

The Centre Democrat.

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FACTS ABOUT THE COURT HOUSE.

How The Public Was Deceived—Promises Were Not Kept—An Expensive Blunder—An Awful Debt Confronts Tax Payers.

In the last issue of the Centre Democrat six facts were clearly presented to the taxpayers of Centre county relative to the repairing of the Court House. They are facts that can not be successfully refuted, because they were taken from public records, that are accessible to all who may be interested, or who may seek information. Further, these facts are still fresh in the minds of the public as they are not of ancient date, but are matters that transpired here since the spring of 1909, when the agitation was begun for the repairing of the Centre County Court House.

From the financial statement made by Commissioners Woodring and Zimmerman, and filed in the Prothonotary's office in June, 1909, we quote again:

FACT NO. 1:—"The present actual indebtedness of the county (July 1909) is \$54,350. To offset this there is over \$29,000 due the county in taxes and tax liens."

FACT NO. 2:—"The expense for additions and improvements to the Court House is estimated at \$60,000."

FACT NO. 3:—"The amount of debt to be incurred by funding present indebtedness, and for alterations, additions, and improvements to the county buildings is \$100,000."

From the annual financial statement, of Centre County, issued March 17, 1911, we quote:

FACT NO. 4:—"Commissioners statement of entire cost of repairs to Court House" to that date:—"122,052.56."

From the Souvenir book issued by the Commissioners May 19th, 1911, we quote for Fact 5:

FACT NO. 5:—"The new and remodeled court-house therefore will cost the county sixty-two hundred dollars per year for thirty years, four thousand dollars for the annual interest and twenty-two hundred dollars for the annual sinking fund payments."

From these facts there can be no dispute as follows:

That the Commissioners guaranteed the taxpayers not to spend over \$60,000 in repairing the building; instead, they up to Jan. 1, 1911, paid out \$122,052.56 for this purpose, and the building then was far from completion. Nor does this \$122,052.56 include the costly interior furnishings in the Library, Judge's room, District Attorney's office, etc., where elaborate mahogany furniture and rare and expensive oriental rugs were placed, costing many thousands additional, making the completed building cost nearer \$135,000 than \$60,000 as promised the public.

That this \$135,000 for rebuilding must be added the \$25,000 net debt of the county, in June 1909, making over \$160,000. To meet this they sold \$100,000 bonds, payable in 30 years, which leaves still an enormous present, unprovided floating indebtedness of over \$60,000. It can't be otherwise.

That by paying \$6200 annually on the \$100,000 bonds for thirty years will cost the taxpayers \$186,000, absolutely; and that does not provide for the additional present floating debt of over \$60,000 that must be paid as well.

That when they tell the taxpayers of Centre county that such a burden of indebtedness "will not in any way affect the tax rate" for the next thirty years they certainly are underrating the intelligence of our people; and, after violating their solemn pledges, made repeatedly, not to spend over \$60,000 on the repairs to the building, they now are adding insult to injury in such misleading statements.

HOW PUBLIC WAS DECEIVED.

The Centre Democrat publicly announced in June 1909 that it endorsed the proposition to improve the court house because it was absolutely necessary. All sensible people seemed to agree on that point. The first definite action taken was a meeting at the home of Judge Orvis which was attended by most of the county officials and members of the bar. After mature discussion, the sentiment of those present was unanimous that repairs were necessary, and should be made in a substantial manner. Carefully prepared plans were submitted from the Philadelphia architects. At this meeting it was positively announced that the rebuilding would cost about \$45,000, and that the architects, who are financially responsible, would give a bond guaranteeing the entire cost not to exceed \$60,000. This assurance from those who spoke in behalf of the Commissioners, is what induced those present to endorse the proposition. In order to insure the accuracy of this statement the publisher in the past week interviewed several prominent attorneys present at this meeting and all, positively, recalled that the promise was absolutely given that an indemnifying bond would be given by the architects for any amount the repairs would exceed \$60,000. To confirm this statement let us quote from the Centre Democrat, June 24, 1909, about two weeks after the meeting at Judge Orvis' home:

"On Saturday Messrs. Magaziner and Ketterer, representatives of Newman & Harris, the Philadelphia architects, were in Bellefonte taking measurements for the proposed improvements. The county commissioners have set a certain price for the remodeling of the court house, and the architects have guaranteed that they can be made for so much money. Bids will be received from local contractors, and nothing would please the commissioners better than to give the contract to one of them, but if their estimates run over a certain set price, they will have to do the next best thing, give it to outside contractors who are willing to come within the required limits."

In the same article "The Centre Democrat" endorsed the proposition to remodel the court house, but at a cost of \$60,000 believing that there was an absolute guarantee that it would not be any more. The commissioners went ahead pell-mell, and Tommy Mitchell seemed to be continuously on the job. They never secured the indemnifying bond from the architects, and when done our people found that Commissioners Woodring and Zimmerman not only spent the promised \$60,000, but that there is now no indemnifying bond in existence from the architects, and that there is \$75,000 additional to pay.

In the face of these facts can anyone say that these commissioners kept the pledges, so carefully and deliberately made to the taxpayers of Centre County?

One calculation shows that had these bonds been issued in series, a number to be retired annually, in 30 years over \$24,800 could have been saved the taxpayers, over the present method of paying \$6200 annually for 30 years.

Again if \$2200 is paid and compounded annually at 4 per cent, in 30 years it would yield over \$125,000, or save \$28,000. Even at 3 per cent, the rate for deposits, it would have yielded \$108,000, or \$3,000 more than the present rate.

No effort was made to float this loan in Centre county with its dozen or more of solid banking institutions and millions of deposits. Centre county taxpayers, who pay this \$186,000 in thirty years, were not invited to invest in these gilt-edged securities, but it was peddled to the cities, and the reason for doing so is variously surmised by people acquainted with financial matters. While all these transactions were going on, our commissioners, like innocent "Babes in the woods" contentedly and with childlike simplicity gave their endorsement, having reposed too much trust in those accepted as confidential advisors.

Another item, as the bonds and sinking funds draw interest for 30 years, both are said to be subject to a 4-mill state tax annually, which in that time would mean \$12,000 and \$6,000 state tax or \$18,000 to be added to \$186,000 or \$204,000 as the net cost of the \$100,000 bonds. The Gazette, said recently it was "one of the shrewdest and most economical deals ever accomplished by any board of County Commissioners in this or any other state," but facts don't bear it out and common rumor now refers to the deal as having a taint of graft attached to it.

It neither was shrewd or economical. From every aspect it was a blunder, and the people must pay dearly for the stupidity of our commissioners for allowing themselves to be even a party to this suspicious deal.

AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE.

Tuesday was the last day for filing petitions to have names of candidates appear on the official ballot, in addition to those nominated at the recent primaries. The only petition filed was that of Reuben T. Comley, of Union township, for the office of county treasurer, under the "Independent Party." For that reason his name will be printed on the ballot, and from all appearances he will be a real live candidate. Mr. Comley insists that the republican organization cast its influence toward Josiah Pritchard, of Philadelphia, which, if correct, was not a square deal, and Mr. Comley takes this method of filing a positive protest.

In all primary campaigns, the county chairman and the party organization should play no favorites, or set up any slates. That is unfair and unjust, and if Mr. Quigley gave Comley a lemon, as is possible and quite probable, we do not blame Mr. Comley at this time for throwing it back. If Mr. Comley

got a dirty deal, his many friends will now stand with him, as he defies such an organization.

Hospital Notes.

Admitted for treatment—Julia Foreman and John Bryan, Bellefonte.

Operations—Mrs. Marjorie Harding, Tyrone; Lulu Spicer, Pleasant View; Russell Wallace, aged 5 years, Millersburg; George E. Boyd, student at State College, injured while playing football.

Twenty-five patients now in the hospital.

Gets Letter After 47 Years.

John Nadden, of Tomawanda, who was a member of the Third Pennsylvania heavy artillery during the Civil War, has just received a letter which he wrote to his wife while stationed at Fort Monroe forty-seven years ago. Where the letter has been all these years he does not know. In the letter he urgently requests his wife to get him a pair of pants.

CANDIDATES' EXPENSES.

What the Various Politicians Spent Before the Primaries.

Under the corrupt practice act all candidates for office are required to file a statement of the expenses incurred in their canvasses. The following candidates at the primaries in this county have filed their accounts of expenses incurred. Some have itemized the amounts in detail, while others set it out in a lump sum. Some candidates, who seemed to be working the hardest, make the lowest report, while others apparently not hustling, make large returns. This may be due to lack of uniform system, and some may have short memories.

Those candidates who have not filed a statement have made themselves liable to a penalty, and had better give the matter immediate attention. The following are the accounts as filed, those who spent less than \$50 were not required to state the amount:

Sheriff—Dem.: D. J. Gingery, \$300; Arthur B. Lee, \$150; John Hipple, \$30; Geo. H. Yarnell, \$208; Jacob S. Kneibly, no statement.

Prothonotary—Dem.: D. R. Foreman, \$122.75; C. U. Hoffer, \$265; Rep. Harry H. Diehl, \$77.44; H. C. Rothrock, \$136.97.

Treasurer—Dem.: Frank W. Grebe, \$203.02; John D. Miller, \$116; James S. Schofield, \$106.25; Rep.: R. T. Comley, \$508; John S. Dale, \$64.07; Josiah Pritchard, \$229; Robt. D. Musser, less than \$50.

Register—Dem.: J. Frank Smith, \$123.75; John Trafford, no statement; Rep.: G. W. Hall, \$65.93; Frank Sasserman, \$74.40; Edw. J. Williams, \$97.

Recorder—Dem.: Joseph M. Alters, no statement; D. A. Detrich, no statement; Edw. C. McKinley, \$103.20; W. Francis Speer, less than \$50; Rep.: William H. Brown, less than \$50.

Commissioner—Dem.: Burdine Butler and John Dunlap, less than \$50; Wm. H. Fry, H. N. Hoy, John R. Lemmon, John H. Runkle, no statement; Daniel A. Grove, \$99.53; Wm. H. Noll, \$112.50; Wm. A. Stover, \$115.56; Rep.: Christ Decker and Jacob Woodring, less than \$50; Isaac Miller, P. S. Richards, no statement; Harry E. Zimmerman, \$84.67.

District Attorney—Dem.: D. Paul Fortney, \$190; J. Kennedy, John Johnston, \$154.48; J. M. Keckhline, \$115; S. Kline Woodring, \$181.16; Rep.: Jas. C. Furst, less than \$50.

Coroner—P. S. Fisher and S. M. Huff, no statement.

Auditor—Dem.: Jeremiah Brungart and S. H. Hoy, less than \$50; Wm. A. Collins, no statement; Rep.: W. H. Goss, no statement; Clement H. Gramley, less than \$50.

Surveyor—Dem.: J. H. Wetzel, less than \$50; Rep.: David W. Fletcher, no statement.

Candidates whose expenses were less than \$50 have thirty days from the date of the primaries to file a statement.

PENITENTIARY COMMISSION.

Visited Bellefonte on Wednesday to Inspect McBrides Gap Location.

The following members of the commission appointed by the Governor to secure a location for the new penitentiary farm arrived in Bellefonte on Tuesday evening: John Francis, Wm. E. Sanky, Wm. Price, Thos. A. Dun, and C. E. McPherson. With them was W. C. Hagan, of Pittsburg, president of the "Centre County Traction Company" which was chartered a few years ago to build a trolley line from Bellefonte to State College.

Yesterday morning, in company with Col. W. P. Reynolds, Linn Harris, of the State Forestry Commission, L. T. Munson, the local representative of Traction company, H. C. Quigley, Esq., and others, by automobile they started out and spent the greater portion of the day inspecting the proposed location in Nitany valley adjoining McBrides Gap. They went into every detail regarding the soil, water supply, building material, limestone, transportation facilities, etc. Mr. Hagan, of Pittsburg, was invited to be present to explain the expediency proposition and assured them that in a very brief time, if the location was selected, the trolley line would be rushed to completion and put in operation.

While Mr. Francis has been here a number of times this is the first inspection by the full commission, and it is believed to be the final one, and that the selection of a location will soon be settled. During the afternoon the commission was in session at the Brockerhoff House, gathering all the available data possible.

They have given out no information to anyone, thus far, and for that reason predictions are only idle speculation.

A number of citizens from Pennsylvania were in Bellefonte on Wednesday afternoon and were in consultation with the commission, which indicates that notwithstanding the opposition of the Grange in Pennsylvania, many others were exceedingly anxious to secure the institution in that section.

Political Cards Came Down.

"Almost a wagon load of political cards bearing the portraits and names of defeated candidates for county nominations were removed from different places in the town last week. The cards of the successful nominees are still in their places."—Lewisburg Journal.

The Bellefonte Civic Club could expend some of its surplus energy to good advantage in like manner in this community.

When you are thinking of job printing come to the Centre Democrat.

With 5,600 circulation The Centre Democrat is the best advertising medium in Centre county.

Falling as he was descending the basement steps at the Pickering Hotel, Jersey Shore, a resident of Jersey Shore, fell on Friday and received injuries from which he died. Gecken entered the hotel about noon and after speaking to one or two persons started for the basement. As he was descending the stone steps from the first floor, he slipped and fell to the bottom, landing head first on the hard cement floor.

TWO YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS.

Harvey Tressler and Harry Barner Admit Robbing Gillen's Store.

Ever since the robbery at Gillen's store last Tuesday night the police have been almost sure they could lay their hands upon the guilty parties once they got the opportunity, and on Saturday after a little springing upon the part of Special Officer William Beezer, Harvey Tressler was taken into custody, and about the same time Policeman Harry Dukeman nabbed Harry Barner. Both Tressler and Barner are boys of perhaps seventeen years of age and have figured in a number of escapades which have come mighty near bringing them within the clutches of the law. The boys were locked up by the officers until Monday afternoon, at which time they were taken, as before Justice Henry Brown for a hearing. Both boys admitted to doing the robbing, Tressler telling how they opened first the shutters and then the window at the rear of the store, using a beer bottle opener in the operation. Tressler then entered the store and took the money from the cash register, while Barner went around to the front door on Allegheny street and kept watch. When asked how much they got, Tressler replied about \$545. As to the correctness of this amount they were questioned, as Mr. Gillen is of the opinion that there was more than that amount taken. Barner claimed to have gotten none of the money. Justice Brown bound the boys over for court, thereby putting their case in the hands of the judge for disposal. They were taken back to jail, as they were unable to secure bail for their release.

We have no desire to add anything to the Justice's plain but friendly talk to the young men while they were before him, but we would like to give a little warning and advice to a number of other boys who are fast approaching the same end. The police have long known of a gang of these boys who, while all are not totally bad, seem to be led by several of bolder spirits. Most of the youths come of good parents, and it has become a matter of wonderment among their friends as to why they display these adverse traits of character. We only refrain from giving the names of the boys through regard for their parents. But unless they soon mend their ways, their names will be connected with some crime that will bring the blush of shame to their friends. The authorities have been very lenient a number of times, with the impression that a reprimand would work some change in the lives of the boys, but patience has now ceased to be a virtue, and hereafter Justice Brown intends to deal more severely with all incorrigible youths who are brought before him.

CAME FROM CLEARFIELD.

Josiah Pritchard a Resident of Centre County Only 8 Years.

There is much dissatisfaction over the nomination of Josiah Pritchard for County Treasurer. It is maintained that instead of allowing the candidates to make the fight as individuals, a few politicians in Bellefonte who control the organization, sent word around to pull in for Pritchard. When you look over the situation and see old-time republicans, from families that have lived in the county for many generations, like the Comleys and Dales, turned down for a young man who moved to Centre county but a short time ago, you realize that there is merit in the complaint.

We understand that Pritchard does not like our allusion to him as a Clearfield citizen, and will attempt to refute it this week in the local papers, in order that there may be no doubt in this matter this week a careful search was made of the Assessors records in the Commissioners office, which should definitely settle any such contention as to Josiah Pritchard's residence. The records show as follows:

In 1902, Josiah Pritchard was assessed for some property, and his legal residence is given on the assessor's books as a citizen of "DECATUR TOWNSHIP, CLEARFIELD COUNTY, PA."

In 1903, Josiah Pritchard became a resident of Philadelphia borough, this indicates that he has lived in Centre county only 8 years, which is hardly long enough to warrant him in asking preference and recognition for the very best paying office in this county over deserving republicans who have lived in the county all their lives, and whose ancestors for many generations more, and who have been substantial citizens and heavy taxpayers all those years.

Alexandria Pastor Resigns.

Following the close of the regular preaching service in the Presbyterian church at Alexandria on Sunday morning, Rev. William Stewart, pastor of the church, called his flock together and offered his resignation. In doing so Rev. Stewart took occasion to score a part of his congregation, which for a time has been maintaining that his period of usefulness is past. Rev. Stewart said: "Now I will resign in order to make way for a younger man. A small part of the more fashionable set have been harping at me for some time to make this move, and it is up to the congregation as a whole, whether I continue as your pastor." No definite action was taken on the minister's resignation on Sunday.

Rev. Mr. Stewart has been the faithful pastor of the Presbyterian congregation at Alexandria the past sixteen years.

Round Table Meeting at State College.

A round-table conference on industrial training in the public schools will meet at State College, tomorrow and Saturday, with representatives from among the superintendents and principals of the schools of central Pennsylvania. Charles Lose, of Williamsport, will report for the committee recently named to recommend form of school records and reports. The school code, provides for industrial, manual training and agricultural schools and the meeting will discuss the best methods of carry out its provisions.

THAT HIGH STREET BRIDGE.

A Few Things Not Generally Known—Ignored a Home Industry—Men Deprived of Work—Paid An Enormous Price

On Saturday, while driving by the old chain works, near the fair ground, the clatter of machinery was heard in the old building. The doors being open, through sheer curiosity, in search for news, the writer stepped inside, uninvited. First to greet us, with square and marker in hand, was H. S. Moore, the proprietor of Bellefonte's bridge and structural steel works. Throughout the plant was scattered piles of iron and steel, the raw material or stock used in his business. There were overhead tramways and hoists for handling the heavy parts; engines and heavy machinery for cutting and shaping the parts, and bolting them together in some massive structure.

It really was a revelation to realize that we had such an important industry in this community, constantly giving employment, and of which thus far so little account has been taken by the public or the press. But then Mr. Moore is a modest, unassuming, practical business man, and skilled bridge builder, who has no time or inclination to seek notoriety.

Being inquisitive as to what he was designing, he showed us that he had just filled an order for a truss bridge, 182 feet long, which he erected near Pittston, Pa., and other truss work for some large buildings near Scranton. He said he had constructed other large bridges here, and erected them in adjoining counties.

Naturally he was asked what bridges he had built for Centre county. The query brought a peculiar expression to his face as he modestly informed us that Centre county officials gave him no encouragement; in fact, appeared to want to devote exclusively elsewhere. That there always was a cool, misty atmosphere about Centre County officials that could not be penetrated by him; but as a student of human nature and from experience with officials as a bridge man, he believed he knew when it was the proper time to "get off"—especially when there was something else doing; and with it was a curt and cunning smile that contained a wealth of meaning that words could scarcely express to one conversant with the bridge business and methods often employed in driving a good bargain. Then a rapid fire conversation followed. In substance it was:

Q—Have you ever applied to our County Commissioners for bridge work—a chance to estimate, etc.? A—Yes, Sir.

Q—When did you usually apply? A—Only when I saw an occasional advertisement, or from indirect information.

Q—Were you ever notified when contracts were to be let privately? A—No sir, at no time.

Q—Are they acquainted with the facilities you have, your location of a bridge plant in the town, and your ability and desire to serve them? A—They most certainly are as I have been to the office and solicited work personally.

Q—What response did you get? A—It was indefinite—that they would do better by private contract.

Q—Did you make application for the new High street bridge? A—Yes, when I learned that one was to be built. They then said I was "too late—contract already let."

Q—Could you have constructed such a bridge in your present plant? A—I did build one of 182-foot span and am certain could have erected this one.

Q—What guarantee can you give for your work? A—Never had a bridge condemned for either inferior material or workmanship.

Q—What financial guarantee, I mean? A—Oh, I see; I am not a rich man, but in all cases can supply the required approved bond; that point gives me the least concern.

Q—Could you have taken this High street bridge at \$7641? A—The chances are I could, though I saw no specifications—because my factory expenses are light; because I can secure good non-union labor here for less than in large factories; because I would not have needed to ship my finished bridge by rail to Bellefonte; because myself and workmen live here in Bellefonte, and would not have had travel expenses and board bills and other expensive delays; because I would have superintended the work myself and not needed an expert to oversee it.

Q—Have you done any work in this section? A—Yes, the trusses and girders for the match factory, but none for the boro or county.

Q—What could you have erected the High street bridge for? A—I can't say because I don't know the exact specifications. I am confident I could have put an entirely satisfactory bridge there for at least \$5,000.

Q—Do you think, as a resident of Bellefonte and a taxpayer of Centre county, and with a promising industry in our community, that you have gotten a square deal? A—Oh well; what is the difference, I am not complaining. My work comes from this and adjoining states, you see. I located here because I like the town, and the location suits me.

Fearing that we were trespassing on the valuable time of a busy man, we withdrew; and in another moment Mr. Moore was busily engaged designing patterns on large steel plates and we were speeding up the pike.

As the writer drove up the state road he philosophized to himself as follows: "Here is Bellefonte with business practically at a stand still. The silent furnaces and smokeless stacks rise over the inviting scenery like sentinels in an industrial cemetery. On our street corners bundles of men are seen in groups—often mistaken for idlers, when in fact they are industrious, honest men, with hungry families at home and unfortunately are out of work and only too anxious for any kind of employment. Up in the Court House are a set of County Commissioners, who with certain individuals in our boro council, but last week sent a \$7600 contract away from Bellefonte, out of the county, at an unnecessary cost to the taxpayers, and thereby took from a promising Centre county industry, and from honest needy men just that much employment, that might have brought food, cheer and comfort into many a humble home, when the bleak winds are sweeping from the north to remind all that a severe winter is almost upon us.

Thus the money raised by taxes, is sent out of Centre county at this time—where it is sadly needed. It goes to enrich others, to help build up industries elsewhere, to give other labor employment, when in all fairness and decency it should have remained here in Bellefonte, and thereby encouraged a new industry and given local workmen an opportunity to earn an honest dollar, so that they might support their families in a decent and respectable manner.

In all fairness, is such conduct of public officials a square deal between man and man?

Since the above was written inquiry at the Prothonotary's office showed that the report of the viewers on this bridge has not been "confirmed absolute" by the court. Nothing is on record to that effect.

One of the County Commissioners informed us, nevertheless, that the contract had been awarded to the York Bridge Company, for \$7641 sometime ago; that in a few days work would be commenced and rushed to completion. The clerks in the Commissioner's office examined the minutes of the daily proceedings, and reported nothing on record regarding awarding a contract for the High street bridge. Some councilmen were seen and no definite answer could be secured, although a special session of council was held during fair week, about Oct. 4th.

EXPLANATIONS ARE NOW IN ORDER!

WOES OF A NEWSPAPER OFFICE.

We frequently receive letters that are worse than puzzles. Carelessness on the part of some writers runs into the marvelous. We here refer to only a few recent incidents: Last week we received four letters asking for a change in address without a syllable as to where the paper had been going to, and to get out we were obliged to dig into over 5000 names, and then off fall, because of similarity of some names upon the Democrat's list. A short time ago we received a letter with one dollar on subscription but no name of the remitter. Last week we had four letters requesting a change of address, without mentioning where the paper was going to previously. Then again last week we received a note which contained nothing more than what follows:

"Chas. R. Kurtz: will you send my paper to Benora, I came back to stay, I am not well."

No postoffice and no signature. A safe rule is to read over every letter before inclosing it in an envelope to see if what you have written is what you intend to say and the receiver will clearly understand what you wished to tell him.

Judges Are Men.

That courts are not entirely above criticism was the opinion of the late Senator George F. Hoar of Massachusetts, who, while a member of the house of representatives in 1876, said: "My own public life has been a very brief and insignificant one, extending very little beyond the duration of a single term of senatorial office. But in that brief period I have seen five judges of a high court of the United States driven from office by threats of impeachment for corruption or maladministration. I have seen in the state of the union foremost in power and wealth four judges of her courts impeached for corruption."

Our Discovery. Mrs. Hutchins, of Washington, declares that it is impossible to live upon less than \$67.50 a day. That may be true, but many have discovered it to be quite possible to exist on considerably less than that amount per day.

You get the most news in the Centre Democrat.

A Jersey Shore bride says she is glad she's married, because now she can eat all the onions she wants.