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GREAT MINE FIRE GOES ON FOREVER

Millions of Tons of Coal is Consumed By King of Mine Fires; Now Burning After 67 Years

\$9,000,000 BEEN SPENT IN EFFORT TO CURB FIRE

Summit Hill, Pa., March 24.—An anthracite strike may come and go, but the Summit Hill mine fire apparently goes on forever.

It has been burning for 67 years, ever since February, 1859, and is the most destructive, expensive and famous mine fires in the history of mining in the United States.

The area involved is about one mile long and 1,500 feet wide. More than \$3,000,000 have been expended in fighting the fire. The tonnage of coal consumed by this "king" of mine fires can only be guessed, but estimates run as high as 14,000,000.

The coal area embracing the scene of the fire is owned by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, founded in 1820.

Summit Hill lies in the Panther Creek valley, in what is known as the Schuylkill of Lower coal field of the anthracite regions.

In the years since the fire first was discovered, many stories have been told of its origin. But the true story, vouched for by the company, is that it was started through hot coals being mixed with ashes, the cause of many a fire in the homes of coal consumers.

It was common in the days before the Civil War to have large stoves at the bottom of the slopes for the comfort of the men. The "bottom man" at old No. 1 slope when the fire started was one Daniel Boyle. Among other things it was his duty to attend to the stove. One morning he was a little late in arriving, and, hurrying to get the stove burning, he set a severe raking, shaking down hot coals with the ashes.

An empty car was standing near and he shoveled the ashes and hot coals into it. The cars in those days were built entirely of wood, sheet iron bottoms not as yet being used. By the time he finished, one of the drivers, hitched his mule to the car and hauled it to one of the tunnel gangways. He had been ordered to place it there by the foreman the previous day, in accordance with the foreman's intention to place several men in that section to do some repair work. The foreman, however, changed his mind, and the car, as well as the repairing was forgotten for a couple weeks.

When they started to do it they found the fire well under way, the hot coals, mixed with the ashes, having ignited the wooden car and the fire having spread to the timbers. As it was an old, worked-out gangway, the fire spread rapidly to the loose coal.

There was little, if any, experience then in fighting mine fires. The only method employed was to flood the place. This was done but on pumping out the water it was found that the fire had gained considerable headway and showed plainly that water was of little use in combating it.

There was such an abundance of coal, the vein here being fifty feet thick, and many of the workings being under-developed, it was felt the fire would burn itself out in time. It was decided to abandon the old slope and sink a new slope (No. 2) farther west. With the development of the slope passed the glory of Summit Hill as a mining town.

In fighting the fire in the early sixties, an open cut was made which seemed to isolate it for many years. Eventually the fire traveled past this cut into the coal seams beyond.

The next method used was sinking 6-inch diameter bore holes, spaced 25 feet in each direction, across the basin west of the fire to establish a barrier 250 feet wide and extending from the outcrop on the north to a point where a water seal on the south would prevent the spread of the fire. Fine silt or coal dirt mixed with water was run into the bore holes to fill the crevices and opening in the coal seam and the rock overlying it, thus creating a barrier which, it was believed, would check the fire. It failed.

The next attempt was the sinking of a 12-foot gap 100 feet into the earth, which was lined with concrete and the intervening space filled with clay, making a fire wall 700 feet long. The fire traveled so rapidly that it pressed close to the barrier before it was completed and necessitated the engineers working their men in 20-minute shifts. The wall was finished, notwithstanding the hardships and great expense. Considerable heat filtered through, but the defense halted the fire. For double security, however, the west face of the wall was cleared and a water seal constructed.

Engineers are now certain the fire cannot vault the barrier.

Today there is still evidence on

PROHIBITION GETS PUBLIC HEARING

Two Weeks' Hearing on Modification of Eighteenth Amendment to Begin April 5

FAVORABLE COMMITTEE REPORT NOT LIKELY

Washington, March 22.—The prohibition issue, which has agitated both houses of congress at this session as has no other question, is to be given a public hearing before a senate committee during the two weeks beginning April 5. This was determined upon today by the senate judiciary committee which approved with but a single dissenting vote the program recommended by its subcommittee of five for hearings on the pending measures for modification of the dry laws.

Senator Means, Republican, of Colorado, will have charge of the hearings and he will attempt to hold both wets and dries strictly to the subject of the bills at issue. Each side will have six days for presentation of its case, with the wets taking the stand first.

The first measure that will be considered will be that by Senator Bruce, Democrat, of Maryland, proposing to change the eighteenth amendment so that those states and committees which were wet when the dry law went into effect again would be wet, but would have to depend on the federal government for their limited supplies of intoxicants.

Then the beer bills and the Edge measure to remove the restrictions on prescription whiskey will have their hearings. There are three beer bills proposing four per cent, 2.75 per cent and beer "non-intoxicating in fact." Senator Edwards, Democrat, of New Jersey, is author of the first, and Senator Edge, Republican, of New Jersey, sponsors the other two.

Wet leaders have no hope that the committee will report any of the bills favorably. They asked for the hearings, they explain, so congress can elicit officially the opinions of enforcement officers, educators, ministers and others as to how the dry laws should be amended so as to make their enforcement less difficult.

BRAMHAM DECLINES TO ENGAGE IN CONTROVERSY

Durham, March 24.—"Nothing to say, now or later," was the attitude of W. G. Bramham, chairman of the state Republican executive committee, expressed toward the Marion Butler broadside hurled at him in a pamphlet headed "Fallacies of Chairman Bramham Exposed," a summary and extracts from which were published in several papers of the state yesterday, on his return from a weekend spent in western North Carolina. Mr. Bramham intimated that the former North Carolina senator is often publicity and wants him to help get it for him, through entering into a newspaper controversy—and Mr. Bramham has taken the attitude that he will not help the Marion Butler faction and proposed plan of organization in the state by discussing it. Yet, he also intimated that when the "smoke of battle has cleared away, the Sampson county petrel of the state Republicans will be found high and dry on a limb—just as on many former occasions.

EARTHQUAKES

Washington, March 24.—Two earthquake shocks were registered on the Georgetown university seismograph today. The first, which began at 12:47 a. m., and lasted until 1:30, was placed by Director Tondorf approximately 1,600 miles from Washington. It was of a pronounced character. The second, beginning about 6 o'clock and reaching its maximum between 6:13 and 6:15, was a distant quake.

North Carolina farmers spend too much money on fertilizer not to use the kind suitable for their crops and soils, say agronomy workers.

the surface of the fire that has burned so long and is still burning. A few hot spots are visible along the south crop of the Mammoth vein. The northern part of the fire area has cooled off materially, although from the vapor that arises from crevices at certain places, it is known some bodies for fire still exist.

During the last two years a large number of eight-inch drill holes have been sunk in this section to allow further flushing. This has not been entirely successful, but in combination with the barrier cut-off and the silting operations over the entire area, it undoubtedly is causing the fire to gradually burn itself out. Drilling and slushing along the south crop will be continued until the fire in that area also has been extinguished.



Last picture of President Coolidge and his Father, Made Shortly Before the Death of Colonel Coolidge.

MISSING MAN MAY HAVE BEEN FOUND

Shelby, March 24.—A man has been discovered, living in a small city near Shelby, who believes he is Charlie Ross, the lost lad, whose disappearance early in the seventies of the past century was one of the great mysteries of that period.

In fact, such broadcast publicity did the disappearance of the child occasion, that the name of Charlie Ross has been a household word in this country ever since.

Now, after more than fifty years, a man comes to the front, announcing his belief that he is the kidnaped child.

The story is revealed through J. F. Gaffney, of Shelby, who has been asked by the man in question if he will make an affidavit to the effect that he believes him to be Charlie Ross.

Mr. Gaffney said that he will make such an affidavit without hesitation. "I actually believe the man to be Charlie Ross," said Mr. Gaffney.

Asked concerning his connection with the case, Mr. Gaffney says: "Back in 1875—the year Charlie Ross disappeared—I was living in Gaffney. Soon after the disappearance of the child, there showed up in Gaffney a man and a woman and a child. The child resembled exactly the published pictures of Charlie Ross.

"The appearance of the couple in Gaffney created a great deal of curiosity and comment, so much so that an investigation was set on foot to find out if the lad was not the missing child. Evidently the father of the family, for such the man posed as being, got wind of the affair, and disappeared.

"Ever since that time I have had the conviction that that child was the missing Charlie Ross. But I lost sight of him and never heard of him again, until a few weeks ago when I got a letter from a man in a city near Shelby, asking me if I was the Mr. Gaffney who lived in Gaffney in '73, and asking me further if I remembered a child resembling Charlie Ross who had lived in the South Carolina city when I was there.

"It seems the man in his advancing years has made an attempt to clear up the mystery surrounding his early circumstances. He is now married and a man of family, and he wished to clear up his name and his identity for the sake of those near him, before it should be too late.

"He was successful in tracing his history back to the Gaffney period. And so he wrote to me. In the letters he has written me, he stated that he is in correspondence with the brother of Charlie Ross, Walter L. Ross, who is still living. He also has taken up the question with the New York World, the newspaper which was most active at the time of Charlie Ross' disappearance in trying to trace him."

There are a number of letters of correspondence which have passed between this "lost soul" and Mr. Gaffney during the past few weeks.

R. F. GENTRY DEAD AT JEFFERSON

Was Prominent in Fraternal and Church Circles; Influenza Cause of Death

Jefferson, March 24.—R. F. Gentry died at his home here early Sunday morning following a brief illness with influenza and complications. The deceased was 51 years of age. He is survived by his wife and six children and two brothers, W. E. Gentry, of Jefferson, and Rev. A. H. Gentry, of Virginia, and one sister, Mrs. J. G. Horton, of North Wilkesboro.

The funeral was conducted in the Jefferson Baptist church Monday afternoon by the pastor, Rev. S. C. Blackburn, assisted by Rev. J. L. Reynolds, pastor of the Methodist church, and Rev. R. H. Stone, pastor of the Presbyterian church. A large crowd attended and witnessed interment in the town cemetery, the burial services being in charge of the Masonic order, of which the deceased was a prominent member.

Mr. Gentry was long an active member of Jefferson lodge No. 219, A. F. & A. M., and of the Jefferson Baptist church, of which he was a deacon and treasurer and assistant superintendent and a teacher in the Sunday school.

He was a printer by trade and was formerly editor of the Damascus News, Damascus, Va. He was born and reared in Jefferson and returned here from Damascus about two years ago to accept a position with the Northwestern Herald.

NEWS OF THE WEEK AT VALLE CRUCIS

Valle Crucis, March 24.—Mrs. J. W. Whitehead spent the week-end with her sister, Mrs. W. H. Mast.

Mrs. D. F. Mast is recovering from her recent fall and injury.

Mr. and Mrs. John Clarke, of LeNoir, spent Sunday at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Clarke.

Mrs. C. D. Taylor is visiting in Boone this week.

Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Baird this week received news of the death of their daughter, Mrs. W. H. Penley, in Spokane, Wash.

Mrs. J. L. Teater, who has been visiting her sister, Mrs. John Dyer, in Mountain City for the past few weeks, returned home last Saturday.

Mr. J. H. Shipley, who has been ill at the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. K. Mast, was able to be at the store again last week.

Mrs. T. W. Taylor made a short visit to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. N. Mast, at Silverstone last week.

The school truck has once more taken its place on the road, relieving the wagon which has been doing duty during the excessive mud, to the great satisfaction of the school children.

Mr. and Mrs. D. C. Mast spent Sunday in the valley.

APPLE GROWING MADE PROFITABLE

B. T. Taylor Finds That With Proper Care Orchard Can Be Made to Yield Good Profit

INCREASES YIELD FROM 150 TO 3,500 BUSHELS

(By H. R. Niswonger, North Carolina Extension Service, Southern Ruralist.)

The cash return from commercial growing of apples does not depend upon the number of producing trees per acre, but on the quality of high-conditioned fruit yield per tree. The ultimate aim of every orchardist should be to develop a tree that has a large capacity for a yearly crop of marketable apples.

In the program of orchard management, cultivation and spraying have more to do with production than any other phase of the work. A fruit tree under intensive cultivation produces new wood and additional fruit buds. It is kept in a state of vigor, thereby increasing the set of blossom buds on the old wood and in many instances, making these buds more resistant to adverse weather conditions. Spraying, in combination with cultivation, also increases the set fruit and prevents the accumulation of insects and diseases, thereby reducing the number of culls and increasing the volume of salable apples.

These two factors in orchard management have proved very profitable to Mr. B. T. Taylor of Stony Fork, N. C., who has followed the recommendation of the state department of horticulture in co-operation with the county agent of Watauga county.

Mr. Taylor four years ago purchased a neglected orchard of about 1,000 bearing apple trees, 10 to 15 years of age. The soil had grown to sage grass and briars, the trees were severely over-pruned and stunted in growth, and had not borne a marketable crop of apples. The first year it was purchased, the only attention the orchard received was the breaking up and turning under of the broom-sedge and the grubbing out of the briars. The orchard that year bloomed very little, followed by a light crop of around 150 bushels, nearly all of which fell off due to the absence of the spray program.

The second year the trees were given an application of nitrate of soda as the buds were swelling, were cultivated and the orchard sown to cowpeas the latter part of the summer. Three sprays were put on, a dormant, calyx and one later application. The production jumped to 1,200 bushels of marketable fruit. The third year the same cultivation and spraying were continued with a production of 2,500 bushels.

Mr. Taylor, although satisfied with the quality of fruit, was not satisfied with the condition of the apples, as he had been having too many culls. In conference with the county agent he found that he had been omitting one of the most important early summer sprays, namely, the pink bud application or the one preceding the calyx spray. The chief trouble causing the cull apples was the presence of apple scab, a disease which begins its infection as the fruit bud clusters are separating and often as early as the appearance of the leaves.

The following year which was now the fourth year under Mr. Taylor's management, the production was 3,500 bushels. Not only was the yield increased, but the condition of the fruit was better; apple scab infection was reduced, resulting in a greater quantity marketable apples. Mr. Taylor found that by increasing the number of sprays the fruit set better. In addition he controlled apple scab early infection, which if not checked causes a large number of the young apples to drop off. The spraying up to this time had been handled by a barrel pump, which was traded in on a power outfit at the beginning of the season of 1925. This outfit enabled the spraying crew to cover the orchard in a short period of time and to put on the various sprays at the proper period. The apple production this past year was 2,500 bushels with the condition of the fruit far superior than any of the previous years.

Mr. Taylor kept records on cost and returns of this orchard which are as follows: Yield for the four years, 9,700 bushels with an average price of \$1.25 per bushel at the orchard, making the gross returns \$12,125. The cost of orchard management, including all labor, material for spraying and soil improvement, boxes and barrels, etc., was around \$1,000 per year or a total four-year cost of \$4,000. This gave Mr. Taylor a net return for the four years of \$8,125. The farm, including 50 acres, 25 of which is in orchard, was purchased by Mr. Taylor for \$4,500.

In contrasting the two systems of orchard practice, it was observed that heavy pruning followed by neither cultivation nor spraying, as practiced before Mr. Taylor took hold of the

SUPERIOR COURT NOW IN SESSION

With Judge Finley Presiding, Spring Term is Disposing of Number of Criminal Cases.

LINNEY IS PROSECUTING IN ABSENCE OF SOLICITOR HAYES

The spring term of Watauga superior court convened Monday with Judge T. B. Finley presiding. Owing to sickness in the family of Hon. Johnson J. Hayes, the solicitor, was not present and District Attorney F. A. Linney carried on the prosecution for the state.

Judge Finley delivered his charge in his usual able way, forcefully and concisely impressing upon the grand jurors the seriousness of their oath, and giving them the usual instructions.

Judge Finley has many friends in this part of the state who are always glad for him to come. A fine gentleman and a man of wonderful ability, he rules his courts in a way befitting his honored station in life. He has won state-wide recognition as a jurist, having tried some of the most noteworthy cases in the history of North Carolina courts. He won widespread popularity in the famous Cole-Ormond case last year, by his wise rulings on the bench.

Both state and civil dockets were unusually light and court will likely adjourn today.

The cases disposed of on the criminal docket, and the sentences imposed, follow:

Lloyd Stansberry, carrying concealed weapon, fined \$50 and the costs, and given a six-months suspended sentence.

Huffman and Pope, reckless driving, judgment continued until next term.

Charles McConnell, assault with deadly weapon, fined \$10 and the costs.

Fred Penley, violating prohibition laws, taxed with costs and given a six-months suspended sentence.

Bern Cook, resisting officer, fined \$50 and the costs.

Wm. Winkler, liquor, not guilty.

Frank McGee, liquor, \$100 and costs.

George Moretz, liquor, \$150 and the costs.

W. W. Randall, carrying concealed weapon, two years on roads, capias to issue on order of the court.

W. W. Randall, liquor, guilty, 15 months on roads.

Milton Coffey (Peanut), liquor, judgment suspended on payment of costs.

G. C. Wilcox, liquor, fined \$25 and costs.

George Moretz, carrying concealed weapon, fined \$75 and costs.

W. J. Wagner, assault with deadly weapon, fined \$15 and the costs.

WOMAN GIVEN CREDIT FOR SAVING 30 LIVES

Mt. Vernon, Wash., March 24.—Mrs. F. E. Elijah, a chambermaid, was given credit last night for having saved the lives of 30 students of Washington State college today when fire destroyed the Windsor hotel here.

Johnny Gland and Charles Itkin, two of the students, also shared credit for heroic conduct. Mrs. Elijah ran through the rooms after the fire was discovered, waking the students, who are members of the college glee club. Her hands and face were burned but she continued until all had been notified. Glenn carried a woman guest to safety from the second floor of the hotel and Rukin assisted two other women down a fire escape.

Prof. F. C. Butterfield, in charge of the glee club, also showed great courage in directing escapes and remained in the burning hotel until all the college men got out. Many of them escaped by ropes and sheets tied together.

All of the 117 guests escaped. The loss is estimated at \$150,000.

Has Wet Platform

Washington, March 24.—Frank J. Kelly, formerly in charge of liquor case prosecutions in Washington, will be a candidate for the United States senate in Wisconsin this fall on a light wine and beer platform, the Washington Post said today, quoting him as expressing the belief that enforcement of prohibition is impossible.

Es. W. L. Bryan, who has been quite sick at his home here for several days, is very much improved, his host of friends will be glad to learn.

orchard, resulted in neither wood growth nor fruit, while a complete system of orchard management involving soil improvement, spraying moderate pruning, and thinning of the fruit, returned to the owner a four-year average yield of 2,425 bushels per year and at the same time increased the value of the entire farm.