

DAILY NEWS  
MOUNT CARMEL, PA., FRIDAY EVENING, DECEMBER 4, 1908

WHOLE SQUARE BURNED IN CENTRALIA THIS MORNING

Thirty-Four Families Rendered Homeless and Eight  
Stores and Five Saloons Burned Out

NO WATER; LET FIRE BURN ITSELF OUT

Wet Blankets and Razed Buildings Checked Progress-  
Fireman's Coats Burned on Their Backs.

Centralia was visited last night by the biggest fire in the history of that town and probably bigger than any fire hereabouts for many years. The money loss does not exceed recent fires hereabouts but for area burned over and the number of families rendered homeless, it is considered one of the largest fires in this section. The loss will probably exceed \$75,000 and thirty four families are rendered homeless. On Locust Avenue, from Center to Railroad street beyond the Odd Fellows' Hall, and on Railroad street east almost a square everything is burned to the ground. Because of the scarcity of water the firemen were compelled to abandon the work of fighting the flames, and continue their attention to properties across the streets from the burning district. A few bucketfuls of water would have sufficed to extinguish the blaze when it was first discovered in the Palace theatre, but the water was turned off in the entire town. There is not more than \$5,000 insurance. The homeless are being cared for.

It was just about two o'clock this morning that fire was discovered in the Palace theatre, a moving picture house conducted by Oscar E. Fetterman. This show had not been open this week and how the fire originated is a mystery, but it is supposed to have been the work of meendaries (? difficult to read).

The fire was very small when discovered and a few bucketfuls of water would have been sufficient to squelch the blaze, but the water was turned off. The Centralia reservoir is entirely dry and water is being secured from the Brush Valley Water Company. The water is low in Brush Valley and the Centralia supply is shut off from six in the evening until six in the morning. The water was turned into the Centralia reservoir instead of into the main leading direct into Centralia. When the fire hose was attached to the plug a stream of water only ten feet high was the result. The pressure was not sufficient to force water higher. That was no good at all and the firemen were compelled to cease all efforts to put out the fire and confine their attention to saving other properties and let the fire burn itself out.

The Centralia Fire Co. No. 1 performed most valiant work in fighting the fire and were assisted by Ashland fire companies. A number of the local firemen went up to help. The Centralia firemen fought the flames with might and main and their work cannot be praised too highly. The heat was intense and many firemen were scorched and had their clothes on their backs catch afire while they worked. Buckets of water were poured over them to keep their clothes wet and thus lessen the danger to themselves. Wet blankets were kept on the roofs of the houses on the opposite sides of the streets from the fire affected district and bucketsful of water were poured continually on these blankets. It was this work that saved the west side of Locust Avenue, and probably the entire town. The Washington Hook & Ladder and the American Hook & Ladder Cos., of Ashland,

also performed excellent work in tearing down a dwelling house and stopping the progress of the fire on east Railroad street. Three members of the state police from Ashland were on the ground and performed excellent service.

The fire alarm was sounded in plenty of time for all to be aroused and those nearest the seat of the fire, of course, quickly denuded their homes of all furniture. When it was learned that nothing could be done to extinguish the blaze and that it necessary ?????? Alone to burn out ????. ?????? nearby commenced to remove their household effects and as the fire spread and approached still other homes these were emptied of all worldly goods. About three-fourths of all furniture was saved from the fire and the loss in this direction was small.

A strong western wind prevailed and this carried the flames east and helped to save the western side of Locust avenue. On easy Center (?) street the flames burned themselves out and on east Railroad street, the destruction was checked by the razing of a house. The fire burned quickly and about four o'clock this morning, it had practically burned out, but at noon today there was fire ??? (the next 2 ½ lines are unreadable)...constant watch was necessary to prevent new fires originating from this cause. Embers set fire to the Mammoth store, but only slight damage resulted before the fire was extinguished.. Red-hot pieces of wood were carried by the wind as far as Aristes.

The light, telephone and telegraph wires were all down about the burned square, but linemen representing the different companies are already on the ground making repairs. Much of the furniture saved from the burned homes was stolen by those villainous thieves who seem to be on hand at nearly every fire. It will not go well with them if they are caught while Centralia is in such a state of grief and excitement at present.

In the burned Locust avenue portion there were eight stores and five saloons.

On the west side of Locust avenue, opposite the burned district, every window in the fronts of the buildings was cracked by the intense heat, and there were a number of large plate glass windows in the stores.

Following is a list of those who suffered by the fire, the order on Locust Avenue, being from south to north, on Railroad street from west to east and on Center street from west to east.

#### *Locust Avenue*

Charles Thomas, double corner property, confectionery and Seth Thomas. Five occupants.

John Smoke, residence owned by Mrs. Cain. Four occupants.

John Haley, saloon, owned by Nertney Est. Seven occupants.

A.E. Fetterman, grocery, about 10 in family.

Oscar Fetterman, owner of Palace moving picture show, where fire started. Second floor occupied by Nicholson and wife and Paul Masty and wife.

E.J. Flynn, law office and residence of late Margaret Flynn. Seven occupants.

Mary A. Colahan, residence and John Colahan, saloon. Four occupants.

Mrs. Owen Cain, mother of Yardmaster Cain of the local L.V. yards. Three occupants.

Councilman Michael J. McDonnell, grocery and residence. Seven in family.

Freeman Yeager, saloon and residence. Seven in family. Owned by Martin Welsh.

Ellen Rooney, saloon. Seven in family.

Mrs. P.F. Burke, residence. In this house her son lay with a broken leg. He was carried to safety on a stretcher. Six in family.

Mrs. Collier's residence. Four occupants.

Mrs. Ellen Gallagher, residence. Owned by John Moran. Four in family.

John Conway, residence. Three in family.

Charles Schaum, tailor. Three occupants.

John McDonnell, corner, saloon. Two occupants.

*Railroad Street*

Ellen Rooney, double and single houses. Three families with fifteen occupants in all.

Mrs. Barnett (?), double house with ten occupants.

Bernard Reilley's house, occupied by Mrs. Anthony Conroy. Three in family.

Patrick Darrow, residence. Six in family.

*Centre Street*

Odd fellows' Hall.

Mrs. Morrison, mother of Dr. P.J., of town. Double house, occupied by Richard Monahan, family of five, and Mrs. Richard Horan, family of five.

Mrs. John Purcell, residence. The house tore down by the firemen, which saved the two houses yet remaining in the block.