

The Centre Democrat

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The New Penitentiary Comes to Bellefonte

The Decision Was Officially Announced on Thursday of Last Week—Work Begins in Spring—A Tract of Almost 5000 Acres.

Last week when the Centre Democrat went to press early on Thursday morning the following semi-official announcement was made to its readers:

"At the hour of going to press, we feel justified, for reasons known to ourselves, in saying: The new penitentiary will be located at McBride Gap, and the decision will likely be made public by the time 'The Centre Democrat' reaches its readers."

This prediction was verified that same afternoon when Warden John Francis called up the publisher of this paper by phone and authorized the statement that the commission had officially selected the McBride location for the new penitentiary; and that they had secured options on all the properties.

Location Definitely Settled.

There now is no doubt in any one's mind but that the question of the location is definitely settled. Gov. Tener has been over the location several times and has assured the members of the commission, and others, that when their formal report comes before the senate it will be without any hesitancy. For that reason the citizens of this community have regarded the matter as absolutely settled, and have had much occasion to rejoice over the outcome which means so much to the future of Bellefonte and the immediate community.

For some time there was the utmost confidence here that the McBride location was the choice of the commission, yet no vote had been taken on the proposition, and there was some uncertainty as to some of the details, which at any time might upset all calculations. We hardly think we are violating any confidence now when we say that the location was actually determined as early as the Saturday prior. That day J. Linn Harris and Col. Reynolds were summoned to Pittsburgh and in the afternoon had a long conference with the commission when all possible questions regarding the details were taken up. Mr. Harris was there to represent the many options they had secured, and Col. Reynolds in behalf of his large holdings of farm land. That evening when a verbal understanding was reached, the commission informed these two gentlemen that they had decided on the McBride location, provided that all the conditions could be complied with, such as securing some additional options on necessary lands needed to secure the control of the water sheds at the McBride stream; and some portions of the stream that comes down at Pleasant Gap, in case they needed that for additional supply. This decision at that time was announced in the strictest confidence between the parties present, as its publication then might cause them trouble in securing the additional options. When Mr. Harris returned from that conference he failed, in response to numerous inquiries, to make a definite statement as to the result, further than to assure all that he still had "a smile on his face" which was favorably interpreted.

On Wednesday afternoon the commission arrived here and at once got down to business. Various options were lifted but the parties were enjoined to secrecy for twenty-four hours, while other parties made hasty trips to the country, and especially to Pleasant Gap where land owners were consulted, and the deal that was made with little trouble to secure all the additional properties that were asked for at the close of the negotiations. When these options were returned to the commission in proper shape and delivered, the formal announcement was made that the McBride location was not only selected, but had been actually acquired for the State of Pennsylvania on which the new penal institution would be erected to take the place of the Western, and later the Eastern, penitentiaries, with their several thousand inmates and hundreds of officials and attendants.

23 Tracts Secured.

The following is a schedule of the various tracts of land acquired for the penitentiary site:

Located on Nittany Mountain:	
John Angstedt, unimproved...	2 1/2
John C. Barnes, unimproved...	50
Charles T. Bilger, unimproved...	50
William Bilger, unimproved...	20
D. Callahan, Sr., house and lot...	5
D. C. Callahan, Jr., house and lot...	15
A. W. Garver, house and lot...	12
J. Houser 2 farms and buildings...	64
Henry H. Houser, unimproved...	64
E. H. Hoyer, house and lot...	10
S. H. Hoy, unimproved...	100
Geo. Thomas, farm and buildings...	128
State Forest Reservation...	936
Located in Gap:	
Wistar estate, unimproved...	45
Henry Noll, house and lot...	5
John L. Hoyer, house and lot...	19
Farm Land in Valley:	
William E. Crust...	122
I. L. Dresser...	242
J. Howard Grove...	100
John F. Ishler...	160
Col. W. Fred Reynolds...	2145

Harry E. Zimmerman..... 275
Total acres..... 4928 1/2
Cost of entire tract..... \$190,944.39
Average cost per acre..... \$37.74

Purchase Free From Graft.

When you think of it, the selection of a tract of five thousand acres that would meet all the necessary requirements, and its purchase at a low price direct from over twenty different owners, without any condemnation proceedings, all conducted in an open market and all parties perfectly satisfied and not a note of dissension heard anywhere you will appreciate the vast proportions of the undertaking. When it is remembered that this vast tract was purchased for the State of Pennsylvania which has been besmirched with recent capitol buildings, and is honey-combed with gang-rules, where graft has run riot in the past, with scandal and some of the plunderers now in the penitentiaries, the price paid for this land is proof that Mr. Francis conducted a shrewd deal for the state, in which every transaction was open, clean, and above the thought of suspicion and the property acquired, we believe, was at a lower price than it would have brought in the open market at public sale. This is a high compliment to Mr. Francis and his commission, and such a successful beginning should augur well for the future success of the institution.

A Brief Interview.

The next step is to thoroughly search the titles of all the properties and have the deeds recorded, and this work now is well under way. A complete survey of each tract will be made to see if the land is located as recited in the records. For this purpose a corps of surveyors will be located on the vacant Reynolds farm property at Rockview and they will go over every inch of the land, and do their work for the location of the reservoirs and the pipeline as well as select locations for some of the preliminary buildings.

On Saturday morning the writer called on Warden Francis and though he had had a strenuous time for the past week he was in a most entertaining mood as the first and possibly the most important step, in his great movement to reform the penal institutions of our state, had been successfully made. We say successfully, for the reason that it was a task of great responsibility, one that had required almost a year of research, inquiry and study. In that time he has traveled over the greater portion of the central part of this state examining all kinds of sites that were tendered the commission; and inspected others of his own accord, going into endless detail with all of them as to their peculiar advantages. The McBride Gap site was selected for the simple reason that the peculiar conditions that were essential to such an institution were more fully combined in that site than anywhere else in the state and the same was secured at a reasonable figure.

Prisons Impair Men.

Mr. Francis objected to a formal interview at that time for the reason that he did not wish to work the publicity end of his job too strong, and thought that he had enough notoriety thus far. Nevertheless we found him a most interesting character; a man of strong convictions, and, without a particle of diplomacy, speaks out just what he thinks at all times, and his vocabulary is by no means limited. He believes that the prisons of the country, as a rule, impair men physically as well as mentally; that from a criminal point of view every man in either an asset or a liability to the state; that as an economic proposition it pays the state better to reform our prisoners than to punish them and harden their hearts towards law, order and society; that we should endeavor to teach them that crime is wrong, and create in them a desire for better living—to become good, useful and respected citizens; that we can not accomplish such results through confinement in gloomy prison walls where men will brood over their punishment, and become mental and physical wrecks.

Mental Reformation Needed.

The question was bluntly put to him, "What will be your remedy; what will you attempt along the lines of reform in the new institution?" In substance he replied emphatically: "That is a large problem and years may be required to successfully solve it. I may be only laying the foundation and the details certainly will be worked out in the future through experience and observation. I believe that it is the first duty of the state to supply these men with proper food—feed them; I believe in the injunction of the scriptures that man shall earn his daily bread by the sweat of his brow—there is no reason why they should be idle and fed by the state, therefore the second duty is—work them. That will make them use their muscle and brawn, and they will build up strong bodies, and outdoor exercise will give them health and vigor, and in conse-

HAS DOMESTIC TROUBLES.

William Wellers Seems to Have Two Wives—One Enough.

William Wellers, a one-time resident of Bellefonte, who has been living lately at Osceola, was arrested last week on a charge of desertion brought by his wife. He was brought to this place and given a hearing before Squire W. H. Munser, who sent him to jail in lieu of \$500 bail. Two wives figure in the case, the second having been acquired by him but a few weeks ago.

The woman who brought the charge, formerly Miss Mann, of near Howard, claims to have been married to Wellers in March, 1905. This the man denied on the witness stand, but acknowledged to living with her as man and wife. A boy of four or five years of age was a testimonial of this union.

First Improvements.

From him we learned that the first step towards improvements will be the erection of a preliminary building to accommodate about one hundred men. This will likely be erected of concrete and will become, later, a part of the general plan. The first lot of men who will be brought here will be those who are considered as trustworthy; those who have only a few months to serve and who would not think of attempting to escape as they would, upon capture, be subject to an extension of their time. There will be no making until this coming spring when the weather will be more settled.

Up to this time there has been no definite plan for the erection of suitable buildings or the selection of the site of the main buildings. In fact nothing definite thus far has been considered, except the selection of the general location. These problems will be taken up later, and as they are propositions of large magnitude they will be very carefully considered before work is done. It is the purpose to do as much of the construction work as possible with the prison labor.

Owners Can Remain.

Some inquiry has been made as to when the owners of the various farms will be asked to yield possession. All parties were informed that possession will remain, if they desire, for at least a year, and may not be required for several years. At this time everything is in an indefinite shape and the state will want their properties occupied rather than empty, therefore, all the tenants will remain, if they desire, for some time to come, subject to a reasonable or customary rental to the state for the use of the same.

Warden Francis left here on Sunday morning with his secretary, C. E. McManis and Parole Officer John M. Eagan and they will be back and forth frequently, looking after matters of importance.

One of the important inducements made to the commission while here was the offer of a large sum for the purchase of a portion of their large supply to the institution, in case they found that it was needed at any time.

Ample Funds Available.

The State at the last session of the legislature appropriated \$1,250,000 for the beginning of this work so that they now have over a million dollars in cash to spend on construction. The site of the Western Penitentiary is located in the midst of a business section and the land has become exceedingly valuable, and if sold, would give a large sum for further improvements. From this it will be seen that there are ample funds at hand for elaborate construction work. Then with the great state of Pennsylvania finally secured, there should be no trouble in securing the necessary funds for completing the institution on a substantial basis.

It is said, on reliable authority, that there were possibly a hundred locations offered the commission, and these finally were sifted down to three plausible ones, that received serious consideration. They were, one at Westmoreland county, and the two in Centre County: near Boalsburg in Pennsylvania and the McBride location in Nittany valley, which latter was finally chosen.

In the above schedule three of Col. Reynolds' farms in Benner township are omitted for the reason that the commission did not want to exceed the \$200,000 limit in the purchase of a location. The farms reserved are the ones now occupied by John Speary, John Benner and Miles Mechtly. In case they later might feel that they needed more farm land, they were given a two-year option on these properties. The large peach and apple orchards on Col. Reynolds' properties are included in the original purchase for the institution, also all the power sites on spring creek.

On page 7 of this issue we give an extended article on the location of the penitentiary, that appeared in the Pittsburgh Dispatch on last Friday morning. (This paper is published by Col. C. A. Rook, president of the commission), which covers many important points regarding the institution, and gives some idea of the importance of the institution as viewed by them.

A Boom For Bellefonte.

The citizens of Bellefonte certainly have reason to congratulate themselves on the successful termination of this movement. From a financial point, it means that large sums of money will be spent in this immediate community for construction work alone, amounting to several millions in the next few years. The institution, if consolidated with the Eastern Penitentiary, will then employ several hundred persons, some at large salaries amounting to \$200,000 per annum and many of them will reside in our town and occupy good homes. It

DOING A GOOD WORK.

Pruner Orphanage Has Ample Income at Present.

Last Thursday the Board of Directors of the Pruner Orphanage held a business meeting at Tyrone and looked over the properties and passed on some matters that needed their attention at this time. The home is now being repaired, and the little ones have been provided with all the comforts of life, such as food and clothing and good home influence and moral training to make them useful citizens.

Most of them have been attending the public schools in the town and have proven apt students. During the past year all bills incurred by the orphanage have been paid out of the current income of the rentals on properties, and a large surplus is left over. About a year ago the income for the home was so large over the expenditures that the Board authorized the investment of a \$2500 loan as first mortgage on improved real estate. We mention this to satisfy our people that the institution is prospering, doing a good work in a modest, quiet way; up to this time it has had ample funds, and even more than its present needs.

There was some doubt in the minds of some of our people, at its inception, as to whether the orphanage would be self-sustaining; but the experience thus far dispels any such doubt. The success of the home, thus far, in a large measure is due to the donors at Tyrone, given by Sigmund Joseph, the President of the Board, who derives more real genuine pleasure by it than anything else that he ever was interested in. The success of this little home for friendless children seems to be the best and most important thought at all times.

Runaway Youths Captured.

Tuesday morning's Altoona Tribune has this to say of two wayward State College youths:

"Harry Jackson and Wallace Kline, both about 15 years of age and reside at State College sought lodging at the police station Monday night about 8:30 o'clock and when questioned by Lieutenant McIlvaine proved to be runaways. They disappeared from State College on December 12 and since then their whereabouts had been a mystery to their friends. The local police authorities were asked to be on the lookout for them and when they sought a place to sleep out of the city they were not surprised when informed that they would be held for their parents. While they were being questioned by Chief Tillard the father of the Jackson boy walked into the police station, intending to make some inquiry for his son, and was some little surprised when the boy walked out of the chief's office. He took him home while Kline was locked up and his people notified of his whereabouts."

Special Christmas Services.

Miss Helen Overton, director, and Mrs. Herbert Robb, organist, have been making preparations for interesting musical programs for the Presbyterian church worshippers, Sabbath. The regular choir has been added to, for the occasion, and an orchestra composed of Christian Smith, violin, Harry Garbrick, cornet, and Henry D. Brown, bass, will be in evidence.

The musical program will include, anthems, "O Little Babe of Bethlehem," "He shall reign forever," "Behold, I bring you good tidings," "The First Christmas Morn." Solos will be sung by Miss Julia Curtin, Miss Dorothy Jenkins and Mrs. Joseph Mitchell.

The pastor, Rev. G. E. Hawes, D. D., will preach appropriate sermons, both morning and evening. A most cordial invitation is extended to the public to worship with the Presbyterian church people this Christmas Sabbath.

At Nittany Country Club.

A dinner and a dance will be given at the Nittany Country Club, at Hecla, on next Thursday evening, December 28th, to which each member of the club and two guests will be invited to attend. The famous Tyrone railroad orchestra will be in attendance and special return train over the Central railroad will be run to Bellefonte at 12 o'clock in the evening. Most of the guests will go there by special train. A large delegation of members of the club from Tyrone are expected to be in attendance.

Erecting Saw Mill.

H. E. Harder is erecting his steam saw mill on lands of the Alexander M. DeHaas estate about 200 yards west of the Beech Creek station in the Bald Eagle Valley railroad, which will saw out the timber to be cut off of the DeHaas tract recently purchased from the DeHaas estate and from Richard B. DeHaas and William Lingie, on the north side of the Bald Eagle mountain. Considerable timber stands on these tracts, which will keep the mill running for the next year. The necessary buildings are now being erected.

Large Fire at Howard.

A complete ruin of the large fire that destroyed the dairy barn and live stock of Geo. H. Leathers, near Howard, last Saturday, will be found in Howard items on the last page of this issue. This is one of the worst fires in that valley for a long time, and the origin is a complete mystery. There was little insurance and the loss will be very heavy to Mr. Leathers.

Pioneer Citizen of Tyrone.

Andrew Gardner, one of Tyrone's oldest and most respected residents as well as one of the oldest pioneer settlers in that section of the state, died Saturday evening, at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Clara Gorman, Asthms, was the contributory cause of death. Mr. Gardner had attained the good old age of 83 years.

Ends Her Life at Ninety.

Margaret Plouse, ninety years old, ended her life by hanging in the spring house at her home in Burnesberg, where she was found by her husband when he returned home.

A CLEANING UP.

McManigal Declares He Will Make Full Confession.

Ortie McManigal, who has confessed to exploding dynamite at the Llewellyn Iron works, on which charge he has never been arraigned, made the following statement: "They are going to take me to Indianapolis to testify before the grand jury investigating the dynamite conspiracy—well, I am going to tell all that I know about it, and that is more than anyone else knows besides John J. McNamara and several other 'higher ups.' I am going to tell the Indianapolis jury things that I have withheld from William J. Burns, and when the probe is ended, if justice is done, a score of men who are responsible for my deeds will find lodgment behind prison bars."

"This is going to mean a cleaning-out of the corrupt 'higher ups' in the labor unions. I have done all that I could for the cause of justice, and now I feel that I have in a measure atoned for my deeds."

APPLE PACKING SCHOOL.

At the Pennsylvania State College, December 27 to January 3. An apple packing school will be held in Room 209 of the Agricultural Building at State College every day from eight to five during Farmers' Week, December 27 to January 3. This will be in charge of Mr. Geo. N. Cresswell, an expert box apple packer. Lectures will be given on the proper methods of packing apples in boxes and an opportunity given for any one interested to do actual box packing in order to become thoroughly familiar with the work. Every fruit grower in the county interested in fruit or fruit growing should take advantage of this opportunity. Even if time cannot be spent to learn the operation of packing, it would be worth while to stop in and see the demonstration.

Barn Burned at Marsh Creek.

The explosion of a lantern, Saturday evening, in the barn of John James, who resides in what is known as Pole Cat hollow on Marsh Creek, caused the total destruction of the building together with almost the entire contents. Mr. James went to the barn about 6 o'clock to feed the stock. He placed his lantern on the barn floor while he climbed to the mow to throw down corn fodder. While climbing down the ladder he discovered that the lantern had exploded or burst and the flames were fast spreading. He cut the horses and cattle loose from their leashes and succeeded in getting to the fence and walking away, but the barn was consumed valued at \$300. The grain was in the granary some distance away and the stock was saved. The saving of the team of horses and several head of cattle was due only to the quick and risky work of the owner. The building was insured for \$500 and on the contents there was \$250, all with the Sugar Valley Fire Insurance company of Logansport. The loss is placed at \$1,100 to \$1,200.

Post Office at Beech Creek Robbed.

The post office at Beech Creek was robbed some time Sunday night, but the amount realized by the robbers hardly paid them for their trouble, owing to the fact that the postmaster, Harry Fearon, as a rule always takes the cash and stamps home with him. The robbers gained entrance to the brick building by prying open the front door. Once inside they took the small safe and carried it across the race back of the grist mill, where probably by a charge of dynamite the door was forced open. Pennies and stamps to the amount of about \$6 were taken. A number of cancelled money orders were also missing. There is no clue to the robber.

The Biggest Hog Yet.

Centre county just about took the lead in the fall for large hogs, but Illinois takes the premium, as per the following note from James Renner, of Freeport, Ill. Dec. 13, 1911:

"I have become quite interested in the rivalry between the farmers at hatching time as to who will have the largest hog. I enclose a photo of an Illinois hog raised by John F. Renner, of Freeport, Illinois. This hog, a Poland China, at the time of killing was thirty months old, and weighed 465 lbs. on foot and dressed 325 lbs. This hog was fed with the intention of making it weigh 1000 lbs. but fell a little short."

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Barn Burned Saturday.

The large barn on the farm of John James in Liberty township, on Marsh Creek, was burned Saturday afternoon about 3 o'clock. A quantity of hay and grain was consumed by flames. The loss is covered by insurance in the Grange.

Hospital Notes.

Operations—Miss Dora Stern, Snow Shoe; Chorney Lowery and John Garbrick, Bellefonte.
Discharged—Life Tate.
There are twenty patients now in the hospital.

Some Eggs.

Wm. H. Lee of Spring Mills, has a hen's egg that measures nine inches one way, and seven inches the other way. It was laid by a Plymouth Rock hen—the weight of the egg is just eight ounces.

We're 'Poplar,' We Are.

It is feared by the people of Harrisburg that Centre county will soon reach out and grab the new State Capitol. If they want it over there they'll get it, too.—Clearfield Spirit.

Business Booming.

So great is the demand for day-old chicks from the stock of Kerlin's Grand View Poultry Farm, Centre Hall, that in place of orders for 2,000 as stated in last week's Centre Democrat they booked orders for 12,000 chicks, five months in advance of time wanted for spring of 1912.

A Birthday Surprise.

A number of friends and relatives of the neighborhood met at the home of David W. Behres, at Port Matilda, on the 12th of this month, in honor of the birthday of Mr. Behres, who highly appreciated the surprise. A sumptuous dinner was prepared which was heartily partaken of by all. The afternoon was taken up in friendly chatting, music, singing, etc., everybody having had a fine time. Among those from a distance were John Shoyer and wife, and James Foust and wife, of Tyrone.

To Our Correspondents.

Next week no paper will be issued from this office as we wish to allow our employees the customary holiday vacation. For that reason we would call the attention of our correspondents to the fact and will ask them to defer their customary communications until the following week in January, 1912.

In this connection we wish to express our appreciation to all our correspondents who have faithfully supplied us with the news from the surrounding country for publication in their popular paper. Thousands of readers, far and near, have appreciated these efforts and this has done much to make the paper interesting to its many patrons. To one and all, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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