

The Centre Democrat.

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DESTRUCTIVE FOREST FIRES

Sweep Over Vast Areas of Valuable Timber Land

ENVELOPED IN DENSE SMOKE

Monday Dark Clouds of Smoke Swept Over the County—The Sun Was Obscured—Forest Fires Caused by Incendiarism—A Bad Act of Assembly.

The long continued dry spell caused much destruction to property in the mountainous sections of Centre county, by raging forest fires. The dead leaves and brush were dry as tinder and the slightest spark from locomotives soon started a fire wherever it fell, which in a short time was fanned into furious seething flames extending over vast areas. During the past week conditions were most favorable for forest fires. In every direction, by day clouds of smoke arose from the mountains on every side, and at night presented a magnificent display, leaping up the mountain sides to the very summits like rolling billows of the sea, sweeping everything in its pathway. The climax came on Monday afternoon. The wind was coming from the north, over the Alleghenies, where thousands of acres of wild land were burned over. The smoke began to get heavy and denser and by four o'clock the sun was almost obscured. The atmosphere was so impregnated with smoke as to effect breathing and the eyes. The smoke continued to gather in density, and by five o'clock the sun was obscured, a pale yellow halo or light seemed to hover over the sky. It was necessary to use artificial lights in stores and offices, and by 6 p. m. it was quite dark. The atmosphere was so heavily laden with smoke as to become oppressive.

At last relief came. Deep, heavy peals of thunder told of an approaching storm, and soon a copious shower began that continued during the night and by morning the atmosphere was clear, the sky was bright, the parched earth was attired in spring's most verdant gown of green and varied blossoms; not a smouldering spark of fire could be detected anywhere over our vast mountain ranges.

Monday's experience was remarkable, the like of which few have ever experienced. It was not confined to our immediate locality, but extended over the entire county, and in adjoining territory. Some alarming reports prevailed here. The smoke came from the north, and the report was current that Snow Shoe town was a victim of the flames and was burning down. Telephone messages to that place soon put all at rest. There was much mountain land burned over in that vicinity, but at no time was the town in immediate danger. From all sections came reports of the fires burning fences, cord wood, paper wood, bark and cut timber, while in some instances much valuable growing timber was damaged.

ORIGIN OF FOREST FIRES

Many forest fires no doubt originate from burning cinders thrown from the stacks of locomotives. But then there were so many fires, far from railroad lines, that the only conclusion is that they are deliberately started. Some motive prevails for a deed. It is said some people start forest fires to burn away undergrowth and brush to make conditions favorable for a good crop of huckleberries. Some hunters start fires to burn out the low brush to make traveling easier. Many, no doubt, start fires of this kind from malicious motives, to injure the property of another, or from a pure devilish spirit to do something mean and cause distress and consternation. The large amount of fires this season beats all records and there seems to be another explanation for their frequency. In March 1897 an act of assembly made every constable a fire warden, and authorized him, in case of forest fires in his bailiwick, to endeavor to extinguish same and could call any number of men to assist him. For this work he was to receive 15 cents per hour, and his assistants 12 cents per hour, return of which is made to the county commissioners and the county pays one-half and the state bears the other half. A late decision by the court authorizes any citizen who discovers a forest fire to put it out, without order from the warden, and that upon making return to the constable and receiving his approval, can collect full pay for his work.

This act was created for protection to our forests, but without a doubt, it has had the opposite effect. Go into mountainous regions of our county and you find a large per cent of idle, worthless, unemployed, desperate characters, who, for the purpose of getting a chance to do something, will fire the forests to collect a bill for fighting fires of this kind. Land owners tell us it was simply astounding to see fires spring up on every side, no matter how often they were extinguished. All over Centre county last

week hundreds of men were fighting forest fires by day and night, and when the returns come in at next August court, the county commissioners expect to face some enormous bills from these fire wardens for services of themselves and hundreds of assistants.

BILL UNCONSTITUTIONAL

At Warren, Pa., recently, Judge Lindsey handed down an opinion declaring the act compensating fire wardens and their assistants unconstitutional on the ground that the title of the act was defective. If that decision holds, it will be the best thing that can happen our forests, as the worthless rakes, outlaws and bums can not gain any more revenue by burning and destroying our forests, which affords them an opportunity to make a false padded return to pull money from the public treasury. If the act is not unconstitutional the next legislature should repeal it at once. The purpose of the act was good, but the effect is the direct opposite from that intended.

NEWSPAPER LEASED

On Wednesday morning it was announced that the office of the Bellefonte Republican and Daily News, of this place, had been leased by Editor E. T. Tuten to John P. Harris, cashier of Jackson, Hastings & Co's. bank, for a period of five years. This naturally caused a ripple in political circles and the deal, outside of a purely business venture, is significant. Mr. Tuten has been engaged in the newspaper business here for many years, since 1873. The concern, we understand, will be managed by Wilber Harris who during Gov. Hastings' term at Harrisburg was his private secretary. From that it is safe to conclude that the papers will be in sympathy with the Hastings element of the republicans in this county. For some years these papers have been publishing regularly each week columns of Quay literature sent them from the Quay headquarters in Philadelphia, which often were bitter in their attacks on the independent republicans with whom Hastings is identified. Owing to this transfer no more Quay literature will be imposed on the public from that channel. It also indicates that Gen. Hastings expects to be right at home in the future in local republican politics, and some of the rosters who have been using him like a foot ball will be getting a little uneasy. The Gen. is no longer in office, and as a private citizen will serve notice that he is no old house-cloth for the Love-Dale-Chambers crowd to rub their dirty political feet over. It looks as though some fellows will be called to account unless they can successfully demonstrate that they are the political masters in the county. There is lots of good fighting blood in both sides, and some real political sport is in store for the future.

Mr. Tuten, we are told, received a handsome rental for his office and can look on and smile, while others are struggling with the glorious privilege of being editors of a country newspaper.

We extend to our new brethren the hand of fellowship in their venture, with the promise that when they cross our political path they can expect to get the best in the shop, from us.

We hope they may have lots of sport with their wayward republican brethren, prosper abundantly, and grow as fat and sleek as an old rat in a Holland cheese.

ON THE OTHER SIDE

Strolling about town the following variety of comments were heard from Quay politicians, on the paper deal:

"If Hastings keeps on at this rate some of us fellows might as well lay down, or go west."

"The political cat will soon commence to jump in our camps; even if the insurgents are buying newspapers, keep an eye on the indicator."

"Oh I expect they will run a right decent paper for a while; but just you mind, if it is necessary, that gang will try to cut the livers out of some of us."

"What need the Quay crowd care for Dan's papers; why they are all right. Stone is governor; Quay will be senator; Love is the judge; Montgomery is the postmaster with that nephew as clerk; Jack Dale has a fine appointment; John Hamilton got all he was after; Chambers is baro solicitor and recently got another nice job at Harrisburg. Haven't they been getting there, in addition to naming all the postmasters over the county? Now, tell me what has Dan and his crowd captured? Can you tell?"

"The only reason Hastings got it was that he offered Tuten \$100 more than we did. We will have to have a paper of some kind."

"Say, ain't Harter's Gazette a sort of on the fence? Don't know where to drop. Don't it look that way?"

These and many similar comments were the talk among the Quayites. Here and there were little knots and groups in consultation, philosophizing, and none of them seemed in the happiest frame of mind. What will be their line of action is hard to say, but if they must have a Quay organ and the Gazette won't flop, come up here and we will help you along with an extra, for a political faction without an organ is like a cat in hades without claws.

C. L. GRAMLEY RE-ELECTED.

Centre County School Directors Met on Tuesday.

SALARY REDUCED TO \$1500.

Resolutions Against a Reduction of the Regular State Appropriation—Interesting Statistics Relative to the Public Schools of the State and County.

On Tuesday noon the school directors of Centre county assembled in the court house to elect a County Superintendent for the ensuing term of three years, and transact other business that might come before them.

At 12:40 Superintendent C. L. Gramley called the convention to order and then the following organization was effected: Chairman—C. T. Fryberger, of Phillipsburg.

Secretary—C. G. Fink, of Huston Twp. Tellers—H. C. Quigley, Esq., Bellefonte, and Dr. S. S. Frank, of Millheim.

Before the secretary had time to call the roll, the question of the Superintendent's salary for the ensuing term was thrust before the convention by a motion from John A. Daley, of Curtin township, that it be fixed at \$1500. Senator Wm. C. Heinle, Esq., finally explained the effect of a recent act of assembly on that point. An act was passed, at the request of the smaller counties in the state, that the County Superintendent's salary be not lower than \$1500, and that the larger counties could fix their salary at any amount above which they deemed proper; and the salaries are deducted from the state's appropriation to the respective counties.

At this point the proper order was resumed by the roll call of directors present, and some twenty absentees out of 204 were noted.

Being in proper order Mr. Daley again introduced his resolution fixing the Superintendent's salary at \$1500 per annum, which was seconded by several, in different parts of the house.

An amendment was promptly offered making the salary \$1800. Short discussions in rapid order took place and the amendment was withdrawn, but the party seconding same refused to consent. After some confusion the chair simplified matters by calling for a rising vote, only about eight or ten favored the \$1800 salary movement and the amendment was lost. Only one or two votes were cast against the original motion; so that the salary for the next three years will be \$1500 per annum.

G. W. Reese, of Bellefonte, offered the following resolution which was adopted: Resolved that great injury and injustice would be done to the school children of Centre county and the Commonwealth, if the Governor should reduce the school appropriations.

NOMINATIONS IN ORDER.

The next and most important business of the day was the election of a County Superintendent. D. F. Fortney, Esq., lead in a strong speech pointing out the requirements and qualifications necessary to fill the office, and gave his reasons why experience so eminently fitted his man for the position, and he presented the name of C. L. Gramley, the former incumbent.

Senator Wm. C. Heinle next took the floor and eloquently spoke of the peculiar fitness of another gentleman, Prof. A. Reist Rutt, of the Bellefonte High School.

Last came Dr. S. S. Frank, of Millheim, who in well chosen words spoke of the worth, character, learning and superior fitness of Prof. H. C. Rothrock, of the Millheim schools, for the position.

At this point G. W. Reese, of Bellefonte, announced, before the balloting began, that he was authorized to withdraw the name of Prof. Rutt. No more nominations the secretary began reading the roll of delegates and the first ballot resulted in the re-election of C. L. Gramley by the following vote:

C. L. Gramley 123
H. C. Rothrock 53

At the conclusion of the vote Supt. Gramley was called upon for a speech and he responded briefly in appropriate words for his re-election to the third term, which he accepted as an endorsement and approval of his past labors.

No further business, convention adjourned.

SCHOOL STATISTICS.

From the report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, of Pennsylvania, for the year ending June 6, 1898, the following statistics have been compiled for this paper relative to our public schools, that should be of interest to our people:

School Districts.....	2490
Schools.....	27,347
Graded Schools.....	16,842
Male Teachers.....	9,345
Female Teachers.....	18,732
Total no. of teachers.....	28,080
Total no. of pupils.....	1,143,100
Teachers wages.....	\$10,332,759.97
Cost of school books.....	\$609,446.18

State appropriation.....\$5,500,000.00
Value all school property.....\$48,917,002.59
Total expenditures.....\$19,644,401.31

AVERAGES:

Salaries of male teachers month.....\$42.69
" female ".....\$38.45
Length of school term, months.....7.97

AVERAGES, NOT INCLUDING PHILA.:

Salaries male teachers, month.....\$41.06
" female ".....\$32.50
Length of school term, months.....7.69
Mills tax on \$1 for school purposes.....3.14

AVERAGE WAGES IN CENTRE CO.

Male teachers per month.....\$33.97
Female teachers per month.....\$31.24
Length of school term, months.....6.52
Average age of teachers.....28

CENTRE COUNTY STATISTICS.

Permanent certificates issued Feb. 1897 to June 1898.....	8
School houses.....	207
" rooms.....	281
" houses insufficient size.....	18
New houses built.....	3
Good school buildings.....	169
Number with suitable furniture.....	276
Supplied with furniture during year.....	4
Graded schools.....	115
Bible read in schools.....	281
Higher branches, in school.....	57
Professional certificates granted.....	254
Professional.....	28
Applicants rejected.....	118
Male teachers employed.....	177
Female.....	119
Teachers no previous experience.....	36
" of five terms or more.....	153
" with provisional certificates.....	137
" professional.....	4
" permanent.....	2
" normal graduates.....	23
" attended normal schools.....	45
" educated in common schools.....	149
" college graduates.....	13
Estimate of children from 6 to 16 not attending school.....	149
Number of school directors.....	204
Number private schools.....	2
Attending colleges, academies, seminaries and private schools.....	500
Number male scholars.....	5342
" female.....	4945
Average number attending school.....	7.955
" per cent of attendance.....	86
" cost per scholar, month.....	\$1.25
Number mills levied.....	444
Total tax levied school and build- ing.....	\$1,631.76
State appropriation.....	\$47,787.46
Receipts, except state appropria- tion.....	\$85,719.69
Total receipts.....	\$133,507.15
Teachers wages.....	\$7,279.86
School text books.....	\$5,644.63
" maps, globes, etc.....	\$3,637.72
Fuel and other expenditures.....	\$33,199.97
Total expenditures.....	\$123,117.14
Resources.....	\$9,409.38
Liabilities.....	\$5,079.22

REMAINS MANGLED.

Son of Dr. Bland, of Howard, Run Over by the Cars.

Saturday night as the passenger train from Tyrone was coming to Lock Haven, the crew found the remains of a human being strewn along the track. They gathered up portions of the body and afterwards learned that it was that of a son of Dr. Bland, of Howard. The young man, it is supposed, was run over by a freight train. Judging by the mangled remains, many cars passed over the body. The head was held to the shoulders by a few shreds of skin, while the body below the chest was simply an unrecognizable mass. The deceased was subject to epileptic fits, and it is supposed that he was seized with one of these spells while riding on a train and then fell under the wheels, or may have been struck while walking on the track. The remains were interred Sunday at Howard. The young man was a nephew of Jerry Bland, who is now in the hospital, in the city, recovering from injuries sustained by being struck by a car above Mill Hall a few weeks ago.—L. H. Democrat.

Ordered to the Danville Asylum.

The commission on lunacy who examined George C. Brungard Saturday found the man in a semi-conscious condition. His attending physician states that on the day before Christmas he was struck on the head, which blow produced concussion of the brain. Since that time he has been acting strangely at times. The commission found the man in a state indicating that he was on the verge of a mental and physical collapse. The commission made their report Monday, whereupon by order of the court Brungard was ordered to be taken to the Danville asylum for treatment. Brungard is the man who confessed to burning the Dornblazer barn, near Salona.

A \$4,000,000 Building.

John Wanamaker will erect a gigantic store building at Thirteenth and Market streets, the site of his present store, in Philadelphia. The proposed structure is to be twelve stories high and will probably be completed in two years. The new structure is to be 500x250 feet in size and it is proposed to build it in such a fashion that the operation of the present store shall not be interfered with. To do this the new store will be constructed in four sections, each section to represent a quarter of the building. It is understood that when finished the building will cost \$4,000,000.

—Penny Photos at the Mallory-Taylor Studio, Saturdays.

SECOND WEEK OF COURT.

Commonwealth Cases of Last Week Fully Reported.

REPORT OF THE GRAND JURY.

Sentences Imposed—Cases Continued or Settled—A Large List of Civil Cases on Trial this Week—Important Verdicts Rendered—Reported by S. D. Gettig.

Continued from last week.

THURSDAY MORNING.

Com. vs John D. McKinney, indicted first count larceny, second count receiving stolen goods; prosecutor J. M. Bunnell, dealer in musical instruments, etc., Johnstown, with a branch store at Phillipsburg, this county. This case was returned by the justice charged with larceny and forgery, and a true bill found by the grand jury at this court, but upon petition of the district attorney an indictment was found as hereinbefore stated and the other charge dropped. The circumstances of the case are about as follows: The defendant is charged with the taking of one piano valued at \$500; one organ valued at \$135, and one mandolin valued at \$22, or assisting one O. J. Sherman in taking the articles. The organ was recovered at the railway station at Tonawanda, N. Y., the piano at Buffalo, and the mandolin also at Buffalo where the defendant was arrested early in April of this year and brought back by officers Howe and Millward of Phillipsburg, who traced the property over the railroads to where they were found, and the defendant with his co-defendant arrested. At the close of Commonwealth's testimony the defendant changed his plea by leave of Court from that of not guilty to that of guilty on the first count.

Com. vs O. J. Sherman, indicted on first count larceny, second count embezzlement; prosecutor, J. M. Bunnell. This defendant was the general superintendent of the prosecutor's branch music store at Phillipsburg in this county, and is charged with the larceny of the piano and organ referred to in the case above reported, also with getting away with two Domestic sewing machines valued at ninety dollars, one Standard sewing machine valued at fifty dollars, also with the taking of fifty-six dollars of the money belonging to the prosecutor on the 27th day of March, 1899. This defendant with his co-defendant was arrested in the city of Buffalo, New York. They had sold the piano to a music dealer at Buffalo and Mr. Bunnell was obliged to pay the purchaser to get it back as it had been sold to a man by the name of Elliott at Phillipsburg by Mr. Bunnell, in whose possession it now is. The defendant plead guilty.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, APR. 27.

Com. vs George C. Pifer, indicted for false pretense, prosecutor A. W. Oliver. The prosecutor lives near Graysville, Huntingdon county, and met this defendant at a Mr. Fye's sale in Ferguson township, near State College, early in 1897, and the prosecutor was informed that the defendant was anxious to buy some horses, and sometime afterwards the defendant's brother, W. H. Pifer, came from Clinton county and looked at Mr. Oliver's horses, after which the defendant wrote Mr. Oliver to meet him at Lemont on March 16, 1897, with the horses, at which place the defendant gave Mr. Oliver his note for one hundred and ninety dollars, at one year after date payable at the First National Bank of Bellefonte for two of the horses, and represented to Mr. Oliver that he was the owner of a large farm in Porter township, Clinton county, and did not owe a dollar. At the close of Commonwealth's testimony, on motion of defendant's counsel, the Court held that there could be no conviction as the case was barred by the statute of limitations, the prosecution not having been instituted in time. Verdict not guilty and the defendant to pay all costs of prosecution.

Com. vs Clair Rupert and Leo Reardon, indicted for malicious mischief and maliciously throwing stones, prosecutor Geo. Spangler. This case is from Liberty township near Eggleville, and the defendants, who are boys thirteen and ten years of age, were prosecuted for stoning the house of a Mr. Strawcutter and hitting Mr. Spangler's six-year old son on the head with a stone, injuring the boy to such an extent that he could not be in attendance at court. Verdict on Friday morning of not guilty but the defendants to pay two-thirds of the costs and the prosecutor one-third of the costs.

Com. vs Blanche Twohey, indicted for fornication and open lewdness, prosecutor Harry Simler, policeman from Phillipsburg. Verdict not guilty and the county to pay the costs.

Com. vs Frank Rockey, indicted for betrayal, prosecutrix Minnie Rachan. This case is from near Zion in Walker township. Verdict not guilty and the defendant to pay two-thirds of the costs and the prosecutrix to pay one-third of the costs.

The following civil cases were then taken up:
Dr. S. F. Neving vs overseers of the

FACT, FUN AND FANCY.

Bright, Sparkling Paragraphs—Selected and Original.

Hiram Baker's Moralizing.

Sometimes, when I read of the men who're on the tip top notch of fame, While every tongue and every pen is payin' tribute to their name, And when I think how close and small My life and lot is on this earth, I have been fool enough to fall into the blues and hate it all. And envy tuckler men their berth. Sometimes, when some chap wins the prize, And writes his name amongst the best, I think, 't'pose I'd like to rise, His education and the rest. I wonder if I couldn't climb The ladder just as quick as he, And then it almost seems a crime That he should feast, while, all the time, There's but the hard, dry crusts for me. But, then again, I think, suppose That all our brains was same as his, Who'd plough the furrers, plant the rows, And do the common stints there is? If everyone could greatness share This world would stop, I guess we'd find: We can't all fancy-work prepare. The few have pleasant tasks and fair. The many's got to git the grind. God made us all, and put us here As part of His almighty plan; And each one's got his duty clear; It's just to do the best he can. And if my place in life ain't what I'd like to have it, nor as great, Why, if I can, I'll change my lot, And, if I can't, whate'er I've got, I'll try to keep my furrer straight. Joe Lincoln, L. A. W. B.

A stump speech ought to be a short one. The best material for a successful novel is brains.

Good luck sometimes knocks a sensible person silly. Sorrow's crown of sorrow is forgetting happier things.

The man who is the first to argue is usually the last to act.

Dignity sometimes comes high, but certain people must have it.

A man who refuses to live within his means must live without it.

Girls who go 'round a good deal are evidently in the spinster class.

Don't put your trust in riches it pays better to put your riches in trusts.

A man always says appearances are deceitful when they are against him.

When a man is satisfied that he made a mistake in marrying he isn't satisfied.

Conscience makes cowards of us all, but it can't make honest men of us all.

The hotel annunciator frequently summons the bellboy to another climb.

No matter how dull the times are, the bill collector always finds things promising.

The man who succeeds in conquering his bad habits is indeed a conquering hero.

Familiarity breeds contempt; as we get to know others we think less of ourselves.

A man may have his price, but he is apt to be shy about showing his cost mark.

Inconstancy is other people's failure to respond to friendliness we have neglected to show.

A Missouri belle of 40 years standing has just married. She lived down competition.

Women ought to make good legislators. Many a man can testify that a woman's word is law.

Sometimes a woman crushes a man with a look, and sometimes she only mashes him.

"A ready-made suit is seldom the real thing," says Wigwag; "it's generally a counter fit."

Sentimental girls find great pleasure in kissing the grass early in the morning because it's dewey then.

There's a difference in lawyers' charges—some ask only a nominal fee, and what others ask is phenomenal.

When a man says he has nothing to say the chances are that he could say a good deal if he wanted to.

The golden rule should work both ways, but most men who are willing to do as they would be done by want to be done by first.

Every American husband should read this: "In cold weather Chilean women, when in bed, keep their feet warm by placing them on a dog."

Practical Father—if he says he loves you, I suppose he does; but can he support you? Daughter—Why, papa, you know it wasn't his fault that the chair broke!

The late John Holmes, youngest brother of Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, was also known among his intimates as a man of ready repartee and characteristic humor. Mr. Holmes never married, but lived by himself in a little house in Cambridge, and once a friend rallied him on his lonely life. "You ought to marry, John," said he, "and have a larger house." "Why, yes," replied Mr. Holmes, with a quiet smile; "if I should take a better half, I would have to improve my quarters."

Another Act Unconstitutional.

At Scranton Wednesday Judge Gunster declared the act of May 3, 1893, empowering municipalities to impose a maximum tax of \$1,000 on itinerant merchants, unconstitutional. The decision was rendered in the case of the city against Morris Wormer, of New York, a man who conducted a fire sale, and who was arrested and fined \$100.

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