

## DEATH LIST IS NOW 167

OFFICIAL ROLL OF VICTIMS OF  
BOYERTOWN HOLOCAUST.

PEOPLE ARE DAZED BY GRIEF

Entire Families Obliterated and Every body in the Borough Lost Either Relatives, Friends or Acquaintances in the Awful Panic and Fire.

Boyertown, Pa., Jan. 15.—The official roll of victims of the Rhoades Opera House holocaust numbers 167. Whether any more bodies are buried beneath the ruins cannot be positively stated, but it is the belief of those who had charge of the gruesome work that all of the dead have been removed and that the total list of victims will not go above 170. The ratio of women and girls to men and boys is about nine to one.

The work of identification was begun this morning. Most of the bodies are still lying in a confused state at the four improvised morgues. The inhabitants of the little borough in the Berks county hills are steeped in grief.

The calamity is terrible, when it is realized that the population of the place is about 2,500 and has paralyzed the town, and the people are going about dazed. They do not realize what has happened and cannot believe that loved ones, friends or acquaintances were lost in the awful panic and fire. It is safe to say that everybody in the place either lost one or more relatives or was intimately acquainted with those who died in the fire.

Entire Families Obliterated.

In several cases whole families were wiped out. If ever a community was truly in mourning, it is the substantial town of Boyertown today. It was almost daylight before the flames were extinguished and rescuers were able to enter the ruins to remove the dead.

The morning was bitter cold and by the time the benumbed and exhausted firemen began the task of disentangling the mass of burned beams and twisted iron, the entire ruins were coated with ice and there was danger of the walls falling.

Coroner Strasser of Reading had a detail of men ready to tag the bodies and keep a record of the description of every corpse removed. The bodies were so badly burned, however, that there was little to describe them by, and it is safe to say that not half of the victims will ever be identified.

By noon the rescuers became thoroughly exhausted from the cold and hard work and for a time the work came almost to a standstill. Fortunately, the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad company sent two carloads of laborers and carpenters and the work of recovering bodies moved so rapidly that victims were being taken from the ruins at the rate of two every five minutes.

Cause of the Holocaust.

There were many different stories as to the exact cause of the panic and fire and there were several rumors of arrests, but the borough officials and Coroner Strasser denied that any action whatever had been taken.

The Rhoades Opera House was located on the second floor of a three-story brick building. The first floor was occupied by a national bank and several stores and the third floor was used for lodge rooms. The entertainment hall was a large room, about fifty feet wide and seventy-five feet long. It had no gallery. There was a stairway at the front of the building and a narrow exit in the rear of the stage. Fire escapes were built on both sides and on the front of the building. So far as can be learned, there were about 425 persons packed in the room, most of whom were adults. The number of children present was small. There were about sixty-five persons, all local talent, on the stage, who were giving a performance of the Scottish Reformation.

The entertainment was nearly over, the audience waiting for the curtain to go up on the last part, when something went wrong with the calcium light apparatus that was perched on a small platform near the front entrance of the building and back of the audience.

Performer Upsets Oil Tank.

The light was in charge of H. W. Fischer of Carlisle, Pa., and he says a rubber tubing slipped from one of the tanks. At any rate, there was a loud hissing sound, which caused many in the audience to turn their heads in curiosity to see what it was. There absolutely was no panic up to this time and nothing probably would have happened if one or more of the performers behind the curtain had not

been curious to learn what was causing the noise. Hearing the hissing sound and the slight commotion in the audience, one of the performers raised the curtain from the floor. In front of the curtain and serving as footlights was a tin tank, perhaps eight feet long, three inches wide and three inches high. It contained kerosene oil and about ten lights. In raising the curtain the performer accidentally turned this tank over and it fell to the floor within a few inches of those persons in the front row.

The Rev. Adam A. Weber, pastor of St. Johns Lutheran church, for the benefit of whose Sunday school the entertainment was being given, tried to pick up the tank, with the assistance of others, but before they could do so the oil flowed out and caught fire. Then came the inevitable cry of "Fire," and what followed has been impossible to accurately tell. Eye-witnesses say that the audience rose en

masse and the one impulse was to reach the front door. All attempted, but few got out. In the scramble to get out many persons fell over the chairs and were never again to regain their feet. Those who did reach the front entrance found it jammed. One of the double doors had been bolted shut so as to better enable the ticket taker to take up tickets. Not more than two persons could pass this door at one time, and after the first half dozen got through the narrow passage, it became clogged with the struggling mass of humanity. Men, women, boys, girls and chairs were tangled up in a solid mass that no one from the outside was able to disentangle. In the meantime, some one discovered that there were fire escapes on each side of the building, and dozens made their exits by those avenues of escape and gave the alarm. The fire bell was rung and the whole town was aroused and went to the rescue. All this time the flames from the oil tank were creeping toward the terrible mass of people, who were frantically shrieking and fighting to get out. The noise was terrific and few heard the cries of those who found the fire escapes. Some of the bravest, who had gained the fire escapes, pulled dozens from the struggling mass and directed them to the sides of the building.

Calcium Light Tank Explodes.

While the frenzied people were fighting to get down the front steps, the calcium light tank exploded and fire was spread over the entire mass of people. This added horror was more than the feeble rescuers could stand, and in order to save their own lives they were forced to flee down the fire escapes.

On the front steps outside the door men pulled frantically to open a way for the wedged-in people, but not more than half a dozen were rescued in this manner. The explosion of the calcium tank and the flames from the front of the stage, which and by this time reached the struggling people, made further rescue impossible. The entire interior of the building was one seething furnace.

The cries of the struggling people, many with their clothing already ablaze, and the moans of the dying were heartrending. Fathers and brothers, frenzied by the thought that loved ones were in the fiery place, were compelled to retreat. Nothing could be done to get their people out and they were forced to stand by and watch the awful sacrifice of life.

Everything possible that could be done to get the people out before the flames enveloped them was resorted to, but too late. The flames advanced rapidly as a prairie fire.

Bodies Piled Six Feet High.

When the flames were extinguished and the rescuers entered the building, a horrible sight met their gaze. Bodies were piled in one solid mass, six feet high on the second floor. So solidly were they wedged that pickaxes and crowbars had to be used gently to separate the victims.

Dr. J. K. Evans, who supervised the removal of the bodies on behalf of the coroner, said that there were nine female victims to one male. He did not believe that 10 per cent of the victims would ever be identified. In nearly every case the upper portions of the bodies were burned away and in a great many instances the lower parts of the bodies were not touched by the fire.

INSANITY THAW'S SOLE DEFENSE

Counsel Draws Curtain from Family History in Tracing Weak Mentality.

New York, Jan. 15.—The attorneys for Harry K. Thaw began relentlessly to build up the case of legal insanity which they have interposed in his behalf as a defense for the killing of Stanford White. The two principal witnesses of the day were Professor Charles H. Kohler of Winona, Minn., who acted as instructor to Thaw in the Wooster (O.) university in 1886, and Mrs. Amy Grossette of San Mateo, Cal., who attended Thaw as a trained nurse at Monte Carlo in 1897. They both told of the young man's eccentricities and declared that his manner always was irrational.

Dr. John T. Deemar of Kittanning, one of the Thaw family physicians, also was heard, as were the attending physicians of three institutions for

the insane where members of the Thaw family, on both paternal and maternal sides, were confined. District Attorney Jerome by unexpectedly invoking the sacred privilege of physician and patient blocked much of the testimony as to unsoundness of mind in the Thaw family, but the calling of witnesses left the desired impression on the jury. Mr. Jerome explained that the law compelled him to object to such testimony without an express waiver from the patient. Even the nurse who attended Thaw was not allowed to testify until Thaw personally had made a waiver of the confidential privileges in open court.

Nevada Legislature Meets.

Carson, Nev., Jan. 15.—The special session of the Nevada legislature called by Governor Sparks met at noon. After organization, Governor Sparks' message was read. In the senate the appropriation bill for the session was passed. The only important action taken was the passage of a resolution referring all bills that may be introduced relative to state rangers, constabulary or military, to a special joint committee.

Austrian Wedding Guests Arrive.

New York, Jan. 15.—A party of friends of the Austrian bridegroom, who will be guests at the approaching wedding of Miss Gladys Vanderbilt and Count Szechenyi, arrived on the steamer Kron Prinzessin Cecilie.

IMBECILE BOY NOW SPEAKS

Albany Professor Develops Youth, Born Deficient, in Remarkable Manner.

New York, Jan. 15.—Speechless for sixteen years, Gustav Laut has in ten months learned to talk fluently. During the same period he has developed from an abnormal, undeveloped, almost imbecile boy, into an alert, active, ambitious person; he has grown four inches in height, permanent teeth have come in him against all the beliefs of the dental profession, and he now gives promise of becoming a healthy, normal man. His development is the result of experiments of Dr. Campbell of Albany, N. Y., an instructor in music, who treated the boy according to theories of his own—theories which he believes will cure the deaf and even the blind and put an end to imbecility.

When the boy first came to his notice, Professor Campbell said all of his habits were infantile and he was abnormal in every way. His body was undeveloped, as was his brain. Professor Campbell began by causing the boy to wiggle one of his toes, an operation which required several weeks. Gradually the principle was extended, muscles were stimulated, and with their stimulation came a response from lungs and heart. Circulation was quickened and finally the boy was taught to speak.

FIND MATRIMONIAL BUREAU

Literature Seized at Des Moines Discloses Charms of 150 Girls.

Des Moines, Jan. 15.—When William Powers and his wife were arrested by order of Chief Althman of the Great Northern railway's secret service for securing tickets on bogus orders, it was found that a matrimonial plant had been invaded. A large quantity of literature and a bundle of letters were found in their apartments. The woman went by the name of Mary White.

Copies of a pamphlet containing photographs and minute descriptions of the charms of 150 girls were found. The system also was unearthed by which correspondents, selecting one of the women named in the booklet, were informed that she had just gone to a millionaire, but Mary White, the most charming and dainty of them all, was still free and could be seen in Des Moines.

The extent to which swains were induced to furnish money is not known, but the tickets were used by suitors to, whom the couple sold them after Mary proved unsatisfactory. Many letters from persons desiring wives were seized by the officers.

QUESTION IS ONE OF INTENT

Prosecution in Walsh Case Compares Banker With Speculating Official.

Chicago, Jan. 15.—John R. Walsh's alleged manipulations of the funds of the Chicago National bank were compared with the hypothetical offense of a bank cashier who speculates on the stock exchange in the course of the day's argument to the jury on behalf of the government in the Walsh case. Assistant District Attorney Francis Hanchett, conducting the second prosecution of the case against the accused banker, told the jury that the only question that remained for them to pass upon was that of intent.

Sequence in Industrial School.

Lincoln, Jan. 14.—State Health Inspector Wilson was notified that there were nineteen cases of smallpox in the state industrial school at Kearney. He ordered a strict quarantine of the school, its 200 inmates, officers and employees, and left for Kearney to confer with the proper officers.

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