending a ball into his head, lingering several weeks, before death came. He was engaged in the purchase of produce, and for this purpose was much from home with his team, traveling through the lower townships. His temper was not a violent one, though his disposition was far from being as amiable as that of the people of the community in which Solomon Ettlenger had lived his life-time.

William Ettlenger, the principal actor in last week's awful tragedy, was a man of about thirty-eight years of age. He was tall, of fine proportions, and quite handsome in appearance, but long the terror of that peaceable community. He had a natural gift of mechanics and a skilled artisan, al-

ner, in which Mr. Benner received a good pounding. He had Mr. Ettlenger arrested on a charge of assault and battery and bound over for his appearance at court, Isaac Orndorf and Daniel Engle being his securities on his recognizance. He however failed to appear at court as commanded, and his bondsmen had a bench warrant issued by Judge Love for his arrest; said warrant was placed into the hands of constable Ed. Mingle of Aaronsburg for execution, but for some reasons Mr. Mingle failed to execute it. Ever since then Ettlenger has been a fugitive from justice, staying in the mountains and with friends in the vicinity, and occasionally going home to look after the wants of his family. He was occasionally seen by various parties and was always heavily armed, carrying a Winchester, revolver, and a large bowie knife. He often threatened to shoot any man who attempted his arrest. In this manner he terrorized the whole neighborhood, and was a constant menace to all people who lived in that quiet community.



of Ettlenger's when without any provocation Ettlenger fired at him with a load of buckshot, two of the buckshot taking effect, one striking him on the shoulder, and the other hitting him on the forehead making an ugly scalp wound but not penetrating the skull. Mr. Geisewite's one arm is paralyzed from the wound in the shoulder, but the attending physician thinks he will recover.

At recess a number of the children were standing at a window of the school house which is about fifty feet

The sheriff and his deputies and a number of volunteers, all armed with repeating rifles, or revolvers, sallied forth from behind a house and were about to make an assault upon the front of the house and take Ettlenger by storm. To their surprise two loud reports in rapid succession came from an upper window of his house, and the leaden balls came whizzing past their heads. They fired several volleys in the direction from which the others came and retreated. All valor had been taken out of the attacking party.



Ettlenger's Wife.

Taken as she was escaping from her husband.

velopments. The two little children were pushed out in the yard by Mrs. Ettlenger and willing hands rushed forward to take them to a place of safety. Mrs. Ettlenger returned to the cellar, and in a few minutes again ap-