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EDITOR & PROPRIETOR.

# The Elk Advocate.

JOHN G. HALL, Editor.  
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## A Night of Terror.

In the Fall of 1845 I was traveling eastward in a stage-coach from Pittsburgh over the mountain. My fellow-passengers were two gentlemen and a lady. The elder gentleman's appearance interested me exceedingly. In air and manner he was calm, dignified and polished; and the contour of his features was singularly intellectual. He conversed freely on general topics, until the road became more abrupt and precipitous, but on my directing his attention to the great altitude of the precipice, on the verge of which our coach wheels were leisurely rolling, there came a marked change over his countenance. His eyes so lately filled with the light of mid intelligence, became wild, restless and anxious; the mouth twitched spasmodically, and the forehead beaded with a cold perspiration. With a sharp, conclusive shudder, he turned his gaze from the giddy height, and clutching my arm tightly with both hands, he clung to me like a drowning man.

"Use this cologne," said the lady, handing me a bottle with the instinctive goodness of her sex.

I sprinkled a little on his face, and he soon became somewhat more composed; but it was not until we had traversed the mountain and descended to the country beneath, that the fine features relaxed from their perturbed look, and assumed the placid, quiet dignity I had noticed.

"I owe an apology to the lady," said he, with a bland smile and gentle inclination of the head to our fair companion, "and some explanation to my fellow-travelers also, and perhaps I cannot better acquit myself of the double debt, than by recounting the cause of my recent agitation."

"It may pain your feelings," delicately urged the lady.

"On the contrary, it will relieve them," was the respectful reply.

Having signified our several desires to hear more, the traveler then proceeded:

At the age of eighteen I was light of foot, and I fear (here he smiled) light of head. A fine property on the right bank of the Ohio acknowledged me as sole owner. I was hastening home to enjoy it, and delighted to get free from a college life. The month of October, the air was bracing, and the mode of conveyance, a stage-coach like this, only more cumbersome. The other passengers were few—but three in all—an old, grey-headed planter of Louisiana, his daughter, a joyous, bewitching creature, about seventeen, and his son, about ten years of age. They were just returning from France, of which the young lady discoursed in terms so eloquent, as to absorb my entire attention.

The father was taciturn, but the daughter was vivacious by nature, and we soon became so mutually well-pleased with each other, she as a talker, I as a listener, that it was not until a sudden flash of lightning, and a heavy dash of rain against the coach window elicited an exclamation from my charming companion, that I noticed how night passed on. Presently there was a low, rumbling sound, and then several tremendous peals of thunder accompanied by successive flashes of lightning. The rain descended in torrents, and an angry wind began to howl and moan through the forest.

I looked from the window of our vehicle. The night was as dark as ebony but the lightning revealed the darkness of our road. We were on the edge of a frightful precipice. I could see at intervals huge jutting rocks far away down on the sides, and the sight made me solicitous for the fate of my fair companion. I thought of the mere hair-breadths that were between us and eternity; a single little rock in the track of the coach wheels, a tiny billet of wood, a stray limb of a tempest-torn tree, a restive horse, or a careless driver—any of these might hurl us from our sublimity existence with the speed of thought.

"This a perfect tempest," said the lady, as I withdrew my head from the window. "How I love a sudden storm. There is something so grand among the

winds when fairly loose among the hills I never encountered a light like this, but Byron's magnificent description of a thunder storm in the Jura immediately recurs to my mind. But are we on the mountain yet?"

"Yes, we have begun the ascent."

"It is said to be dangerous?"

"By no means," I replied, in as easy a tone as I could assume.

"I only wish it was daylight, that we might enjoy the mountain scenery. But Jesu Marie! what is that?"

And she covered her eyes from the glare of a sheet of lightning that illuminated the rugged mountain with brilliant intensity. Peal after peal of crashing thunder instantly succeeded; there was a very heavy volume of rain coming down at each thunderburst, and with the deep moaning of an animal, as if in dreadful agony, breaking upon my ears, I found that the coach had come to a dead halt.

Louise, my beautiful fellow-traveler, became as pale as ashes. She fixed her searching eyes on mine with a look of anxious dread, and turning to her father, hurriedly remarked: "We are on the mountain!"

"I reckon so," was the unconcerned reply.

With instant activity, I put my head through the window, and called to the driver, but the only answer was the heavy moaning of an agonized animal borne past me by the swift wings of the tempest. I seized the handle of the door and strained at it in vain; it would not yield a jot. At that instant I felt a cold hand on mine, and heard Louise's voice faintly articulating in my ear the appalling words:

"The coach is being moved back-wards!"

God in Heaven! never shall I forget the fierce agony with which I tugged at the coach door, and called on the driver in tones that rivalled the force of the blast, while the dreadful conviction was burning in my brain that the coach was being moved slowly backwards.

What followed was of such swift occurrence that it seems to me like a dream.

I rushed against the door with all my force, but it mocked my utmost efforts. One side of our vehicle was sensibly going down, down. The moaning of the agonized animal became deeper, and I knew from the desperate plunges against his traces, that it was one of our horses. Crash upon crash a heavy thunder rolled over the mountain, and vivid sheets of lightning played around our devoted carriage, as if in glee at our misery. By this light I could see for a moment—only a moment—the old planter standing erect, with his hands on his son and daughter, his eyes raised to heaven, and his lips moving like one in prayer. I could see Louise turn her ashy cheeks and superb eyes toward me, as if imploring my protection; and I could see the bold glances of the young boy flashing indignant defiance at the descending carriage, the war of elements, and the awful danger that awaited him. There was a roll of thunder, a desperate plunge as if of an animal in the last throes of dissolution, a harsh grating jar, a sharp piercing scream of mortal terror, and I had but time to clasp Louise firmly with one hand round the waist and seize the leather fastenings attached to the coach roof with the other, when we were precipitated over the precipice.

I can distinctly recollect preserving consciousness, for a few seconds of time, how rapidly my breath was being exhausted; but of that tremendous descent I soon lost all further individual knowledge by a concussion so violent that I was instantly deprived of sense and motion.

On an humble couch, in an humble room of a small country house, I next opened my eyes in this world of light and shade, of joy and sorrow, of mirth and madness; gentle hands smoothed my pillow, gentle feet glided across my chamber, and a gentle voice hushed for a time all my questionings. I was kindly tended by a fair young girl about sixteen, who refused for several days to hold any intercourse with me. At length, one morning, finding myself sufficiently recovered to sit up, I insisted on learning the result of the accident.

"You were discovered," he said, "sitting on a ledge of rock, amidst the branches of a shattered tree, clinging to a part of the roof of your broken coach with one hand to the insensible form of a lady with the other."

"And the lady?" I gasped, scanning the girl's face, with an earnestness that caused her to draw back and blush.

"She was saved, sir, by the same means that saved you—the friendly tree."

"And her father and brother?" I impatiently demanded.

"Were both found crushed to pieces; at the bottom of the precipice, a great way below the place where my father and Uncle Joe got you and the lady. We buried their bodies in one grave close by the clover-patch down in our meadow ground."

"Poor Louise!—poor orphan! God pity you!" I muttered in broken tones, utterly unconscious that I had a listener.

"God pity her indeed, sir," said the young girl, with a gush of heartfelt sympathy. "Would you like to see her?" she added.

"Take me to her," I replied.

I found the orphan bathed in bitter tears, by the grave of her buried kindred. She received me with sorrowful sweetness of manner. I will not detain your attention detailing the efforts I made to win her from her grief, but briefly acquaint you that I at least succeeded in inducing her to leave her forlorn home in the South; and that twelve months after the dreadful occurrence which I have related, we stood at the altar together as man and wife. She still lives to bless my love with her smiles, and my children with her goods precepts; but on the anniversary of that terrible night secludes herself in her room, and devotes the hours of darkness to solitary prayer.

"As for me," added the traveler, while a faint flush tinged his noble brow at the avowal, "as for me, that accident has made a physical coward of me, at the sight of a mountain precipice."

"But the driver," urged our lady passenger, who had attended to the recital of the story with much attention; "what became of the driver? or did you ever learn the reason of his deserting his post?"

"His body was found on the road, within a few yards of the spot where the coach went on. He had been struck dead by the same flash of lightning that blinded the restive horse."

A son of John W. Forney, negro suffrage candidate for United States Senator, a captain in the 14th U. S. Infantry, was recently found guilty by court martial in San Francisco of disobedience of orders and conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman. The commanding general has approved the sentence. There is another of Forney's sons in the military service; but, as it happens, neither of them ever were fortunate in getting to the front or into active service in the field. But, in this they were not an exception to the sons or several of the present disunion leaders of the Rump Congress and party.

—Brigham Young's eldest son is named "Joe." He has traveled in Europe, smokes, chews, gets drunk, swears, preaches the gospel, has three wives whom he whips and otherwise shamefully abuses, and is a good Mormon and is full fellowship of the church.

"You young rascal," said the old gentleman to the rash little boy in the street, "if that cab had run over you where would you have been now?" and the boy answered, "Up behind, a takin' of his number!"

—They are fond of titles in the east. Among his other high-sounding titles, the King of Ave has that of "Lord of Twenty-Four Umbrellas." This looks as though he had prepared for a long reign!

—The bursting of the Petroleum bank of Titusville has settled the question—"Will petroleum explode?"

—A man who got drunk at an election said it was owing to his efforts to put down "party spirit."

Read this paper with care.

## HISTORY OF ELK COUNTY.

By a Northwestern Pennsylvanian.

### EARLY SETTLEMENT OF RIDGWAY AND VICINITY—CONTINUED.

It has been before observed that 1833 was a marked era in Ridgway history by the commencement of the Wilcox settlement, the building of the mills and the construction of the race by Hughes & Dickinson at Ridgway. In that day such an enterprise might be regarded as a large one, and so it was; to incur so great an expense as digging so large and long a race for water power was regarded by many (millwrights in particular) as a useless project. "Place your mills upon the bank of the stream and not expend five or six thousand for a race," but experience had demonstrated its dangers. James L. Gillis, among his enterprises, had built a saw-mill in 1824 at the "Windfall," a mile and a quarter above the present village. The first or second ice-flood produced a gorge, and the whole thing was cut out and carried away in a trinkling, and he was opposed to further trial of that sort.

We have before spoke of the healthfulness of the country. Although settlement commenced at Montmorency in 1822 and at Ridgway in 1825—the improvements requiring a large number of hired laborers, in addition to the residents—yet not a single death occurred during that whole period of time to 1833—11 years! Whilst grubbing for the race, one of the workmen, a stranger from Armstrong county, was killed by the falling of a tree. There were children at the funeral who were large and capable of discernment, who had never seen a corpse, nor witnessed the burial of the dead. As no burial place had ever been laid off nor selected, the remains were interred upon the bank of the race within the boundaries of its survey, at what was called the "swamp section." It may be safely avowed that such an exemption from death for so long a period, and among so many dangers and exposures, and by so many persons, has no parallel in western settlements, or even in the proverbially healthy climate of northwestern Pennsylvania. In a period of six months thereafter, there were four deaths—Mrs. Brown, Mr. Webb, Emily Gallagher and Julia Wilmarth. The first mentioned came in from the Wilcox settlement for a temporary sojourn; the second was a man in the last stage of consumption, who was traveling through the country, and was there intercepted by the fell destroyer; the two last were children of residents. There were no other deaths till about the year 1840-41. Up to this latter period no burial place had been secured by title; Mr. Ridgway had positively declined any conveyance for that purpose, and there were at that time inconveniences upon all other eligible locations; the difficulty existing had become painful, and all admitted that there was a sad neglect. A schoolhouse had been erected by private subscription upon land donated by Mr. Aylworth, which was transferred into the public school system of 1836, becoming the property of the district. This building stands upon the "Pike," just above the residence of the late Caleb Dill, Esq. The increasing population soon made it apparent that a more commodious building would be required with more room; an exchange of property was effected between the then owners of the present site of school and burial ground and the directors of the school district. The present burial ground was deeded to the township of Ridgway, and the school ground to the directors of Common Schools for the purposes therein mentioned. As before observed, the undetermined location of a burial place was a matter of painful and embarrassing discussion among the permanent citizens for the many years its requirements had lain dormant. The rites of burial of the dead is of a sacred character among all nations, and a neglect to discharge its duties places a community outside the pale of christianity and civilization;—the citizens felt it, and perhaps they were justifiable in their censure of Mr. Ridgway, who at that period held by

mortgage or other tenure upon every proper site for the purpose, and it was not until these impediments were removed that the present location was fixed. It is consolatory to the living, that although "of dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," we can view without fear of interruption or removal the ground under which their beloved dead are mouldering and returning to their native element. The marble monuments, the simple paling, the myrtle, the blooming rose, or the willow with its streaming branches—like mourners tears, are objects sacred to our eyes, as we cherish affectionately the remembrances of the dead.

But the writer is constantly digressing, or musing, but he has this excuse, he stated at first that no order would be observed, nor design to connect events; the simple facts, or ideas suggesting their conclusions, as it were, are promiscuously jotted down, and the reader must act a part like the mechanic when the frame-work or the different parts of machinery lie scattered about—put them together, whether their appearance or utility is congenial to their views or not.

Within eighteen months after Hughes & Dickinson broke ground in the erection of their mills they were manufacturing boards, and thereafter commenced a more regular system of rafting and running lumber out of the Clarion from Ridgway than previously. The sawmill of Elmes Gillis had manufactured sufficient boards to test the capabilities and power of the stream. They were making some boards on Little Toby, out of which a "run" within two years was considered a quick trip. There was some three or four individuals in and about Ridgway who had been down Toby to Pittsburgh, and they were regarded as eminent pilots. Some funds had been raised by subscription to blast out some of the most dangerous and prominent rocks; and the "Duke" had spent two summers in drilling and burning powder, and he might be said to have a good knowledge of all the dangers of the navigation—thus Henry Karns was among the first and best pilots; then there were Thomas Barbour and Joab Dobbin. Now Joab was for a year or two regarded as the oracle by which every raft was started on its downward voyage. When the rains fell or the spring thaws commenced, and the turbid waters gave indication of a "flood"—oars were hung, cables affixed, bread and beans baked—all on tip-toe for a start, awaiting the pilot. Joab would emerge from his morning nap, and sally out from his dwelling which stood near the mouth of Elk creek—take a look, first at the water, and then cast his eye along the valley of Elk creek, and unless the waters were high enough to submerge the roots and part of the trunk of the large elm tree just opposite the mouth of Elk creek, and the fog shooting upwards from along its eastern course—no woodchuck on Candelmas day, emerging from his burrow and seeing his shadow, scampering back to his hole to abide a six week's continuance of cold weather was more certain of his instincts, than Joab Dobbin to retreat to his house and quietly peg away at his boots and shoes, if these (to him) evidences of a flood did not appear. A few experiments in running exploded this theory, and it was soon discerned that this mark, for a rafting flood, was at least two feet too high for all purposes of safe navigation. The rafting and running of lumber out of the Clarion twenty-five years ago and the year 1860 were vastly unlike—at the present period calculations must be made for every fourth raft being stove, and a good bit lost; there was necessarily a good deal of "gigging back" (as Joab would call it), in consequence of low water, or being picked up by some forgotten rock, or unskillful inexperienced steering. There were no roads or guides for the returning raftmen save the stream itself or the boundaries of the "windfall," which often times enticed the weary traveler within where the eddying blast had caused a bay or estuary along its line, soon to entangle its victim among the logs and brambles, a fatiguing retracement of steps adding to its vexations and hardships.

Other embarrassments in the way of "Entertainment" along the river were a source of much discomfort. There were but few houses along the margin of the stream, and it was sometimes difficult "to make" those stopping places for a shelter. Soon, however, raftmen came up from Armstrong county, who had acquaintances along the river, and the well known insignia, a red "wam-est," generally insured a reception which would otherwise be denied to what was then denominated a "Yankee from the Gillis settlement." A short period sufficed to dispel these fears, and the Yankee's money ceased to burn in their pockets. The concomitants of these Ridgwayites, with their legends of *spooks* and *witches* soon evaporated, and in a few years ample accommodations were provided and raftmen were made comfortable. There are many yet who have had business upon the Clarion waters who can attest to these reminiscences.

JONATHAN COLEGROVE.

This gentleman so often mentioned in these chapters: though residing in McKean county, is intimately connected with this vicinity; coming there as early as the year 1827—was born in Norwich, Chenango county, N. Y. He commenced improving a farm in the town of Norwich, in the valley of Potomac creek. He was a surveyor and as such surveyed nearly all the lands in that section, and particularly for Mr. Ridgway both in McKean and Jefferson, (now Elk). He was in fact the confidential agent, in all matters relating to his lands, selling, receiving payment, executing deeds &c., continuing his services to the surviving heir, John Ridgway, Esq., now residing in Paris, until age and love of quiet, admonished him to surrender the trust to his son William Colegrove, Esq., who is now the urbane and popular agent in his stead. As a citizen, Mr. Colegrove has always taken an active and prominent part in all concerns of a public character within a large district of country; possessed of a strong constitution and inured to exercise, he was proverbially a surveyor who made hard work for his assistants. Axe and chain men must travel fast to keep up with the compass. It made no difference whether he was running lines by the mile or day. So familiar had he become in tracing the old surveys of 1790, that the least vestige of a scar upon a tree that indicated a survey mark, was sure to be recognized. One who had often carried the axe for him, declared he would leave follow a Bear through the woods, as follow Mr. Colegrove. He was a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature for the year 1828, during the Governorship of A. Shultz and representing the then district of Lycoming, Tioga, Potter and McKean. To reach the seat of government he went via Bellfonte on horseback thence by stage. He has filled other various offices in his county; rigid and indefatigable in the discharge of every duty, he was liberal in his exorcise. As a manager and conductor in the construction of the Milesburgh and Smithport turnpike road. No one in his department spent more of his time, nor more prompt on all occasions to forward the enterprise. The difficulties attending that important work has been mentioned, much of its success may be attributed to Jonathan Colegrove. During the many years of application to the Legislature for the erection of Elk county, out of McKean, Jefferson and Clearfield; Mr. Colegrove, although a slice was to be cut off his county, was liberally active in its favor, from pure public regard and its utility and interest to this section of country. Mr. Colegrove is now in the "sere and yellow leaf" being 84 years of age and must, as *all will soon do*, be gathered to his fathers—leaving a large family and an unblemished reputation—their best inheritance.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—Brownlow is sending insulting dispatches with reference to the President. Andrew Johnson can survive his blame, but praise from such a quarter would be fatal.

Vote for Clymer.