

# The Centre Reporter



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## ACME FARMS SWINDLE IS NATION-WIDE.

### \$50,000 Represents Amount Swindled—Nichols and Gaines Now Under Eighteen Indictments—Plea Is Insanity.

The public has been defrauded of about \$50,000, according to Post Office inspectors' estimates, in the nationwide advertising and mail order swindle, which culminated in Atlanta with the arrest of D. W. Nichols and H. D. Gaines, on the evening of December 9, who with their associate, J. R. Grimes, are now under 18 fraud indictments found by the Fulton county grand jury.

The scope of these men's activities had reached almost at least 35 states, and had even penetrated Canada. They operated under the names of about forty firms, giving addresses in more than a hundred different towns.

Post office inspector Tomlinson estimates that the trio realized about \$150,000 profit during the whole period of their operations which have extended over more than a year in a modest way. Of this sum \$50,000 has been taken by absolute fraud. It is alleged. In addition to this is \$4,000 to \$5,000 worth of advertising placed in different publications throughout the country, which was never paid for.

At the rate money was pouring into their hands, inspector Tomlinson declares they would have netted several hundred thousand dollars by January 1st.

The scheme seems to have grown from small beginnings. Nichols is said to have been in the game for four or five years, operating from Rockmart, Georgia.

All through the first part of 1926 he operated in a small way, placing advertisements of different products in newspapers, farm journals and religious papers, offering produce for sale at unusually low prices.

The advertisements were worded as to give the impression that the chickens, oranges, malt, plants, honey, etc., were being produced by the firm advertising them, at the address given in the advertisement. All mail, however, was forwarded to Atlanta. Until about November 1, inspector Tomlinson says that an attempt was made to fill all orders after a fashion. Connections were maintained with several large hatcheries in Missouri which supplied day-old chicks for shipment. Large chickens were obtained from farms near Cannon, Ga. Seeds and plants were obtained near Valdosta, Ga. The condition in which these products reached the customers was guaranteed perfect, but in many cases, inspector Tomlinson declared, all chicks would be dead.

In the spring of 1926, Nichols affiliated with J. G. Grimes and the two operated until the middle of October when Grimes turned over his business to Gaines, who had meanwhile come into the scheme, and went to the Government Hospital No. 62, in Augusta, Ga., where physicians declare he is a "mental case" and have him under observation.

It was only during the latter part of July and first of August that they began to go into the business on a large scale with the advertisement of baby chicks. None of this advertisement was ever paid for, it is reported. Early in November they began to advertise oranges, \$3 for a crate of 300, express prepaid. While orders up to this time had been filled in most cases, the three men now decided to realize all they could on the Christmas trade and then leave for England, it was learned from employees in their offices.

As far as can be ascertained, not an orange was ever shipped. Growers declared that the express charges on a crate of oranges from Florida to different points in the United States equals almost \$3.

At least eight clerical workers were employed by the men to carry on the scheme. Solicitor Boykin said that these clerks had told him that they had been ordered not to bother to read the letters which came in but to get the checks, money orders or cash which might be enclosed, and to place the letters in what was called a file, but which everybody knew was a waste basket. When the trio were apprehended, approximately \$8,000 in checks was discovered in their possession with deposit slips made out to Atlanta banks. This was said to be one day's receipts for the firm.

Employees also said that about as much cash was enclosed in letters as came in the form of checks. This Nichols and Gaines pocketed without depositing in banks.

The men are reported to have approximately \$17,000 to their credit in Atlanta banks.

Between the Thursday night on which the arrests were made, and Monday morning, some 15,000 letters were forwarded to the firms, which the postal authorities returned unopened to the senders, it was declared. It is estimated that about two-thirds of these letters contained remittances of \$3 or more, aggregating perhaps \$20,000 for four days.

Inspector Tomlinson says that postmasters in the different towns in which the firms had forwarding addresses have turned back an estimate of 40,000 letters since a fraud order was obtained from Postmaster General New. Some of these were returned to parties in Centre Hall.

Nichols and Gaines are being held in the Fulton county (Florida) jail in default of \$10,000 bail. The three men are under 18 indictments charging all three different degrees of fraud, larceny after trust, simple larceny, and common cheating and swindling.

The defendants have filed pleas of insanity through their lawyers, claiming that both Nichols and Gaines had been "mental patients" in hospitals in Georgia and Florida.

## "GOOD CHEER" AND "GLOOM" IN REPORTER ARTICLES

### Dr. Alfred Beirly Pens Letter on Matters of Strictly Opposite Natures. Recalls Days of His Youth.

The following communication is from Dr. Alfred Beirly, well-known music master, of Philadelphia:

Upon opening our "Centre Reporter" of recent date we read the announcement of "A Big Community Christmas Program" at Centre Hall. Surely thought something worth while had happened in old Centre Hall where a Christmas cantata was given in double order—in a church and also out of doors, all under the musical direction of an able Bellefonte lady, who, it would seem, understood her work fully.

We were glad, GLAD, that so auspicious an event occurred in Centre Hall, and in which so many of our former acquaintances and friends participated. It must have been a joyous event for the people of that section, for, it seems, the large population round about were also interested in its promotion.

A Lesson in Gloom.

After rejoicing over the "Christmas Cheer" event we turned to page five of the Reporter and beheld another sight of activity was being exploited by an apostle of gloom, Dr. S. Parks Cadman. No doubt all the Reporter readers took note of his views. The writer may be pardoned for wondering which event was enjoyed the most, for we clearly recall that vast numbers of persons there and elsewhere used to greatly prefer gloom hiegeria to rational and joyous entertainment.

In the olden days the writer was a youth residing in the village of Madisonburg, Pa. We used to witness the highly excitable revival methods of making people good. Those orgies, for such they were, the most noisy and boisterous we have ever witnessed, were staged for religious excitement mostly. During such events any one that had no "religion" was invited to come forward to a "mourner's bench" and get an outfit—in other words, get "through." The turmoil was usually most distracting, consisting of loud begging prayers and hollering to the Deity to be "saved."

Only the spirit of righteousness and reason can ever save anyone from folly and evil. It is the first business of life for all mankind. Let your conduct be ever Righteousness and Reason! With that and action you will win peace for your soul and no "higher power" will ever have cause to question your motive.

DR. ALFRED BEIRLY.

### Commissioners Reduce Taxes.

The Centre County Commissioners at a regular meeting voted to reduce the county taxes by two mills, thereby saving the taxpayers approximately \$35,000 per year. The millage for 1926 was 8 mills, hence it will now be only 6 mills. The expenses for 1926 were enormous, due to the fact of repair work on the Bald Eagle valley road, the budget amounting to approximately \$185,000, of which sum approximately \$45,000 was paid by the county for the installation of bridges and almost \$27,000 in reimbursing the farmers whose lands were encroached upon by the construction of the highway, making a total expenditure upon the highway of about \$72,000. Another item of expense during the past year was the expenditure of about \$18,000 for the two abandoned turnpike roads in Penn township. The budget this year was agreed upon as \$135,000, approximately \$50,000 less than that of last year.

### Threshermen to Meet.

The Centre County Threshermen and Farmers' Protective Association will meet in the grand jury room in the Court House, on Saturday of this week at one o'clock P. M.

Officers will be elected, also delegates to the State convention in Harrisburg to be held Thursday and Friday, January 20th and 21st. Compensation insurance, boiler inspection and many matters of interest to threshermen, saw mill men and farmers will be considered. A representative of the Harrisburg office will address this meeting and answer questions.

You want to say to the Legislature now in session whether you want compulsory automobile insurance at an additional cost of two or three times present registration fee, or not.—Isaac Underwood, Secretary.

### T. B. on Decline.

Coincident with the decline of tuberculosis among cattle and hogs is an official report of a decreasing human death rate from the disease, says the United States Department of Agriculture. The low mortality of children under four years may be attributed in part to the aggressive campaign for testing tuberculous cattle and disposing of animals affected with the disease.

We may get back the one-cent postage on picture postcards. The measure has already passed the house. If the high rates of postage are continued it will be only because of the boosting of salaries of clerks whose services could be secured in other lines at one-half the cost.

Among the questions to be discussed at the association of boroughs at the meeting set for the 24th and 25th of this month, at Harrisburg, is that of paying a salary to borough councilmen. Should the salary be based on their worth treasurers will need to be well acquainted with the decimal system to enable correct computation.

The Centre Reporter, \$1.50 a year.

## 80,000 MILES OF ROADS MAPPED BY BUREAU OF ROADS

### Ten Transcontinental Routes Are Included in Highways Which Form Network Throughout the United States.—Standard Signs to Be Adopted.

Approximately 80,000 miles of roads, forming a system of highways with a network of standard marked routes has been mapped by the Bureau of Roads of the Department of Agriculture.

Announcement of the completion of the work was made recently, and standard markers and placed on the routes for the guidance of the users of the roads which include ten main transcontinental routes.

Some portions of the system are unimproved and the work on these portions will be given the preference and pushed as rapidly as possible. The system was approved at the annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway Officials, held November 11 at Pinehurst, N. C., but public announcement of the exact location of the routes was withheld until maps could be prepared.

Branches of these important routes reach practically all of the larger cities in every section of the country. The route numbering system which has been decided upon will be of great assistance to tourists in following through routes. All east and west routes bear even numbers, while north and south routes have odd numbers.

A standard sign for showing the route numbers has been adopted, also standard caution and directional signs, and there will be no change of the character of these signs in passing from one state to another. Twenty-two states have already completed the work of marking the state highways; fourteen have partially completed the work; and six, which have not yet started, expect to do the work the coming season.

The work started with the appointment of the Joint Board on Interstate Highways, consisting of State and Federal Highway officials. This was done by the Secretary of Agriculture in recommendation of the American Association of State Highway officials in February, 1925.

The system in its final form is a harmonization of suggested systems, submitted by all states, and has had the approval of each of the State Highway departments. Work on the unimproved sections is to be pushed rapidly. No special funds have been set aside for the roads designated as parts of the system, but unimproved sections will be given priority over other roads in improvement. Practically all of the system is on the system of Federal-aid highways and is eligible to receive Federal aid.

### MARRIAGE LICENSES.

John Watson	Shawville
Ruth B. Stippler	Cleardale
Wm. L. Morris	Bellefonte
Heleen Hull	Bellefonte

### Some Cabinet Selections.

Governor-elect John S. Fisher has made known that Judge Thomas J. Edridge, of the common pleas court of Blair county, has been selected as attorney-general to succeed George W. Woodruff, the Pinchot official.

Peter G. Cameron, of Tioga county, will be retained as banking commissioner.

Nathan R. Buller, of Wayne county, commissioner of Fisheries, will also be retained.

A Highway Commissioner has also been selected and is said to be from the western section of the State, but the Governor-elect refused to disclose the name. Acting Commissioner Connel was very anxious to be appointed, as were also more than twenty others. Connel's activity to gain the appointment was not looked upon with any favor by Mr. Fisher, who no doubt was influenced by some of the work done by the titular head of the Highway Department since Commissioner Wright refused to violate laws at the suggestion of Governor Pinchot.

During the latter part of this week Fisher will likely make known all heads of departments.

### Fall to Drill for Oil.

Residents of Atkinson Mills, Mifflin county, are still waiting the arrival of the oil well drillers, which were expected in December, according to the announcement of the representatives of the Standard Oil Company, when they secured leases on a considerable tract of land in that vicinity early in November.

According to a resident of that section there has been no sign of preparations to start the drilling and no representative of the company has been back since the leases were signed.

### Bellefonte Lady Breaks Hip in Fall.

Following a fall in her home on Linn street, Bellefonte, on last Tuesday evening, Mrs. George F. Harris, an aged and highly respected resident of that place, was removed to the Centre County hospital Thursday morning where an X-ray photograph revealed a fractured hip, which is considered very serious in view of the lady's advanced age. Mrs. Harris is a daughter of the late Governor Andrew Gregg Curtin, Pennsylvania Civil war governor.

When handling a gun "not loaded," always point the barrel toward yourself and pull the trigger. If you were mistaken of your surmise, proof will show immediately.

## Musser Co. Closes Business.

A special meeting of the stockholders in the G. F. Musser Company, of Bellefonte, was held last Friday in the grand jury room of the court house, and owing to the present conditions of the business of the company it was decided to close out the business at once as it has been losing ground for several years. A number of real losses and a general decline in the profits of the business have been the chief causes of the action which has just been taken. The business is now in the hands of a committee of six stockholders who were instructed to dispose of the stock, etc., to as good advantage as possible, in the shortest time.

### Attended Funeral of Mrs. Runkle.

Among the many persons who attended the funeral of Mrs. James W. Runkle, in Centre Hall, were the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Gross R. Allison, of New Castle, Kentucky; Miss Ferna Hoover, Danville, Virginia; Mrs. (Dr.) S. C. Runkle, Philadelphia; L. C. Runkle, Shamokin; Mr. and Mrs. Keener Runkle, Sunbury; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Whitmer, Sellersburg; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Stover, Mrs. Wm. Snyder, of Yeagertown; Mauris Kelley, Reedsville; W. R. Bruchbill, W. G. Runkle, M. B. Runkle, J. L. Runkle, A. R. McNitt, Miss Helen Schaeffer, Bellefonte; Orvis Beatty and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ed. Wason, of Avis; Irvin Bloom, Williamsport; Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bressler, Flemington; Wm. Musser and family, Carl Runkle, Rev. and Mrs. J. M. Runkle, Altoona; Dr. H. S. and Mrs. Braucht, Mr. and Mrs. D. Musser, D. R. Runkle, Frank Musser and family, Spring Mills; Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Ripka, Millheim; Mrs. Minnie Shirk, Glen Iron; Rev. W. A. and Mrs. McClellan, Miss Sallie Runkle, Rebersburg; Mr. and Mrs. John White, State College; L. Frank Mayes, Lemont; Mrs. Margaret Shutt, Wellington, Ohio.

### W. C. T. U. Meets.

A meeting of the ladies of the W. C. T. U. of unusual interest was held Saturday afternoon in the Reformed church, at which Mrs. Ella Black, of Beaverdale, was the principal speaker. Mrs. Black is the State treasurer of the organization, and spoke on the topic, "Courage and Optimism." As a means to accomplish the purpose of her mission she urged the various organizations to introduce essay contests and medical temperance instruction. Organizing new unions and building up weak ones was also a part of her work. Mrs. Black also visited the unions at Blanchard, Wingate, Millheim, State College and Bellefonte.

Mrs. W. A. Broyles, the county president, presented the work planned for her district. The spring executive meeting will be held at Pleasant Gap. The Centre Hall Y. P. B. will give a playlet or some other form of entertainment at this meeting.

Mrs. Bell, president of the State College Union, spoke of the victory meeting held there on Wednesday.

The meeting was under the direction of Mrs. F. M. Fisher. With Mrs. J. M. Kirkpatrick as accompanist a duet was rendered by Mrs. F. Y. Goodhart and Mrs. H. W. Potter, and a solo by Mrs. J. F. Wetzel.

### Suffers from Blood Poisoning.

William F. Rockey, of near Tusseyville, is suffering greatly from blood poisoning. About ten days ago he slightly injured the palm of the right hand, and soon he began to have pain. His condition since the beginning of the week has been very serious.

### Man Hit by Car.

Lucian McGinley is in the Centre County hospital in a serious condition as the result of being run over by a car driven by Thompson Henry, of Martha Furnace, on Monday.

Mr. McGinley was walking along the highway as the Henry car was returning from Bellefonte. The machine was of such a type that the axles were built low and the car did not pass over his entire body. Mr. McGinley suffered several fractured ribs and he was badly bruised.

### Railroad Official Dead.

James H. Baer, for many years assistant freight claim agent for the Pennsylvania Railroad, died at his home at 1505 Poplar street, Philadelphia, Friday night, from acute indigestion. He was 67 years old.

Mr. Baer, who was born in Altoona, had been in the company service forty-seven years, beginning as a clerk in the Altoona ticket office. On September 1, 1894, he was appointed special agent of the freight claim department, and was advanced to the chief clerkship on February 1, 1904. Next he was made assistant freight claim agent of the old lines east of Pittsburgh, Buffalo and Erie.

When the department was reorganized in 1925 Mr. Baer was made assistant freight claim agent in Philadelphia, with jurisdiction over the entire system. He is survived by his wife, Ethel, and a son, John L., who is connected with the Philadelphia terminal division of the road.

### Mercantile Appraisers.

Union county: John Hackenberg, of Hartleton.

Snyder county: Jacob Shaffer, of Port Trevorton.

Mifflin county: Ward Walk, of Reedsville.

### I. O. O. F. Association Meeting.

This (Thursday) evening the I. O. O. F. Association will hold a regular meeting in the lodge rooms. A quorum is very much desired, as it will be the time for the election of officers, and other important matters will be presented.—By order of President.

We have had rather pleasant winter weather since the beginning of the new year. It has been cold, it is true, but not excessively cold. The by-roads are well open or else good field detours, and this adds much to making living in the country desirable.

### Card of Thanks.

H. E. Grove and family take this method of returning thanks to those who extended their services during the last illness and subsequent death of Mrs. Grove, as well as to the members of her Sunday-school class who presented flowers.

The Harris township school directors are advertising for sale the Plum Grove school house, vacant for three years.

## AT THE COUNTY JAIL.

### Number of Prisoners, Their Keep, and Other Statistics for 1926, as Given out by Deputy Sheriff D. R. Foreman.

During 1926 a total of 192 prisoners were committed to the Centre county jail, and Deputy Sheriff D. R. Foreman makes these statements that will be of interest to the general public:

Of the 192 prisoners committed there were discharged during the year, 153. The time served by the prisoners represents a total of 4,363 days. The cost of boarding prisoners is fifty cents per day, and for the whole time Sheriff Taylor received for boarding the sum of \$2,481.50. There were served a total of 14,889 meals, the cost per meal being sixteen and six-tenths cents. Nineteen violators of the liquor law were imprisoned, and fourteen for violating automobile laws. Seventeen of the number were escaped prisoners from Rockview penitentiary. Among the prisoners were a number of women.

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## TOWN AND COUNTY NEWS.

### HAPPENINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST FROM ALL PARTS.

The style of costume for milady in 1927 is briefly described as "shorter and fewer."

In Brown township, Mifflin county, there are a number of cases of scarlet fever. In the family of J. B. Giboney there are several cases.

Thursday evening of last week there happened an incident of such rare occurrence that it is entitled to space here: The train going west was on time.

Harvey Swartz, who formerly lived near Centre Hall and later lived in Millheim, is seriously ill at the home of a daughter, Mrs. Paula Clemens, in Northumberland.

One of the saddest things we observed in our little town within the past week was to hear a child—a little girl of scarcely six years—utter a string of profanity that would have done "credit" to a tenderloin denizen.

F. V. O. Housman and James Z. Ziegler, who over a month ago fell down the elevator shaft at the Millheim knitting mill, while improving, are still confined to their respective homes.

Messrs. Frank Hockman, the Hecla Park poultryman, John Roseman, Lawrence McMullen and A. R. McNitt, all of Bellefonte, are off on a jaunt to Florida, the trip having been made in the latter's Paige car.

Mrs. H. O. Pfeiler, of near Woodward, who several weeks ago entered the Clearfield hospital, underwent a number of blood transfusions and later submitted to a serious operation. Her condition was reported favorable.

The Richelleu Theatre will present Keith's vaudeville Thursday, Friday and Saturday of this week. Mr. Richelleu has secured a contract for a high class series of Keith's productions, the first of which he offers for his patrons' inspection this week.

A new type touring car that brings the joy of the open without its disadvantages is the latest addition to the Oldsmobile line. The car has European-type rigid and removable side curtains which can be used with the top both up and down.

Floyd White and family moved from near Centre Hall to Brookline Mills, near McVeytown. Mr. White has been driving the large truck for Kelley & Sons lumbermen, while operating on the Dr. Lieb tract, and will continue to do so in Mifflin county where the Kelleys have several mills.

Guy Nolan, of Walker township, was appointed mercantile appraiser for Centre county. The appointment was made by Auditor General Martin upon the recommendation of local Republican bosses under His Bigness Scott. Although Chairman in Walker township for a number of years, this is the first political recognition of the services of Mr. Nolan.

The Friday evening service of the Week of Prayer was attended by a large number of the local Y. P. B. members, both girls and boys, the former being in the large majority. The service was held in the Reformed church, sermon by Rev. S. F. Greenhoe. The Holy Communion was administered to a large audience, members of the various churches of the town.

The rights of children to coast on the highways has probably been well established, but they are gaining a privilege with so many hazards that one cannot help but feel that parents are thoughtless, to say the least, not to prohibit their offspring from indulging in the sport. Imprisonment of a careless auto driver or a verdict collecting cash from him is small recompense for the life of a child.

Edward J. Thompson, Esq., of Philadelphia, opened a law office in that place independent of George W. Zeigler, Esq., with whom he was associated in business for eighteen months. Mr. Thompson is a young attorney, but is making his way forward in the legal profession. He is licensed to practice in the courts of Centre and Clearfield counties, the appellate courts of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, also the U. S. Treasury Department, and the U. S. Board of Appeals.

Out-of-town relatives and friends who attended the funeral of Mrs. Howard E. Grove, in Centre Hall, last week, were the following: Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Hoy, Mr. and Mrs. Davis Tressler, Mr. and Mrs. D. O. Cori and two sons, Curtis and Dorsey, and Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Cramer, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Cori, Mr. and Mrs. L. D. Fye, Mrs. Samuel Cori, Edward Houser, Miss May Cramer, Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Bartgers, of State College; Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Cramer, of Tusseyville; Mrs. Minnemyer, of Tyrone; Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Albright, James and William Gummo, of Centre; Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Wm. Cramer and daughter Isabelle, Mr. and Mrs. Charles McMullen, Mrs. Bertha Cramer and son John, of Altoona; W. H. Grove and daughter Esta, of Coburn; Mr. and Mrs. Percival Tharpe and daughters Ellen and Orpha, Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Lohr, Robert Neese, Lester Condo, Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Runkle, Spring Mills; Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Calhoun, of Lock Haven; Mrs. J. F. Grove and two sons, Ralph and George, Mr. and Mrs. Roy Keeler, Mrs. Allen Whitmer, Mr. and Mrs. Geo. W. Grove, Etta Grove, Vianna Grove, D. A. Grove, A. C. Grove, Jas. H. Harshbarger and family, of Bellefonte; Miss Nettie Gill, Mrs. Sarah Lohr, Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Eckenroth, Pleasant Gap; W. E. Grove, Julia Shuey, Lemont; Wm. Rockey, Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Rockey, of Boalsburg.