

CONDEMNED.

The Opera House Pronounced Unsafe for a Public Gathering

MUCH ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY.

Sworn Statements From the Managers—Dr. George W. Wagoner Testifies—Full Particulars of the Coroner's Inquest—The Verdict.

The Coroner's Jury in the case of the Opera House disaster met at 7:30 yesterday evening according to appointment, at the office of Dr. Evans, the Coroner. In addition to the testimony previously taken and published in yesterday morning's DEMOCRAT, the following was added:

John Leber Sworn—Am a cashier for Mr. O'Donnell under the Opera House. Was in the restaurant and heard the noise, imagined the building was breaking down—ran to the head of stairs saw a man gathering himself up in the middle of the street, took him to be Mr. Parsons the plumber, went toward the Opera House steps, and was caught by some one who called "pull me out" and I caught a boy and pulled him out, then a couple of more men came and helped me and we pulled two or three men out, the crowd gathered and all began working. I thought to work to the best advantage I had better get up stairs the back way. Got on the stage and called to the people to come forward that there was no fire, but that there was a lot of people lying at foot of stairs. When I told them that they gathered back towards the stage. I got down to head of front stairs soon after. Some asked me why they did not leave the people go on down the stairs, they did not know any one was lying down in the stairs until I told them. Then we got some of them to come back up. We got a boy and woman out, they looked as if they were dead—the woman was dressed in black, I didn't know her. The theatre was packed—we could hardly get through. No one got out except those we pulled out, some may have got down the back stairs. I saw a boy and a woman taken down to the restaurant, I helped to take them down. I saw Dibert's boy he was alive but injured. Dr. Zimmerman attended to them. There was a big crowd around the Opera House when I came down, the police were there trying to keep the crowd back, I saw one man hit who was trying to get to the house, he was intoxicated. There was no one got out except those we pulled out, they were wedged in the stairway. The back stairs are very narrow, one man can just about get down at a time, there are so many little offsets in it.

JOHN LEBER.

Winfield W. Evans, sworn—I am the assistant of Mr. John Henderson, undertaker. The following bodies were taken to Mr. Henderson's morgue after the disaster in Opera House: Miss Lizzie Claycomb, John Miller, colored, Mrs. Wesley Burns, Miss Clara Burns, Isaac Foler, Georgie Little Horner, Mrs. Nestor, Eddie Bigler, Mr. Fresholtz, George Slonicker.

WINFIELD W. EVANS.

James Dillon, sworn—I am a waiter in H. O'Donnell's restaurant, soon as I heard the noise I ran up out of the restaurant to see what was the matter, I saw several people lying in the doorway of the Opera House, tried to get them out but could not, but with assistance of two others managed to get two out, they were two men. Three of us tried to pull one man out but could not he was wedged in so tight. His body was half out on the pavement, his legs were wedged in the crowd. When we found we couldn't get any body out in front we went through Mr. Weir's saloon to the back of house and there I saw a lady coming down the stairs with a child in her arms, I never was up the back stairs. I took the child and led the lady down to O'Donnell's restaurant. Mr. O'Donnell directed me to take the big lamp out on the pavement so the people could see. The light over the door had been broken by a man climbing over the heads of those lying down in the stairway. I stopped there with the light until the house was empty and the dead were taken away. It was about fifteen minutes after the crush until the stairs were cleared. The people I tried to pull out were living and crying for help, but we couldn't pull them out.

JAMES DILLON.

James Clair, sworn—I reside in Pittsburgh. I was acting as usher on the balcony, last night at the show, after I had everybody seated I went down to box office and I stood there until the show was pretty near at an end, when a crowd came rushing down stairs, and another gentleman (Mr. Herrington), and myself tried to stop them. We saw it no use, the crowd pushed us aside. The box-office is on the first floor and the people came down from the gallery to the first floor. Then there was a cry of fire on the first gallery. When the crowd came rushing down and pushed me aside I went out into the auditorium and called

to them to keep their seats, that there was no fire. About that time a lady fainted, and I got water for her and restored her. The water was brought to me from the stage. Then I assisted in getting the people down the back stairs. I can't say whether any one jumped over the railing into the stairs. It was about ten or fifteen minutes until the stairs were cleared. The people rushed down before the cry of fire; they thought the curtain was coming down, then the cry of fire was raised. There was a good many people got down the back way. One person can about get down the stairs. Before the panic I went down the front stairs to see if the doors were open. Mr. McCann had the doors fixed, they were not open, but could be pushed back very easily. One of the doors is fastened by a bolt and this was removed so that the doors could be fastened back against the wall in a minute. I don't know how wide the opening between the door is.

JAMES CLAIR.

Michael McCann, sworn—I am one of the lessees and managers of the Park Opera House. I was in and out through the house and around the top of the stairs all night, and about the time the last act was on I went to bottom of stairs to see that the doors would be prepared when the curtain would fall. One of the doors is usually held by a small bolt to keep the door closed. I removed the bolt and left the doors hang loose. I went to bottom of stairs, which is only a few steps further down. I was standing there talking, when I heard a bell ring. I never had heard the bell before, its tone was strange to me, it rung a dozen claps before I noticed it. I asked a man near by what the ringing of the bell meant. One of them said he thought it was one of the new fire bells. I said to them: "Gentlemen, for God's sake go away from the door." I feared some one might cry fire. They turned as if to leave, and then I turned to door and started up stairway. I opened door and got on inside of door, thinking I could reach top of stairs before the people would hear the bell. The first or lower gallery windows being open the people evidently heard the bell as soon as I did. By the time I got half way up the stairs they began to jump over the banisters down into stairs. There was quite a number sitting on banisters around top of stairway. I saw by the jumping and the rushing that there would be a panic. I called to the men in front to be calm; they said they couldn't, they were being pushed. They pushed me down in front of them. To the best of my knowledge fifteen or twenty people landed on the sidewalk before the blockade took place. I staid a few minutes, helping to get those who fell on the sidewalk out of the road. Several others helped me to get them away. The thing got so serious looking to me, and my wife and child being on the inside of theatre, I rushed around to back stairs and made my way on to stage. I went to foot-lights and begged the people for God's sake to be calm, that there was no danger. By this time my wife, who was on the stage, ran to me and threw her arms about me, and my child was crying; my wife begged me to take her out; I insisted on her standing on the stage until I went down among the people. She insisted on me taking her out, and as the people seemed calmed down considerable on the inside, I took them down the back stairs and through Postoffice alley. I left her at Griffith's corner with child, and I rushed over to front of theatre. The policemen were flourishing their batons and I drew back again. There was a fearful howling mob about the door, and somebody at engine turned the water on them. After that the people drew back from sidewalk. Soon after that a passage-way opened through to top of stairs. I returned to my wife on the corner, and we saw them carry several people away from the front of the theatre, evidently wounded. I met my brother and sent my wife and child home with him. By this time the theatre was emptied. After this I went to top of stairs by the front way, then I saw the first corpse, a lady, Mrs. Nestor, they called her. She was laid out on some chairs. I saw several people up around the stage and two people on stretchers. I asked if they were dead. Some one said one was living, but they thought the other was dead. I waited at top of stairs until the people were brought down, one was a man and was dead, the other was lady and was still alive. I didn't hear any one crying fire in the house, I was too far down the stairs. I did not see the police using unnecessary violence. I think the police did their duty nobly. There was a mob around the door. They did not treat that crowd anyway rudely. The front stairway is the only exit for the audience. I think it is four feet six or seven inches wide. I believe if the people had not got panic stricken they could have got out in from five to six minutes. The people acted as if they were wild. There was 713 people paid admission according to our box-office statement. I believe the theatre will seat that many. The one exit is hardly sufficient; it is rather small. In case of fire near the stairway the people would be entirely cut off. But I have seen lots of Opera Houses that are worse

than that one if I mind them aright. But it is my deliberate judgment that if the stairway had been three times as wide as it is, the same trouble would have occurred if the people had acted as they did last night. They jumped and fell and then others jumped on those that were down. They all came down pell-mell.

MICHAEL McCANN.

James Flynn, sworn—I reside in Johnstown and am one of the lessees and managers of the Parke Opera House. I was on the stage during the performance when I heard some one cry fire. In a moment everybody was on their feet. The alarm came from one of the galleries. The people seemed wild, jumping from both galleries and boxes. Two of the actors and myself rushed down to the foot-lights and tried to quiet them, but everybody seemed to rush for the stairway. When we saw we could do nothing with them and remembering the back stairway, we assisted the women and children from the audience on to the stage, and stationed a man at the back stairs to pass them out quietly. After a short time Officer Varner and another officer appeared, coming up the back stairs. They assured the people there was no danger and it seemed to pacify them. The officers went down front and worked on the stairway for ten or fifteen minutes. We saw them carry up two women, a man, a boy and a girl. The man was dead and the woman died in short time after. It wasn't very long until Varner had the passage way cleared and then the people passed out. The exit of the house is not very large, that is certain, but the way the people piled down there it would be very hard to get them out of any exit, no matter how large it was.

JAMES FLYNN.

Dr. Geo. W. Wagoner, affirmed—I reside in Johnstown, and am a physician. Last night I was summoned by telephone to the Opera House. I was informed that a great disaster had occurred. When I arrived the panic was over and the house was almost emptied. All who were in it were attending to the wants of the injured and preparing the dead for removal. I saw the dead body of a woman lying on some chairs, another woman on the stage very nearly recovered from the shock, a boy, who was also recovering, and the body of a man whom I afterwards learned to be George Slonicker. He was lying on the stage. I detected a faint flutter at his heart, and endeavored to revive him by artificial respiration. Dr. Zimmerman also gave him hypodermics of stimulants. We worked with him about a half an hour and were finally forced to give up our efforts. He gave several slight gasps during our work, but finally died. The bodies were taken to Henderson's morgue, where I saw nine, identified as related by Mr. Evans. I made a superficial examination of all the bodies and am of the opinion that they all died by suffocation. To-day I accompanied Dr. Evans, the coroner, to the Park Opera House, and examined the exits somewhat closely. We gained the stage by the back stairway and found it to be built in one corner of the building, not lighted, very steep and winding, several of the steps broken, and the entrance from the stage only twenty-two inches wide. An ordinary sized man filled the entrance. The main and only exit for the audience is situated in the front part of the house under the gallery. It is surrounded by a casing thirty-six inches high. The exit from the first gallery is on the left hand side of the house looking to the front, and that of the second gallery on the right side. Both exits come together on the first floor and are separated by a casing thirty-six inches high. The aisles from all parts of the house centre at the main exit. Thirty-three inches from the mouth of the stairway, towards the stage, is an iron post which helps to sustain the gallery.

The distance between each side of the casing around the stairway is fifty-two inches. Thirteen feet slanting down the stairway are double doors swinging outward. The clear opening in stairway when doors are open is forty-eight inches wide and eighty-two inches high. A few steps below these doors are the outer doors of hall, fitted in the stairway which is of the same size. There is then a small platform and three more steps to pavement. There are nineteen steps each seven and one-half inches high from floor of hall to outside doors and then the three steps below these doors to pavement. The stairway leading to first gallery is at the front of the house to the left. There are three steps which carry one to a platform thirty-six inches wide and thirty-one inches above floor of hall. From this platform the main stairway to gallery goes off at a right angle to the three steps first mentioned. These stairs are thirty-two inches wide and there is a turn composed of four winders at the top, leading to the landing on the gallery. There are eighteen steps in all. The stairs on the right hand side, which lead to the top gallery, are exactly similar until they reach the floor of the first gallery, where the landing and entry of the stairs leading to the top gallery are cased in making a passage way immediately at top of stairs thirty-one inches wide which is enlarged to fifty-seven inches wide at one place sud-

denly contracted to thirty-two inches wide where first step is made on to stairs to top gallery. These irregularities in the passageways are all made in a very short distance as will be seen by the accompanying diagram. It is my opinion that they are constructed about as badly as they well could be. All the exits appear to me as if they had been constructed for the purpose of forming a trap. It is also my opinion that the main stairway is entirely inadequate for the purposes for what it is intended.

GEORGE W. WAGONER, M. D.

We, the undersigned, the Iquest summoned by D. W. Evans, coroner, to inquire into the cause and manner of the death of Lizzie Claycomb, John Miller, Mrs. Wesley Burns, Miss Clara Burns, Isaac Foler, George Little Horner, Mrs. Nestor, Eddie Bigler, Mr. Fresholtz, and George Slonicker, do find that death was caused in each case by suffocation in the jam resulting from the panic precipitated by a false alarm of fire in Parke's Opera House during a theatrical performance on the evening of December 10, 1889. We do also find that, owing to the insufficient number of exits, the narrowness and faulty construction of the only one in the house, we condemn the building as entirely unsafe for any public gathering, and we hereby ask the authorities to take proper means to prevent any public assemblages in the building as now constructed.

Witness our hands and seals this 11th day of December, 1889.

J. M. SHUMAKER, [L. S.]
Geo. TURNER, [L. S.]
JOSEPH PRICE, [L. S.]
E. ZANG, [L. S.]
THOMAS S. SEIBERT, [L. S.]
JACOB C. HOENSEL, [L. S.]

KILLED ON THE RAILROAD.

Lizzie Gerhardt, of Hornerstown, struck by the Limited While on Her Way to Morrellville.

The New York and Chicago Limited was late yesterday evening and went through here at what railroaders call lightning speed. It passed here about 7:30. Just below Haws' Fire-brick Works, Cambria, it struck a young woman, and knocked her off the track. The trainmen saw her and stopped as soon as they could. A man was sent to notify the Cambria borough authorities, who in turn notified Coroner Evans, by telephone. Dr. Evans telephoned to have the body put in a safe place till morning. The body was then taken to the Council Chamber.

It was found that the young woman was Lizzie Gerhardt, of Hornerstown. She was on her way to Morrellville, having left her home about 6:30 P. M.

Word was sent to her parents at Hornerstown, who sent down for the body. Her father is William Gerhardt.

Lizzie, it appears, has been somewhat wayward, and had left home without her parents knowing where she had gone.

First Work First.

The voters of Pennsylvania with those of three other eastern States, have, during the past year, stood up, been counted and found lacking on the temperance question by many thousand votes.

Men are not yet convinced that alcohol is an outlaw that should be outlawed. A great work of popular education on that point remains yet to be done. It may be hard to believe, but it is nevertheless true, that there is no short road to the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic liquors under a government of the people. They, the people, must first be taught that these liquors as beverages are bad before they will prohibit their traffic.

A thorough enforcement of the temperance education laws of Pennsylvania and these other States in their public schools will slowly perhaps, but surely and permanently change public sentiment on the question.

The sooner we temperance workers realize that this first work must be done first, and therefore address ourselves to securing the most thorough and intelligent temperance education of every child in all our public schools that the laws demands, the sooner will our States and nation be rid of the incubus of the saloon.

MARY H. HUNT.

That Gift to Dr. Beale.

Pittsburgh Dispatch.

Whatever the outcome in fact may be of the somewhat mysterious letter of Colonel Shepard to Dr. David J. Beale, of Johnstown, those who know how the latter gave up everything and worked unceasingly for his fellow townsmen after the great flood hope that the \$5,000 will prove a reality and react Dr. Beale's pockets.

One of the newspaper correspondents who was an eye-witness of the scenes after the disaster at Johnstown said to me yesterday: "Dr. Beale was a hero in those dark days. He never gave a thought to himself at a time when most Johnstown men were looking strictly after themselves, and early and late worked for those who were in distress. The whole-hearted Christianity of the man made him a conspicuous figure. He was one of the few, too, who thought it was worth while to get on a barrel of a Sunday and with cheerful words attempt to instill courage and hope into all within hearing. His open air addresses did a great deal of good."

WEE WILLIE'S VIOLIN.

YOUTH'S COMPANION.

A poet, rambling 'mong the hills,
Chanced on a cottage gray,
And there he made his tuneful home
For many a summer's day.
Wee Willie was the farmer's son,
A pretty lad to see;
But all the village called him daff,
So dull and dumb was he.
Even to the poet's gentle speech,
He gave but sullen heed,
And, turning from his friendly smile,
Ran from the cot with speed.
But suddenly he stood transfixed;
What was that angel-tone
That thrilled each nerve with rapture wild,
'Till Heaven around him shone?
An old red violin, in hands
That knew to use it well,
What tender tones ring on the air!
What wondrous things they tell!
The wee daff laddie nearer drew,
His shining eyes like stars,
Mind, spirit flamed, as bursts the sun
Behind dawn's cloudy bars.
His fingers work—oh, for a chance
To wake such wondrous sound!
"Let me!" he cried; the poet smiled,
And his wild wishes crowned.
When lo! the boy with eager hand
Put soul in every string,
And drew forth soft, melodious sounds,
Tender and lingering.
Nor would he yield his angel up—
For angel 'twas to him—
Till the long day grew dusk and gray,
And even the sky was dim.
To hear and far the glad notes went,
The wondrous tidings sped,
Wee Willie was no longer daff;
The evil spirit fled.
He talked and walked like other boys,
And laughed and loved and sung,
And, later, with his wondrous gift
And fame the world has rung.
Now listening thousands eager crowd,
This deed of Heaven to win;
"For angels guide the bow," they say,
"O, wee Willie's violin."

THERE IS NO DEATH.

There is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore;
And bright in Heaven's jeweled crown
They shine forever more.
There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain or mellow fruit—
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.
The granite rocks disorganize
To feed the hungry moss they bear;
The forest leaves drink daily life
From out the viciest air.
There is no death! The leaves may fall,
The flowers fade and pass away;
They only wait through wintry hours
The coming of the May.
There is no death! An angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silent tread;
He bears our best beloved away
And then we call them "dead."
He leaves our heart all desolate;
He plucks our fairest, sweetest flowers—
Transplanted into bliss they now
Adorn immortal bowers.
The bird-like voice, whose joyous tones
Made glad this scene of sin and strife,
Sings now her everlasting song
Amid the Tree of Life.
And when he sees a snail too bright
Or heart too pure for taint or vice,
He bears it to that world of light
To dwell in Paradise.
Born unto that undying life,
They leave us but to come again;
With joy we welcome them—the same
Except in sin and pain.
And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear, immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there are no dead!

—Erica Power's Advance Thought.

THE NEW NATIONAL BANK.

A Room in Alma Hall to be Occupied—Operations to Begin January 1st.

The Authorities of the Citizen's National Bank have rented the room in Alma Hall now occupied by John H. Waters & Bro., plumbers. A large safe will be procured and the room put in condition for the bank by January 1st. Arrangements for remodeling the interior of the room are now making.

There is great demand for the stock of the new bank, so much in fact that some of the heaviest subscribers have given some of their stock to others who were anxious to take it.

MARRIAGE LICENSES.

The Following Have Been Granted Since Our Last Report.

(Christian) F. Goran.....	.....Morrellville
(Mary) Elton.....	.....Morrellville
(Katie) Kelly.....	.....Johnstown
(Jacob) S. Miller.....	.....Stony Creek twp
(William) Keating.....	.....Morrellville
(Annie) M. Kelly.....	.....Jackson twp
(Alex) Paulson.....	.....Morrellville
(Annie) Haden-Green.....	.....Morrellville
(David) J. Lavelly.....	.....Morrellville
(Margaret) M. Bartlebaugh.....	.....Millsville
(Evan) B. Powell.....	.....Johnstown
(Jeanie) Worthington.....	.....Johnstown
(Philip) W. Luman.....	.....South Fork
(Susan) L. Fenrod.....	.....South Fork
(Henry) Fink.....	.....Jackson twp
(Sarah) Lely.....	.....Ebensburg

Carter Will Hang.

The news has been received here that Charles Carter, convicted last week of the murder of John Matthews, was yesterday morning sentenced to be hanged. He claims that if he had another trial the result would be different.

A Hungarian, said to be named Glusky, was killed on the Pennsylvania Railroad last night by Fast Line east. The body was shipped to Portage yesterday, in care of P. McGough, for interment.

THE NEW LINCOLN BRIDGE.

It Was Ready for Use Early Yesterday Morning—Rapid Work.

Tuesday morning about half-past 9 o'clock the new Lincoln Bridge was thrown open to the public. Of course there was a great rush when wagon communication was re-established with the Pennsylvania Railroad passenger and freight stations. The latter place was a very busy one yesterday in consequence of the opening of the bridge. Everybody wanted to be the first waited upon.

The completion of the bridge in such a short time reflects great credit on the contractors, Hoover, Hughes & Co. It was about twenty-two hours from the time the first trestle was set up till the wagons were crossing the bridge.

Christmas—Preparing For It.

At this time of the year, when the Christmas holidays are fast approaching and many thousands of people are making secret preparations for the secular celebration of the festival, it is worth while to stop and consider the principles that should guide one in following the customs of the season. If we could free ourselves entirely from the traditions and customs that require us to make gifts to our friends on Christmas Day we should nevertheless return to the practice spontaneously and again establish the custom, for Christmas is the time of peace and good-will, and those who have a proper appreciation of the day give their feelings natural expression when they try to make their relatives and friends share their own happiness during the festival period. It is entirely natural, therefore, that it should be a gift-giving season. The custom is not an arbitrary fashion, but is founded upon the instincts of humanity. It is possible, however, to have, custom warp the gift-giving from its true purpose by encouraging extravagance and leading the giver to gratify his own vanity instead of kindly ministering to the tastes or wants of his friends. Between those whose friendship is real there can be no such thing as a selfish weighing of the intrinsic value of a gift. Its value lies in the fact that it embodies an expression of love or affection, and whether it be large or small, costly or simple, it has this value to the true heart. For this reason that gift is most highly appreciated which in some way forms a part of the giver; that which has at one time been cherished by the giver, or made by his hand, or that has been thoughtfully and considerably selected to meet the tastes or needs of the recipient. Christmas should not be desecrated by gift-giving felt as an obligation that is fulfilled solely because custom demands it. The gift should be a real expression of affection sincerely offered. With this consideration of the principles, says the *Baltimore Sun*, that should guide one in the Christmas season comes relief from some of the perplexities that beset one while preparation is being made for the coming festival. It encourages one to rule out at once all merely formal gifts and to dismiss from the mind all thought of making presents merely for form's sake. It imposes at the same time the very pleasant duty of preparing for each friend some token of affection that shall show consideration as well as kindness and leads to the preparation of little tokens of affection, inconsiderable in value perhaps, but significant of thoughtful love. Christmas is thus made a real festival in the heart, not a merely formal season for gift-making. But one cannot afford to wait until the day itself before choosing the gifts that shall give expression to the kindly, generous feelings of the Christmas season. There must be thinking and planning now if the gifts are to exhibit that consideration which shall add to their value as tokens of affection. Our friend is to be pleased; that is the first consideration. What gift will show him that a tender regard has been had for his tastes or whims; that there has been a real effort made to gratify him? If that can be determined in such a way as to enable the giver to give something of his own personality into the gift it will have a double value in the eyes of the recipient. There are probably no Christmas gifts that give higher satisfaction than the home-made articles fashioned in secret during the pleasurable weeks preceding the holiday. Next to these are good books, selected with delicate appreciation of the literary tastes of the recipient. There is no need for extravagant expenditures of money on Christmas gifts, but there is need for a great deal of thoughtful consideration, which is the essence of true friendship. And now, while Christmas is still some days in the future, is the time to think about the matter and to resolve to honor an old custom in the right way by following its spirit and disregarding its fashions form.

The Bodies Found on Sunday.

The body identified as Walter E. Hoopes was shipped yesterday evening to Stewart & Mowen, Baltimore, funeral directors. They had written to the undertakers here to have the body shipped to them.

The other body has been positively identified as Joseph Karnes, of Union street, and will be buried in Grand View to-day at 2 P. M.