

COUNTY "BROKE" AMID COAL RICHES

Schuylkill Faces Bankruptcy Despite Mineral Wealth Beneath It

TAXES ARE TOO LOW

Cannot Build Schools or Contract for Needed Municipal Improvements

Schuylkill County is going bankrupt. Under its fields and hills and the streets of its grimy little towns it has coal sufficient to keep every mill and factory of the nation running for generations.

And yet it is going bankrupt. With the greatest mineral wealth of any county in the United States lying just under foot, the communities of Schuylkill County cannot afford to lay sewers and cannot afford to build schools for their children.

As a county, Schuylkill confesses itself a financial failure. It barely can pay its way. Many of its boroughs and townships have all but exhausted their legal borrowing capacity.

For this anomalous state of affairs Schuylkill County blames the very mineral wealth which should be its strongest financial asset.

Schuylkill County does not own the coal which has made it famous but not prosperous. It does not even get from the coal taxes sufficient to meet its needs.

Small Taxpayer Burdened The burden of public expense in Schuylkill rests heavily upon the small taxpayer. True, the coal companies pay taxes on their coal lands, just as the householder pays on his small property.

But adequately to supply the financial needs of Schuylkill County the tax payer would have to be taxed to a figure that the small taxpayer would find unbearable. As matters stand, his property is assessed much closer to its real value than the coal lands.

Hence, it is true to say that the poor man pays the bills in Schuylkill and not the rich coal corporation.

Not that the people of Schuylkill are poor, save in contrast to the great wealth of the coal-mining corporations. Schuylkill did its part nobly in winning the war. Enlistments were heavy and subscriptions splendid in the various Liberty Loan drives.

A distinction must be made between the financial condition of the people of Schuylkill and the financial condition of the county and its component parts in an official sense. While the people of Schuylkill are able to put money in the bank, the officials of Schuylkill find themselves hard pressed to meet the county's financial needs.

It is a matter of taxes merely. Right now Schuylkill is making a grim fight against this menace of bankruptcy.

The fight has been going on for months, conducted by two public-spirited organizations, the Anthracite Consumers' League and the Schuylkill County Tax Revision League.

So far it has been waged before the Commissioners of Schuylkill County. It very likely will get into the Schuylkill County courts. The men who are the leaders in this fight plan to carry it on to a decision, no matter how much it costs nor how long it takes.

They expect before they are through after the survey, estimated that the lands were worth, also in round numbers, from \$500,000,000 to \$1,000,000,000.

This is why the associations would consider an addition of \$25,000,000 to the present valuation of the coal lands—the increase which it is rumored the Commissioners will recommend—ridiculously trifling and inadequate.

The present assessed valuation of Schuylkill's coal lands averages from about \$200 to \$400 an acre. To be fair, it must be noted that there are higher individual assessments than this. At Minersville a single acre is said to be assessed at \$700. The Gilford and Gilbert estates, in the rich Mahanoy region, which possess the world-famous Mammoth vein, the North and South Dips and the various underlying and overlying veins, are said to be assessed at \$550 an acre.

The coal lands of Luzerne County are assessed at \$171,000,000. Schuylkill County, as elsewhere, the assessment valuations are fixed by real estate assessors. Some time ago the Tax Revision League notified all the assessors of the county to raise the valuation of coal lands. They didn't do it.

The assessors turn in their assessment for the year to the County Commissioners, who approve or disapprove. The two associations which are fighting against Schuylkill's state of impending bankruptcy went before these commissioners some weeks ago, and at a public hearing demanded that the coal land valuations be brought up to an approximation of what the coal lands are worth.

Decision Not Announced The County Commissioners have not yet announced their decision. They are expected to do so almost any day. It is rumored that a vote of public opinion they intend to add about \$25,000,000 to the present valuations.

Members of the two fighting associations say they won't be satisfied with any such paltry sum. For it is paltry, they contend, compared to the real value of the coal lands.

If the County Commissioners don't come through with a whopping big raise in the valuation of Schuylkill's coal land the two associations will appeal from the commissioners to the courts.

And there Schuylkill expects to get its demands. The court proceedings can't be directed against the coal companies, because the coal companies do not fix the valuation of their own properties.

to let the public of the outside world—the people who buy the coal which Schuylkill County produces—know all about the inside history of coal development and exploitation in the county. They hope before they are through to have the United States Senate take a hand through a coal investigating committee.

They plan to subpoena J. P. Morgan, of New York, and E. T. Stotesbury, of Philadelphia, to tell what they know about the value of Schuylkill County's coal lands.

For the fight centers around the valuation of the coal which has made Schuylkill at once the richest and the poorest county in the United States.

To explain the situation in Schuylkill: The county, in common with every other county in the State, meets its bills out of money raised by taxation. Taxes there, as everywhere, are apportioned so many mills on the dollar. Property owners pay according to the assessed valuation of their property. The rate is the same whether the property belongs to a day laborer or a multi-millionaire corporation.

Crux of Situation Here is the crux of the situation, as it is seen by the men who are making Schuylkill's fight: Properties owned by individuals are assessed practically as they sell on the market. Properties owned by the great corporations are assessed at a fraction—and that a small one—of what they are really worth.

Schuylkill's fight is to have coal land valuations for assessment purposes brought up to something like the actual market value of the land.

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another local newspaper of wide circulation and influence, likewise has committed itself for tax revision.

This article, which states only the position of the two associations striving to have Schuylkill's coal lands held at a higher valuation, was submitted in proof to a leading representative of one of the great mining corporations.

He was asked to give the coal operators' side of the controversy, but declined to be quoted in the matter.

SCHUYLKILL'S REPORT SHOWS LARGE ASSETS The twenty-second annual report of the controller of Schuylkill County shows that for the year ending January 5, 1918, Schuylkill County had an excess of assets over liabilities of \$1,043,732.77.

In detail this report shows that of the total assets \$1,005,786.21 represents the value of the county's property holdings. Seated and unseated land taxes add \$200,000 to the sum. Another item is \$98,786.71 taxes due by tax collectors.

Of this sum, however, only \$47,043.21 is for the year 1917. The rest is for various years going back in some cases as far as 1885.

The net cash in the hand is reported as \$48,417.18. The report of the county's liabilities suggests that taxes are needed in Schuylkill County more for borough and township purposes than for use by the county as a whole.

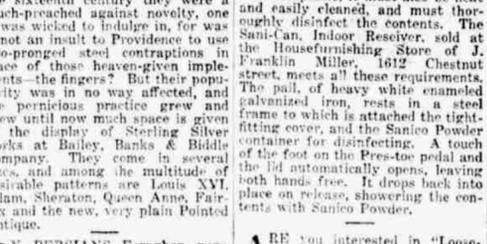
Hence a gross volume of taxes furnishing an ample quota for the county's needs might be, it is pointed out, inadequate for the underlying borough and township that must build school houses and make public improvements.

The bulk of the county's liabilities are various bond issues, totaling \$672,500. Accrued interest adds another \$755.4; temporary loans, \$30,000. Unpaid justice, constable and witness fees total \$204.09. Outstanding county warrants come to \$273.72. Small items—outstanding indoor almshouse warrants, \$17.70; and outdoor almshouse warrants, \$201.72. The county is liable for \$2443.15 for the hospital for the insane and \$44 for mothers' pensions.

The sinking fund report of the county shows on the "Dr." side cash in hand at the end of 1918 of \$18,000, and cash received and interest totaling \$103,417, making a grand total of \$121,417. On the "Cr." side, for 1917, total of \$19,786.71.

Every Piece of Fur in This Sale Is Being Sold at Less Than the Manufacturer's Cost of Production Today

BONWIT TELLER & CO. The Specialty Shop of Originations CHESTNUT AT 13TH STREET ANNOUNCE FOR TOMORROW (TUESDAY).



Annual Clearance of FURS of Fashion and Quality FOR WOMEN AND MISSES Regardless of Former Prices Featuring the Authoritative Modes and Silhouettes Established by the Paris Fourreurs and Bonwit Teller & Co. FUR COATS, CAPES, WRAPS and MANTLES, JACQUETTES, STOLÉS, PELERINES, NOVELTIES and MUFFS

Small Furs MUFFS SCARFS SEPARATE SCARF AND FUR SETS

Table listing fur items and prices: Now Were, Hudson Seal, Natural Skunk, Raccoon, Beaver, Taupes Nutria, Natural Mink, Natural Squirrel, Black Lynx.

Fine Fur Coats 6 Leopard Cat Coats Smart Belted Effect Models, Reduced from 95.00, 58.00

10 Hudson Seal Coats 45 inches long, made from selected Muskrat Pelts. Reduced from 225.00, 155.00

10 Trimmed Leopard Cat Coats Reduced from 135.00, 95.00

8 Natural Nutria Coats Reduced from 175.00, 125.00

are considered the name of excellence, their rich dark shades appealing strongly to their taste and idea of the beautiful. In this country they are quite as much sought after by those who do not care for the very light effects of some Oriental rugs, and in the large collection of Fritz & La Rue, 1124 Chestnut street, there are many fine examples. The color of the well-covered field is usually dark navy blue, occasionally soft red or ivory white. The design consists of roses and long leaves, arranged artistically, and sometimes a medallion is set in the center, with corner pieces to match. The chief border always has a green ground, with a rosette and chainlike pattern, or vases at intervals, with long stemmed flowers between.

INFANTS will not remain infants forever. They have an ineradicable habit of outstripping their baby clothes, and fond mothers and grandmothers are continually being forced to and new shops where the growing needs will be catered to. Knowing how inconvenient this has been for their patrons, B. F. Dewees, 1222 Chestnut street, have enlarged their well known Infant Department to one that includes clothes for children up to twelve years of age. The same care has been shown in the selection of these garments as has characterized their infant wear in the past. All kinds of little dresses are there, two of the newest styles being the much wanted Adolajide Crapsy white dresses and cute pink or blue calico dresses, with the real old-fashioned ring patterns so popular generations ago.

A GENERATION or so ago the fashion custom prevailed in Philadelphia of holding annual exhibitions of prize Winter Peas in old Horticultural Hall. Scores of the best families competed, and took great pride in their awards. Time has made many changes. The beautiful orchards and gardens facing the river have been crowded out by factories, but the pea trees have lived and prospered elsewhere. All the varieties formerly grown in Philadelphia, transplanted to the fertile soil of Oregon, thrive and waxed strong in the new climate, and today the fruit, a hundredfold more beautiful, has returned to its early home and is on exhibition at Henry R. Hallowell & Son's, Broad below Chestnut street. Six wonderful varieties are there to choose from: Beurre d'Anjou, Comice, Forelle, Banc, Easter Beurre and Winter Nells.

ARE you interested in "Loose-Leaf" books? If so, stop and look at the window display of A. Pomerantz & Co., 1525 Chestnut street, and if you were not before, you soon will be. For the number of forms to which the loose-leaf system is applied is really remarkable, especially when you consider how recent an innovation it is. There are Loose-Leaf ledgers to suit any business, with invoice tags and various rulings. Loose-Leaf Transfer Binders for the filled sheets. Post binders, ring binders and loose sheet holders for inventory forms. Pocket memorandum books, salesman's price books, tenographers' analysis and note books, diaries, address and recipe books. All of these are virtually perpetual, for extra sheets may always be added, and once the loose-leaf book is acquired it is never abandoned.

NO NEED of asking what kind of hot cakes you prefer. The answer is always the same, and is always followed by the same ill mother used to ask: "If you are a man you do not know the reason for this deprivation; if you are a woman—well, perhaps you are not careful where you buy your buckwheat or how you make your cakes. At E. Bradford Clarke Company, 1529 Chestnut street, they have the real genuine, undiluted buckwheat from the famous buckwheat district of Pennsylvania, the kind that must be raised overnight, not whipped up a few minutes before using; the kind that makes the real old-fashioned, tender, golden brown hot cakes, so delicious with fresh country sausage and good, thick "Maple-Fruit Syrup" from Clarke's.

SENSIBLE, not silly, times are these. And judgments from the excellent selection of books and Underettes that Jacob Reed's Sons, 1424-26 Chestnut street, are showing and selling it is very apparent that the men of Philadelphia are dressing according to the times. Those who have not seen these cakes will be glad to know that, while the variety is almost unlimited, the desirable ones excel themselves in appeal to men who appreciate handsome and attractive clothes. They are made of Worumb, Chevots, Billard Cloths, Crombies and other fabrics adapted to the purpose, and are cut and tailored in a manner that nothing is left to be desired in comfort, style and practicality. What more could be wanted in an overcoat?

EVERY PIECE OF FUR IN THIS SALE IS BEING SOLD AT LESS THAN THE MANUFACTURER'S COST OF PRODUCTION TODAY

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8 Natural Nutria Coats Reduced from 175.00, 125.00

7 Taupes Nutria Coats Reduced from 250.00, 175.00

2 Taupes Nutria Coats (Lining Slightly Soiled) Reduced from 295.00, 175.00

1 Imported Mole Coat (Hudson Seal Trimmed) Reduced from 495.00, 275.00

5 Natural and Taupes Squirrel Coats Reduced from 350.00, 265.00

4 Scotch Mole Coats Reduced from 325.00, 250.00

2 Scotch Mole Fancy Coats Reduced from 375.00, 295.00

\$177,152.83 represents purchase of bonds leaving a cash balance January 5, 1917, of \$44,254.17. The report is for Against \$94,600 in Schuylkill county bonds in the sinking fund is a cancellation of \$28,000 in November, 1917, leaving \$66,600 held in the fund January 5, 1918. Sixty per cent paid the same date on \$100,000 worth of Liberty Loan bonds added \$60,000, making a grand total of \$126,600.

P. R. T. Unveils Service Flag An honor roll hearing 113 names of the men in the employ of the P. R. T. car barn at Tenth and Luzerne streets was unfurled yesterday afternoon by two of the men recently returned from the service. Of the number of the honor roll only one has been killed in action. The tablet was placed in the assembly room of the barn and the unveiling addresses were made by Herbert Tulley, vice president of the company, and his assistant, R. W. Johnson.

Alice Roosevelt Notified Washington, Jan. 6.—Mrs. Nicholas Longworth received a telegram today that her father, Colonel Roosevelt, was "not expected to live" and to arrange to leave for Oyster Bay on the first train.

GAS KILLS MAN AND WOMAN Two Other Persons Found Unconscious in Another Case A man and a woman are dead and two men are in Pennsylvania Hospital, victims of escaping gas. Mrs. Mary McCormick, fifty years old, and Charles Montague, forty-five, were found dead in their rooms, which joined, in the house at 1132 South Twenty-fourth street. Montague left a gas heater burning and after he had gone to sleep the gas supply, gauged by a quarter meter, ran out and the fire in the heater was extinguished. Mrs. Jane Falls, who keeps the rooming house, placed another quarter in the meter a little later and the escaping gas asphyxiated both Montague and Mrs. McCormick.

Frank Magee, twenty-one years old, and Marion Bobo, twenty-nine years old, were found unconscious in a room at 821 S. Walnut street early today. They were revived after being taken to the hospital.

THE SHOPS INDIVIDUAL BACKERS THINGS THAT MEN WEAR

Semi-Annual Clearance SALE

Men that have been waiting for this announcement will find BETTER VALUES THAN EVER

SHIRTS \$2.00 and \$2.50 Values... Sale Price \$1.65

\$3.00 to \$3.50 Values... Sale Price \$2.65

\$4.00 to \$6.00 Values... Sale Price \$3.15

\$6.50 to \$7.00 Values... Sale Price \$5.15

\$7.50 to \$10.00 Values... Sale Price \$6.65

NECKWEAR \$1.00 Value—Sale Price 65¢

\$1.50 Value—Sale Price \$1.15

\$2.00 Value—Sale Price \$1.35

\$2.50, \$3 & \$3.50 Values... \$1.85

Bath Robes, Full Dress, Street and Angora Wool Vests and Canes 25% Off

Other "Things That Men Wear" Proportionately Reduced At These Addresses Only

1338-40 S. Penn Square Widener Bldg. Arcade

926 Chestnut Street

Fur Wraps 2 Hudson Seal Wraps Reduced from 550.00, 425.00

2 Scotch Mole Wraps Reduced from 595.00, 450.00

1 Eastern Mink Coat Reduced from 1250.00, 795.00

1 Eastern Mink Wrap Reduced from 1050.00, 1050.00

1 Eastern Mink Wrap Reduced from 1500.00, 1500.00

1 Broadtail Wrap (Sable Trimmed) Reduced from 950.00, 950.00

THE CHESTNUT STREET ASSOCIATION